journal of social theory in art education

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- to promote the use of theoretical concepts from the social sciences—which include, but are not limited to, anthropology, sociology, and political science—to study visual culture and the teaching of art;
- to inform art educators about theory and practice in the social sciences, thus acting as a liaison between social scientists and art educators;
- to encourage research into the social context of visual culture and teaching art and to develop socially relevant programs for use in the teaching of art.

The editors invite formal and informal contributions on all matters relating to social theory and art education. Correspondences, permission requests, performance pieces are welcome. Original manuscripts, together with three copies should be prepared in conformity with the guidelines established in the Publication Manual of American Psychological Association (APA). Deadline for submission for JSTAE No. 10 is February 15, 1990. Send relevant articles to:

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ON THE COVER: The cover graphic was designed by Arthur Guagliumi. The organic graph, with its enfolded hyperspace and the torn edge of the collage have replaced the grid and the hard edge of Modernism. Such logics of disintegration are suggestive of a historical moment searching for definition in a world which has imploded in a sea of technological communication.

In Memory of Nancy Johnson

We, the Members of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education dedicate this journal to the memory of

Nancy R. Johnson

Colleague, friend and founding member of the Caucus, her hopes were part of this journal’s history. Her contribution, her criticism, and her support will surely be missed. To many of us she was a personal friend. Without her our lives are diminished.
In Memory of Nancy Johnson

"I am sorry to inform you that Dr. Nancy Johnson died on September 6, 1988 at 4:15 a.m. at Our Lady of the Lake Medical Center in Baton Rouge..."

Who is ever ready to read words like these? How do we ever believe that face, that smile, that special vision, those words are gone from the workings of the Caucus on Social Theory? Herein are some of those words, and some of the memories of those of us who worked with Nancy over the years:

"Why do art students sit mainly on stools or benches rather than chairs? Does one's back need less support while learning about art?"

(Caucus on Social Theory column, NAEA News, December, 1986)

Cathy Mullen: I treasure the fact that the last time I saw and spoke to Nancy, she looked terrific. She exuded an outgoing glow and sense of personal presence that struck me with its strength. As usual, that encounter was at a conference, I knew Nancy mainly through years of attending conferences, and our mutual involvement in the Social Theory Caucus. We also shared membership in that community of junior academics struggling to find a secure job and a place in this profession. I respect her research; I have my students read her articles as valuable models of research and content. Although I wasn’t in contact with her during the last few years, I was aware of Nancy’s struggles - the professional ones and then the personal one with cancer. I had always thought of Nancy as a quiet, shy person - except for that laugh that revealed an inward exuberance just waiting to pop out and delight us all. When I saw her that last time, I saw the exuberant Nancy, out there in full view. Knowing what she had been through, her presence that day taught me something I remember often: In a world where most of us live “lives of quiet desperation,” Nancy Johnson showed me that it is also possible to live a life of quiet heroism.

"We support the idea of participatory democracy in the schools... (and yet within the NAEA there is) the self-appointed fifty member Council for Policy Studies. This group is not affiliated with NAEA, but meets on the same day as the affiliate groups. Why are the group’s affairs private and not public?"

(Caucus Newsletter, Vol 2, No. 4, Spring, 1983)

Elleda Katan: It was at the Detroit Convention, at a session led by a shy and flushed lady, wearing wire-rimmed glasses and a midWestern look. The modesty, the steadfastness, the occasional quick smile... all my stereotypes clicked into gear: this was going to be one of those sensible presentations adding some small grace note to the academic accumulation. Right? No. Wrong. This was Nancy Johnson and she was dealing with metaphors in the conceptualization of design curriculum. Those were years in which I was shaping and reshaping my own teaching of design. It was as if she had crawled into my head and made a neat and vivid order out of the questions and tentative answers I’d been forming. And then there was a question from the audience on some issue that she hadn’t yet thought through. I had, so I jumped in. There was this click between us of kindred spirits. One of those one-hour highs you hit when you are very very lucky at a National Convention.

The problem was, I wanted to learn more from this lady, and you had only to look at the two of us to know that that was going to be a problem. Beyond living in different parts of the States, there was this enormous contrast in temperament, dress, noise level, thinking style, and basic philosophy of parties. There was only one thing to do and we did it from that year on: we became annual roommates at the National. She taught me so much: how New Yorkers look to MidWesterners; the secret networks within the NAEA; oh, and yes, not a little about social theory. Sadly now, with her gone, I realize how much what I write about, I write for her to read and in response to discussions we had. I’ve lost a voice and an ear that had become the better part of my professional self, as well as a point of view which in large measure defined for me what the Caucus is all about. It is a great loss indeed.

"Well reader, do we give up trying to engage the art teacher in and with the Caucus, and become only an elite group of specialists on social theory who meet once a year for esoteric discussions or conversations with each other?"

(Caucus Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall, 1984)
Amy Brook Snider: I did not know Nancy Johnson very well. For several years, she was the President and spiritual leader of the Social Theory Caucus. She also guided us in the intricacies of Parliamentary Procedure, wrote the Caucus column month after month in the Newsletter, and never gave up trying to get new people to take positions of responsibility. Often the life and integrity of an organization or a group can be traced to the perseverance of only a few individuals. Nancy was one of ours. Ironically, she was curiously shy and retiring for such a strong leader. She wasn’t “good” at the silly inanities that pass for conversation at parties. And yet, you had to admire the way she tried; it wasn’t easy but that didn’t stop her.

This April, I ran into Nancy when she was leaving the hotel in Los Angeles for home. She looked beautiful and happy. And why not? She thought she had won her fight with cancer. Her strong and gentle spirit will be missed by the group she nourished.

“Why are the elements and principles of design often the only content of the curriculum in art from kindergarten through twelfth grade? Is all that we know about art the sum of line, shape, balance, etc.?”

(Social Theory column, NAEA News, December, 1986)

Karen Hamblen: As a graduate student at the University of Oregon, Dr. Nancy R. Johnson was one of my idols. I read and admired her dissertation for its ground-breaking methodology and for what it revealed about the socialization processes of art museum tours. After graduation, my university students and I continued to use Nancy’s work, and I saw another group of students grow to admire her contributions to the field. When it was possible for Nancy to come to Louisiana State University, I felt truly privileged, and my idolizing image of her was never tarnished. Dr. Nancy R. Johnson was a consummate educator - she was an excellent classroom teacher and researcher. I told her that she seemed too good to be true - and perhaps the gods thought so too.

After Nancy’s death, I helped her mother sort and pack Nancy’s papers, books, household items, etc. I came to know a mother who was fiercely proud of her daughter’s accomplishments, who cared for Nancy through a previous bout with cancer, and who was shocked by the quickness of the final events of Nancy’s passing. I learned that Nancy was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, that she helped artists by always trying to buy at least one art object at exhibitions she attended, and that she contributed objects from her travels to various art museums. In a folder I found Nancy’s photographs taken throughout the years. Nancy, from first grade onward, was totally recognizable. She always had the same smile - a smile, slight laugh, and an upward look to her eyes that she had when confronted with the insaneness of academia and when the two of us talked about forming a song and dance team that would specialize in the “academic shuffle.” Certainly Nancy’s research will endure beyond individual memory, but it is the memory and image of Nancy’s smile and laugh that give recognition of her triumph over life’s ironies.

“Why are the visual arts often referred to as the fine arts? What is a fine art? Why do we perpetuate a concept that was contextually appropriate about two hundred or three hundred years ago?”

(Caucus on Social Theory column, NAEA News, December, 1986)

Bob Bersson: I have lost someone I deeply respected, a warm, giving person and a committed professional with whom I worked closely for many years. One of the founders of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education, Nancy blessed us with an incisive mind, passionate loyalty, and a generous and humane spirit. A serious intellectual given to body-rolling peals of laughter, she was ever at the forefront of progressive change for the profession: in respect to multiculturalism, to the application of social science research methods and theories to art education, and to the critical social-cultural analysis of our unexamined assumptions about art, design, and aesthetics. Never superficial or small-minded, Nancy took on the big issues and probed them to the core. Ever committed to the teacher in the field, she always related her theoretical or research work to practice, whether for school or museum. Her last professional wish was that the Caucus put together a practical curriculum where the organizing principle would be the relationship between art and society; a curriculum that art educators at the local, state and national levels might draw upon. To me, Nancy was heroic. Whether in good times or bad, she gave her all to the art education profession. She richly deserves both our appreciation and our commitment to carry on where she left off.

Jan Jagodzinski: I knew Nancy Johnson since 1982. I recall that she was a determined individual who really gave a damn, wanting change and justice. I always thought Nancy a strong woman, a matriarchal figure who had an uncanny sense of the NAEA network. When she was president of the Caucus I always knew that organizational matters would be taken care of. There was a generosity in her style, always listening critically to others. I never knew that she was gravely ill. There were rumors of course, but no one ever thought that the worst would come. The Caucus will miss her drive, desire and belief that it can make a difference to art educational discourse.


Editorial Re(Mark)!:
The Question of Voices

JAN JAGODZINSKI

There is always the danger that the editor’s thumbprint remains so heavily pressed on the parade of pages within that the reader is unable to read and see the dimensions of the covers. Partly through curiosity, partly through sensuality, partly through the hope of a surprise, the creation of desire for a reader’s attention is always seductive. The editor’s fingerprints lie hidden, invisible to the reader: they form a pretext, and pretend that they are omniscient, speaking one voice for the many: they are cursed with power, the ability to survey the landscape from above and feel in control. And this is a male/female curse; you never know whether it is indeed your message or someone else’s that you are delivering. The irony of the index sign of my thumbprint and the fact that I have signed personally all copies of this journal in a letter on page 131 should be apparent. In an age that claims the possessive individual, the thumbprint and personalized signature is suppose to be the height of such personalization, the guarantor of authenticity, the moment documenting the presence to consciousness of a signifying intention. The whole modernist tradition has continued to promote art as a blue-chip stock based on the “authenticity” of that artistic signature. Copyright laws, a relatively recent phenomenon have been instituted to ensure the authenticity of the signature, to make sure the possessive individual is alive and well, that intellectual labour, as signature may be bought and sold as a commodity.

Derrida has pointed out the folly of such reasoning. To ensure the authenticity of the signature requires that it become readable, therefore it must become repeatable, iterable, an imitable form. The very sense of uniqueness is put into doubt. For a signature to function, to act as a check that the artwork is indeed authentic and different from others, it must conform to a model, reinforcing the belief that the artist has developed that unique style, that personalized statement which offers a market differentiation. A style guarantees repetition and recognition, but then the paradox emerges, one unique to our postmodern condition: the very detachment from the present and intention of its production is what makes it function. Since a signature must be recognized as a repetition the modern means of reproduction becomes part of the structure of the signature. It eliminates the need for any particular intention at the point of signature. We can rubber stamp anything in the style of anything. If you have followed these arguments, a Proper Name paradoxically cannot exist! As users of language and visual images we continually recycle the inherited meanings of our current generation; every historian must speak as if s/he were the last, only to realize that history will again be rewritten.

Perhaps the greatest irony of this discussion is how the editor’s Voice has leaked out from the confines of an editorial and into the Text of the Other, hoping not to dominate but finding a seductive pleasure in bringing the journal to fruition. The confession of a will-to-power is (here). Hopefully, the reader will find that this journal is full of Voices: Voices rendered through the modern means of technology; Voices presented with different fonts; Voices which try to recall the spirit of a dedicated departed member, Nancy Johnson; Voices which try to push back the homogenization of culture by DBAE zealots so that more Voices with a difference might be heard so that the Other is vindicated; Voices which look at themselves and write an understanding of their own participations in the conference ritual and recognize how it is that they right themselves; Voices which wish to name a different reality but whose horizon remains blurred and indistinct but whose journey the reader can identify with.

The search is to find a different Voice, a different tone for art education. But this is also an enunciated Voice. It should not be forgotten that these are also Voices with an unconscious who write in excess of what they want to say over what they know. There is a telling about them without them consciously knowing - and there is a saying over which they want to say - the desire to speak to the silence of what they cannot adequately say. Many simply point to where the interface between art and society lies. The reader will find, at times, a strange dialogue. What appears as idle gossip is examined as if it were an anthropologist’s midden. There is a decided postmodernist edge to many of the essays. The questioning of the dominant representation appears time and time again. There is a celebration of local events, real time, and serious ‘gossip.’ Marginal and fringe groups are placed at center, echoing perhaps the Caucus’ place as marginal in relation to the Centering of art education. All these Voices are committed to social change. Their agendas are varied and their tones diverse. We hope the reader will engage in their dialogue.
Toward Foundations for a Socially Critical Art Education*

**Paul Duncum**

Significant recent developments in Australian art education have moved away from a consideration of the aesthetic value of fine art products to a broad sociological conception of the visual arts which includes folk and popular arts. Many art educators assume a socially functionalist approach which celebrates cultural diversity and attempts to describe the function of cultural artifacts, sometimes in terms of lived experience. While acknowledging the importance of these developments, the author adopts the view that cultural production is part of an unjust society in ferment and is a site of ideological struggle. The view advanced is that to be true to its subject, art education must adopt a socially critical position. Drawing upon the culturalist tendency within English Cultural Studies, possible theoretical foundations for a socially critical art education are explored. These include: social structure is as important as lived experience; society is comprised of competing interests and is structured in dominance; cultural production is constitutive of social reality; basic to human action is agency, constraint and struggle; and explicitly engaged judgement is essential to the development of a more democratic society.

The democratic impulse at work within the Australian Institute of Art Education reflects a collective motive and a genuine commitment to principles derived from no less than deeply engrained cultural expectations. It is perhaps not surprising to find that in our official policy statements we adopt explicitly democratic approaches to art and art education. We argue against competitions in favour of exhibitions (1987); and we propose that the visual arts should be broadly conceived to include not only fine art, but the folk and popular arts (1984). Our practice, however, may not accurately reflect our rhetoric. Not all of us have the training or experience to echo in practice our stated intentions, but our intentions at least, are clear. If we take seriously the endorsement of our policy statements by the various art teacher organizations around the country, Australian art educators, at this time in history strongly support a broadly conceived, inclusive, democratic approach to the visual arts.

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**Cultural Pluralism**

Among the many pressures for this position not least has been a search for relevance. By defining our subject as the aesthetic, we long ago condemned ourselves to a marginal role within education, a position that merely echoes the marginal role of aesthetic considerations within society. This marginality is spelled out each year at A.I.A.E. conferences, state by state.

A search for relevance has led to the consideration of students’ own tastes, attitudes, and beliefs. Increasingly, we have become aware of the need to be sensitive to students’ own ways of life in a society stratified by economic classes and comprised of numerous ethnic groups (Boughton, 1983). Both here and overseas the acknowledgements of a multicultural society has led to calls for visual art education to be broadly understood; to include, potentially, all visual artifacts through which people make meaning. Robert Bershon (1983) calls for an art education that acknowledges “pluralism, diversity, variety, difference...the full range of visual culture” (p. 29). Calls are made for a sociocultural curriculum, a sociological curriculum, and a social studies approach (Nadaner, 1985; Chapman, 1978; Chalmers, 1985). Edmund Feldman (1982) calls for an anthropological orientation. Laura Chapman (1978) writes of the need for art educators to be willing to talk “about life, not just art” (p. 99) and Graeme Chalmers (1985) writes of the need “to focus on, meaning rather than the perception of form” (p. 281).

The shift of focus can be captured by examining a story told by Vincent Lanier (1987) in his Leon Jackman Memorial Lecture last year. Lanier argues that aesthetic experience is not peculiar to art, certainly not to fine art, and need not, as is often claimed, have high moral associations. Yet his framework remains aesthetic. He writes:

I myself have an aesthetic response I am not proud of and cannot explain. Many years ago, our oldest son brought back for me from a trip to England a small ceremonial dagger in a metal sheath. On the black handgrip is an enamelled red swastika on a white field and on the blade is engraved Blut und Ehre, the German for Blood and Honour, the motto of the S.S. As an unrepentant anti-Nazi of World War 2 vintage, I stand behind no one in my hatred of the Third Reich. Yet I must confess I think that dagger is beautiful; horribly beautiful, but beautiful nonetheless (p. 16).

Lanier is perhaps the father of a socially critical art education (1969), but since his avowed interest here is aesthetic, though he knows more, his response is divided. He is unable to reconcile his aesthetic response to his knowledge of the wider social context. By contrast, Chalmers concern and mine, would be in the whole meaning of the dagger, aesthetic and otherwise; indeed, in this case, the tension between the aesthetic and the context. Many art educators today profess concern for meaning, not just aesthetics.
And they are interested in the meaning artifacts have for students, not just connoisseurs. Pat Brady (1986) calls for an art curriculum of "the human social condition" (p. 61). In reply to a quote offered by Ralph Smith (1986) as a paradigm of aesthetic sensitivity, Brady argues that a legitimate response could be "Merdel!!!" (p. 60).

On what basis are we now to proceed? Having opened the schoolroom door to allow in the plethora of cultural products previously locked outside, what do we do? How do we deal with the diverse and often deeply disturbing cultural products that exist. While we have learnt to deal with Monet aesthetically and Van Gogh in terms of expressiveness, what are we to do with television soaps, teen magazines, supermarket paintings, with illustrations on the back of cereal packets and bubble gum wrappers? How are we to deal with the kinds of cultural experience with which most of our students are most familiar? We have recognised the issue of cultural diversity; how are we now to deal with it?

Most of the art educators I have mentioned as champions of an open-door policy to the visual arts are theoretically indebted to functionalist sociology and functional anthropology. Chapman (1978) makes her approach clear in advocating the study of artifacts in terms of paired opposites like traditional and innovative. Feldman (1982) would study cultural artifacts as bearers of themes common to all humanity; birth, death, grief; and rites of passage like marriage.

The end product of this approach is description. It seeks to make students aware of their own participation with the visual arts in a way that relates their participation to others in time and place. In this, the approach responds to deeply felt pressures. As the anthropologist Braudy (1982) has written:

> The pre-occupation with the present, the search for patterns and the exposure of its images... is historically associated with periods when the signs are unclear and cultural classification becomes the prime way to get control over events (pp. 484-485).

By exercising the control of interpretation, art educators would place themselves, and invite their students, to stand outside the chaos. They assume that if they can describe what is going on they have at least some measure of power over it. The desire to impart such power, such control, appears to me wholly commendable. The desire to better understand the lived experience of students appears equally commendable. The need to make art education relevant and vital to students goes without saying.

Yet the approach is, I want to suggest, seriously flawed. It is not enough to describe social function as if standing outside looking in. Society is at least not only a functioning organism. It is hierarchical, stratified and, in many ways, unjust; and whatever else the visual arts may be they are essentially an integral part of such a society. Since they are part of a struggle to make meaning in an unjust society, a hierarchical and stratified society, inevitably they are bound to issues of power and domination.

I agree with Lanier (1976) when he writes elsewhere of arts education:

> What is required is a critical consciousness, an informed awareness of the social forces which oppress our lives, constrain our growth, and define our dreams, and an additional awareness of what we can do to combat them... to clarify the ways in which the social, political, and economic worlds work and how it can be improved (p. 20).

I agree with Gerry King (1987) who calls for an art education that is "issues conscious" because that is the way art is. I agree with Landon Beyer (1984), who calls for an art education that interprets culture in ways that "puts it at the centre of social conduct and ethical deliberations" (p. 8).

Foundations for a Socially Critical Position

I will attempt to lay before you several theoretical foundations upon which a socially critical art education could be built, an art education prepared to address not only the socially embedded nature of its subject, but its political nature. In developing a socially critical position, I will be keeping in mind the two competing positions I have already mentioned: the cultural pluralist approach, many of us now advocate, and the aesthetic orientation many of us, in one form or another, still practice.

The foundations I will offer are not exclusive. Other approaches are available, and all are constantly being revised. I will not be translating theory into classroom practice; that work remains to be done. The kind of theoretical ideas I will be drawing upon have been developed largely for literature and the media, not for art education. Where they might lead us in the classroom I cannot yet say. Here, I will seek only to outline some general principles.

In the spirit of the intellectual tradition from which I will be coming let me spell out what that tradition is. Let me lay my cards on the table; that way I will be a stationary target. I will be drawing upon what has been called the culturalist tendency within contemporary Cultural Studies in England. This is a network of ideas that owes a major debt to various Marxist theorists and, indeed, has been a significant contributor to a new, complex Marxism. In particular, I'll be drawing upon the ideas of Raymond Williams (1958; 1961/65; 1977; 1979; 1981; 1983), E. P. Thompson (1962a; 1962b; 1963), Stuart Hall (1977; 1980; 1982), Terry Eagleton (1983), and Richard Johnson (1979), including their interpretations of continental theoreticians, notably Antonio Gramsci, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Michel Foucault.

What I will be offering is not a coherent body of knowledge, not a single theory, but a number of intersecting themes, a set of interwoven proposals. As ideas about society and human action some will seem unremarkable, though used as the basis for thinking about cultural products they can have far reaching consequences."
Social Structure and Lived Experience

The first foundation I wish to propose is that there needs to be as much stress on social structure as on lived experience. On the one hand, studying culture means to try to understand how cultural products are generated and used within the context of people's lives. One needs to be sensitive to student's own meanings, beliefs and values. This far many of us are now prepared to go. But going only so far means ignoring the wider context of the social structure in which experiences are had. As well as responsiveness to lived experience we need the scale of a theory concerned with the social world as a whole. Naturalistic approaches take us only so far. From a Marxist position, experiential accounts of culture disregard the ever-present possibility of false consciousness and the power of social structures to operate behind our backs (Johnson, 1979). And this applies as much to the fine arts as it does to television.

When we gaze at a Monet haystack bathed in warm afternoon light, perhaps we are overwhelmed by the loveliness of the colours, or like Kandinsky (1964) claimed, transported into another dimension. Perhaps the only response we wish to make is aesthetic. Political considerations seem irrelevant, intrusive, even tasteless. Of course, there are times when all we want to say about an artifact is "how beautiful." However, an educated response is at least aware of the pressures that drive one to this position, and as educators it is incumbent upon us to make those pressures visible to our students.

We should be cognizant that the notion of aesthetic experience, like our modern conception of fine art, was a direct response to the Industrial Revolution; and that the emergence of these concepts was bound closely to the emergence of culture as the cultivation of a refined sensibility and later the works of such refinement. We should recall that these developments occurred in response to the ugliness of industry, to a general social emphasis on utility, but also, to calls for democracy by the new proletarian class oppressed by their industrial masters (Williams, 1958, 1983). We should remember that the honoured place afforded aesthetic sensitivity, of refined taste, has often been used as a weapon in the class war inaugurated by the Industrial Revolution. We should be aware, and make it known to our students, that we are all heirs of the Industrial Revolution, all subject to the social dynamics that arose at that time; to the split consciousness between art and industry, the aesthetic and utility, high culture and mass culture, the culture of the elite and the culture of the so-called mob. And we should never forget that these distinctions have frequently been used to check democratic impulses.

The single most influential text of the high culture social critique, forever after regarded as a pinnacle of high culture analysis, was Matthew Arnold's (1869) *Culture and Anarchy*. It was written in direct response to a riot which occurred in London's Hyde Park when police charged into protestors who were calling for a widened franchise (Williams, 1979). At the turn of this century, at the dawn of modernity, the single most pressing dilemma facing young members of the European avant garde was whether art should serve the international working class movement for social justice, or whether art should serve itself (Shapiro, 1976). In deciding, as most did, that art should serve itself, they responded to the same social pressures we are subject to when we respond to their work with "how beautiful" and are prepared to leave it at that.

Foucault advises, whenever there is talk of meaning and of goodness and virtue, look for "strategies of domination" (Oreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 212). Lived experience is vital to cultural analysis, our own as well as our students, but it should never exclude considerations of social organization.

Society Consists of Competing Interests Which are Structured in Dominance

The second foundation stone I wish to lay is that society consists of groups whose interests are in conflict and is structured in dominance. Society is not just a functioning organism. The anthropological view of culture as a whole way of life is a false generalisation, altogether too impersonal and passive. It is more accurate to speak of a whole way of conflict, or whole ways of life (Thompson, 1962a). But society is not only conflictual; it is, in Althusser’s phrase “structured in dominance” (cited in Hall, 1977, p. 327). Society should be understood in terms of power and domination.

To understand cultural production in such a society a concept which has proven enormously helpful is that of hegemony. Gramsci described hegemony as the domination of one group over another by, among other means, establishing what will count as definitions of reality. Definitions which are favourable to the dominant group are institutionalised in civil life and the organs of the state. This includes education, the major communication systems, and the arts. Such definitions of reality are so persuasive that they come to constitute the primary lived experience of subordinate groups. All competing definitions of reality are framed within the preferred range of dominant groups. This does not mean the dominant groups are able either to prescribe or proscribe the specific consciousness of subordinate groups, but dominant groups strive to bring all alternatives within their horizons of thought. Consciousness is saturated to such an extent that pressures and limits of what is actually economic, political and cultural, seem to most of us the pressures and limits of human existence and common sense (Williams, 1977). The interest serving nature of hegemony is thereby rendered invisible. By such naturalness, such taken-for-grantedness, ideology secures consent. Ideology masquerades as common sense (Hall, 1977).

In a society that is structured from top to bottom, to study cultural products is largely to study definitions of reality acceptable to dominant groups. In a hierarchic society, to study culture is often to study how the ruling hegemony is produced.
Cultural Products are Constitutive of Social Reality

The third foundation I wish to propose is that cultural products should be regarded as constitutive of social reality. The keyword here is constitutive. Culture is constitutive of social pressures and processes, social values and beliefs. In proposing that culture is constitutive of social dynamics, I am rejecting expression theory and reflection theory and all the other theories which assume culture and society to be autonomous domains.

In orthodox Marxism, culture was a reflection of the socio-economic base. In common, liberal parlance, culture is an expression of social dynamics. Both views are equally rejected. Instead, cultural production is seen to be interwoven with the general social order (Hall, 1982), as inseparably interactive with economic and political processes (Williams, 1961/65). The inherent passivity of expression and reflection theory is rejected in favour of the view that culture is as much an ongoing contribution to society as a mere response to it. Culture is seen as an active, ongoing intervention which helps to highlight, exclude and frame issues; even to define what will constitute an issue.

For example, research now focuses on television as only one, not clearly demarcated influence, among other influences within society, an independent element of a whole social reality rather than about social reality (McQuail, 1983). The media is seen not as one thing but as offering an enormously diverse set of messages, images and ideas, most of which do not originate with the media themselves, but come from society and are sent back to society. Thus, visual images should be regarded as an integral part of what has been called “the teeming forces which jostle each other within the combat zone of the world” (Holquist, cited in Kijinski, 1987).

I said earlier that to study culture is often to study how the ruling hegemony is produced. But cultural production does not only mean reproducing world views; it also produces them. A paradigm for this analysis is language. As individuals we are born into and shaped by language, but we can also actively contribute to the development of language. This is at once our socialisation and our individualisation (Williams, 1977). Similarly, we are born into and shaped by the plethora of visual images that today saturate our environment. Yet we can also actively contribute to the development of the visual arts. We should not think of a reified visual arts and a separate society; we should think of a social art.

I believe this point to be of great significance. We need to reject Romantic notions about the arts as highly impactful as well as behaviourist notions about the media to the same effect. On the other hand, we need to abandon the popular contrary notion that the arts have no effect on society. Rather, we need to understand culture as an active generation of meanings as much a contribution as a response to society. As art educators we need to be realistic about the impact of images on society; equally, since our subject is an integral constitutive part of society, we cannot avoid social commitment. A failure to engage with social issues cannot be founded on the belief that the visual arts are passive.

Agency, Constraint and Struggle

This analysis of culture as active is built upon a general view of human action in terms of agency, constraint and struggle. To view human action in terms of agency, constraint and struggle is the fourth foundation I wish to propose. The importance of this proposal is twofold. There is a real need to individuals and groups of individuals to perceive the power they have to make changes. There is an equal need for us to understand the strength, tenacity and pervasiveness of the forces with which we must contend.

While we enthusiastically celebrate individual achievement, it is always necessary to remember that human agency operates within historically formed constraints. Engels wrote, “we make our own history ourselves, but … under very definite assumptions and conditions” (cited in Williams, 1977, p. 85). Culture is something people make for themselves; an active process which is lived, not fixed, and not consumed. Culture is something which happens in human relations as the result of human agency (Thompson, 1962a). As Williams (1977) writes,

Everything we see and do, the whole structure of our relations and institutions, depends finally on the effort of learning, description and communication. We create the world as we have thought of art being created (p. 54).

We are not powerless, but our power is limited. The control established by hegemony is very great, but it is always a struggle and usually, only partial. There always exists the possibility of counter hegemony; and always, in actual social practice there exists opposition and alternatives. Cultural forms close to the general social and economic organisation tend largely to reproduce the ruling hegemony. We have only to think of who owns television stations in this country to make this connection. But other forms of cultural production exist. Cultural forms which were once dominant, but are now marginal, like painting often have an alternative or oppositional relation to dominant culture. Other cultural forms suggest new meanings and values, new practices and kinds of relationships (Williams, 1977).

However, such alternative and oppositional possibilities exist, by definition, only in relation to the dominant. And they are always in danger of incorporation. The most challenging ideas can be rendered acceptable; by selection, modification, contextualisation. Thus, in speaking of cultural production it is only ever possible to speak of agency and expression, while also speaking of regulation and constraint. I said earlier that society should be understood in terms of power and domination, and so should cultural production. Yet both social dynamics and cultural production should also be viewed in terms of resistance and struggle.

To make meaning is to struggle with competing definitions of reality. This applies whether one is producing a cultural product or using one. The meaning of a visual image is modified and transformed by the variable
social tones, valuations and connotations with which it is used under specific conditions. Far from being neutral, images are a focus for struggle and contradiction. To study an image is to investigate its varied history as conflicting groups, classes, individuals and discourses have sought to appropriate it and imbue it with its own meanings. The visual arts is a field of ideological contention, a site of ideological struggle. The many images produced in our society carry with them values and world views. There are many official images which are passed off as the only true images, but their values and world views are constantly being tested - and then accepted, or rejected, or modified, or subverted - by the multiple interpretations of the various classes, age groups, professions and ethnic and other minorities.

Media research is now premised on the "resilience and self-protective capacity of individuals, groups and even cultures" (McQuail, 1983, p. 222) in dealing in complex, negotiable and oppositional ways with media content. Research focuses on audience exploitation of the media, where initiative and control of the media are often located with those who use it. The meaning of an image is never fixed. Meaning, despite its pedigree, and no matter how seemingly fundamental, is always contestable by those who seek to exercise the power of interpretation for themselves. We should look upon images, not as stable possessors of beauty or truth, but as items in a network of manoeuvres, tactics and techniques which serve interests.

A Commitment to Explicitly Engaged Judgement

The fifth foundation I wish to propose is that there should be a commitment to explicitly engaged judgements. While cultural pluralists are content to describe and celebrate, a socially critical stance is premised on the assumption that offering judgement is central to one's responsibility toward the development of a more democratic society. If culture is an instrument of power, it is naive merely to describe and irresponsible always to celebrate. What is needed is a willingness to confront the hierarchic, unjust, undemocratic nature of our society as manifest in cultural products. Being an art educator should mean appraising cultural products on the basis of what contributes toward a genuine participatory democracy.

How is judgement to be offered? A number of past practices surely are to be avoided. We should not conflate all that is good and worthy with the fine arts and all that is bad with the popular arts. The boundaries between these categories are often arbitrary; close examination reveals as many similarities as differences (Gans, 1975). It should not be categories of culture that count, but the interests they serve. What is important is the intentions of, and responses to, cultural producers, not the medium of communication.

Equally, we should reject the imperialism of aesthetic judgement. We should avoid the kind of judgement which is ostensibly, though never in reality, one of detachment, where the judgement and the judged are alike in being taken out of all their conditions and intentions. There should be no place for making judgements on the basis of some kind of spontaneous sixth sense where the product judged is hermetically sealed from history (Eagleton, 1983). Furthermore, we should not merely assume, as the cultural pluralists do, that cultural products fulfil needs. This is to fall into a black hole called cultural relativism. Finally, we should avoid, as the cultural pluralists do not, dissolving criticism back into descriptive sociology.

What we should do is to begin where the cultural pluralists leave off. Like the cultural pluralists we should accept no a priori honouring of selected cultural forms, but rather, work on the assumption that people's conditions of existence are diverse and a wide range of cultural forms is necessary to fulfil their need to grapple with meaning. But we need to go further. We need to examine cultural products in terms of people's whole conditions of existence; that means in terms of both lived experience and social structure, in terms of power and domination. It also means - this is an essential ingredient - describing the nature of one's engagement.

Judgement means describing artifacts in terms of their whole conditions of existence while also describing the conditions under which the judgement is offered. It is necessary to state where one is coming from, to make clear one's relationship with the artifact judged, to make visible the nature of one's own engagement. Judgement is, thereby, open to scrutiny and, thus, open to being contested. Acknowledging the nature of one's engagement avoids cultural relativism; it avoids the imperialism of omnipotence and it avoids the reduction of criticism to mere description.

Lanier made explicit the nature of his engagement with the Nazi dagger. Perhaps if we were more explicit about how our middle-classness influences our judgement of the kinds of cultural participation many of our students prefer, our judgements would be more honest. Certainly, they would be more contestable, and that would be no bad thing. Williams (1961/1965) writes that the purpose of cultural study should be to make the interpretation conscious, by showing historical alternatives; to relate the interpretation to the particular contemporary values on which it rests; and, by exploring the real patterns of the work, confronts us with the real nature of the choices we are making... The more actively all cultural work can be related either to the whole organisation within which it was expressed, or to the contemporary organisation within which it is used, the more clearly shall we see its true values (pp. 69-70).

For those concerned that such judgement takes us far from aesthetic considerations, it is fair to say, while aesthetic value is no longer at centre stage, it is not ignored. Not even a central focus on ideology and only a marginal interest in aesthetics is being suggested. Rather, I am advocating an interconnected ensemble of considerations - the social, the economic, the psychological, and the aesthetic - in which the aesthetic is essential.

The view of aesthetic value adopted here is far broader than the usual conception of the fine, beautiful and vital. It is expanded to include, not only the intensifying, the heightening, but sense activity in general - the dulling,
the lulling, the chiming and the overbearing. Analysis will show where the orchestration of such general sensory phenomena stimulates, reinforces and extends meanings and values in intense, even irreplaceable ways. But analysis will also show where sensory means aid the evasion of other important human experiences. This needs to be of at least equal concern. Lauer's story about the Nazi dagger makes the point. Rambo-type films make the point; pornography makes the point, the presentation of the news makes the point. Even television programming makes the point.

Conclusion

Let me draw together the threads of this address. I am interested in an art education which acknowledges pluralism, but is not uncritical of it; that is accepting of lived experience, our own as well as our students', but is equally conscious of how lived experience is framed by how society is structured. I am interested in an art education which recognises that to focus on meaning is to do so in an unjust, stratified society; that is aware that concentrating on the human social condition means to acknowledge as central dimensions power and inequality. I am interested in an art education that is open to both consummatory experience and self-expression, but is conscious from where such concerns derive and resists allowing such pressures to dominate. I am interested in an art education that is as much concerned with power as aesthetics, an art education that would place aesthetic value back into its historical pressures and social processes. The kind of art education which I seek to support is not passive or reactive, but proactive; indeed, interventionary. To celebrate cultural diversity is fine; certainly preferable to a narrow aesthetic interest in the fine arts. Cultural pluralism is at least democratic, but it is a soft kind of democracy; one without any fight in it. The art education I seek plays its part in challenging undemocratic practices and is characterised by struggle, an inevitable consequence of being at the centre of social issues and ethical considerations.

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Footnotes

1. For a more comprehensive survey of these proposals, and others, see Duncum (1987a). For an indication of how these proposals may effect art education see Duncum (1987b).

References


The Meaning(s) of Lens Meaning

MICHAEL J. EMME

As a photographer and an art educator, I want to come to a better understanding of how lens images (photographs, film and television) convey meaning. This is not a trival or purely academic concern. Recently media educator David Trend has observed that "media studies of any kind are virtually nonexistent in elementary and secondary schools. Yet serious studies of film, photography, and video are needed most in these latter areas, as students encounter powerful mechanisms of socialization that will follow them the rest of their lives...Without a pedagogical imperative, the broader mission of progressive culture stands in jeopardy" (Trend, 1988, p.10). It is hoped that the discussion of the meaning of these media initiated here can draw further attention among educators to the power and impact of these lens media.

Lens Meaning

In his essay "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," Sekula (1984) suggests that:

All photographic communication seems to take place within the conditions of a kind of binary folklore. That is, there is a 'symbolist' folk myth and a 'realist' folk myth. The misleading but popular form of this opposition is 'art photography' vs. 'documentary photography.' Every photograph tends, at any given moment of reading in any given context, toward one of these two poles of meaning. The oppositions between these two poles are as follows: photographer as seer vs. photographer as witness, photography as expression vs. photography as reportage, theories of imagination (and inner truth) vs. theories of empirical truth, affective value vs. informative value, and finally, metaphoric signification vs. metonymic signification (pp. 20-21).

Sekula refers directly to two (form as meaning and content as meaning) and indirectly to a third (context as meaning) layer of signification in his discussion of photographic meaning. Sekula's argument suggests that there is a constant tension between the form and content notions of meaning. I take from his placing of context outside of this struggle that it functions as an over-arching influence on meaning much like the arena is the larger context in which two boxers vie for domination.

Allan Sekula’s tripartite conception of photographic meaning is a useful starting point in our discussion, but in order to expand his notions to include photography, film, and television I must create a term: 'Lens meaning' by which I mean the understanding that results from our use of lens images. By lens images I mean any visual representation, whether projected on a screen (including a television screen) or in the air (as in a hologram) or printed on a page or other surface that has been created or reproduced with the aid of a lens and any chemically or electronically light sensitive matrix. I hope that I am avoiding the pitfalls that Michael Scriven attributes to redefinition in conceptual analysis (in Jaeger, 1988, p.138.) simply because 'Lens meaning', as far as I can tell, is a new term, not a redefinition of an older one. In one sense the term narrows considerably a large field in philosophy by limiting our concern to meaning only as it refers to lens images. At the same time, by combining the technologies of photography, film, and television, it runs counter to much of the modernist writing which tries to explore the 'nature' and uniqueness of each separately.

My purpose here is to analyze terminology that people use to discuss critically lens media and imagery and to suggest that the new term, 'Lens meaning,' can be applied to much of what has been said about photography, film, and television. Additionally, I want to argue that collapsing these three technologies into one larger category is both a useful and an appropriate (if not final) step when considering their visual signification. A.D. Coleman has applied J. David Bolter's concept of "defining technology" (Coleman, 1986, p.10) to the lens. Bolter (1984) suggests that:

A defining technology develops links, metaphorical or otherwise, with a culture's science, philosophy or literature; it is always available to serve as a metaphor, example, model, or symbol. A defining technology resembles a magnifying glass, which collects and focuses seemingly disparate ideas in a culture into one bright, sometimes piercing ray. Technology does not call forth major cultural changes by itself, but it does bring ideas into new focus by explaining or exemplifying them in new ways to larger audiences (p.11).

It is intriguing that Bolter, in discussing the computer which he wants to label a defining technology because he feels that it has resulted in a "general redefinition of...mankind's relationship to the world of nature," (p.9) uses the metaphor of the lens just in the way that he suggests a defining technology would be used. Coleman starts from this base and traces the impact of the lens from its beginnings to the 16th century. It is between 1550-1553, he argues, that western civilization became a lens culture. In that three year span: Girolamo Cardano built the first 'modern' camera by affixing a lens to the light-admitting aperture of a camera obscura; Franciscus...
Maurolycus first suggested that the human eye is like a lens; and the two British mathematicians, Leonard and Thomas Digges, designed the first compound lens (Coleman, 1986, p. 13).

While Coleman’s notion of the rapidity of cultural change is problematic, his argument at least makes the important point that in that short three-year period the groundwork had been laid for: the photographic recording of information; the generation of new visual information in the sense that a compound lens makes it possible for us to see what our eyes naturally cannot; and perhaps most importantly, for us to accept the images produced by the lens as being like what our eyes see. Moving to the present we must recognize that these three qualities of the lens have been incorporated (literally) into a mass communications network that Hans Magnus Enzenberger (1974) had labelled “the consciousness industry.”

Thus...it would seem to be vital to our advancement as a culture that we come to understand the extent to which lenses shape, filter and otherwise alter the data which passes through them, the extreme degree to which the lens itself informs our information. This influence, though radical in many cases, often manifests itself subtly. Yet even the most blatant distortions tend to be taken for granted as a result of the enduring cultural confidence in the essential trustworthiness and impartiality of what is in fact a technology resonant with cultural bias and highly susceptible to manipulation (Coleman, 1986, p. 18).

It is reasonable to speak of any human product as meaningful. As Oakeshott (1975) argues:

...a human being is the inhabitant of a world composed, not of ‘things’, but of meanings; that is, of occurrences in some manner recognized, identified understood and responded to in terms of this understanding. It is a world of sentiments, beliefs, and it includes also artifacts (such as books, pictures, musical compositions, tools and utensils) for these, also, are ‘expressions’ which have meanings and which require to be understood in order to be used and enjoyed (p. 19).

But in addition to this general sense, lens images are both systematic and institutional, with the lens providing the system, and the mass media providing the institution. This implies that talking about lens meaning has much the same logic as talking about meaning and language.

Brian Barry, in his discussion of three theories of meaning in Political Argument (1965), suggests that the most naive notion of meaning is what he calls “the causal theory.” He describes meaning in this context as being perceived in Pavlovian terms. “An utterance corresponds to the dinner-bell and the effect of the utterance to the dog’s salivating (p. 17).” In contrast an “intentional” theory of meaning keys on the speaker’s intention. Somehow meaning is molded by the speaker and the listener’s job is to discover that intention. Barry’s own conception of meaning takes into account both the linguistic forms and conventions of a language on the one hand, and the social context of particular speech acts on the other.

Just as an individual word may have different meanings and one discovers which meaning is relevant by seeing which fits in with the rest of the sentence, so a sentence may have different meanings and one discovers which is relevant by examining the context of its utterance, which includes both the linguistic context (what was said before) and the non-linguistic context (when, where and by whom the sentence is spoken, etc.) (Barry, 1965, p. 24).

Barry’s tripartite division of meaning, as will be seen, has direct application in the consideration of lens meaning. As with Barry, the three categories of lens meaning that will follow are not offered as being definitive so much as useful. As he suggests, “surely the right procedure is to develop the categories to fit what one finds rather than force everything willy-nilly into predetermined pigeon-holes” (p. 25).

A further insight must be mentioned concerning our further inquiry into lens meaning. In Speech Acts, Searle (1970, pp. 12-13) argues that the linguistic characterization of one who is deemed to have mastery of his or her native tongue are valid representations of that language’s structure. An identical contention may be made concerning lens meaning.

Though the theoretical grounding in lens meaning for most members of this culture is skimpy at best, the direct experience with lens systems and lens imagery is extensive for most of us. Thus, to borrow a concept from Noam Chomsky, the visual equivalent of linguistic competence in the language of lens imagery is now commonplace in western society and, increasingly, to be found worldwide (Coleman, p. 10).

I would now like to draw together Searle, Chomsky (1972), Coleman, Barry and add John Wilson, who suggests that meaning is the sum of the various ways that a concept is used (Wilson, 1966, p. 26). So armed, I am going to explore the lenticular competence necessary to make valid representations of lens meaning. By describing the various ways that lens images are experienced I hope to build a framework for discovering its meaning.
Three Key Metaphors

Three key metaphors have grown out of both film and photographic theory which emphasize how viewers use images. Images are conceived of as windows, as frames, or as mirrors (Andrews, 1984, pp. 12-13). Perhaps the most common and most disarming way we use lens images is as a window. Film theorist André Bazin (1967), and photographic theorist John Szarkowski (1966) have both described this metaphor as a construction of unmediated reality by the lens image, a literal window of the world for viewer response. However it becomes questionable whether we can discuss such images in terms of meaning. There are two basic opportunities for the mediation of meaning in lens images: the first is in the production, which I will extend to include distribution of the image and the second is during the reception of the image by the viewer. If we assume that the entire filmic or photographic process is unmediated then both the producer and the consumer of the image can be seen as looking through the same ‘window on reality.’ At that point lens images correspond to C.S. Peirce’s (1955) notion of indexical signs, and viewing lens images becomes like a hunter trying to decipher the meaning of tracks in the snow. If the viewer’s response to a lens image is seen only as unmediated then we are describing lens meaning in the Pavlovian terms described by Barry’s causal theory.

The subtlety of the effect of the window metaphor can be seen any evening on the television news. We tend to respond to the various news stories as little 30 second facts without much thought as to the impact that the various framing and editing devices have had on getting that bit of news down to those thirty entertaining seconds. For example, consider the often broadcasted scenes of twisted automobile wreckage followed by the blanketed and barely visible form of a victim/survivor being whisked away on an ambulance gurney and the closing words of a trenchcoated, microphone-clutching reporter. The viewing audience feels that it has understood the ‘reality’ of that accident and yet, based on both what they did and did not see, have no conception of the ramifications of that tragedy. How painful is it to see one’s family injured or killed on television? For how many months or years will the survivor of an accident be dealing with the physical and emotional damage? Entertainment must be ‘tasteful’; it isn’t until we experience a tragedy like one in the news that we come to realize how much of that ‘reality’ has been left out.

A different example can be seen in family photographs. If film and television are ‘windows on the present,’ then photography is a window on the past. Consider the boxes of family snapshots that are gathering dust in most households. I am referring here to those images that were judged too poor to be placed in a photo album. It is extremely difficult for most people to destroy poorly photographed or duplicated images of family members. Even these visually inferior images refer strongly to personally significant people, places, and events. In this sense photographs take on the same iconic significance as a religious relic. Like the sliver from the ‘true cross,’ the family photo can be perceived as being one step closer to ‘what was’ than some other more iconic representations such as a drawing, sketch or painting. Virtually every writer in film, photography, and television has had to deal with the apparent ‘reality’ of the lens image, the point being that regardless of our lenticular sophistication, we, particularly in the west and increasingly in the rest of the world, continue to use lens images as evidence for past events, sometimes even as literal emanations of them.

The contrast to this window metaphor is when we respond to a photograph or film as a construction like a painting by an artist. This corresponds to Barry’s description of the intentional theory of meaning, utilizing what C.S. Peirce had called indexical signs and suggests a framing metaphor. Our assumption is that what we see is not real but intentionally meaningfull. Our task as viewers of this art-image is to discover the layers of meaning that the artist has intentionally (and occasionally unintentionally) built into the image. Early theorists who subscribed to this notion of filmic meaning include the Russian film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein (1949) and gestalt psychologist Rudolf Arnheim (1954). A film recently released in North America, Commissar (Azkoldov, 1967), specifically draws attention to this tradition through the heavy use of montage in combining unlikely imagery and musical fragments for metaphoric effect. As a specific example, consider the following three shot sequences. In shot (1) we see three young children squirming naked in their bath tub with their mother in attendance; off stage a clatter of hoofs on cobblestone is heard. Shot (2) cuts to the front of the children’s home where we see the three children still wet and naked, watching the road. The camera pans from eye level down to ground level as a horse-drawn cassoon carrying a cannon pulls noisily along the road. As the shot progresses we see alternately the wheels of the wagon, which are rolling between the camera, and the children and the three children’s genitalia effectively stop-framed by those same wheels. Shot (3) dissolves to ground level looking up as the cassoon rolls over the camera’s position. As this final shot progresses the huge and unavoidably phallic cannon advances across the screen. Iconically this sequence shows us children watching a noisy procession, but the shifting point of view so common in montage alerts us to an indexical level of meaning. Our task as viewers is to make sense of these images of innocence and war, sexuality and power. There is no reason why any lens image cannot be used in this way. Anytime that we recognize and try to interpret, in a literary sense, the ‘signs of suture’ - the procedures of cinematographers, actors, editors, directors “by means of which cinematic texts confer subjectivity upon their viewers” (Silverman, 1983, p.195), in a lens image we are using that image in a framed and intentional sense.

The most complex of the three metaphors is that of the lens image as mirror. Drawing from psychoanalysis and Freud’s appropriation of the myth of Narcissus, lens images can be seen as reflecting back on their spectators. In the Imaginary Signifier (1981) Christian Metz combines semiotic theory with Freudian psychoanalysis in an analysis of film meaning. The issue then becomes one of discovering the nature of our spectatorship in relation to lens images. If one assumes, as Metz does, that there is a deep structure driving, or at least guiding our relationship with lens imagery, then understanding from this perspective can only be derived through the careful discovery and analysis of that structure. Whether working from a Saussuran linguistic model, as Metz does, or a multiple systems model - like that of Peirce, arguing for the lens media’s status as a symbolic language that has proven to be difficult. The referential nature of lens images gets in the way of the arbitrariness that is basic to symbolic language systems.
Kaja Silverman (1983) uses semiotic analysis and Lacanian psychoanalytic to discuss what she calls suture. In her sense of the term, suture is a metaphor for narrative. Just as castration creates an absence and presumably a dissatisfaction or desire, awareness of the limited vision implied by the film frame creates a dissatisfaction that can only be healed (just as literal sutures help a wound heal) by helping the spectators to feel a part of the filmic narrative so that they will forget about themselves. The shot/reverse shot sequence, as in the camera movement and editing commonly used when filming a conversation between two people is offered as an example of this strategy at work. By allowing the viewer to see the second person involved in the conversation, the person occupying the viewer’s position—which is also that of the camera—is nudged toward adopting that new character’s persona. We are no longer in control of the images that are being presented to us but have relinquished or have had our individual desires appropriated for control in favour of a voyeuristic projection of ourselves into one of the characters. The peculiarly masculine qualities and metaphors that surround the notions of subjectivity, spectatorship, and desire in the cinema have been effectively explored by feminist semioticians such as Teresa De Lauretis (1984).

The Complexities of Lens Meaning

Many writers using semiotic analysis with cinema set photography outside of their discussions. For them the basic unit of signification is the shot, (meaning one continuous sequenced segment of a movie camera) which may be literally the result of thousands of individual photographs. Their concern is less with the visual, per se, and more with the narrative flow and its signification. Max Kozloff (1987) argues convincingly that much advertising photography and some art images as well work in this narrative sense. He describes the ambiguous sexual relations depicted in the bedroom scenes used by Calvin Klein to sell his blue jeans and cotton underwear. By using dramatic stage lighting, young, muscular male and female models in poses that dramatize triangular and complex relationships in various degrees of nudity, the ads create a world that is lurid and desirable and into which we are drawn as spectator-consumers.

Regardless of how orthodox our use of semiotics may be, this kind of approach can imply a kind of rigorous analysis of lens images that would only have a very narrow, academic application. Semiotic analysis of film, television or photography is simply too arduous a task to expect of a general viewing public. If, however, we relax the metaphor somewhat, (and use a larger mirror) this critical analysis only implies, in a general sense, that we become aware of ourselves in front of the lens image placed in a social context. From the theater of Brecht, Walter Benjamin (1935) drew much of his inspiration for his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” where he celebrated the lens media’s potential to replace art with something more like visual communication in which the audience played a conscious and critical role. He argued:

Mechanical reproduction of art changes the reaction of the masses toward art. The reactionary attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction toward a Chaplin movie. The progressive reaction is characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. Such fusion is of great social significance. The greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public. The conventional is uncritically enjoyed, and the truly new is criticized with aversion. With regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide (p. 688).

Whether the potential for a fusion of criticism and reception is often met, it is still argued that the lens media can be used for critical reflection on both self and society.

In Summary

To summarize: the term, lens meaning can be seen to involve three parts. Our use of a lens image as a metaphoric window on reality determines its indexical meaning, our recognition of that lens image as an auetural construction determines its iconic meaning and is represented by the ‘frame’ metaphor. Lastly, its context determines its symbolic meaning and is represented by the metaphor of the ‘mirror’. These visual qualities can all be influenced by physical contexts such as the sequencing of images, the words, music and general noise that may accompany them, gives us some sense of the complexity of our response to the mass media. Add to this the truism that each of us, as viewers brings to this experience our own personal desires, beliefs, and experiences which we contribute to the construction of meaning, it becomes clear why trying to articulate lens meaning is a substantial task.

As an art educator, I feel that lens meaning and media education in general ought to become more under our domain of influence. Controlling the making of meaning in lens images is central to communication in a postindustrial society. If art education is about children becoming visually critical, creative, functioning members of society, then art educators need to open their collective, institutional eyes to see what is being seen, taught, and learned through the medium of the lens.
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A Study of the 1988 National Art Education Association Convention and its Accessibility to Delegates Experiencing Disabilities

DOUG BLANDY

People experiencing disabilities are no longer content to be treated as victims, objects of pity, and passive recipients of charitable impulses. They are aggressively and actively bringing discriminatory policies and environments to the public’s attention. This activity is based on newer definitions of disability that do not associate disabilities with individuals, but with policies and environments that fail individuals.

This article documents a study of the 1988 National Art Education Association Convention for its accessibility to delegates experiencing auditory, visual, speech, and physical disabilities. The convention and aspects of the convention program are analyzed through the use of guidelines from the Eugene Commission on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The National Endowment for the Arts and The Research and Training Center on Independent Living. Areas of accessibility and inaccessibility are evidenced. Recommendations are given for future convention coordinators, the National Art Education Association Board of Directors and the general membership.

On October 6, 1986 two hundred and eighty members of “American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit” (ADAPT) assembled at the Los Angeles Westin-Bonaventure Hotel to protest the inaccessibility of the United States’ public transit system to people experiencing disabilities. A lack of wheelchair lifts on buses and the failure of the system to develop transportation alternatives motivated the participants. Hotel security and members of the Los Angeles Police Department were mobilized to prevent the protestors from entering the hotel. One observer of the event later described the Westin-Bonaventure as a “police held fortress” (Hentoff, 1986).

This protest in Los Angeles is an example of an emerging assertiveness on the part of people experiencing disabilities. These individuals are no longer content to be perceived as victims, objects of pity, and passive recipients of charitable impulses. They are actively and aggressively bringing to public attention the discriminatory policies and environments which exist for them. These policies and environments exist in the United States despite legislation such as PL 94-142 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This discrimination, according to disability activists, exists in part because of the non-disabled community’s unwillingness to take responsibility for policies and environments which fail to adapt to the needs of all citizens (Hahn, 1985). The potential success of this civil rights movement was reconfirned in March, 1988 with the realized demand of the Gallaudet University student body for a president who experiences deafness. This is a significant and appropriate accomplishment, considering that this university is a higher education institution for people experiencing auditory disabilities.

An estimated 36 million children, youth and adults are experiencing disabilities in the United States. It is predicted that by the year 2000 the numbers of people experiencing disabilities will be equal to the non-disabled population (Hahn, 1983). Consequently, it is likely that many of the potential readers of this article are, or will be, experiencing the visual, auditory, emotional, behavioral, communication, intellectual, learning, and health-related handicaps associated with disability. Policy analysts, researchers and civil rights advocates are aware of these demographics and are beginning to articulate a socio-political definition of disability which does not associate disability with people, but with failure in the social environment. This is in contrast to previous definitions of disability which focused on medical etiologies, personal inability and norms accessible to few people. These earlier conceptions also failed to consider that perceptions and definitions of disability are culturally influenced (Hahn, 1983).

A socio-political definition of disability focuses less on the individual’s responsibility to adapt to any given environment and more on the adaptability of the environment to any given individual’s aspirations. A socio-political definition of disability recognizes that people are not inherently disabled but are disabled by environments shaped by discriminatory policies (Hahn, 1985). It is this conception of disability which is encouraging people experiencing disabilities to begin to think of themselves collectively as a minority group oppressed by the same discriminatory practices which have confronted other minority groups defined by race, age, ethnicity, religious preference, and gender. Disabled people, like members of these other groups, are experiencing welfare dependency, high unemployment, social exclusion, segregation, stigmatization, and stereotyping (Hahn, 1985). In art education settings, these discriminatory practices have resulted in “special” curriculums, segregated educational environments, professionals using medically derived etiological labels, stereotypic assumptions based on these labels, and the creation of programs and environments which disallow people to act in a culturally appropriate manner (Blandy & Congdon, 1987).

People Experiencing Disability and the NAEA

The language of The National Art Education Association’s (NAEA) Constitution and Bylaws (1988b) does not discriminate against those people experiencing disabilities. The Preamble to our Constitution affirms “… our faith in the power of the visual arts to enrich the lives and endeavors of humankind” (p. 50). The visual arts are recognized as “… giving dignity
and a sense of worth to the individual” (p. 30). As an organization, we will “...communicate our belief to the organized teaching profession and to the community-at-large, to strengthen the position of the visual arts as a discipline in the schools, and to affect positively the role of art education in the culture” (p. 30). Article II of the Constitution charges the NAEA with representing art teachers, promoting instruction, and encouraging research. The NAEA is to disseminate widely, through various media, the results of the programs it sponsors. Article III supports a membership composed of “individuals, professionally interested in or engaged in activities concerned with, or related to art, art education, or education...” (p. 30).

The NAEA Constitution and Bylaws do not distinguish between those of us who are experiencing disabilities and those of us who are not. Additionally, it states that all members of the “community-at-large” should have access to our profession’s collective knowledge and wisdom. However, one wonders what would be found if one of the NAEA’s most visible manifestations of its Constitution and Bylaws, the annual convention, came under the same scrutiny as the other social environments that people experiencing disabilities are examining for prejudicial practices. What would the protestors who entered the Los Angeles Westin-Bonaventure in 1986 think of the convention environment which the NAEA Convention Planning committee constructed in the same hotel from April 8-12, 1987? Was this most recent example of our yearly gathering as a profession enabling or allowing disablities for discriminatory practices. Such scrutiny will force us to be accountable to this constituency. However, it is important to be accountable and knowledgeable now about the social environments we construct. In doing this the art education profession can join with people experiencing disabilities in support of their aspirations for programmatic and architectural accessibility.

The purpose of the remainder of this article is to report on my study of the 1988 NAEA Los Angeles convention facility and selected aspects of the program for its accessibility to delegates experiencing disabilities. This study assumes that this convention environment was reflective of NAEA policy and the values and attitudes of those people responsible for implementing the convention, as well as the NAEA Board of Directors and the general membership. Evaluative tools will be identified in this article which can guide future convention planners. Recommendations for future conventions will be made.

**Methodology**

This study of the 1988 NAEA convention took place from Thursday, April 7, through Monday, April 11, 1988. It was completed in part as a portion of a general NAEA convention evaluation coordinated by Robin Alexander. During these five days the convention was studied in terms of its accessibility to persons experiencing mobility impairments, visual impairments, auditory impairments and speech impairments. Mental retardation was not considered in this study. It is unlikely that people experiencing mental retardation would be delegates to this Convention. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that the NAEA does not have an obligation to this constituency or that under some circumstances people experiencing mental retardation might attend. This study did not determine the number of delegates experiencing disabilities. Determining such numbers might be worthy of study. However, the current incidence of disabilities among the general population warrants consideration when we design our conventions. We should not be consciously constructing discriminatory environments under any circumstances.

The guidelines used to study the convention are those produced by the Eugene Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ECRPD, undated), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, undated) and the Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities (1984). These three sets of guidelines were chosen because people experiencing disabilities assisted in their production. They are also widely recognized for their ability to shape accessible environments. This study of the convention was limited to the standing physical facility of the Westin-Bonaventure Hotel, the additional physical facility designed by the NAEA staff and convention coordinators, and selected portions of the print materials published by the NAEA in conjunction with the convention. The contents of scheduled individual presentations were not studied; however, their program descriptions were considered. Although such a content analysis of all presentations dealing with disability would be illuminative and warrants study, it was not possible to attend all such presentations. To analyze a selection would not be particularly instructive or fair.

**The 1988 Convention Site**

The Westin-Bonaventure Hotel facility was first studied in terms of the ECRPD guidelines. These guidelines are based upon directives from the American Standards Institute and respond to the minimum recommendations for the physical accessibility of any given environment (ECRPD, undated). These guidelines attend to parking, entrances, rest rooms and public telephones. The following statements can be said to be true of the convention facility.

Parking was available in conjunction with the Westin-Bonaventure with at least one designated handicapped parking spot. There were curb cuts, ramps, or level approaches to the entrance. The hotel could be considered accessible in these ways. Some main guest entrances to the hotel were level or had a threshold of less than 1/2 inch high. The door clearance width was 32 inches or more. The Westin-Bonaventure could also be considered accessible in this regard. Rest rooms for people experiencing disabilities were available in the hotel. The highest operable parts of public telephones were at 54 inches or less and were considered to be accessible.

The convention site was next studied in terms of the NEA guidelines for making visual arts programs accessible to people experiencing disabilities. Their guidelines attend to the relationship that exists between an
individual and the visual arts environment or program. Ease of movement, display, viewing zones and signage are considered. This portion of the study revealed the following about what people experiencing mobility, visual, auditory and speech impairments are likely to have encountered at the convention.

People experiencing mobility impairments would have found the facility generally accessible in all areas but the standard guest rooms. The hotel staff did, however, indicate that "special" rooms for people experiencing disabilities were available upon request (personal communication, registration staff, April 10, 1988). Persons using wheelchairs would have also found the site to be generally accessible in all areas but the standard guest rooms. "Special" guest rooms were also accessible to these individuals. Rest rooms and elevators for people experiencing disabilities were designated through appropriate symbolic signage. Furniture throughout the convention site was movable and spaces could have been modified to accommodate people experiencing mobility impairments.

The NAEA convention coordinators posted several informational and art related displays throughout the public areas of the Westin-Bonaventure. These were generally accessible to people seated in wheelchairs; however, some portions of the displays were placed above the designated accessible height of 48 to 67 inches. This tended to be particularly true of areas where art work was displayed. Signage posted by the NAEA was generally accessible; however, schedules posted outside of presentation rooms may have posed some difficulties in terms of the height of the display.

The NAEA registration counter was not accessible to persons in wheelchairs due to its height. A delegate sitting in a wheelchair would have found the top of the counter to be at about eye level. This is not a comfortable or an acceptable position from which to access information placed on the counter top. Lighting at the convention site varied. It is likely that the low lighting in some public areas could have proved difficult for ease of movement and the readability of signage.

People experiencing visual impairments would have been very handicapped at the convention site. The map in the convention program was completely inadequate for this population due to its size and the dimensions of the print accompanying it (The National Art Education Association, 1988c). Raised maps were not available. Braille and large print convention publication were not available. Signage throughout the convention site was generally inaccessible due to either low lighting and/or print size. However, staff tours of the convention site were available if requested (Personal communication, Jeanne Rollins, May 24, 1988).

People experiencing auditory or speech impairments would have found convention signage accessible. Jeanne Rollins, convention coordinator, indicated that sign language interpreters were available if requested, as were signed tours of the facility (Personal communication, May 24, 1988). However, it is important to note that a sign language interpreter was not available at the registration desk. It is also important to acknowledge that the convention pre-registration form did not allow for the notation of needs associated with disability (The National Art Education Association, 1988a).

The Convention Program

The Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities were compiled in consultation with over fifty disability organizations (The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, 1984). These guidelines are specifically concerned with issues related to the portrayal of people experiencing disabilities and the manifestation of such issues in the language used to describe people with disabilities. These guidelines advocate that disabilities only be referred to when necessary, sensationalism should not be practiced, individuals should be emphasized over disabilities and labeling people into groups by disability should be avoided. These guidelines can be helpful in examining the NAEA Convention program for language usage acceptable to people experiencing disabilities.

Eight presentations at the 1988 convention treated topics specific to art education and children, youth or adults experiencing disabilities. All were listed under the "Special Populations" category in the convention program (The National Art Education Association, 1988c). Program descriptions indicate that four presenters addressed this topic in a general way. Four separate presentations examined art education problems related to behavior disabilities, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), emotional disabilities and developmental disabilities.

Four of the eight presentation descriptions in the convention program conformed to the Guidelines. Three did not because the language used in the program descriptions categorized people into large groups such as the "disabled" (p. 44) and the "handicapped" (p. 46). More importantly, the categorization of presentations which consider children, youth and adults experiencing disabilities under "special populations" is incongruent with the recommendations of The Research and Training Center on Independent Living (1984). The term "special..." is not an appropriate term to describe persons with disabilities in general" (p. 5). "Special" can be applied to any person's differentness, not just to those people experiencing disability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The choice of the Westin-Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles for the site of the NAEA 1988 Convention contributed to the general, but not complete, accessibility of the convention to delegates experiencing visual, auditory, speech and physical disabilities. This site generally conformed to the physical facility recommendations of the ECPRD and some aspects of the NAA guidelines. As a convention site it primarily failed in terms of the environmental and programmatic requirements of those people experiencing visual disabilities. The NAEA convention coordinators demonstrated some sensitivity to the needs of convention participants experiencing disabilities in relation to signage and displays; however, there were some serious oversights in the development of convention publications and registration procedures. Jeanne Rollins did indicate that special services such as staff tours and sign language interpreters were available if requested. However, it is important to again note that the NAEA Convention Pre-Registration Form did not provide a space for participants to note such needs.
It is also a matter of concern that only eight presentations addressed issues related to art education and people experiencing disabilities. Eight presentations is a very small number when one considers that 109 presentations were devoted to elementary and secondary art education. It is commendable that the 1988 convention program included a presentation on AIDS; however, the absence of specific presentations on auditory, visual, physical and health-related disabilities does not indicate that the NAEA membership is involved to any great extent with educational theory and practice associated with these disabilities.

This study of the 1988 convention suggests that changes need to be made which will encourage, promote and reinforce participation by people experiencing disabilities at the NAEA annual convention. The following recommendations, if implemented, will bring future NAEA conventions closer to 100% Accessibility.

1. The NAEA Board of Directors should establish a committee to advise convention coordinators on making conventions accessible to people experiencing disabilities. The membership of this committee should be composed largely of people experiencing disabilities.
2. All print materials associated with the convention should conform to the Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities (The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, 1984).
3. Print materials associated with the convention should also be available in braille, large print, and on audio tape.
4. All convention signage and displays should conform to the NEA guidelines for making arts programming accessible (NEA, undated).
5. Convention sites should continue to be chosen with an emphasis on maximum accessibility to people experiencing disabilities.
6. Convention registration forms should be redesigned to allow participants experiencing disabilities to indicate their needs.
7. On-site registration desk personnel should be prepared to work with participants who are experiencing disabilities.
8. The NAEA membership should be encouraged by convention coordinators to submit convention presentation proposals which attend to art education theory and practice that specifically addresses children, youth and adults experiencing disabilities.

References


DBAE: Viewpoints From a Cultural Literacy Perspective

A panel was organized by Nancy Johnson for the 1988 NAEA Conference in Los Angeles entitled, "DBAE: Viewpoints From a Cultural Literacy Perspective." Invited to participate with Nancy were Karen Hamblen, Laurie Hicks, and Barbara Boyer. Prior to her tragic death this past September, Nancy had begun to pull together the presentations of each of the panel members for submission to The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education. Nancy’s desire to provide a viable alternative to DBAE has been continued through the efforts of Karen Hamblen, who completed Nancy’s unfinished manuscript and Laurie Hicks, who coordinated the four papers published herein.

In the first essay, the reader will find no references in Nancy Johnson’s paper, however it will become readily apparent that cultural literacy, as theorized by Chet Bower’s at the University of Oregon acts as the foil for her arguments against the DBAE program; cultural literacy herein broadly defined as “an active examination of the meanings, values, and behaviors in a culture.” All four presentations question the dominant trend in education to return to a value-free, sequentially based curriculum characteristic of the 1960’s when America felt threatened by its loss of leadership in the space race to Russia, the so-called Sputnik fiasco reported in so many introductory texts on curriculum development. At that time the political machinery went to work to introduce new packaged science programs based on the structure of the discipline. One can only wonder whether these same fears of losing prominence have re-emerged, only now Japan has replaced Russia as the measuring stick. With the continued dominance of Japan’s resourcefulness in the capitalist marketplace and the growing capitalist fervor of the Pacific Rim, especially China, it is clear that the educational system must be mobilized to raise a generation which will compete in a world market. Efficiency of instruction and effective teaching, as theorized by the likes of Madeline Hunter, and the values associated with such approaches - compliance, standardization, meritocracy, testing and evaluation - have once again emerged as high priority. All four papers take issue with the dominant cultural heritage which supports the arts from a predominantly white middle class position as theorized recently by Hirsch Jr.’s views on cultural literacy and Bloom’s attack on the left-leaning university professors in Closing of the American Mind. Such a dominant cultural heritage is now being reinstated by programs such as the DBAE with the support of the Getty Center for Education. All four presentations also argue that a broader approach is necessary and needed to meet the complexity of our multicultural school population, one which extends the conceptualizations of art and speaks to a plurality of cultural positions. Cultural Literacy for Art Education (CLAE) is presented as one such alternative. The members of the panel hope that the four essays which follow will contribute to the critical reflection upon existing educational practice to which Nancy contributed so richly during her lifetime. -editor

Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) and Cultural Literacy Art Education (CLAE)

NANCY JOHNSON

The foundations upon which knowledge is organized and presented in both discipline-based and cultural literacy approaches to art education are addressed. It is argued that the foundations for these two approaches are a result of conflicting views on the standardization of curricula and the perceived need for achievement oriented evaluation; these in turn are reflective of a fundamental difference in beliefs and assumptions as to the nature of education.

Differences in Literacy Between DBAE and CLAE

Cultural literacy as theorized by Chet Bowers at the University of Oregon is an active examination of the meanings, values, and behaviors in a culture. This is the definition of “cultural literacy” with which I will be concerned here, and which I will be comparing with discipline-based art education (DBAE). It is significantly different from, if not opposite to “cultural literacy,” as that term became familiar to us from E. D. Hirsch’s best seller of 1988 Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, in which literacy means knowledge of the dominant culture. Hirsch’s cultural literacy and Bower’s cultural literacy have implications for curriculum that have significant differences. I will be discussing those differences in terms of discipline-based art education (DBAE) and cultural literacy art education (CLAE).

In DBAE, knowledge is to be organized sequentially and cumulatively so that it fits with the developmental level of students. The curriculum is to be written in prescriptive terms based on knowledge and thinking of practitioners and experts in related disciplines. Four content areas or disciplines have been mentioned: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics. The curriculum is to be systematically taught throughout the school district with a model program available to guide the practice of all teachers and with university scholars serving as resources for curriculum development. Scholars will work with curriculum specialists and teachers, with the teacher’s role being to follow and implement curriculum designed by scholars and curriculum developers. Principals and administrators will review classroom instruction practices.

Eisner has said that most curriculum is evaluation-driven. For DBAE, the art curriculum will need educational objectives which specify
concepts, skills, and information, and which identify vocabulary to be learned at each grade level. Teaching will require continuity, goals, and structure. Student achievement and program effectiveness will be confirmed by evaluation criteria and procedures. Achievement tests will be administered. The foundation for the organization of DBAE curriculum knowledge is based on present school practice, i.e., mainly instructional learning outcomes in testing and achievement as it is done in other subject areas.

This approach to art instruction is derived from the works of Tyler, Bloom, and Taba in curriculum construction.

In contrast, in a program for cultural literacy, art education knowledge is organized by topics on themes identified by teachers. The teacher has a central role as the person who will develop the curriculum. The curriculum is to be critically reflective based on the deep codes of our cultural heritage as related to the students' phenomenological world. That's quite a phrase full. I can recall when I first heard about his type of cultural literacy. I had to pick up on the code myself, but I believe I can simplify its meaning a bit. There are two aspects of human existence. The physical existence is a given. We can alter it, change it, create new chemicals and so forth, but we cannot actually make trees. We cannot make clouds, or at least no one has done this yet. And even though we create babies in test tubes, we still haven't been able to create human beings from chemical components.

On the other hand, in the other aspect of human existence, the socio-cultural world, we are able to create our ideas and our thinking. These become patterns that are handed down in various ways by different methods in our society. Society uses schools as one way to transmit culturally devised patterns. It's not something we are born knowing. It is something we have to learn. So the stress here is trying to identify what those deep patterns of thinking are that exist in our society that structure how we think about what we do. Can they be highlighted, looked at, and brought to consciousness and examined?

Apparently there are many deep cultural patterns that could be examined in a cultural literacy art education program. Such a curriculum allows for specific content to be adjusted to the uniqueness of cultural groups and the characteristics of their bio-region. CLAE curricula reflect regional diversity and the teacher's imagination and resourcefulness. The teacher's role is to introduce the student to the community of memory, as Bowers calls it, which is imbedded in cultural traditions. Teachers have the responsibility of contributing to the foundations of communicative competence, that is, in empowering students to raise questions about deep cultural patterns - where those patterns come from, their usefulness today as we go about our business, their need for readjustment and the need to preserve some of them in our customs.

A curriculum for cultural literacy is empowerment-driven rather than achievement-test driven. The individual is to take part in the discourse that shapes the course of social events. Thus, the art curriculum will provide resources and methods for learning how to think about institutions' practices and norms that make up the culture.

Differences in Organizing Principles Between DBAE and CLAE

The curriculum for cultural literacy focuses on three organizing principles: The first is to utilize the student's phenomenological culture and, sometimes, there is also a tendency to use existential experiences. This means raising questions of "What is my personal experience?" and "What is the meaning of other people's versions of life?" What is it like for me to live? The second way to do this would be to use a historical perspective regarding objectifying knowledge. One of my favorites is objectifying concepts of design. Design consists of elements (line, shape, color, texture, etc.) and principles (rhythm, balance, repetition, center of interest, etc.). Where did all this come from? Prehistoric humans did not go into the caves and say, "Well, you have line here; you have balance there." That's the perspective history can give of how we come to conceptions of design that we use today. The third way would be to incorporate a cross-cultural perspective. How do other people in other societies deal with a particular theme or topic or problem? The general guidelines for learning how to organize curriculum are to be open to new relationships and to how we can develop capacities for negotiation and new creations. Developing this involves one's self and encouraging in others a shared future, and to be involved in a sense of future that takes into account the characteristics of the region which one lives. Bowers has been working with the term "bio-region" and our need to sustain characteristics of large "bio-communities.” Evaluation might take the form of testing the students' conceptual understanding against the complexities of their life worlds and coming to see that the foundation for organization is based on cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs.

In contrast to a curriculum for cultural literacy, in DBAE, knowledge is viewed as explicit and factual. It is content to be mastered, not questioned by the student or the teacher. The students are not to create art knowledge, but only to recreate what is known already about art. They will not participate in the naming of art experiences. That will be left up to the experts. Although art knowledge will be modeled upon what the practitioners know and do, the DBAE curriculum will not, however, be knowledge about art as practitioners actually experience it either. More clearly, if the curriculum model is to be based on what practitioners do, one has to look at what practitioners do, what they know, and the skills that they have. A practitioner's knowledge and skills are not neatly laid out, such as in curriculum flow charts where things are all comfortably delineated in observable objectives. The practitioner's life is a very patchy, if-or tentative situation. What is known is on-going, in process. It's not laid down, and it is never finished.

How can we get cultural literacy methods and principles into the curriculum so that the student is also a creator? We are all participants in what we know about art. Rather than naming art content and saying students must know X, Y, and Z, we need to go a step further and allow students and teachers to be participants in the creation of what is known about art. Also, art knowledge at the level of personal knowing and experiencing is not sequentially organized, nor is it systematic. A quick
review of college catalogues, as indicative of how we organize art knowledge, would reveal that there is diversity, uniqueness, and something I call “loose compiling” in the way art is organized. From institution to institution, there is not a particular set model. Practitioners’ knowledge is fluid; it is not static. On cultural literacy art education, the fluidity of knowledge is observed and students are encouraged to participate in the ongoing constructive processes modifying and creating what is known as well as being able to recognize some knowledge as worthy of preservation. In cultural literacy art education the evaluation of curricula is problematic. It does not guarantee a similar knowledge base in each individual, and it does not enable us to compare intellectual performance nationally. Standardization is something that could not happen from a cultural literacy art education perspective.

An issue here is whether or not a nationally referenced achievement test, as favored in discipline-based art education, would determine the curriculum, or whether the local control of schools will, in fact, run the curriculum. The U.S. Constitution leaves education as the responsibility of the states to define and to create guidelines, and for districts to follow them. When Bowers talks about bio-regional, he’s making a case for the curriculum to be specific to the region, for the people who live there and use it, as opposed to a national type of curriculum which may ignore regional differences. DBAE is a highly prescriptive approach to knowing about art while cultural literacy art education is reflective and reflexive and defies singular prescriptions for the knowing and experiencing of art.

*This paper was transcribed by Beverly Wilson, graduate research assistant at Louisiana State University, from an audio tape of a panel presentation that Dr. Nancy R. Johnson presented at the 1988 National Art Education Association Convention in Los Angeles. Dr. Karen A. Hamblett edited the transcribed copy and made revisions for readability on the basis of ideas Nancy Johnson had presented in her articles and other speeches. Since Dr. Johnson’s written notes for this panel presentation were not available, references are not cited. Dr. Nancy R. Johnson died September 6, 1988 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*

Apart from minor revisions through the review process this essay remains intact. Two obvious references are cited below -editor.

References


The Reality Construction of Technocratic-Rationality Through DBAE

KAREN HAMBLETT

The importance of differentiating between a discipline-based approach to art education and the prescribed DBAE curricular structure and goals presented by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts is developed. It is proposed that the Getty’s reliance on the characteristics of contemporary general education for the theoretical foundations of DBAE is restrictive and contributes to technocratic rationalism in art education, and disallows the development of cultural literacy.

It is very important that we make the distinction that DBAE does not have to be any one particular program. However, because of the power the J. Paul Getty philanthropic foundation wields on the pages of our journals, its sponsored conferences, its glossy publications, its planning grants, and so on, DBAE has become almost synonymous with Getty. This is an unfortunate situation, and I think that we all need to make this important distinction when we talk about DBAE. When DBAE becomes synonymous with any one particular institution, its definition and, ultimately, its implementation becomes a closed, predefined situation. Perhaps, this perception is already occurring.

In the Getty version of DBAE it is proposed that there be a written, sequential curriculum that is implemented in designated districts and perhaps, even statewide. This curriculum is to consist of content in the areas of art production, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics. Goals and objectives are to be clearly stated and outcomes are predefined (Greer, 1984; Greer & Hoepfner, 1986).

There are two aspects that are especially important in understanding the nature of this type of DBAE curriculum. First, it has been stated in a number of instances that a primary goal is to have art resemble instruction in the rest of education (Greer & Hoepfner, 1986; Hamblett, 1987). Second, and contingent with the previous goal, are statements by such Getty affiliated individuals as Michael Day (1985) that the main distinction between DBAE and previous art instruction is that DBAE outcomes are evaluated. Although evaluation can certainly encompass a range of methodologies - and Day cites and describes a number of approaches - Greer and Hoepfner (1986) propose that evaluation consist of objective, achievement testing.
review of college catalogues, as indicative of how we organize art knowledge, would reveal that there is diversity, uniqueness, and something I call "loose compiling" in the way art is organized. From institution to institution, there is not a particular set model.

Practitioners' knowledge is fluid; it is not static. On cultural literacy art education, the fluidity of knowledge is observed and students are encouraged to participate in the ongoing constructive processes modifying and creating what is known as well as being able to recognize some knowledge as worthy of preservation. In cultural literacy art education the evaluation of curricula is problematic. It does not guarantee a similar knowledge base in each individual, and it does not enable us to compare intellectual performance nationally. Standardization is something that could not happen from a cultural literacy art education perspective.

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The importance of differentiating between a discipline-based approach to art education and the prescribed DBAE curricular structure and goals presented by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts is developed. It is proposed that the Getty's reliance on the characteristics of contemporary general education for the theoretical foundations of DBAE is restrictive and contributes to technocratic rationalism in art education, and disallows the development of cultural literacy.

It is very important that we make the distinction that DBAE does not have to be any one particular program. However, because of the power the J. Paul Getty philanthropic foundation wields on the pages of our journals, its sponsored conferences, its glossy publications, its planning grants, and so on, DBAE has become almost synonymous with Getty. This is an unfortunate situation, and I think that we all need to make this important distinction when we talk about DBAE. When DBAE becomes synonymous with any one particular institution, its definition and, ultimately, its implementation becomes a closed, predefined situation. Perhaps, this perception is already occurring.

In the Getty version of DBAE it is proposed that there be a written, sequential curriculum that is implemented in designated districts and perhaps, even state wide. This curriculum is to consist of content in the areas of art production, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics. Goals and objectives are to be clearly stated and outcomes are predefined (Greer, 1984; Greer & Hoepfner, 1986).

There are two aspects that are especially important in understanding the nature of this type of DBAE curriculum. First, it has been stated in a number of instances that a primary goal is to have art resemble instruction in the rest of education (Greer & Hoepfner, 1986; Hamblen, 1987). Second, and contingent with the previous goal, are statements by such Getty affiliated individuals as Michael Day (1985) that the main distinction between DBAE and previous art instruction is that DBAE outcomes are evaluated. Although evaluation can certainly encompass a range of methodologies - and Day cites and describes a number of approaches - Greer and Hoepfner (1986) propose that evaluation consist of objective, achievement testing.

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Since the characteristics of general education are proudly cited in DBAE literature as being desirable for the education of students in art, what DBAE portends can be understood by examining the characteristics of general education. In effect, we have from general education extensive information on modal curriculum content and classroom practices as well as well-developed critiques of the world view that is being presented.

General education is characterized by an emphasis on predictability of outcomes, predetermined outcomes, efficiency of instruction and of student activities, and the accountability that comes from prescribed, carefully delineated content (Apple, 1979; Hamblen, 1985, 1987, 1988). General education depends on having standardized content that can be implemented in a variety of contexts. It is, in effect, content that is assumed to be context free. In much of general education, standardized testing is used to evaluate the outcomes of teacher-proof materials. Such materials emphasize the learning of factual information that is presented without attention to conflicting information, debate or the possibility of alternative interpretations.

Most instruction in general education is dependent on textbooks which present information noninteractively and at a predetermined rate of study (Apple, 1986). Lower cognitive levels of thinking are emphasized (i.e., memorization), and content is denotive and factual. Such content, of course, is also amenable to objective testing.

To understand the Getty version of DBAE, it is helpful to think of how some other subject areas are taught, such as social studies or math (Greer & Hoepln, 1986; Hamblen, 1988; Rush, 1987). For example, math is taught in a linear, sequential manner, wherein the emphasis is on concept acquisition that is reflected in correct answers on daily worksheets and an achievement test. There is the belief that a body of mathematical knowledge exists that the child can acquire at a more or less predetermined rate and prescribed sequence. Content is broken down into manageable morsels, and learning is considered incremental and predictable.

If one is moved to object that the above-cited characteristics may apply to general education, but that DBAE art educators are only selecting the best from other subject area curricula, it needs to be noted that the SWRL teacher-proof materials have been used throughout the Los Angeles School District in Getty-implemented DBAE programs (SWRL Elementary Art Program, 1975). One might also look at the test items in Utah's tests for grades one through six (Art Inventory, 1985) that are criterion referenced to the concept centered state curriculum guide (Cornia, Stubb, & Winters, 1976). Content in such curricula and its companion tests is reductionist and pedantic. The focus is on the formal qualities of art, on content that lends itself to easy identification testing, and on the technical aspects of art production. Concessions to individual differences are limited to developmental levels and the rate at which instruction is given. The emphasis is on simplistic, atomistic information about art that can be clearly defined and tightly sequenced. The student is rewarded for following directions, for neatness of art product, and for completion of the assignment (Bullough & Goldstein, 1984; Hamblen, 1987, 1988). In a discussion of test items for art, Greer and Hoepln (1986) focus on what is "effective and efficient, and ... [what will] minimize dependence on unwanted variables, such as creative expression, interests, attitudes, and values" (p. 47).

An art curriculum is a reality-constructing document that allows for some views of art and that disallows for others. A curriculum represents choices, and, as Michael Apple (1979) has noted, choice of some sort is unavoidable. The characteristics herein cited for DBAE constitute an aesthetic reality that not only offers few choices for the teacher or student, it also obscures the very choice that underlies its construction.

DBAE curricula, as currently being defined and supported by the Getty Trust, obscure the human authorship of curriculum selections, its origins, and its historicity. To date, DBAE curricula have tended to be formalist, technical, and rationalistic, requiring conformity on the part of students and teachers to preselected, unexamined standard. A view of art is provided that is supportive of white, upper middle class values, and that ignores diverse, hidden stream, and/or controversial art.

One of the keys to why general education has persisted in a rationalistic-technocratic format is that this format commands acquiescence. Curiosity and the pursuing of serendipitous goals, let alone dissent, have little place in such programs. As noted above, the choice that underlies the curriculum is obscured. Information in a curriculum, such as SWRL, is presented as fact. It is presented without debate or a sense of its origins and its dependence on variable interpretations. It avoids the confusion of alternative viewpoints, questions without easy answers, and problems without solutions. It provides closure.

Such a curriculum disenfranchises students and teachers alike. It does not lend itself to self-reflection or critical consciousness. Students acquire a restricted view of art and restricted abilities for critically analyzing aesthetic phenomena, much less questioning the information directly presented in the curriculum (Hamblen, 1988). DBAE, as currently discussed and implemented, fosters a passive reliance on experts who present a singular, supposedly socially validated aesthetic reality.

Cross-cultural aesthetics, avant garde art, the art of minorities, the unequal distribution of aesthetic capital in our society, and similar topics have little place in a curriculum that must be validated by an objective test that will be approved by school administrators. The shape of the aesthetic reality acquired from a DBAE curriculum would be one that is highly compatible with Hirsch's (1987) belief that there are several thousand facts that are needed to be learned to be culturally literate and with William Bennett's (1987/1988) belief that education should deal with our [sic] common aesthetic heritage. It is unfortunate that according to current trends in educational policy, there is one cultural heritage, and to most questions there is one acceptable answer. Curriculum, and ultimately reality, is presented as a fait accompli which requires no intervention and even punishes individual differences and variable output.

If the characteristics of general education are taken as integral to DBAE, the result is a view of art that is primarily limited to western fine art forms, formalist analysis, and easily delineated technical skills. DBAE, as currently presented, inculcates conformity to a preselected, unexamined standard that has its roots in the most restrictive aspects of general education and in the limiting world view of technocratic rationality.
Cultural Literacy as Social Empowerment

Laurie Hicks

The concept of cultural literacy as a process of becoming socially empowered is developed. A comparison is made between "Getty-ized DBAE" with an approach to art education informed by the development of cultural literacy. How these approaches differ, not only in their design but in the fundamental goals which motivate and guide them is illustrated. An outline is presented of a pedagogical structure around which a cultural literacy approach to art education can be organized and implemented.

Introduction

In recent years art education discourse has become a highly politicized and philosophically charged debate over curricular content, sequential programming, and finances. At the forefront of this debate is the concept of an integrated art program which embraces not only the study of studio techniques and expression, but art history, criticism, and aesthetics. This broader based approach to art education has been appropriated and marketed by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts as Discipline-Based Art Education. Support for discipline based approaches to art education continues to grow as art educators, schools and teachers turn to embrace the plethora of discursive literature and programming dedicated to the theory and practice of a DBAE conception of art education. Currently, this conception most commonly embodies the notions and curricular strategies of the Getty Center. These notions and strategies are based on the assumption that art is grounded in four well-established and concrete areas of inquiry and knowledge. According to this Getty Center’s conception of DBAE, these four areas - studio production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics - represent self-sufficient and autonomous bodies of knowledge whose content can be clearly and unproblematically defined and articulated. The Getty-ized DBAE wishes to implement a written, sequential curriculum at the district and state levels which would reflect these four disciplines. Since the knowledge and processes traditionally assigned to these disciplines is not seen as problematic by the proponents of DBAE, content is viewed as rational and objective. A result of this view is the standardization of curricular goals, objectives, and learner outcomes (Greer, 1984). Further, this approach supposes that learning can be tested through objective, achievement oriented criteria (Greer and Hoepfner, 1986).

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The Socio-Cultural Constitution of Art

The standardization and objectification of educational content which is inherent to the Getty's DBAE presupposes that education and the knowledge it purports to teach are context free (Hamblen, 1988). This rationalistic approach decontextualizes both the content of art and the process of education; it obscures the fact that art emerges from cultural contexts which inform its production and reception. By decontextualizing art education, DBAE fails to acknowledge that these cultural contexts are humanly authored, and thus fails to make explicit the relationship between art and socio-cultural identity. As such, this estrangement of art and art knowledge does little to help students understand how art is socio-culturally constituted and validated; how our ability to visualize, respond, and visually express ourselves is influenced by our culturally embedded expectations, values, attitudes, and behaviors (Hamblen, 1984). It is this notion that art is socio-culturally constituted that should guide the process of education which informs the cultural literacy approach to art education. From this perspective, I want to argue that there is a broader and more fundamental understanding of art education which we must grasp if we are to work towards the creation of responsible art programs capable of helping our students become active participants in the design and construction of their own futures. Essential to this argument is an understanding of the complex relationship between art as a visual language, culture, and the process of thought. This understanding takes into consideration the social and political nature of artistic expression, and acknowledges its power to both limit and enhance thought and behavior. Such an argument suggests that art education involves not only the study of various art forms and processes from hands-on and historical perspectives but that it includes an understanding of the socio-political forces which influence how art, and its instruction, is practiced.

At first glance this suggestion may not be new to many in the field; discussions of art and culture have long been a part of contemporary art education discourse. However, such dialogue has traditionally been immersed in patterns of thinking which reinforce dominant socio-political notions of what art is, how and why artists create, and what forms artistic expression takes within various cultural groups. Omitted from these discussions are other important questions: What role does art play in the transmission and sustenance of taken-for-granted cultural assumptions? What forms of knowledge and activity does art validate as reality? How accurately does art and art education reflect contemporary human conditions? And most importantly, how do we, as art educators, contribute to our students' ability to understand and address these issues? Also omitted from these traditional discussions is an exploration of the role art plays in our ability to communicate visually an understanding of art as a culturally defined and informed language. Understanding the relationship between culture, language, and the individual is important to the conceptualization of the integrated and comprehensive art curriculum which I am proposing. A curriculum based on a cultural literacy approach to education.

Four Pedagogical Principles for Cultural Literacy

The cultural literacy approach to art education seeks to break away from the current situation where studio art, art history, criticism, and aesthetics are viewed, and subsequently taught as isolated areas of knowledge and inquiry within the discipline of art. The ideal curriculum would integrate these areas of study along with other disciplines which contribute to our understanding of the visual arts (i.e., sociology, psychology, anthropology), in such a way as to make clear, in the actual process of teaching, the relationships they have with one another. This integration can be accomplished by organizing the art curriculum around specific themes or issues. By focusing on a series of themes questions may be raised which illuminate the importance of visual imagery and dialogue in the lives of students. Themes that might prove stimulating in this connection include: women as objects, the relationship between human beings and nature, and art as political power. Topics such as these give broad-based access to fundamental existential questions about who we are, what kind of society we live in, and how we relate to other cultures.

There are four pedagogical principles which should structure the treatment of such themes. The first principle is that the educational process should begin with the student's own phenomenological experience of the theme in question. We should start out with images that originate within the culture and everyday experience of students rather than imposing too quickly academic constraints on what counts as legitimate art. We ought to begin with the vernacular of everyday art imagery, rather than with the highly specialized language of the art community. These images can be found in popular magazines, television shows, advertising, films, local environments, and in the student's own visual expression.

The second principle that informs our discussion of themes is that our understanding of the present cannot be divorced from an acquaintance with the past. Thus, we must include an historical perspective on the themes we choose to discuss. It is extremely important that our understanding of a history perspective include an understanding of history as a process of description and interpretation. Historical philosopher, E. H. Carr (1961), points out that our view of "history" as reflecting "the facts" and our understanding of historians as being objective viewers of absolute events is problematic. He articulates a view of history as interpretation, as a selective process of recording what is perceived to have happened by the person doing the perceiving. We must learn to demystify the authority we have learned to place on history and help students come to accept historical information, not as a time-sequenced list of facts, but as information which has been selected, interpreted, and presented as one perspective amongst many.

The pedagogical purpose of including an historical perspective on the theme being discussed is to encourage students to see their lives as part of a larger tradition. By encouraging this view, we contribute to students' understanding of art as a conveyor of social memory. Philosopher Hannah Arendt (1961) proposes that an understanding of social memory is essential to the development of critical and reflective thought. It is through an understanding of history as a socially constructed memory that we come to understand history as a humanly authored phenomena, one which can be controlled and manipulated.
The third principle recommends that we take a cross-cultural perspective in each of the themes we address. Just as our present situation is the product of an historical development, so also is it the result of numerous cultural influences. As a language, art is one of the agents through which culture is determined and maintained. Since art is one of the means whereby cultural attitudes, values, and modes of acceptable behavior are transmitted, a cross-cultural perspective will serve to expose students to the “multiple realities” of these beliefs as they are represented in the art of various cultures. It is hoped that this view of “multiple realities” will encourage students to reject the notion that all people share the same meanings and world view. It will encourage an understanding of culture as diverse, humanly authored and maintained. Those who lack an understanding of culture as a humanly authored phenomenon are more passively dependent on the values and images of self, conveyed through art than those who have gained a working knowledge of the visual language from a cross-cultural perspective. Part of our task as art educators is to ensure that our students acquire that knowledge.

Three distinct aspects for such a cross-cultural practice may be distinguished. First of all, it requires that we facilitate an understanding of the confluence of cultures which now define what we call “American culture.” In this effort, we might study themes which are embodied in the art of various African, South American, and Asian cultures, as well as those found in the art of Native Americans and Europeans. This cross-cultural perspective requires us to set up comparisons between these various cultural settings and their influence on the development of our cultural experience. Secondly, a cross-cultural perspective must not ignore the presence and contributions of various sub-cultural groups to our contemporary visual expression. Thirdly, a cross-cultural perspective must also include an anthropological dimension which investigates not only the artifacts of various cultural groups but moves beyond the artifact into the constituting belief systems out of which it originates. In all these cases, the concern is to develop a sense of culture as something humanly authored and defined. If our art curriculum is to contribute to the critical skills of students, it must help them to see how cultural habits and expectations are socially and humanly inspired, and hence, how they may be changed through self-conscious and informed choices. It must make explicit the “reality constituting” nature of visual communication.

The fourth and final principle overlays the other three. It recommends that our curriculum, and our treatment of selected themes be oriented to the future. Each stage of our treatment of curricular topics should focus on the ways in which art, conceived as a language, is an important implement for personal and cultural change and empowerment. An eye toward the future helps us understand the role we may play in defining our own sense of reality. The wider the range of possible choices we have for visualizing and developing our view of personal reality for thinking and acting and for finding meaning in our daily life experience, the greater our ability to weigh and consider alternative images of our future. A curriculum which encourages speculation on the future would help students visualize and “articulate” scenarios for change. It would also offer the opportunity for students to explore how these changes would or would not affect their life experience. Most importantly, it would empower students to intervene in the design and construction of their own futures.

I have proposed that a cultural literacy approach to art education would evolve around a series of themes or issues; that it should include the students’ phenomenological experience, an historical perspective, a cross-cultural perspective, and an eye on the future. In connection with all of these concerns, I envision three basic goals: a) to make explicit the language of expression - to help students understand how the language of expression is not culturally neutral, that it reflects who we are and what we are capable of thinking; b) to encourage an understanding of the role visual language plays in the development and maintenance of social, cultural, technological, and political contexts; and c) to encourage the questioning of beliefs, values, and behaviors in terms of their origins, development, and future. Unless art educators recognize the importance of understanding the cultural and political dimension of visual arts education, classroom instruction will do nothing more than promote traditional concepts of art and the technology of artistic expression. Further by limiting the ability of students to conceptualize, understand, negotiate, and communicate the complexity of their life experience, these programs contribute to the inability of students to participate critically and intelligently in the crucial decisions and processes which influence not only their own futures but also the future of the human community. From the cultural literacy perspective, this is the problem with the rationalistic DBAE proposed by the Getty Center.

In conclusion, if we are to encourage students in their efforts to define and communicate a vision for the future which is based on critical and reflexive thinking we must acknowledge the need for a new agenda in art education. This agenda cannot be carried out under the aegis of the Getty-ized DBAE program. This agenda must dedicate itself to the development of individuals fluent in the language of visual images, individuals who are visually competent, culturally literate and socially empowered.

References

DBAE and CLAE: Relevance for Minority and Multicultural Students

Barbara Boyer

The importance of art programming which reflects, and is responsive to the diverse needs of students in a multicultural society is examined. It is argued that the DBAE fails to consider the increasing diversity among the population of our schools in the prescription of standardized and achievement oriented curricula. It is further claimed that CLAE offers an alternative to DBAE which promotes sensitivity to the cultural make-up of our classrooms.

The Question of Multiculturalism

One of the greatest challenges for educators entering the last decade of the twentieth century is the education of the growing population of multicultural and minority cultural students in American public schools. It's not uncommon for these students to feel alienated and have difficulty being a part of a predominantly white, middle-class school system. Classroom teachers are often not prepared to work with children whose cultural attitudes and values are so different from their own. Philips (1983) found that American Indian children have linguistic and behavioral modes of communication specific to their culture. Phillips observed that tension and obstacles to classroom learning were created by teachers socialized in the white dominant culture who misinterpreted communication cues sent out by the children.

Increasing numbers of school age children are entering the United States from Asia, South America and the Middle East. In addition, the number of children born in the United States from minority cultures who are often in the lower economic strata of society continues to increase in the large urban school districts. It is becoming difficult to close our eyes and ears as educators and ignore the fact that our schools are facing tremendous problems in the education of today's student population. The dropout rate of students in the public schools is escalating, youth gangs are a fact of life in our inner cities and the educational literature continues to grow on students "at risk" of failure in our schools (Cummins, 1986; Hornbeck, 1987; Vobedja, 1987; Wehlage, 1988). Poverty, discrimination, crime and conflict ridden neighborhoods all combine to take their toll on our youth. Wehlage (1988) describes the conditions that confront educators today:

The causes of dropping out - family back-ground conditions, personal problems and school practices - present a complex set of problems... This web of conditions surrounding those at risk of dropping out makes intervention a formidable challenge for all educators (p. 1).

These concerns in education are not only related to multicultural and minority students, but are present for all populations in our schools. Focusing on difficulties that we have with diverse groups of students can highlight common practices and attitudes in the schools that need to be examined, modified or changed.

How is the field of art education dealing with educating the minority or multicultural student, the student at-risk and those students feeling alienation and cultural conflict in the classroom? Currently, the major focus of art education is on implementing a discipline-based approach to art education in the public schools. A handful of art educators are writing and discussing concerns for implementing cultural literacy in art education. What possible relevance does "Disciplined-Based Art Education" (DBAE) or "Cultural Literacy in Art Education" (CLAE) have for minorities and multicultural students in the public schools?

DBAE and CLAE

There can be multiple interpretations of exactly what a DBAE or a CLAE curriculum should be. For purposes of this paper, the comprehensive statements by Eisner (1987) and Clark, Day and Greer (1986) define the form of DBAE which is associated with The Getty Center for Education in the Arts. In theory DBAE places rigorous equivalent curricular emphasis on art history, art criticism, studio art and aesthetics. In practice, "aesthetic scanning," SWRL art curriculum and the use of Chapman's Discover Art (1985) have been utilized by the Getty for training elementary classroom teachers in DBAE.

Cultural literacy specific to art education has been outlined in a chapter in Democracy in Art (Boyer, 1987) and has its roots in Bower's (1974) book Cultural Literacy for Freedom. In CLAE, the student is guided by the teacher to decode personal cultural experiences related to art as well as the culture and art of others. Culture can be defined as the learned and shared values, attitudes and beliefs of specific groups of people. Large cultural groups of people can be identified by geographic location, such as the Japanese or Brazilians, or micro-cultural groups can be found within dominant cultures, such as the Appalachians or the Amish in the United States. Other microcultural groups can be identified through economic level, type of occupation or religious beliefs. All people belong to a dominant culture, as well as various microcultural systems. These microsystems may contain different levels of complexity and traditions and exercise greater or lesser degrees of influence on people's thinking and behavior.
Schools are a place where culture is transmitted and knowledge is passed down to students as a "given." When knowledge is conceived of in this way, very little if any questioning takes place in the classroom. CLAE centers around questioning and examining knowledge and cultural experiences in art. In a cultural literacy program the teacher helps the students understand that their culture and knowledge is not to be taken for granted and that various attitudes and assumptions need to be analyzed and human origins of knowledge identified.

Reflective and critical thinking skills about art as a cultural process are key to CLAE. A CLAE curriculum would have a spiral structure sequencing from simple to more complex thinking and from the student’s individual worldviews and culture to more expansive views of art in culture. Studies of the present are emphasized by examining feelings and attitudes about art related to contemporary art movements and cultures. Studies of the past are examined for identifying origins and influences that have affected attitudes and changes in the world today. Skills necessary for adapting to the future are continually held in perspective. Imagination and speculative thinking skills in art are employed for preparing students to expand their visions and flexibility. A phenomenological approach integrating art heritage, aesthetics, art criticism and studio art would be used with a continued focus on examining the student’s worldview.

DBAE’s four foci have their origins in European academic universities where emphasis is placed on exemplars and the study of the classics. DBAE focuses on studying, examining, talking about, responding to, and doing studio work related to “masterworks” and “styles” in the history of art. The aspect of art criticism centers on the identification of formal and expressive qualities of the art object and the artist’s intent. If carried to the extreme—the study of exclusively white, western art and the emphasis primarily on art historical knowledge—DBAE could create a sense of alienation for the multicultural or minority student.

Currently in art education DBAE is particularly visible and one might even say “popular.” In Studies in Art Education and Art Education during the last five years are any indication, most journal articles describe discipline-based approaches while only a limited number of articles describe cultural processes in teaching. There has been a strong rationale for the discipline approach in art education. The “bandwagon” syndrome for “back to basics” was felt by art education back in the 1960’s after Spuntik and Bruner’s discipline approaches in education. Barkan had ample support for his concepts of art history, studio, and art criticism in the public schools (Boyer, 1980) and this was definitely an upgrade from the potato printing, string painting and mimeographed holiday art that was all too prevalent in the elementary classroom. Art educators in universities, who did the majority of the published writing in the field, could see the benefit of modeling school curriculum after academic subjects that mirrored those taught in the university, while high school art teachers had traditionally replicated university studio settings in their classrooms. Students could select courses in ceramics, jewelry or painting, and art history was taught by the slide-lecture approach. Unfortunately, most of these courses in the high schools emphasized the technical, hands-on, approaches to art education.

Discipline-based approaches became a strong counter movement to Lowenfeld (1970) and his theories of child-development in art education. The child as the center for the curriculum in the 70’s and 80’s lost popularity in university art education courses. Crayon and cut paper projects designed to foster “creative and mental growth” were not favored. Talking about and looking at works of art (in the form of reproductions and slides) were favored. In general, there was growing support for content based on discipline approaches in the field (Boyer, 1980).

Most art educators today would agree that students should at the very least acquire sequential, structured (1) experiences in studio processes and visual expression, (2) skills for identifying meaning in works of art and the ability to appreciate art throughout history in a variety of cultural settings, and (3) methods of aesthetic inquiry and criticism.

In terms of analyzing the organizational base and implementation of DBAE and CLAE, there are no real comparisons. DBAE has a central corporate structure supported and funded by the Getty Foundation that has national outreach programs. CLAE is recognized by only a small group of art educators and emphasizes local decision making by teachers. With less support monies currently being allocated for education from federal, state and local governments, corporations will fill the gaps and become more involved in educational decision making. If this is to be the trend of the future—corporations may also hold the purse strings and determine who decides what is to be taught, what research is to be recognized, who is to teach and who is to be included in the different levels of the decision making process.

The Relevance of DBAE and CLAE

Do DBAE and/or CLAE have relevance for minority and multicultural students? DBAE has the propensity of focusing more heavily on subject content and less on a concern for the students who are being taught. In an "Issues Seminar" (1988) sponsored by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (1988), Feinstein, the seminar director, noted the different approaches between positivists and phenomenologists in education.

Positivists, she said, would hold that the subject matter—content and sequence and scope—is more important than the student, the society, and so on. The phenomenologist would hold that the students' experience of the subject matter is more important. She admitted that she was making the dichotomy more ‘black-and-white’ than it might actually be; she and most of her colleagues, she said, are probably somewhere in the middle, leaning toward subject matter. "But I think it’s important as educators that we think about where we are. Do we in fact think we have a subject matter and is it worth teaching? Then let’s teach it" (p. 60).
As art educators we must not become so defensive about the worth of our subject area so that we lose sight of who we are teaching and how best to teach them. Educators outside the field of art education are joining forces to combat the escalating rate of the dropout rate in the schools. Students that are low-achievers, falling, or dropping out are every educator’s concern and responsibility.

Educational research indicates that successful school programs promote a “social bonding process” between the students and the school. Wehlagle (1988) found that a major obstacle to this bonding was “incongruence between the school and the students’ social and cultural orientation” (p. 5). Programs that were sensitive to students’ needs and problems were most successful when learning strategies centering on the students’ interests and strengths were developed. These findings do not seem particularly earth shaking, and such programs do not have to be lacking in either structure or subject content to be taught.

CLAE structures the curriculum around the student’s culture, progressing through expanded world views of art and finally developing imagination and speculative skills. DBAE structures the curriculum around knowledge and skills based on four academic disciplines as defined by master specialists. Culture is observed from the “outside-in” in DBAE. Students may study the cultures of others, but this is usually in an historical context. The concept of culture as a process in socialization is not used to examine one’s own culture nor the culture of others. CLAE has the potential to be strictly student-oriented without emphasizing skills and knowledge of the subject matter. DBAE has the potential to be subject oriented and not concerned about the students as individuals or sensitive to their individual diverse cultures.

CLAE is more closely related to successful programs identified in the current research literature for students-at-risk. The spiral sequenced curriculum in CLAE could be used with all students. The emphasis on reflective and critical thinking balanced by the development of affective and emotional factors are essential for high-achievers, as well as, those having difficulty in the schools. More importantly cultural literacy in art education is a teaching process which differentiates it from DBAE. CLAE not only supports the study of cultures in an academic sense or the study of a wide range of art forms existing in contemporary cultures and ethnic groups, but it places the student on center stage in the educational setting. The students should not be viewed merely as a receptacle for knowledge. Rather their world views and feelings about art are considered central to what should be selected to study and analyze. In CLAE, students are allowed to participate in decisions regarding their own education, thus promoting a sense of ownership and involvement.

An art education that incorporates cultural literacy better prepares students for the world they will be living in tomorrow by encouraging speculative thinking and imagination with a focus on change. An aesthetic education emphasizing cultural literacy will encourage positive feelings about cultural identity and promote appreciation for cultural aesthetic changes and diversity in the aesthetics of others. Art educators can meet the challenge of educating the multicultural and minority students by using cultural literacy as an approach for examining beliefs and attitudes within the disciplines of art.

References


Conference as Ritual: The Sacred Journey of the Art Educator

Under the co-ordinated efforts of Amy Brook Snider, Chair of Art Education at the Pratt Institute of Art, Brooklyn, N.Y., Harold Pearse, Chair of Art Education at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada, and Cynthia Taylor also of NSCAD, a mini conference was held under the sponsorship of the Social Theory Caucus at the National Conference in Los Angeles, 1988. The self-examination of the conference ritual had its genesis with Amy Brook Snider’s insight of the parallels between the NAEA’s annual spring pilgrimage to various hotels in the United States and Barbara Myerhoff’s description of the Huichol Indians in her book *Peyote Hunt*. Not all the members of this mini conference are represented in the pages which follow. This, in itself is no doubt telling and harbors its own story. Interesting insights were also offered by James N. Stewart on the history and development of the conference in art education and Maurice Sevigny, Chair of the Department of Art at the University of Texas at Austin whose analysis of secret societies, private customs, rituals and practices at the NAEA Convention was a rare glimpse into its hidden corridors.

It will become readily apparent to the reader what the purpose and intent of this self-examination was. The opening essay by Amy Brook Snider is an introduction to the essays which follow. These range from acid social criticism to outright satire and humour. There are as many Voices of interpretation as there were participants, yet one is struck by the way the conference is written, tattooed on each body, worn in permanence.

As a collection of essays, The Conference as Ritual exemplifies what many postmodern anthropologists like Stephen Tyler (*The Unsayable: Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World*) and James Clifford (*The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*) have written: all ethnographies are rhetorical performances determined by the need to tell an effective story. Ideology and desire can never be reconciled with the needs of theory and observation. The issue remains as one of representation and the question dwells always in the background: whose representation is written as the truth? -editor

Rituals specified members of a group from everyday life, placed them in a limbo that was not any place they were in before and not yet any place they would be in, then returned them, changed in some way, to mundane life” (Turner, 1986, p.25).

We sit for hours in the windowless rooms of expensive hotels with fountains, flocked wallpaper, oversized plants, franchised boutiques, and muzak in the lobbies; we sleep surrounded by tasteless furnishings and tacky art reproductions; we eat low quality, high-priced meals in fancy restaurants. It is Spring in Los Angeles, and today Friday, April 8, 1988 marks the beginning of the 28th annual National Art Education Association Convention. Why do we travel hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles each year to listen to papers which we could read in the comfort of our living rooms or lay on our hands in workshops which we could attend much closer to home?

How does this annual ritual function in our professional lives? When we “present” ourselves to each other, what are we accomplishing? What shared assumptions, beliefs or myths unite us? Which are the symbols that condense and evoke our sense of what art and teaching means?

Here's Looking at Us Looking at Us

AMY BROOK SNIDER

This paper was an introduction to the mini-conference, "The Conference as Ritual: The Sacred Journey of the Art Educator," organized by Harold Pearse, Cynthia Taylor and myself for the NAEA Convention in Los Angeles, April 1988. Art educators from Canada and the United States along with Dr. Michael Ozen Jones, author and director of the Folklore and Mythology Center at UCLA (our non-participant observer) looked at our annual spring pilgrimage to various hotels in the United States from historical, psychological, philosophic, structural and ethnographic perspectives.

As the introduction to the mini-conference, my paper specifically recounts the ways that I, an individual presenter, have tried to break out of the ritual forms of presentation through the years.

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Art is not an integral part of our culture; fine art, popular art forms, and folk art even when accessible, are not connected with the aesthetic dimension in our lives. We are purveyors of what society does not value. Undaunted we strive for instrumental arguments, claim grounding in a four part discipline, lobby the politicians, invent catchy slogans for shopping bags, publish countless pamphlets listing our aims, and develop scientific evaluation instruments. Like unknown salesmen, we clamour for recognition. We are tireless in our efforts to validate an experience, a discipline, a mode of knowing, a vehicle for self-definition, a career.

Like any band of outsiders, we fight amongst ourselves. Our Conference structure appears to allow for diversity as it creates and reinforces a consensus from our constituency. The format we have created is, as in all rituals, rigid. It has the power to constrict, expand, and distort our content. Our time frame is fixed; like the old radio soap operas, we measure our words on the quarter and half hour. We send in our proposals without knowing the criteria for inclusion. With experience, we discover tricks to guarantee a place in the program. We read without time for response; there is usually no relation to what came before or what will follow. We rarely collaborate since we are separated by busy lives and enormous distances.

For visuals, even our best and our brightest rely on the “portable” slide. It seems that we are least concerned with the art part, that is, the formal character of our performance in front of our peers.

Ritual may be likened to a vessel into which anything may be poured: an order-endowing device, it gives shape to its contents” (Myerhoff, 1979, p. 86).

Often we are looking for affirmation and professional identity. When we select sessions to attend, we usually pick those individuals or points of view with whom or with which we are already in agreement. We applaud those presenters who seem to read our minds. The categories on the Convention Proposal Application serve both to reinforce our sense of belonging and help maintain our separateness: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle/Jr. High, Gifted/Talented, Higher Education, Museum Education, Supervision, Administration, Student Interest, Theoretical Concept, Research, Instruction in Studio, Art History, Criticism, and Aesthetics, DBAE, and the Caucuses (Social Theory, Women’s, Minority Concerns, Public Policy).

My interest in the self-reflexive activity that we are engaged in today began in childhood when I was consumed with a desire to know all the missing details of the stories unfolding in my family, my apartment house, my classroom, and my neighborhood. My oft-repeated question, “What was he wearing?” became a family joke.

So, nine years ago, I, a participant observer since my early years, went to my first National Art Education Association Conference in San Francisco. For a few years, the experience was so overwhelming that I never considered presenting. I went home every year with a sense of confusion, with pieces that never seemed to fit together. But as I reflect upon my subsequent history as a presenter, a picture of my developing vocation as a deconstructionist begins to emerge as well as an understanding of my attraction to the work of people in the unaffiliated Women’s Caucus and the Social Theory Caucus.

My first presentation was during a snow storm in New York. I brought a ton of books, tapes, slides, and a shopping cart in a taxi. Only about 6 or 7 of my friends came to what turned into a kind of a relaxed ‘show and tell’ about my work with untrained elderly painters. It was not an auspicious beginning.

I was also Chair of the Exhibition Committee. This is where my active critique of the Convention probably started. The formula was simple: many rectangular-shaped pictures of varying quality with different frames and mats and no relation to each other except that they are all by children. The exhibition is installed on spindly, aluminum panels tottering on their perches, viewed en passant on the way to somewhere else. One would think that original art by children would be the raison d’etre of an art education conference. Our committee tried to get an actual gallery space outside the hotel but settled for a narrated two projector presentation with slides we had collected in response to ten specific problems.

My second foray was a collaborative performance in Miami, “To Read, or Not to Read: Presenting at Professional Conferences.” We used slides of quotations by a film-maker, an anthropologist, an artist, and a scientist, as well as a puppet moved by a magnet, and a questionnaire for the audience on the environment of conference rooms.

Even the Women’s Caucus, which organized their sessions around the theme of gender, offered the same mixed bag with little coherence other than the familiar faces and themes of the membership. The College Art Association invites individual members to develop panels about controversial issues in art and art history: Expanding this model into a mini-conference I now had a vehicle for posing questions like “Is Style in Art Education a Question of Gender?” Next, I outlined several sessions using a variety of formats involving both visible or “mainstream” art educators as well as invisible or “hiddenstream” art educators (cf. Collins and Sandell, 1984), and as many strata of the membership as possible - men and women, administrators, art teachers, museum educators, college professors and school supervisors.

Before the Dallas Conference, it occurred to me that local women artists might be interested in discussing their work with the Women’s Caucus, and the following year, in New Orleans, an interview with painter and sculptor, Ida Kohlmeier proved an even more effective sequel for our traditional slide-chairing sessions.

In “Teaching as Story-Telling,” I began to experiment with the uses of autobiography. It was but a short step to organizing a panel with other autobiographers in our field. For my most recent talk at the Canadian Society of Education Through Art Conference, Herb Perr and I brought a dozen loaves of fresh rye bread from the Lower East Side in New York City to Halifax, Nova Scotia and reflected upon our identity as Jewish art educators.

I am obviously trying to redress the neglect of the formal considerations in our conference structures. What we say here in our Convention
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


Outsiders and Taboo Subjects: The Horseflies of Art Education

Karen A. Hamblen

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 horseflies 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; Hamblen, 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-
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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, 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 horselies 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 horselies 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 followers 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


Conference as Ritual: Structures for the Unsavage Mind

RONALD N. MACGREGOR

Can anyone take conferences seriously after reading David Lodge’s Small World? Lodge’s book is a satirical examination of academic groupiedom, set in a never-ending cycle of conferences. He introduces his subject by declaring.

The modern conference resembles the pilgrimage of medieval Christendom in that it allows the participants to indulge themselves in all the pleasures and diversions of travel while appearing to be austere bent on self-improvement. To be sure, there are certain penitential exercises to be performed—the presentation of a paper, perhaps, and certainly listening to the papers of others. But with this excuse you journey to new and interesting places... and at the end of it all, return home with an enhanced reputation for seriousness of mind (Lodge, 1985, prologue).

A number of people, in spite of the insinuations of persons like Lodge that it is all rather a giggle, take conferences quite seriously: enough to make a study of them as a social phenomenon that aids in generating cohesiveness and a sense of occasion. A conference, they would argue, is not just experience, but an experience. It has dimensions that mark it off as something extraordinary, in the literal sense of that term.

Anthropologists like Victor Turner and Edward Bruner focus their attention on the experience of experiencing (Turner and Bruner, 1986). Their approach is to make an initial distinction between behaviour, which is noted in other people, and experience, which is personally felt. It is a germaine distinction, for anthropologists of their persuasion are more inclined to describe how it felt to be there, rather than what went on. Their stance is closer to phenomenology than to ethnography, and their efforts are concentrated on what gave the occasion its special flavor, its extraordinary character. Their approach suits my present purpose admirably, since my question is, What makes an NAEA conference special?

First, the fact that NAEA holds its convention once a year is significant. Edgar Wind, the art historian, once remarked that you may blow the Last Trump once, but you must not blow it everyday. To make an occasion out of events, there must be a period of non-occasion preceding and following. One might be tempted to say that the longer the period between occasions, the more significant the occasion: witness the excitement over the appearance of Halley’s Comet. There are however, practical reasons for NAEA conventions to happen more regularly than once every two hundred years. All things considered, once a year is a decent compromise.

Second, NAEA conferences are significant because they provide opportunity to organize experiences into ritual. For an event to be properly savoured, it must have certain predictable elements. Children are very conscious of the part their parents to alter even the smallest aspects of Christmas or Hanukah or Chinese New Year. NAEA gives its convention ritualistic overtones through the regularization of events in the form of conference program with a familiar format. It provides, in its regional and special interest lunches, opportunities for feasting, a traditional and omnipresent part of ritual, a milieu for the reinforcement of small group or familiar bonding, and for eating and drinking to excess, with attendant guilt and catharsis. Ritual extends to the rewarding of exemplary individuals: in the case of NAEA, those who have personified group norms or distinguished themselves in academic warfare. And finally, ritual is developed and reinforced through language that serves to illuminate material and to identify roles held by participants. “Disciple-based Art Education”, for example, serves immediately to identify particular positions that will be taken by those who speak on the topic, and may indeed result in one thinking that those positions have a certain universal familiarity of tone or custom.

Third, the conference creates a world in microcosm, where everyday reality is suspended. The opportunity exists to have a drink with someone who was hitherto only a literary citation. Overnight visibility is possible as a result of one judicious question posed at a general session, or through a presentation that strikes a sympathetic chord with the audience. The particular and the universal, for once, are one. The convention is all there is: art education provides a license under which to operate, and the participants endorse their collective identity while competing with each other individually.

Fourth, the conference creates a sense of theatre, in which key actors or groups emerge, and within which mysteries are performed. One of the most intriguing of these, from my personal perspective, is the Delegates’ Assembly. I meet the participants in elevators, and I am always struck by the number of talismanic badges each of them wears. I had always assumed that their purpose was to ward off the evil eye, but recently I read that in Japan, businessmen go to conferences where, for the first day or two, they confess all their shortcomings. Every shortcoming is marked by a ribbon of shame that is attached to the individual’s clothing so that the more self-effacing may soon be festooned with them. As a result of every positive act of redemption performed at the conference, a ribbon may be removed, and by the end the participants’ grey pinstripe suits may be restored to their original condition. I am now playing with the idea that the buttons on
Delegates' Assembly members may serve the same purpose; though it is troubling to note that, far from atonement being apparent in a decrease in the number of buttons worn, most of the delegates seem to register an increase as the days go by. Obviously, a recalcitrant group!

No mystery would be complete without its shamans, and NAEA is no exception. Shamans in this organization are of three groups. There are comfortable shamans, whose role is to confirm our solidarity. There are prickly shamans, who let us see what a thin veneer separates us from total chaos. And there are inspirational shamans, who tell old stories and create new myths and encourage us to believe that we are at least as good as we think we are - and maybe even better.

In this communal theatre, each of us has a part. Not only do we construct our world in microcosm, but we watch ourselves conducting it. Hence the presence at every event of this kind of photographers and video cameras, validating the existence of the actors as well as supplying testimony that the event actually took place. Experience, like Vitamin C, has to be constantly replenished; but if we cannot in the months following the conference relive the experience itself, we can at least benefit vicariously from images of the event reproduced in the NAEA News.

Having considered what gives the conference significance, I turn now to the question of how it is related to the broader conceptual framework of experiences. Over twenty years ago, Claude Levi-Strauss wrote The Savage Mind, in which he dealt with three ways by which people in non-industrial and often non-literate societies organized their lives. They have, he said, a tendency to see things synchronically, as horizontal patterns and relationships, rather than diachronically, as sequences operating over time. They operate experimentally, making do with whatever is at hand: a process known as bricolage. Their existence is revealed to them through dialectical situations in which polar opposites are set up, each containing the seeds of the other. A haiku illustrates the life-death dialectic.

The butterfly
Follows the bier
Whereon the coffin lies

For the unsavage mind, however, the kind that is in evidence at art education conferences, Levi-Strauss's categories have limited applicability. The context is diachronically experienced: elements exist and draw strength from their own history, rather than being seen as relationships among elements or components. So it was that at one regional lunch, the history of that region formed one of the presentations to the delegates. The program, rather than being organized thematically, across interest groups, was instead divided along traditional lines, into elementary, secondary, supervisory, and higher education categories, with a catchall "Theoretical Concepts," a kind of conceptual Other, or leftover, collecting anything that did not fit those major, historically established components.

There is a tendency to work from a fixed agenda, rather than play the part of bricolage, picking up and adapting circumstances as these occur. Were we to take bricolage seriously as a means to conduct business, we might invite submissions for presentations in the normal way, but then put them all into a hat, draw them out randomly and assign them arbitrarily to the participants.

Dialectical polarities are generally exchanged for a middle ground at NAEA conferences. The preparation of papers and the submission of abstracts in advance ensures that issues are already partially worked out, rather than constructed from different positions on site. Consequently, there is little of the dialectical clash of competing ideologies; rather, small like-minded groups share common perceptions, and surprises are few.

In any large organization, minorities create their own rituals, to let the organization know how they relate to it, and to ensure the propagation of their own ideas. Fragmentation has its price: it may take the form of feeling that we fail to speak with one voice. But it also has its advantages. Complex organisms have more options to draw upon than do simple ones when its comes to responding to new situations. Whether NAEA conferences are judged to be successes or failures may well be a function of an individual's perception of the engagement of that person's conference affiliate with an issue of substance or relevance. There will never, for this reason, be a conference that is universally lauded or deplored.

The anthropology of experience serves to remind us that we live in three worlds: the world of physical reality, the world of experiences (or, life as lived), and the world of expression (or, life as told). It enables us to affirm that we are experiencing a complex, multi-channeled, polymorphic event. And it allows us to maintain that position with a fair amount of self-righteousness in the face of these inevitable allegations made by families and colleagues following our return to home and campus, that we have been simply frittering away the days and nights in unintellectual drinking, carousing, and the telling of scurrilous tales.

References


Conferences and Communitas: Making Magic Happen ... Sometimes

BRENT WILSON

1

The field of art education hardly qualifies as a tribal society. Nevertheless, there are some "tribal" analogies that might be made as we study our customs and conventions, our mores and mutations, and the sources of our symbols and sillinesses. Indeed, our annual conferences are fitting subjects for anthropological analyses. And although I haven't filled my sketchbooks with notes and drawings of our National Art Education Association Conventions with ethnographic studies in mind, in retrospect they just might serve that purpose. What do my notes and my memories tell us about these yearly meetings of the tribe? What planned purposes do these conferences serve and what are their unplanned and unpredictable outcomes?

2

The anthropologist Victor Turner (1967 and 1969) spent many years studying the Ndembu people of Central Africa. In his studies he sought to characterize the changes that occurred in that society. He set about his work in the expected manner by attending to slices of everyday life. Through his observations he was able to observe that there were changes in symbols that the Ndembu people created to define themselves. But try as he might, he was unable to determine the sources of these new symbols. Changes occurred and he couldn't discover why, where, or even when they began.

Finally, Turner realized that, like almost everyone else, he had wrongly assumed that the discovery of change involves careful attention to the structure of a society. To discover the dynamics of social symbolic behavior, he learned that it was necessary to attend to structure beyond the structure, or as Turner would have it, to the "anti-structure." He came to see the ritual processes - the performances of ritual - as distinct phases in the social process wherein groups became adjusted to internal tensions and changes.

Terms such as "liminal," "liminoid," "betwixt-and-between," and "communitas" are central to Turner's analysis of what occurs during the ritual process when normal events, relationships, and patterns of behavior are suspended - times when the everyday is shaken-up, fractured, and suspended (1974). Turner observed times of tension during which the families within the same village broke into separate groups, separated, and then later rejoined. During the separation phase the individual groups developed new symbols and new patterns of behavior that were ultimately incorporated into the larger society. Turner described events that preceded the installation of a tribal leader where the leader-to-be was mocked, spat upon, beaten, derided and otherwise made the lowest-of-the-low for a brief period just before he was elevated to his new high position. And Turner pointed to the puberty rites described by Van Gennep in which young boys were stripped of their clothing, their names taken from them, and their ranks and social statuses dissolved - there was a leveling, a making-all-the-same. When separated from the tribe, the young boys in their leveled and reduced state were forced to survive by fending for themselves. Their time of separation was a state of betwixt-and-between, of liminality, of uncertainty, of threat where they developed new social relationships, established new social structures, new patterns of behavior, and created new symbols. It is particularly to the crazy combinations and re-combinations of signs and symbols, and to rule-breaking that Turner pays attention. When the young initiates finally end their transitional state and are re-incorporated within their society they bring with them their newly created symbols and patterns of behavior. These are the sources of social and symbolic dynamism.

3

When Turner attempted to apply his insights about the sources of social dynamics to non-tribal industrialized Western societies they didn't seem to fit - at first (1974). And then he began to see evidence of "communitas," the special feelings and bonds that develop among individuals when they are thrown into non-structural or anti-structural situations to be the source of new symbolic behaviors in industrialized societies just as much as tribal societies. (He has also observed that some individuals such as artists in industrialized societies are permanently "assigned" or assume the anti-structural role.) On "pilgrimages" and at (some) parties, at conventions and in other situations where individuals are separated from everyday matters, a special atmosphere emerges that permits a feeling of magic to embrace all that happens. There is a liberatum of human cognitive capacities. The past is momentarily suspended and the future has not yet begun. There is created an institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future development. It is a time when people can be subverted from their serious duties in order to create an atmosphere of shared ideas, new visions, a new order, a revolution in thinking, a feeling that all is possible, as Blake would have defined it, catching the "winged moment as it flies."
Our art educational conferences seem to have characteristics of both the structural and the anti-structural. A glance at our conference programs tells us that in our separation from the everyday we have merely surrendered one kind of structure for another. But our conferences would also appear to be an ideal ground for the creation of communitas. In these yearly gatherings of the tribe, we purposefully leave the everyday behind as we seek enlightenment and perhaps romance and adventure as well. We don’t give up our names but we do have them written on tags of the same size -tags that provide the States assembly members the opportunity to distinguish themselves through the ludic pinning-on of symbols from as many states as possible. In our conferences there is a degree of leveling inasmuch as “world-famous” art educators and “lowly” unknown art teachers sometimes sit down next to one another. There are members who know that the “real purpose” of the conferences is not to attend sessions but to strengthen networks and to invest ideological capital in the hope of a good return. But, then again, these power-based maneuverings seem as much structural as anti-structural. There are the parties that may be the sources of new symbols, new ideas, new relationships - if they could only be remembered next morning. As there are the recurring romances - the “same time next year” phenomenon - and the new romances that some come seeking. But do these ideas that we seek at our annual meetings come from the structural or the anti-structural realms of our conferences? Perhaps from both; let me illustrate.

There is rule-breaking, or the scheming for it. Back in 1963 when Laura Chapman and I were new graduate students at Ohio State, we drove to the NAEA conference together in one car with our three professors - Manny Barkan, Jerry Hausman, and David Ecker - from Columbus to Kansas City. During such a long drive one gets to know his or her professors in very different ways from the ways one knows them in their classrooms. We got to know them when their guard was down; we saw into their lives, learned their eccentricities, their sleeping and eating habits. But the thing I remember most vividly about that conference - the only thing I remember about the conference aside from the drive there and back - was a planned burglary. David Mandell’s little book Education and the Evisceration of the Artist had just been published. One night at the conference Manny Barkan gleefully recounted some of its juicy bits and its nasty bits. Either Ecker or Hausman asked, “how can we get copies?” And a plan was hatched to steal into the closed commercial exhibits to “borrow” copies. A guard put a stop to the plan, but that’s not the point. The very idea of rule-breaking was enough to surround that book with memories that have created an aura that transcends any importance the book might have held.

Anon his heart revives: Her vespers done,
Of all its wraithed pearls she frees her hair,
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one -

There is irreverence. There was the keynote address given by Rhoda Kellogg in a large and nearly empty hall in San Francisco (probably in 1967). Through her dotted line diagrams traced over the most improbable patterns in the children’s configurations Kellogg tried to illustrate the gestalt patterns present in children’s scribbles and pictorials. Catching the spirit of the occasion, Jim Kern and I sat in the semi-darkness and with our arms, hands and fingers in the air we traced circles around the most improbable gestalt patterns everywhere in the auditorium - patterns, however, that were just as probable as Kellogg’s. And as we laughed and traced, I resolved once again to undertake studies of children’s drawings that would counter conventional art educational notions of natural artistic unfolding. After the lecture Jim Kern and I laid plans for a secret International Society for Aesthetic Education. The Society exists to this day but it is so secret that only Kern and I know the members - and sometimes we forget; their names are not recorded. Kern and I still hold brief ISAE business meetings whenever we meet.

There is magic - sometimes even in a general session. The Miami meeting of 1961 was my first NAEA national conference. I knew hardly anyone and hardly anyone knew me but there was a need for a representative from the Pacific Art Association to sit on the speakers platform. No “regular” representative could be found. I was drafted. As Sol Steinberg said about himself when he finally arrived in New Guinea, “I am important in my own eyes for being here,” I was important in my own eyes for being there. The presentation was made by John Ciardi, poet editor of the Saturday Review of Literature. I sat directly behind Ciardi looking at his baggy brown trousers and his waving arms as I tried to imagine what facial expressions accompanied his eloquent words. To illustrate what he meant by good aesthetic form from the organicist perspective, Ciardi presented the struggles Keats encountered as he wrote the Eve of St. Agnes. Ciardi told of how Keats had Porforo steal into the castle, ignoring the dangers of Madeline’s heinous kinsmen, and faint as he begins to watch Madeline undress. The faint neutralized the possibility of impropriety. And then:

And Ciardi spoke about how “warmed jewels” has been praised - often, justly - how they got warmed, Keats’ kind of sensory detail - rich, full of suggestion, and yet delicate. Then Ciardi referred to the difficulty that Keats had with the next lines (Ciardi had access to the Keats’ notes that revealed his struggles), how there was a tonality that Keats must preserve. “Wraithed pearls” and “warmed jewels” have a happy relationship. That relationship must be echoed in the next lines. Ciardi told how Keats made a mistake in the next version. Madeline “Loosens her bursting Bodice.”
Ciardi told us that,

There is no scientific fact anyone could adduce that Madeline could not be as buxom as you please and yet be as delicate as you please. It is not scientific fact that counts here, but the tonality: "Bursting" seemed wrong - run for your life, the dam is bursting. It is the flavor of the word that is wrong.

Ciardi then went on to tell how Keats first was tempted to cheat, and then how he finally got it right. Those words of Ciardi (and Keats) have been passed on to generations of my students. I had used them so often that by 1971 when I was teaching in Britain for a year and was without my notes, I was able to reconstruct Ciardi's lecture from memory, and I am one who has difficulty memorizing my own name. Sometimes the magic of a session is felt by only one or two participants. Perhaps I manufactured the magic myself from the marvelous ingredients provided by Ciardi and Keats.

There is revolution. In the 1986 NAEA conference in New Orleans I listened to Ralph Smith give his lecture in which he introduced his monograph on Excellence in Art Education. My response to the lecture recorded in my journal was "scholarly," "well done," "the monograph should be useful." At a reception at the conclusion of the lecture I told Nancy MacGregor that we ought to use the monograph as the basis for discussion in the field. Later, as I read the full monograph I came to see just how little Smiths' ideas of excellence corresponded with my own. I was troubled by his use of modernist theories of aesthetics that seemed so ill-suited a base on which to build a postmodern art education. And I saw as especially problematic Smith's dismissal of the political and social approaches to the study and interpretation of art. It seemed to me that we had a substantial issue that merited debate at one of our conferences. My colleague Patricia Amburgy and I set about organizing a session in which Excellence in Art Education would be debated. And then we fought off what appeared to be attempts to have the session scratched from the conference program. Patricia's and my agreement to include a "balanced" set of respondents secured a place for three connected sets of presentations relating to "excellence" in the 1987 Boston conference schedule.

All of the papers presented at the three sessions were notable - filled with thoughtful and well-reasoned ideas both for and against Smith's version of "excellence." But drama and states of high emotion weld memories to one's very being; the second session has become a part of me. Ralph Smith was in the audience and so was tension as Jan Jagodzinski made his performance-piece-presentation with the assistance of Elleda Katan. The authority of the Trinity was evoked, the executive was in his tasteful suit in his tasteful suite, what nice clothes - how nicely they go together, Mona Lisa was had for lunch (how nicely her parts go together, how nicely they taste, how tasteful they are). The atmosphere of the room made undeniable the fact that politics and art, ideology and aesthetics, contrary to Smith's assertions, can be fused inextricably. Criticism's vehicle was art - not tasteful art, but art all the same. From the front row my back felt the tension of the room and then felt it relax. I learned later that Ralph Smith had left. (Afterwards he told me and anyone else who would listen that he always walks out on bad theater.) That room contained communica	
tas. That communica	
tas still contains some of us.

But why is it that in 28 years of conference-attending I can remember so few things that were truly remarkable, truly vivid, that truly reoriented my thinking. Why are there so few sessions and situations in which new symbols are created. Am I just not to be found in the right places? Do I avoid them? I am, after all, a social klutz who doesn't drink and doesn't relax. My deaf ear doesn't unscramble sounds in the noise of parties. But if parties are the primary places for conference communitas, then are our conferences functioning as they should?

I know that it is impossible to program communitas into our conference sessions - or anywhere else for that matter. But it is not impossible to set the conditions wherein it might happen. Perhaps we could broaden our conceptions of what conference presentations might be. In recent years my proposal to include my grandson - one with whom I have carried on a series of graphic dialogues since he was two years of age - in a conference session, and the proposal of one of my students to present a play were refused. (The play was about a young girl who, when locked in a room by her insane mother, creates symbolic worlds in order to survive.) Why are we so suspicious of art?

In our conferences why don't we play more often with the possibilities of including art and drama? Why in our conference sessions do we not allow for the discussions and interactions that take us if not to liminal and ludic states at least to the realm of the scholarly. The strategies and the symbols for the new art education are the most active and reformative when they collide in irregular fashion among irregular thinkers. But then, perhaps we are truly afraid of the anti-structure.

References


Subjective Undercurrents: Humour and the NAEA

Harold Pearse

The psychological climate of an NAEA conference is a highly variable one. Given the temporal and spatial restrictions, emotions tend to be intense and feelings concentrated. A good deal of what is felt is predictable - after all, conferences are called conventions. But beneath the surface veneer of officiousness, formality and collegiality, there are subjective undercurrents. The novices experience loneliness, insecurity and feelings of inadequacy being surrounded by “experts” - people whose publications they have read or with whose names they are familiar. The experts may experience anxiety and insecurity as their egos, careers and reputations are exposed to public scrutiny. On the other hand, given the freedom that can come from being “away from home,” “in neutral territory,” and with like-minded colleagues, inhibitions may be lost and feelings can soar. But they can also plummet. The feelings associated with being on a conference can be like my first experience on a ski hill - a curious mixture of expectation, exultation, exhilaration... and terror.

Conferences are supposed to be serious business. Indeed, the intent is deadly serious - to acquire and share information that will expand and enhance one’s professional competence. However, the circumstances under which most conferences occur are a prescription for fun - for dangerous fun. They are loaded with tremendous potential for guilt and sin - several days away from work (often with pay or at the employers expense) - maybe even on an expense account; away from family; in a strange city. Not only are there lectures, presentations, business meetings and study sessions, there are dinners, parties and more parties. One tends to eat too much, drink too much and sleep too little. And all this takes place in a hotel - that rhymes with motel - and everybody knows that in our culture motel is synonymous with illicit sex. At the outset the situation is loaded with tension, contradictions, and incongruity.

The aspect of the phenomenon of conferences that I want to focus on is humour. Humour at the NAEA. It won’t take long. Nothing very funny happens at these conferences. Right? It might seem incongruous to speak of humour in relation to a conference of the folks who brought you the slogan “art means work” and who seem obsessed with discipline. But then, humour, like conferences, is based on incongruity. What kind of humour can one expect to find at an NAEA conference? In anticipation of that question, I plunged into last year’s conference with my note pad and my laugh-meter. There was little or no humour of an officially sanctioned nature or in the conference program - except for the odd witty session title or subtitle such as “Dancing with the Dean - When to Lead and When to Follow” or the obvious pun in “Enlarge your Program’s Impact with an Opaque Projector.” From time to time there were clever asides and even some witty repartee in sessions. Someone asked a Caucus on Social Theory presenter (Herb Perr) why he was standing in the shadows. He replied, “I’m part of a shadow group.” There were empathetic sobs at the comment that to many students “art is a foreign language.” Outraged gags and knowing guffaws greeted the remark - “Painting is a nineteenth century approach to art.”

Most humour at sessions however, was in the form of chuckles, usually as the result of forgotten or upside-down slides or other embarrassing incidents. At a “Super Session” given by Elliot Eisner, things kept going wrong. The projector stopped working, lights went on or off at the wrong times, and external noise caused interruptions. Trying to retain his composure and the audience’s attention, he remarked that being interrupted while presenting is “like when the telephone rings when you are having sex.” Some laughter at the clever aside. Then he said, with an unintentional double entendre, “It’s like when the principal comes on the PA.” More laughter. Then he said, unintentionally continuing a theme. “Principals can really screw things up.” The audience roared and the speaker flushed. Were they laughing with him or at him? One theory of humour attributes it to the subjective satisfaction with oneself over the misfortunes of others; another attributes it to incongruity, the wrong things or actions happening at the wrong time or place. Both factors were probably operating here. It is funny and a relief to see that our heroes have feet of clay and that our icons are fallible.

Speaking of icons, the breaking of icons, iconoclasm, is a source of an important kind of humour - satire. Last conference saw a rare but excellent example of a satirical performance. As part of a panel examining the arguments and implications of Ralph Smith’s recent book, _Excellence in Art Education_, Jan Jagodziński and Elleda Katan presented a dramatic performance in which aestheticians and art critics were portrayed as elitist fascist dictators. The format allowed many voices and many texts to speak. It was daring, bitter, ironic, mocking humour that rallied some and offended others. It was in poor taste in that it was tough, crude and hurt feelings. It was totally appropriate in that it critically questioned the relative balance of the notion of taste for a post-modern aesthetic.

As every good satirist and comedian will tell you, humour is extremely serious business. In fact, the title of one of Steve Martin’s record albums tells it all - “Comedy is not Pretty.” But humour still can be fun and can serve a useful purpose. The comedian and satirist in our culture play roles and serve functions much like those played and served by the medieval fool or clown. They were not only entertainers, but they were the society’s conscience. Similarly in the culture of the North American Plains Indian, the visionary holy person or shaman is the earthly version of the
mythological Coyote trickster. The shaman-trickster is a kind of teacher whose aim is to open his people to new levels of spiritual consciousness. He uses the clowning techniques of humour, surprise and drama. The comic, the satirist, the fool, the shaman all provide us with a kind of mirror, often a fun-house or distorting mirror, to see ourselves in ways that might shock us into recognition. Our characteristics as individuals and as a society constantly need to be put to the humour test. If we cannot laugh at ourselves, we cannot improve. We cannot improve if we cannot learn. As we live this conference over the next few days, we should be looking for our comics, satirists, fools, clowns, shamans and tricksters. They can be valuable teachers. It is no coincidence that one of the traits most often mentioned when defining a good teacher is a sense of humour.

So why all the grimness and solemnness when we talk of conferences, education, and art? Why is the fun or the humour down-played or not mentioned at all? Apparently conferences, art and art education have image problems. I mentioned earlier why conferences may be suspect - how can one be serious when all the ingredients for fun are available? If something is fun how can it be respectable? Art and art education, by their very natures, are perceived by the general public as being frivolous indulgences or as not being relevant to society's interests or values. How can we think of art and art activities in “tight economic times”? Art in school, if it gets inside that bastion at all, is considered by many teachers, administrators and not a few parents as not being respectable or serious enough. Kids in art class have been seen with stains on their hands and smiles on their faces. Art outside of school is irrelevant, not understandable, or too serious, which amount to the same thing. Art in school is too much fun and in school terms, that amounts to being irrelevant. Many art educators feel they face a dilemma since one of the gods North American society worships is the work ethic; yet art, at least in elementary school has the reputation for being enjoyable. To make art more acceptable and respectable, some art educators feel that they have to convince the public that art is not fun (much like some groups tell us that sex is not fun). Therefore, in order to construct an image of art and art education that will be more acceptable, the NAEA has launched campaigns to put “art in the mainstream” with slogans and programs like “art is work” and “Discipline-Based Art Education.”

At the risk of being branded an art educational grasshopper by the worker ants, let me try to make a case for putting fun back in art education and into conferences. Keep in mind the old maxim, “all work and no play make Jack and Jill dull people” - and I might add, under-educated ones. The aim (pun intended) of the “art is work” and the Discipline Based movements is to emphasize the value of hard work, diligence and discipline in the art making process. If art is work, the argument goes, it can be brought into line with decent American values. The artist is considered a “caring worker,” after John Dewey’s description of a work of art as “an object elaborated with every loving care of united thought and emotion” (Day, 1982, p. 8). “Real art” says Michael Day, “is not produced by uncaring individuals” (p. 8). I would add that real fun is not produced by uncaring individuals, and that caring individuals are those with “united thought and emotion” who can see both sides of situations and can recognize and come to terms with paradox and irony - in other words, those with a sense of humour.

Admittedly, the case for fun in art is not aided by the realization that except for the occasional work by Duchamp or Magritte and the odd art movement like pop or funk, there is not a great deal of humourous art around. There are, of course, comic books and Mad Magazine which represent major visual aesthetic experiences, for many junior high school students and there is a good reason why these images have a place in art class. However, outside of popular culture, fun art is scarce. There is, though, much joyous art which includes most of the paintings of Renior, Matisse, Calder and Chagall, some of Picasso’s, and much of Miro’s and Klee’s. It may have brought joy and happiness to the creator but more importantly, it brings happiness to the viewer. It celebrates life. While the “Art is Workaholics” reluctantly acknowledge that there is often the joy of satisfaction in the creative act and that there may occasionally be an element of play involved, the point is down-played. I would place much greater emphasis on the role of play in art making and art education.

There is a large body of literature on the nature and role of play and its relation to art and to children’s learning. The young child, like the artist, makes no distinction between play and work. Both are part of the process of discovery and both are enjoyable parts of the task at hand. And, indeed, both are enjoyable and pleasurable for their own sakes. In this regard, a play experience is very much like an aesthetic experience. Each is engaged in for its own sake - for the intrinsic pleasure and reward the activity brings. It is often acknowledged by psychologists and aestheticians that a spirit of playfulness is an essential element in the creative process. The ability to toy with new or even bizarre or silly ideas or interpretations can often lead to new, fresh and insightful solutions. This delight in representing things in new ways and taking things for what they are not is the essence of imagination and is present both in the aesthetic experience and the play experience. Indeed, these qualities are the essence of humour.

I would also place emphasis on the role of play in conferences. If a conference is regarded as a kind of creative learning experience, a kind of celebration, it would also require humour or fun as a component for success. The real fun, the real joy of creation, considered either from the perspective of the maker, the participant, or the viewer, comes when all the elements - the playful, the serious, the fun and the work are interacting. This process pertains to the play experience, the art experience and the conference experience - all forms of learning. I suggest we regard this conference as a learning experience and judge its success by the degree to which it is permeated by fun, joyfulness, humour and comedy.

References

Altered States: Sexuality and the NAEA

CYNTHIA TAYLOR

My very first NAEA conference was in San Francisco; I had left the grey, bleak rock-bound landscape of Nova Scotia far, far behind and I was transported, magically to another world where daisy trees bloomed, where spring was in the air and in my step, where every moment, every corner was ripe with potential... Anything could happen! Once in the hotel I realized, immediately, that all around me there were rituals being enacted; cries and murmurs bespoke the onset of familiar immediately, embraced even magically who had come together, as they had done year after year. Why were they here? Why had they come?

The whole ceremony, as it unfolded, was intensely interesting. I was taken to the long lobby where I and the three other members of my faculty settled ourselves to watch what was termed "the parade." From comfort-able settees set into alcoves we watched the passing crowd. We were a little separate from the rest and could see and make gentle comments on the cast of characters who strutted, minced, strode or swept past. There seemed, to my uninitiated eye, to be key figures - high priests - who were trailed by twittering acolytes. Men and women eyed each other, taking measure; there were bows and curtseys, gestures which proclaimed mastery or subservience; obvious even to me were the whispered assignations, the careful setting forth of agenda soon to be enacted, the establishing of power groupings and sexual encounters. I was fascinated - so much so that I hardly noticed the strange sidling movements of people who were watching ME! and who were edging ever closer, each keeping a wary eye on my three male companions who bristled a bit, self-conscious, self-styled champions who formed a phalanx around me, protective.

The game was on - and, I admit it, I was a not-unwilling participant. It was a game, a contest, a tourney of courtiers and courtseans; there was a joyful exuberance, a devil-may-care abandon. "Why do you come here, year after year?" I asked one conference goer. He looked at me, unbelievingly. We were all together, were we not - removed from our usual settings for this fine springtime odyssey; all was all-potential, was it not? The energy was as tangible as the spring air: we were freed, for a while, from our usual lives, with the restraints, constraints, habits - all was fresh, and new and possible.

And so it continued; year after year we trekked to whatever city had been selected for the Orphic rites of spring. At each conference we would spy our former friends, lovers, colleagues; we would call, connect, embrace, circle, and deftly perform the movement known in square dancing as "Allemand Left" and pass on to the next partner. With joy, celebrating, we would engage in the dance, the game, the jousting. "And all was always now," to use T.S. Eliot's expression; there was no past and no future but a timeless present, a moment plucked from time and held, treasured. It was harmless play, for the most part; we all knew and respected the rules of the game. The operating question seemed to be not WHY? (which philosophers ask to motivate their search), or WHAT IF? (which I am told is what humorists use to set them going) but WHY NOT?

I hardly noticed the change happening, but suddenly I realized that the annual conference had taken on an entirely different tone. No longer was my personal state altered to one of expectation, of anticipation, of readiness to meet whatever new challenge might present itself to me, but I and others had lost the freshness, the heady feeling of laughter, the sense of heightened awareness. We were awake, all right - but grim. We huddled in right groups, casting suspicious glances over our shoulders. When people smiled, their eyes were narrow, assessing. There was no lightness, no wit, no subtle repartee, no games played for the sheer pleasure of following the challenge of the tossed-off phrase - WHY NOT? There was sex, still, but something was missing. There was no sexuality, here. No fine, heady feeling of release and celebration. No energy, which is my definition of sexuality, fine energy by which one relates AS MAN or AS WOMAN to everyone and everything. Not even in the Women's Caucus did I discover any sign of a healthy acceptance of sexuality, or even once glimpse joyful acknowledgement of what I term the essential woman-nature, the Eternal Receptive.

Was it only me, I wondered? Had I, all unawares, tired of the festival? Had I become jaded, depressed, weighted down even here by the political manoeuvrings and academic sabotage which were undermining my work at home? Was I unable to bring to this ritual an ability to rise to the occasion as once I did, like bubbles in champagne, like yeast in bread, like the distillate of alchemy? Was it only I who was feeling all this heaviness? No, I decided, after serious reflection; it was endemic. I wrote, sadly, describing the state of art education as I felt it to be at an NAEA Conference in Detroit: "like ashes - dry, grey, residual ... Irrelevant."

And so it continued; I fought against going to New York, Houston, Miami, New Orleans. I wanted to have nothing to do with an enterprise which, I felt, had lost its heart, had lost its way. The profession, as I judged it to be, was NON-SEXUAL. Suspicion and fear had transformed the field, whose members rushed to protect its exposed flanks. Fear-ridden, self-protective, malevolent, we hastened to proclaim safe, standard, sanitized values and aim towards re-acceptance by a newly conservative public. We repudiated our former hedonistic selves. We flaunted our hair-shirts while mumbling "WORK! VALUES! LANGUAGE! DISCIPLINE!" Instead of emulating the fine, brave forward movement of the risk-takers like artists, we settled for the Back-Step Shuffle. Negation and denial characterized art education and I wanted none of it. I fought back the urge to flee, the urge
to cry, the urge to stay by my surging sea and draw strength and nourishment from it - away from the NAEA and what I felt was its denial of the former restless energy of exchange, open question, potentiality... its denial of a sexuality which proclaimed productive excess of energy.

But then... Boston. I was riveted, my interest stirred to new life. Jan Jagodzinski dared to challenge the formerly undisputed status quo. He tossed the glove into the arena. He was unwise, imprudent, tasteless. He was outrageous. I couldn’t believe it! Here was sexual energy flaunted, distorted, made all-too-evident... I was reminded of Dylan Thomas’ exhortation:

Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage! Rage! against the dying of the light!

In a trice, the company was wakened from its torpor. People were outraged, amused and stimulated. They met in small groups, arguing the relative merits of the position Jan exemplified. A new energy, a sort of aesthetics of denial, swept over the Conference. I was reminded of the peculiar wind which blows in Europe of a summer. Called variously the Mistral, the Meltemi or the Bourra it sweeps in from the fallen regions and brings with it malaise, despair and depression. Bad humour abounds; sexual energy is misdirected and used for pain, for control. People hide from its relentless assault, afraid. As I saw it, Jan’s performance was akin to this dark wind. To me, it was not funny, but interesting. There was sexuality there, all right: a dark, destructive energy was palpable - impossible to ignore. Those who knew about post-modernist aesthetics and the philosophy of De-Construction and its pre-cursor, Nihilism, were intrigued, but uneasy. “Will this save art education, or destroy it?” was the unspoken or whispered question. Polemics, positions and posturings followed as people scrambled to ally themselves with this new, altered state - to decry it.

Sexuality? Oh, yes - but a denial by excess. NAY-saying, in the extreme. Nietzsche’s “slave morality” was made glaringly evident.

Is there an alternative? Can we yet reclaim for our profession the quality of the fine, free days of our erst-while innocence? Will we ever again witness something like one of the most exhilarating performances I ever saw, at any Conference? CSEA held its annual meeting in Halifax in 1976; it was a small, homey affair but it had its moments. The one to which I refer, and which for me represents an apex of healthy sexuality came at the conclusion of a Great Debate which was, I think, about sexual politics and art education. At its conclusion, one of the protagonists, a lively Québecoise of generous proportions, rose to her feet, tore off her blouse and twirled it overhead, proclaiming “Vive la différence!” The hall erupted - uninhibited laughter and the hoots and whistles which accompany good, healthy, bawdy humour swept the room. We left laughing and exhilarated, energized by the display of unabashed sexuality: lusty, funny and energetic, it proclaimed the health of the tiny, young field which was the company of Canadian art educators. We LIKED each other, at that moment. We accepted and proclaimed our differences, our regional disparity, our individual quirks and our areas of problematic concern. Men and women, sexual beings all, we proudly acclaimed our connection that day - we related as caring persons to each other and to our field. It felt good. We were not to know that this healthy sexuality could not or would not persist. Too soon we would be gripped with fear, and fear-ridden, we would act first to deny our true, sexual natures and adopt a politics of suspicion to replace the politics of hope which had just begun to surface. Sexuality is, perhaps, more vulnerable than it seems. In times of economic or social malaise or upheaval, free, joyous interrelationship is hard-pressed. True sexuality will only flourish in fertile ground; the ingredients for transformed awareness (the alchemical process of work towards an integrated consciousness) must include an attitude of acceptance and a generous spirit.

I wish, with all my heart, for a profession which knows its own heart, which supports and proudly accepts the many facets of its nature. I wish for something of the essentially creative energy which characterizes the artist, who works, with a will, to bring-forth something new to form. I wish that we learn to celebrate our differences, and rejoice in our shared values and beliefs. I wish that we have enough faith in our enterprise that we can, once again, laugh without embarrassment, acknowledging relationships which are vibrant and mutually supportive. I wish that we might infuse our acts, here and in our home environments, with the lightness which bespeaks a transformed energy. I would like to believe that we can re-discover an energy which allows and supports fresh ideas - ideas which are listened to, without judgement, and which spark off new ideas in new directions. I wish for a field in which positions are adopted and accepted as being only stages in the healthy, ongoing process of evolution. I wish that as art educators we are freed to relate to one another as caring human beings, sexual beings whose interactions are seen to be open encounters, potentially ripe and interesting. I wish that we might learn to take risks, and encourage our students to do the same. I wish that we be open and emboldened to learn “the secrets of our own hearts” by listening to others - artists, philosophers, mystics - who have something productive to say. I wish that we might learn to fly! Do I hope for too much? I don’t think so. Heraclitus, in 650 BC, spoke thus:

If we do not hope, we will not reach the unhoped-for, since there is no trail leading to it, and no path.

I wish that we learn to dance together, rejoicing, acknowledging our sexuality as a possibility rather than as a problem. T.S. Elliot, again, described a ritual of fruitful complementarity:

The association of man and woman
In dancing, signifying matrimony -
A dignified and commodious sacrament.
Two and two, necessar'y conunction,
Holding ech other by the hand or arm
Which betokeneth concorde.

Vive la différence!
The Path of the Initiate: In Search of the Holy Grail or is it the Golden Fleece?

JAN JAGODZINSKI

This was an irreverent/irrelevant staged performance wherein a schizophrenic voice was presented through a dialogue that answered itself as it moved from one side of a table to the other, speaking at itself, sometimes to itself. The audience was physically separated from the performer in a classical fashion: stage and audience. One end represented the voice of personal memories as an initiate into conference life; the other end represented the jaded view of a voice who bitterly questions the entire ritual. A tie was put on and taken off as the performer moved from one side of the table to its opposite. To represent the physical event as an image the page has been divided into two columns and the dialogue into two sections. The two columns represent voices in opposition; the left column being that of the initiate, the right column being that of a cynical critical voice. The two sections are referred to as the Drawing of the Body and Drawing of the Mind. The Drawing of the Body both literally and figuratively questions the way members of any discipline are seduced into meeting together at a central site, sight, or cite, while Drawing of the Mind speaks literally and figuratively to the ideological inscription/inscription which takes place as pilgrims are seduced by their own ‘lack’ into hearing the experts expound their theories and reproduce the legitimated reality.

The following is a fictional performance. Where I have used real names or what seem to be physical descriptions of real people, it is purely done in the interest of fiction. The account represented herein has been rewritten. Where then is the original?

Drawing in of the Body: The Site/Sight/Cite

Preamble: I always wanted to go to a National. As a graduate student I could never afford the luxury. Costs were outrageous and even my schemes of driving to New York, or Chicago seemed ridiculous. Many years of study had given me a repertoire of names and voices but there never were many faces to go with them. In the past I had always been fascinated and bewildered how discordant my projected image of the person was with the actual physical being. Personalities, strong voices constituted the field. Each year art educators would meet to Pow Wow and like the listener who hears the thunder of distant drums, I wanted to come in a little closer to gaze at the scene, seen of that ‘primal’ orchestration. US cities have always provided a certain fascination for me, perhaps through hype or perhaps by hearing others who had gone to such Pow Wows, big cities, seats of a State’s industrial power, were a real drawing card. And Spring seemed such a perfect time; a time to get away from it all and turn a conference into a holiday after a long winter of hard work.

The attraction to the NAEA was furthered for me by the location of my first conference site—New York. New York offered me a chance to “lap up” culture. All those museums, art galleries and New York lofts; all those opportunities to take in the intellectual life of a great city, all those opportunities to visit bookstores, not to mention a chance to listen to Larry Rivers “speak.” As I reflect, six years ago it was MOMA that was the attraction; today in Los Angeles it is MOCA. Six years ago it was Larry Rivers and this year it’s the opportunity to see the Hockney’s retrospective.

Each new conference site offered me a whole smorgasbord of tours to galleries, artist studios, architectural oddities. Each hotel, a labyrinth of exploration to find cheap, reasonable good food.

These trips, which were meant to be arduous, most certainly painful, have become our escape attempts. What took months, sometimes years to accomplish is done in several hours by plane. The body no longer experiences the journey. Like a television channel, we quickly change...
sets. Holy days have become holidays; what were once refuges have become resorts. What were once hostel which gave alms and food to pilgrims have become multinational chain hotels where we are wined and stuffed. What was once a sign of penance has become folly. All that was sacred sits gleefully in profanity. The holy figures and the places of their birth or death, sights/sites/cites of their Holy sepulchre have been replaced by a circuitry of 'white' hotels; the holy figures replaced by Mr. and Mrs. Art Education. And like the Crusades, which diverted the pilgrims to secondary sites of martyrdom and visitation of relics in order to buy souvenirs as proof that they had been there, we too wear our badges, purchase our paraphernalia to suggest an equal claim.

So what is this sight/site/cite which promises to center us? How does it create the desire so that one becomes convinced by the Brotherhoood of higher art educators? What makes you wear your badge so proudly? The pilgrim sites have typically been The Westin Chain of Hotels, Philip Johnson's monuments to capitalism or sites like Portman's Renaissance Center in Detroit. As the site/sight/cite changes from New York, Boston, New Orleans, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, Washington, the hotels begin to lose their memorability. The journey becomes strangely the same. Day merges into night and by the time the week is over you are completely exhausted.

A particularly obnoxious complex was Detroit's Renaissance Center, a misnomer if I had ever heard one. The 'city within a city' circular design caused much disorientation that, at times I didn't know where the exit was. Some stores I never saw again and as for the swimming pool, it was so windy that few dared to dip. Especially irritating were the guards who walked around at night signalling each other through their walkie-talkies. Apparently there was so much crime in the 'city' at night that it took over 300 guards to patrol it.

It is difficult not to see these pilgrim sites/sights/cites as phallic symbols that rise above the horizon line, dominating the landscape, puffed up by the countless hours of labour and worship by the faithful. These are centers of gravity where those in the hinterland are painfully reminded of their place in the hierarchy which lies somewhere in between their local sphere of influence and the real power which disseminates the "knowledge" through the official arms of its journals, organizational networks and so on.

**Drawing in of the Mind: Slogans, Experts, Business**

**Slogans:** The opportunity to hear many papers, to take back with me possible projects that I might carry out with my class (I had signed up for an experience institute), the chance to see what was the latest in technological innovations and updated materials, perhaps, above all, to meet and talk with fellow art educators, these were the most important tasks for me. To find out what other art educators thought, perhaps talk to some of those writers I admired and gain a better understanding of what should be done. In New York I met up with members of the Salon des refusés, members of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. Their name was so long that I still have to look it up each time I write it down. As for the slogans: hermeneutics and critical theory appeared often.

**The Slogans:** It is difficult, if not an impossible task to envision the conference from the eyes of an initiate, once jaded - always jaded. After six years of continued pilgrimage it is difficult not to become a cynic and not to see the national convention as a perpetuation of the illusion of centrality - order - and the belief all is well despite the incredible decline of art in our schools. It seems that every convention has its central slogans, the oxymoron of coherent jamboree of orchestration wherein all of us can come and go back to our separate hovels feeling that we have been baptized, dipped into the Ganges, blessed into a sacred mission - to spread "ART" to the Philistines. The badges are worn with pride. One year its "YOU GOT TO HAVE ART," another it is "ART IS WORK," and today it's "BACK TO THE FUTURE!"
Experience Institutes: Presenting my first paper was not like anything that I had imagined it would be. I had spent many, many hours preparing and rehearsing the script. I was armed with as many possible replies which were to be thrown at me. I was "blessed" with an 8:00 AM slot, the first day of the conference. I think 3 people showed. What was I to do? I shelved my prepared speech and turned the session into a discussion period. I have no clue how long it lasted but I left in disappointment.

Where were the hoards? Why had I spent all that time preparing for such a short encounter? Why weren't more people interested in social theory?

Finding where the sessions were to be held was, at times, a frustrating task. I kept looking at the hotel's floor maps included in the conference program, but they seemed of little help when a session was to begin in a few minutes. Often I would stop in the middle of a corridor, or sit by a handy couch to flip to the map and try to find the room again. I couldn't stop somebody and ask them where such and such a room was since most of the conference goers seemed equally lost—looking for their sessions. I remember dutifully finding the room I was to present in and memorizing the route so that I would not be late. Recently I have noticed that conference organizers have been placing signs outside the rooms to point the way.

Experts: Looking through the conference program was an experience by itself. Hundreds upon hundreds of sessions—so many that it seemed to me. Dutifully I carried the program around wherever I went. When the session turned out too boring, or dull or just plain "stupid," I would religiously flip through the days events hoping to find something that would spark me through its title. The names of the presenters meant little. Most of the names I knew appeared in either the general or super sessions. Going to super sessions was quite confusing. I sat there, along with the rest of the hoard in a semi-darkened ballroom. In the distance there were several small figures who spoke over microphones. Again disembodied voices with no faces. General sessions turned to be of two sorts: either somebody was getting an award, whom I had no clue about, or a panel was discussing a topic. These latter sessions were more insightful but the audience didn't get a word in edgewise and these sessions usually went on longer than scheduled.

Big Business and Superstars: I recall going from one booth to the next in the exhibitors section which was real hard to find. So many companies, so many new products, so many new books, so many new materials. I sort of walked from one booth to the next, scanning at some, flipping through books at another, fascinated sometimes by the freebees and the new video art, no different than the nineteenth century flaneur caught up by the window displays of consumerist dreams. I think I came out with a handful of business calling cards, several art books and new products I was going to tell my students about. I was surprised over the number of parties sponsored by companies and by state universi-

the monarchy in any national gallery. Former heads of state, their place immortalized, fixed by the portrait's likeness (so we would like to believe). Rather than the royal regalia art educators now appear in suits and ties, stylish dresses. These are measures of their respectability. Rather than gilded frames, they now appear in the conference program in boxes, bold dark lines surround them to let the initiate know that these are "super sessions." Mr. and Ms. Art Education have not only replaced the Holy Men, but have become the Kings and Queens and the royal art family. A Ms. M.W. is pictured in the conference program wearing pearls and we are told that she is a respected collector. Come On!
ties to attract graduate students. Such parties allowed for cordial and relaxed conversation. You can imagine my surprise to find out food and drink were free, that people wandered from one party to the next and that there were unusual rituals associated with this debauchery like riding up and down elevators, greeting fellow colleagues and exchanging State pins. Coming from Canada, one year the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design sponsored a party aided by Moose Beer Brewing Co.

Shamans: I have to admit I still do not know the entire organization of the NAEA organization, even after 6 pilgrimages. Sometimes I feel that I am living as a parasite in one small corner of the hotel in a huge convention site which, if I had not found a small group of compatible thinking people might have trapped me within its walls. I have heard of people not leaving the confines of their hotel to explore the host city in fear of being ‘rolled.’ Many will take the packaged tours where safety in number seems to be the order of the day and then there are always a few horror stories in circulation where real tragedy has struck which simply reconfirms the sense of playing it safe and seeing the ‘tourist’ sites.

Shamans: The Getty

It did not take long to identify who were considered to be the major players in the NAEA organization. They were the legendary ‘leaders’ who had established centers of art educational research: Barkan, Lowenfeld, Feldman, Eisman, Beittel, Smith, Lanier. These men had set the tone of the speak. Guards perpetually control the entrance ways as if someone illicit from the street will come in and get their 20% discount. I mean, really! The power of such companies as Crayola and Grumbacher and the myriad of tools and techniques which they promote, rather than freeing up the teacher’s time make her more busy. These companies help create a false desire that art may be reduced to a skill or technique, MORE HOLY GRAIL that will make the art classroom more manageable and fashionable.

Shaman(s): “As a child living amongst the Kwakiu people I once saw a shaman chant and dance about the bed of a dying woman. I read the account by Levi-Strauss’:

‘That the mythology of the shaman does not correspond to an objective reality does not matter. The sick woman believes in the myth and belongs to a society which believes in it. The tutelary spirits and malevolent spirits, the supernatural monsters and magical animals, are all part of a coherent system on which the native conception of the universe is founded. The sick woman accepts the mythical beings, or more accurately she has never questioned their existence. What she does not accept are the incoherent and arbitrary pains, which the shaman, calling upon the myth, will re-integrate within a whole where everything is meaningful.’

What the shaman does, according to Levi-Strauss is ‘provide the sick woman with a language, by means of which inexpressive physical states can be immediately expressed. And it is the transition to this verbal expression - at the same time making it possible to undergo in an ordered and intelligible form a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible — which induces the release of a physiological process, that is, the reorganization, in a favorable direction, of the process to which the sick woman is subjected.

What is the myth of the NAEA conference and who are its shamans? Who cures the “sick woman” in the illusion of the spiritual birth of “Back to the Future?” How do we make the sick woman well again by exposing the shaman?

Closing: As for the faces, it has taken many years to match the faces with the Voices. Slowly a general schema has evolved, hidden interests have been revealed. For me what has emerged is the complexity of the contradictions which we all live by and the struggle for ownership of the discourse on art education. The Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education has provided me a small plot, a toe hold from which to enter into that discourse in order to at least question it.

Closing: Like Bank Conferences which are often held in exotic places, there is always entertainment provided for the ‘wives’ (there are few women Bank presidents; can you imagine entertainment for husbands?) - hula dancing, exercise classes, shopping sprees, beauty care. A wife can always find something. And so it is with us — we can always find “something” at the National!
STOP ACTION
Tour of the NAEA Shrine

IT BEGINS:

Sounds (taped) of music voices coming & going coughing footsteps chairs scraping louder, louder, LOUDER and then:

STOP

!! Speaker enters, dressed somberly, a cowl about the neck. An long glance at each member of the audience, then:

!! Speaker speaks: "We gather together to speak fine arts blessing. We name them. We date them. We make their slide known."

a long silence: then !! Speaker

(1) lifts up a flute and plays a low-note vibrato,
(2) slowly squirts GLADE over the heads of the audience, and
(3) steps to one side as a slide of

- the Mona Lisa -

is projected on the screen.
The GLADE slowly settles, the droplets glistening in the projector light, the shadows speckling the cheeks, the chest, the landscape of -

- the Mona Lisa -

!! Speaker, gazing at
- the Mona Lisa -

speaks:

"It is true, isn't it? this wondrous feeling . . . when we let go of the thousand small choices, the endless hellos, the angst of self image when we let go of the Convention itself . . . and give ourselves over to 'PURE SEEING' when we just look at the image of

- the Mona Lisa -"

!! Speaker plays another low vibrato on the flute

"We are here."

exultant, eyes on screen, on
- the Mona Lisa -

"Once again, we are here!"

BUT THEN, from the audience

a gruff Voice: "Here, yeah. But where the hell is here?"

"Why... In the same place, of course!"

Voice: "What do you mean, the same place. Last year, you were in Boston. This year, you're in L.A. What's 'the same place' about that?"

"The cities aren't the same! It's the city within a city that counts and the city within a city that is the same. Here, only small things change. Atrium, no atrium Elevators, in doors or out Windows that open, or don't Room with a view, or not... but, then, you must know about that!"
Voice: "Yeah? Well I don't know about that! This in my first national and I find it a bit weird. Don't misunderstand, I've done a lot of conferences. I've even organized a few — but always at the local level."

Voice is standing now swaying about his body blocking the image of the Mona Lisa.

Voice: "Those are certainly different from this. Those we hold in a high school, a community college, a local museum. Those, you get to talk with the people that run the place. You see their exhibitions, their facilities. You learn about the community, the budget, the resources, the problems — the whole thing. Not like this!"

"Yes. Well, this is quite another . . . ."

Voice interrupts: "And then, you know, it's just for a day! You drive there with the other teachers, figure out the best route together, talk things over on the way.

"Yes. Well, let me . . . ."

Voice clearly upset: "And then too you pretty much know the presenters. After all, they're from the region. You can always check out what they say against what they do. Here! Good heavens, I've never seen so many people I don't know and that I'll never see again. I mean how am I supposed to know if they are telling the truth?"

"Yes...well...You are right about one thing: You have entered another world, the world of the city within a city. You've left behind the world of domestic details and parochial variation. You are now in an alternative reality, (excuse me sir...but could you please sit down....thank you) a reality which debates universal truths, which draws its passion from the intrinsic values of:

- the Mona Lisa -
  musical flourish
  from balance
  from dynamic tension
  from harmony
  from the pure act of seeing

  a pause

"But perhaps I can help you see the difference. I do a STOP ACTION TOUR about the place, one that has been very well received, if I do say so myself. We would leave this slide — very briefly — of the Mona Lisa and view other slides of the walls and spaces of our city-in-a-city and let them tell all.

"Yes ?

Good!

First let me help you feel more at home, I'll start with the hotel. As you probably know it in your own home town, as it still remains in small corners of large cities — the hotel as building within a city.
These were hotels for single travelers and local functions, in the center of town or near the railway station. Upright, practical, staunch, symmetrical, familiar within the skyline, like good citizens serving a clearly stated need.

We met one of them at the Boston Convention. Across one street from the Marriott & the NAEA. It was the Copley Plaza: small, compact, square; with an Entrance leading straight to check in and the stairs, an awning reaching from curbside to threshold, a doorman in ready attendance; with sidewalk Windows framing the lounge, the bar, the breakfast nook to passersby; with a rooftop Sign that reads in the night sky like a "Hello, my name is..." label. We perhaps noticed it most as reflections on the green glass reaches of the Marriott where the corniced brick frame of the Copley Plaza was turned into squiggles and shards.

The Marriott, on the other hand, is quite another story. Less the good citizen. More an amorphous congestion of forces.

And what forces! Look here how it sucks in the street Spits out the highway Dissolves a sidewalk Draws in a sidewalk and sends it out skywalking over the streets. Different, no?

And once inside the skin of the Marriott You’re not really inside at all. There’s a MotherNature tenderer, greener than all outdoors, blooming agelessly and There’s traffic, through revolving doors, up escalators, cross ramps, going all directions, no place to stop. Instead of a desk clerk, a traffic clerk to maintain the flow, not to still it.

And once through this web of mobility, these clover leafs at people scale......you finally arrive ......some place?

Not at all. Now there’s an interlocked webbing of cocktail bars and sushi counters cafe terraces and eating alcoves souvenir shops and fashion emporiums travel bureaus and adult toy stores.

pockets of activity cantilevered or sunken in trellised and veiled scattered about visible and re-visible glimpsed around aerial escalators through penetrated walls and open webbed sculptures surfaces? they are reflective or transparent, fractured with pattern or colorless dissolved ambiguous lights? they are moving, blinking, multiple, scattered, reflected and re-reflected.
Everywhere, there is a constant seduction, enticements, visible but out of reach, demanding full energy simply to arrive, draining all energy from issues of choice.

And then in each function area, themes are picked up and repeated in two-and three-dimensional forms which themselves glint, gleam, reflect, gentle concentrations within the overall texture moments of consolidation that only briefly if at all stop the eye . . .

Voice: "Hey, hey, hey. Just a minute. Just a minute. What do you mean 'gentle concentrations.' What you're talking about there is ART. You're looking at art there. At paintings and at sculpture!"

"Those images? No. Not at all. Those are decor, nothing more. This . . . ."

the slide of a 'gentle concentration' (a large floral painting) clicks off, and with a flourish of recorder music, the Mona Lisa appears on the screen

"... This is ART."

Voice: "The other isn't ART?
Those flower paintings? Why they look just like the work of Annie Heartfelt our hometown artist, . . . and she sells her work to Hallmark. But you say that that's not ART. Boy, what you learn at a National!"

No, no ART. real ART, is on slides, in museums.
But to return... through all these lights, surfaces, motions, spaces among the seductions of food, drink, clothes, gimmicks, . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . at the other reach of the magical maze of complexities.
through all of this, one is at last there, At last and finally arrived at openness stillness singleness
You are now at the Atrium.

Ah-h-h! The Atrium,
It reaches down to the lower levels of service into the nether regions of arrival & departure, of meeting & waiting, of storage & delivery and reaches upwards to the higher levels of aspiration, and towards a grid locked vista of moon, sun, stars, and sky.
The glass box elevator traces the vertical to the horizontal of the rotating sky lounge, the two framing a Dali-esque four-D transparent cross
The vital spine to the whole complex moving endlessly, whether empty or full Within the hugely expensive utterly open core.

Voice: "Yeah. Well. That's all very dramatic. It kinda blows your mind. But I've gotta problem. I didn't come here to eat chic and buy Fifth Avenue. I came to learn how to do my job better. I came to make sense. If you know what I mean. Did I make a mistake in coming at all?"
"No. No. All of that happens in back."

Voice: "In back?"

"Yes, yes. Here I'll show you. The meeting rooms. You need a map to find them. Once there, no problem. They are in a row on a hall."

Voice: "Whew, what a change of scene. Is this still the same building?"

"Yes, yes. This is the area for issues of the mind and of theory of the communication of one intellect with another."

Voice: "I guess that I saw one of those spaces when I got lost this morning. Small boxes, fluorescent lights, no windows; rug animated, audience silent; chairs like a marching band, people isolated."

"Yes. Well. It is in these spaces that one gets to hear the cutting edge of art education research; the programs of excellence from all across the states; about how the American people are being awakened to cultural literacy; . . . nay, to Civilization itself.

Voice: "Back in those little box rooms?"

"Yes, yes. That is where one touches the pulse of the profession. That is where one learns about Art in the lives of our children about Art as a vision of the future."

Voice: Well maybe that works for you with your art limited to objects on slides and in museums. My kids and my teachers. We live with the art that you call decoration. We camp out in a nature that goes brown in winter. We hang up our artwork in the school cafeteria.

I'm not sure about this city within a city, this empty atrium surrounded by food, drink, shops. It seems to me that those dark rooms without air and reached only by maps are a kind of black box therapy to sustain you in a space that you are hard put to make sense of."

"No, no, no. That is not all that there is in the back. For a practical man like yourself, there are the Experience Institutes and the Commercial Displays. They are just a bit further down the stairs and a bit further along the halls. Take a look at your map."

Voice: "On my map, those spaces look like basement storage: No color, no air, no music, no fountains, no vistas. Have I flown a thousand miles, and paid out a 1/2 thousand dollars to work out in a warehouse?"

"Well, we're concerned merely with questions of materials & techniques of, well, you know, of "hands-on" so why more? And I'm told that there are over a hundred displays and a wide range of new tricks for the classroom. I am certain that for you, it would prove splendid. You might prefer to go there right now?"
Voice: "No, no. You don't understand. My problems aren't solved by new tricks with materials or new research about learning. My problems are with the world around me, with being allowed to do what I already know how to do well, with helping my kids make sense of and feel hopeful within that world, with gaining the resources to offer them good choices.

These aren't the problems of a city in a city. They belong to the real city outside. I'm trying to teach my kids to protect sidewalks for pedestrians, to keep technology and commerce in their right place. I'm trying to work with my town to have fountains and music for everyone, not just so that specialists can see their own image in a million reflections."

"Certainly, you are taking the wrong approach. You should just stop your questioning and BELIEVE. It's like a visit to any shrine. The reason for going inside is that you BELIEVE."

- the Mona Lisa - reappears only this time, there is no music just a dead silence

Voice: "It's just... I don't know... It seems to me that all you've got of the Mona is your slide. You lost the rest of her way back. Back when you went into all of those little rooms without air or light for analysis and how-to Back when you shot skyward in glass elevators, head empty bank account overdrawn. Back when a teacher's association placed a national convention and a DC building over the grounded reality of regional dialogue. How in a dark room reached only by maps can anything happen that really matters? How do you answer questions like, like with the Mona for instance, I don't see how you would ever explain her smile, the smile of the Mona Lisa.

Voice is talking more and more to himself standing, absentmindedly, disturbed his body blocks out once again the image of Mona as he leaves!! Speaker unsettled sprays a final sweep of GLADE.

Alas! the nozzle is pointed the wrong way cough cough cough cough (untaped) cough cough : and IT ENDS
Self-Reflections in Organizations:
An Outsider Remarks on Looking at Culture and Lore from the Inside

MICHAEL OWEN JONES

As apparent from the title of my remarks, I am an outsider to this organization. I teach folklore courses at UCLA, which is one of five institutions in North America offering both the M.A. and the Ph.D. degrees in the study of folklore. I have been asked to speak in this session, in part because I give courses on folk art and aesthetics, fieldwork, and organizational culture and symbolism. As an outsider, as a researcher of organizational culture, and as the final speaker in this session, it seems to be my role to suggest a larger framework of study to which this mini-convention relates. That framework is the rapidly growing field that examines symbolic behavior and culture in organizations.

Professional Associations as Culture-Bearing Milieux

Like other human communities, organizations have their rites, rituals, and ceremonies. Even as we speak, a field of study is rapidly developing to research these traditions. Some of the books are Deal and Kennedy’s Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life; Organizational Symbolism, edited by Pondy et al.; Schein’s Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View; Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture, edited by Kilmann and Associates; Organizational Culture, edited by Frost et al.; and Sathe’s Culture and Related Corporate Realities.

For the most part, investigations of organizational culture or symbolism focus on business enterprises rather than not-for-profit service organizations. In the U.S. there are thousands of associations like the NAEA, however, with millions of members. These trade and professional associations represent a mind-boggling array of occupations, hobbies, and special interest groups (Samuelson, 1989).

For example, although I am not a member of the National Art Education Association, I am, I’ve recently come to realize, a member of nearly two dozen other organizations similar to NAEA. They range from the American Folklore Society to the Popular Culture Association. I am also a member of various regional and local scholarly organizations.

Like the NAEA, the majority of these associations have annual meetings. Many are in the spring - historically a time for rites of renewal. This
Remarks: What's In A Name?

Elleda Katan: Caucus Co-ordinator

Remarks on Re(Mark)! : or a response to Jan's arguments.

First, a strong word for Don Soucy's suggestion for shortening the title to the Journal on Social Theory & Art Education. It's easier to say and to print; it says all that needs saying; it's more importantly accurate — our Journal is THE Journal on Social Theory and Art Education. There is no other. A smaller print subtitle at cover bottom could say:

A publication of the Caucus on Social Theory & Art Education: An affiliate of the National Art Education Association

Second, a strong vote for some word, symbol, logo, image which is either linked to the title by a colon or by proximity or is integral to the title through typographical design, that (1) marries the visual to the verbal. That is after all what we are about. Not simply that our subject matter is the visual arts, but that as progressives we would replace the notion of the visual arts as remote, transcendent, and closed off with the notion of the visual arts as infiltrating all dimensions of daily life — and, in particular, the cover page of our Journal.

(2) is playful, irreverent, provocative. We are about the art(s) and about alternatives to conventional academic solutions. We even speak longingly of being about humor. How could the name/cover of the Journal reflect this dimension? What images from popular, folk, commercial arts could be given the terminal degree? What of Tom Anderson's Work-of-Art jigsaw puzzle? His was a daring try. One person garumphed that it was not sufficiently dignified. Well garumpher, design something that is both sophisticated and yet pokes a cunningly playful finger in the eye of convention.

Third, a vote against Re(Mark)! — in all its variations. That it is proposed is wonderfully productive. It stimulates consideration of just what we are about and of how we want to be known. Certainly, it's jostled me into a restlessness with our purely academic title and a search for something more.

However... while it is visual and playful, it is hardly accessible or vigorous. If the title of our Journal needs to be 'unfolded' by an expert in order to be appreciated (and I do appreciate it so much more now that Jon has explained it) then, no matter how clever the meanings revealed, I question its appropriateness to a Caucus publication. And the cleverness, it is all in the play of intellect. Where is muscle, sweat, strain, anger, love, and belly laugh humor?

And then there are the arguments given:

(1) Jon identifies the spirit of this title with deconstructive thought, and says: "postmodernist issues (and deconstructive thought) have infiltrated every department that I (sic) know [in science]...the art ed journals have only one essay on the issue.....The time is write/rite/right and ripe." Because a particular theory has caught the imagination of a [scientific] public is hardly reason to assume it necessary or appropriate to Caucus or to educational agenda. Some of the most deformed projects of so-called educational "research" are products of applying the latest scientific methods to educational matters.

(2) Jan tells us: "New rhetoric is needed to match the rhetoric of strong conservative forces," [as] "Canada and the United States [have] recently elected governments write/rite/right of center." Is it rhetoric that we need or better praxis? Just what is deconstructive
praxis? I find that very unclear. I know that they fancy themselves rebels. They deconstruct all claims to absolute knowledge and pooh pooh university niceties— all while collecting their university salaries and benefits. But what alternative do they offer to the practices they critique? A doctrine of textual indeterminacy. How does that open up the meanings of social groups and the possibilities of political opposition? What does it accomplish except to leave a cultural vacuum into which power-hungry authoritarians can impose their way? And Jan, with those gratuitous Dewey- and Feldman-bashing comments, you begin to sound like one of the authoritarian crew!

(3) And the arguments for “re.” No. It is not our texts that reveal us importantly, not our “frozen dialogical exchanges”. That’s a purely academic conceit. Texts are the medium of academics, and in a most human way, they would wish to believe their medium the pivotal force within human life. That is exactly what we would, as progressives, transcend. Texts are important only in their relationship to purposive actions and as partners to gesture, dress, intonation, thought, movement, work, play, etc. It is not our backs that we need to see; it is ourselves within the social whole, using and giving back to the earth and to each other. It is not freezing. It’s breathing. It’s dialogue.

Enough. What do I have to offer that’s positive? I think we should open up the discussion and consider a wide range of possibilities— especially some which are not verbal at all. I do have to confess to a love for MARKS, plural. Both writing and art-making are MARK-making....and MARK-making by the rich multiplicity of people that make up the planet’s population. Go plural and all three are there—visual, verbal, cultural variety of people. Perhaps design it as Amy has suggested, as a scatter pattern of the word, MARKS, repeated and written in dozens of languages and handwritings, printed and word processed.

And I’m simply wild about the explanation mark !!!!!!!! (There is no way that I can improve upon Jon’s arguments in its favor.) So consider

MARKS!

The Journal of Social Theory & Art Education

I know. There is the problem for some because this brings one to think: Karl Marx. That doesn’t bother me. He is, after all, the author of praxis.

That makes you unhappy? Then how about

We’d decide upon one design for the journal and hold constant to it over the years. However, each year could see variety of images drawn within its outline, images drawn from that year’s events.

Well. That’s my best shot. Ellen Katan

From Tom Anderson: Former Editor of the Bulletin/Journal:

"I think, overall, I like "Remarks" better than "Marks", because it does more for my ear. I don’t like the notion of "re" as in research or refer or re-examine or re-enter. It seems derivative and secondary rather than exploratory and elemental. I like the density which surrounds the concept of "Marks" or "Remarks" however. So how about "Art Marks"? That also rings nicely to my ear, sort of like "Arvarks" or "Jack of Hearts", and also has the capacity to carry many layers of meaning while distinguishing the journal with a punchy-succinct title. ("Studies" is the biggy in the field because the title is the briefest?) In addition, with a name like "Art Marks" no one will confuse the title as referring to THE MARX, since everyone knows Art was only Karl’s distant cousin. In spite of my flippancy, here, I’m seriously proposing "Art Marks" as a compromise choice. I really like Jan’s and Ellen’s contextualist notions and semantic twists and Ellen’s concerns about forceful imagery and name recognition and I think this covers both."

From Don Soucy: Present Editor of the Canadian Review of Art Education:

"I am glad to hear you (referring to Ellen and her comments) too agree with a shortened straightforward name for the Caucus Journal. Perhaps I am too conservative in these matters, but I agree wholeheartedly with many of your (again Ellen’s) comments about Jag’s (sic) defense of Re(Marks). Jag enlightened me about the many inferences in the name, and I appreciate his abilities to read into such things, but I guess I’m just not into cleverness when it comes to journal names. Furthermore, although I am now tenured and can afford to snub my nose at the politics of promotion, I think a clever name is unfair to our non-tenured colleagues whose promotion often hinges on impressing engineers with little interest in unfolding texts."

Remarks 135
From Mary Stokroki: Coordinator of the Seminar for Research:

"I am glad that the Social Caucus changed its publication name from the Bulletin to the Journal. My university... questioned the seriousness of such a publication called "a bulletin." I am not thrilled about the (re-mark) (sic) statement, which is playful and clever, but unintelligible to someone outside of the caucus. I am quite familiar with deconstructionist writing, but it does not entail poetic flights of fancy, although I do agree with Jon that deconstructionist writing exposes our myths and forgotten origins. Sorry Jon. Rather than the word "Remark," I suggest the word "Reinterpretations," or no leading word at all. All writing is an interpretation since it entails an explanation and an understanding of meaning (Ricoeur and Heidegger). Reinterpretations suggests a second or even a third dimension of understanding, all of which can be valid. Interpretation theory is dominant in socialist writing, and the philosophical form of phenomenology."

From Kristin Congdon: "The idea of renaming it (the Journal) "Marks" and association to Karl Marx does not bother me, but it may make tenure promotion difficult for some people. I have seen many an art department become quite nervous with Marx (Marks too?). I tend to like Jan's (sic) suggestion of "Remak" because it is associated (in my mind) with feminist works and activities, "re-member" and "re-vision." Also, my work is moving in the direction of postmodernism. Still, I must admit that I am a personal, perhaps even a bit selfish, preference. We may, indeed, lose members/readers/interested parties in all the postmodern jargon. I hate to complicate matters more, but how about this: The title could be: Journal of Social Theory and Art Education, and we could have one or two special focal issues called: "Re(mark)"

From Bob Bersson: Former Caucus Co-ordinator of the CSTAE:

What's in a Name? A new name for the Journal of the Social Theory Caucus? In one sense, not a whole lot. It's not a "live or die" issue. Our Journal has established itself as an important, vital organ for the profession. It attracts increasing numbers of readers and writers. Substantively, it is alive and well.

I would also argue that the visual appearance of the Journal is as important as the title, and in this area both the Journal and the Caucus Newsletter have made great strides. The covers of these two publications qualify as the most visually dynamic of our profession's print productions; our visual presentation says a lot about our organization, at least as much as the name change would. Tom Anderson, past editor of the Journal, and Arthur Guagliumi, editor of the Newsletter, deserve much praise for their creative and artistic contributions in this regard.

All this is not to say that a name change could not make a significant contribution. We have been concerned with effective names—for our publications, for our offices, for the Caucus itself—from the inception of the organization ten years ago. The better we can communicate who we are and what we are about, the better. In this regard, two conditions seem essential for any new name worth its salt: 1) that it emphasize our concern with the relationship between art/education and society; and 2) that it emphasize our critical and activist orientation.

To this end, I very much like the suggestion offered by Amy Brook Snyder. Amy argues that "remaking art education" is what we are all about. Such a phrase, "remaking art education," energetically asserts our critical stance and our commitment to activism and change, and when the name of our organization is added as subtitle, our substantive concern with art and society is also encompassed.

For me then, Remaking Art Education: The Journal of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education is a new name well worth considering. I think our diverse present and potential membership—frontline classroom and community activists, progressive curriculum developers, engaged critical theorists, administrators, and professors—would find such a title embraced and inclusive. The more I consider it, the more I like the title "Remaking Art Education." It has an ambitious and passionate ring to it, inspiration for old and new members alike.

Karen Hambrlen: Former Associate Editor of the Bulletin/Journal:

What's in a Name? What's in a Journal Title? A Title does not a Journal Make. Although I appreciated and enjoyed Jan's discussion of the Re(mark)! title change for the Bulletin, I do have various problems with such a change. I wish that I did not, but I believe that we need to consider the Bulletin (ergo newly named Journal) not just in terms of us, as members of the Caucus, but also in terms of the interests of nonmembers, of classroom teachers, and, yes, even in terms of the value systems of administrators. I concur with Don Soucy and Elleda that the title should be The Journal of Social Theory and Art Education. I would include The because, as Elleda points out, there is no other art education publication with our focus. Such a title is admittedly conservative, traditional, and a bit staid. It legitimates, and I do have problems with doing something for the sake of legitimation. That can be a double bind. But, I think that we need to consider not just our interests now, nor what we might think a social perspective should be, but rather have a journal that can adjust beyond the now or any one person's viewpoint. It needs to be elastic for the present and for the future. Unless we are going to consider a title change every ten or twenty years or more often, it seems that the title should be something that subsumes many possibilities and can still be applicable as changes develop. Our title also needs to provide a forum for articles that will not be questioned by the administrative powers that be. For those art educators not fortunate enough to have unquestioning support of their academic hierarchy, a publication needs to present an air of confidence—and a similarity to the general format of other research journals. Designating our publication as a Bulletin has caused problems for a number of people. At Louisiana State University, Dr. Nancy Johnson was told that a fair percentage of her publications would not "count." At another university, I was asked if the Bulletin was some kind of newsletter. Other individuals (usually women, it seems) have found their publications questioned if,
for example, their references do not conform to the APA style. These are maddening nit-picking administrative strictures. But that does not make them any less real, and until we, individually and collectively, come to the aid of the people who get caught in such inanities, we need to be sensitive to others’ less-than-optimum professional life-world demands.

I think that it is possible to overload the meanings of a title to the point where hardly anyone else knows what we mean. Our title is not the substance of our journal. It is just a catalyst for possibilities that are given life by the editor, authors, reviewers, and readers. Our title should not bear the full-load of meaning that we wish to be explored in our journal. The title of our journal itself should simply state the general focus of our content and then allow for a range of possibilities. The title of the newly named Bulletin should allow for postmodernist, modernist, and, yes even premodernist thinking. Social theorists are of many persuasions. Our publication has been inclusive; it has provided a forum of publication that might not, because of controversial content, be published elsewhere. This must be maintained.

I hope that Jan’s open letter on Re(mark) is published as an article or an editorial in the next issue. It is provocative and insightful and presents an exploration rarely found in art education literature. This is what the Caucus allows for and fosters among its membership and on the pages of its publication.

Amy Brook-Snider and Herb Perr in Dialogue:

Amy: Herb, I think this will be so much fun having a conversation on the computer about the Social Theory Caucus. Arthur said that he needs something for the Newsletter and this beats having to write an article. First, about the debate on the proposed change in title for the Journal, what do you think about “Marks and Remarks”?

Herb: Before I get to that, Jan’s statement in defense of Re(Mark)! was excellent. He almost convinced me to support that title. Eille’s response to Jan was equally strong and she almost convinced me. Here are some of my thoughts on the debate. Jan makes a significant point about a title that is activist oriented. A title that confronts potential readers and inspires them to think about its meaning further illuminates the content of the journal. I have a problem with Eille’s desire to have a more accessible title. Fortunately, we are not a popular consumer journal. A title that soothes and evokes fond memories from the reader is contrary to the philosophy of the Caucus. Oh, yes...on the other hand, as impressive as the title Re(Mark)! is, it is the other side of accessibility. Re(mark)! immediately conjures up Semiotics, Deconstruction, and other theoretical constructions. Rather than liberating readers from their “chains,” it entangles them in other’s theories, leaving some of us humbled, insecure (Amy says, ignorant), but most important it may not give them the power to question and act.

I have an idea about a potential title but Amy told me I already wrote a whole article, so I’d like to pass the keyboard over to her. Wait, she says, no, she wants to hear my title. OK! Do you know the progressive educational journal called Re-making Education? Well, why not call our publication Re-MAKING: Journal of Social Theory & Art Education. The word “make” suggests that we welcome the participation of rank and file art teachers writing about field-based experiences. I’m not sure about your Marks and Remarks. On the positive side, it promises a discourse, however, it sounds like a literary magazine. The title implies that discourse is primary. The content seems to be “ways of saying it.” Actually, ways of saying could include doing, making and acting, and really does speak about what the Caucus is doing. But I still think that the title isn’t provocative enough. What about Marks and Re-Marks? Amy is beginning to wonder if this approach is really a dialogue? So here’s her...

Amy: Well, with all that time to think and “sing along with Herb” I’ve changed my mind about my title since as you point out it is not as inclusive as it could be. I also don’t think we have to repeat the entire title of the Caucus in the Journal title; perhaps that could be at the bottom of the title page so it wouldn’t be so cumbersome. Your title Herb, is nice sounding but it suggests that we have to totally throw out all of what is past of art education and remake it anew. As I was rereading over your shoulder (a very different slowed-down experience from being in conversation—probably similar to the experience of hearing impaired using the TV), with much more time to consider your thoughts in progress as well as my own. I got a completely new idea for the title, sort of reminiscent of the journal Daedalus. It’s Deus Ex Machine. Don’t you love it? In the dictionary, it’s “the God in the machine,” a god introduced by means of a crane in ancient Greek and Roman drama to decide the final outcome. That’s the first dictionary definition, and I think it’s a metaphor for the vehicle of spiritual qualities that is what we call art. Unfortunately, this doesn’t cover the social stuff although I think that B. Brecht would have agreed that the nineteenth century convention of “Victoria’s Messenger” served an important function, so maybe it is included. This is a difficult task...
Helen Muth: Past Editor:
The recent Newsletter debate seems merely to be an undirected exercise. Considering that ART BULLETIN is a rather prestigious journal, a change in name from Bulletin for the Caucus journal for reasons of prestige seems suspect. And represents a loss of continuity assuming we have built some in the last nine years.

My preference is not offered in your recent letter, but nonetheless I will state my preference since I was unaware that such a change was being contemplated within the Caucus, not that I have moved as your correspondence implies. Hopefully, I have not failed to receive material for review.

I would stay with Bulletin and state on the front of the issue that it is the Journal for Social Theory in Art Education.

THE BULLETIN: Journal for Social Theory in Art Education
On the credits page, I would state that it is published by the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. I don't see this as a name change, per se. Others might. Otherwise I would be in favour of the shortened version Journal for the Social Theory in Art Education simply because it's shorter.

Tenure decisions will not be decided by what we call this publication. Those in "power" have the authority to decide which journals count. It's like "taste." I can say you don't have it and you can't prove that you do. And vice versa. Good faith in the quality of work or value of ideas is not a given. The politics of tenure is a many headed monster.

Robert Saunders: Art Consultant, Department of Education, State of Connecticut: And so/sow/sew dear Jan/Jen/John that is my interest. Before finishing, I would like to remark on (Re)mark! You missed a mark remark. To remark also means to mark again, and to mark means to mark one/won up, which is to score. To score means different things to a hustler, a composer, a teacher and a football player. In which case does rescore mean to score again in the same place? Ask the hustler?

You might add Taine (Hippolyte Adolphe-French philosopher and literary historian, 1828-1893) to the other side of your mirrored metaphor for whatever he is worth.

Some things i do not understand well enough yet. I could probably understand/standunder poststructuralism more if I had understood/stoodunder structuralism better. Postmodernism is easier because we lived through modernism which was everywhere therefore we thought we understood it because we were familiar with it which is not the same thing.

Anyway/anyweigh/anywhey you/ewe may or/oar maynot/MayKnot come/sum to/too/two my way/weigh/whey of thinking but/but/bute/but where does Deconstructionism end and Gertrude Stein begin (?)?

Book Reviews

Herb Perr, Making Art Together Step-by-Step
Illustrations by Seth Tobocman
Soft cover, 127 pages.

Do not bother with this book unless you are adventurous. Herb Perr expects you to travel on roads unmarked by the deepening ruts of today's heavy bandwagon traffic, often choosing paths that deviate from the four directions pointed to on the more trendy art education compasses. Follow Perr and you could find yourself in front of billboards, theaters, and window displays instead of museums and galleries. You're not likely to run into Ralph Smith.

But if you are ready for a little adventure, Perr and Tobocman may be just the people to act as guides. Their book contains 24 lessons, each with enough information to get you where you are going, but not so much that your total itinerary is a foregone conclusion. Although Perr has thoroughly scouted the trails that he is recommending, no two trips through this territory are likely to be the same.

The 24 lessons each require students to work together to arrive at an artistic statement that reflects their own social realities. As Perr describes them, "the projects range from the creation of socially concerned chalk symbols and a reinterpretation of advertising messages made by advertising agencies to the exploration of symbols representing an imaginary society" (p. 7). The resulting pieces may therefore be better categorized as applied rather than fine art, though projects such as "Performance Art: Multi-Media Presentation" (pp. 96-99) challenge those categories. The book also challenges categories such as Eisner's (1972) "essentialism" and "contextualism", since in Perr's mind the social context is part of the art's essence, so there is no dichotomy between the two. The degree to which you agree with Perr on this point may well determine your reaction to this book.

Perr also sees no dichotomy between individual and social goals. He takes a position in what Wygant (1988) describes as a long-standing but unresolved debate in art education, a debate illustrated by the contrasting views of Margaret Naumberg and John Dewey. Influenced by Freud, Naumberg believed the art teacher must stress individual values over social. Dewey, on the other hand, believed that it is through social experience that the individual becomes fulfilled. Mackey (1989) sees Dewey as the clear winner in this debate since "virtually anything a teacher does will be socially determined and will encroach in some ways on the 'freedom of impulse' that Naumberg was so anxious to protect." Perr, too, is on the same side as Dewey, with a stated aim of his book being:

JSTAE, No. 9, 1989
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MICHAEL OWEN JONES

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Like the NAEA, the majority of these associations have annual meetings. Many are in the spring - historically a time for rites of renewal. This
month, for example, I am participating in three conventions and one conference. Of these four events, three are occurring right now, a week after Easter (April 1988).

Structurally, the annual meetings of associations exhibit features in common. Most have speakers, break out sessions, committee meetings, a business meeting, luncheons, public receptions, private parties, awards ceremonies, a trade show, tours, social events, and an annual banquet. But conventions also differ from one organization to another and through time. One of the differences at the NAEA convention this year is that there is a mini-conference within the larger conference that examines NAEA conferences past and present.

The mini-conference is unusual in that it grows out of self-reflection - not research by an outsider but documentation and analysis from the insider by some of the members of the organization who are reflecting on their own experiences and inferences. Typically, however, the literature contends that organizational culture consists of underlying assumptions and values which members are unaware of or take for granted and therefore cannot articulate. Perhaps it is better to consider culture as sort of an automatic pilot, providing direction and focus for activities and decisions in a way that doesn't require one's full or even conscious attention.

Research on Organizational Culture, Folklore, and Symbolism

The concept "organizational character" appeared in the early 1970's. By the end of the decade, terms such as organizational "stories," "myths," and "ceremonials" were beginning to be explored in the administrative literature. But neither "culture" nor "symbolism" was in the lexicon of management until very recent years.

In October of 1980 Business Week carried an article titled "Corporate Culture: Those Hard-to-Define Values that Spell Success or Failure." The focus was on businesses that had tried to implement various strategies of expansion - mergers, acquisitions, new product lines - but that had failed because of beliefs and ways of doing things in the companies which resisted these new strategies but whose existence was unknown at the time. When the history of organizational culture studies is written, a particularly important work to be cited appeared in 1980, this time in a scholarly journal published in the Academy of Management Review, and authored jointly by Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce. It was called "Organizational Symbolism: A Topic to Expand Organizational Analysis."

"The term 'organizational symbolism,'" write the authors, "refers to those aspects of an organization that its members use to reveal or make comprehensible the unconscious feelings, images, and values that are inherent in that organization" (p. 77). Organizational symbolism includes what the authors call verbal symbols, such as myth, legend, story, slogans, jokes, and rituals; and material symbols, such as logos, awards, badges, pins, and so forth (p. 80). Most of these forms of symbolic behavior are evident in a convention.

According to Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce, "Symbolism expresses the underlying character, ideology, or value system of an organization. In making this character comprehensible," they write, "symbols can reinforce it or can expose it to criticism and modification" (p. 77). As other presenters in this session have indicated, the stories that people tell, the customs they engage in, even the ways they organize and decorate their spaces for meetings, meditation, and marketing communicate much about attitudes, beliefs, or concerns.

Granted, organizations are culture-bearing milieux. And symbolism pervades them. The Question arises, so what? Why study symbolic behavior and culture in organizations?

Why are Culture and Symbolic Behavior Important?

Interest in organizational culture developed at a time of severe economic recession in the U.S. In search of causes and cures, researchers closely examined America's highly successful foreign competitors. They discovered a different "style," "system," or "culture" of management. In its emphasis on cooperation, participative decision-making, and care and concern about employees and customers, this system differed from what tended to be taught in American graduate schools of business, and practiced in many factories or offices.

Awareness of the existence and importance of symbolic behavior in organizations occurred at the same time. For decades, the dominant model in conceptualizing organization was that of the machine. In terms of scientific management, the ideal in organization design was to create a system that would run with machine-like efficiency. It rarely happened, however. Despite so-called rational, scientific approaches to the engineering of organizations and jobs, there was still the human dimension to organizations.

The concept of organizational culture and symbolism attracts a following because it offers "a way to address the interactive, ongoing, creative aspects of organization..." (Jelinek et al., 1983, p. 331). No longer are organizations viewed as simply technological systems. Nor does the mechanical model seem appropriate. Instead, organizations are being conceived of as "social realities," human creations (Jelinek et al., 1983), and symbolic and aesthetic phenomena (Jones, 1988).

Imagine going to work in an organization devoid of symbols. Only tangible, explicit, instrumental objects would exist," writes Richard L. Daft (1984, p. 199). "This organization would have no retirement dinners, no stories or anecdotes, no myths about the company's past," no metaphors and sayings, and so on. There would be little communication and virtually no interaction, because these are largely symbolic activities. Reduced to a mechanical system, the organization would yield goods and services in a robot-like fashion (if at all).

"An organization designer's dream? More like a nightmare," writes Daft, for "an organization without symbols would be unworkable for human beings... Employees receive a wide range of cues from symbolic elements of organization. Symbols help employees interpret and under-
stand the organization and their role in it by providing information about status, power, commitment, motivation, control, values and norms. In other words, the culture which in turn affects climate and behavior.

Although the field of organizational ethnography is in its infancy, mounting evidence suggests the central importance of culture and symbolic behavior in understanding and changing organizational climate, improving leadership, and enhancing communication and cooperation. Indeed, culture and the symbolic have been implicated as major determinants of organization effectiveness and individual satisfaction (Schein, 1985; Sathe, 1985; Jones et al., 1988).

This mini-conference on the conference as ritual contributes to the growing body of literature exploring the impact of culture and symbolic behavior on the character and functioning of organizations. Indeed, the mini-conference addresses topics that have seldom if ever been examined. One is the meanings, values, and assumptions that lie behind and are expressed through the conceptualization and decoration of space. Surprisingly, there is little research on any aspect of organizational material culture, despite the fact that, for example, organizations physically occupy space, that organizations institutionally design and allocate that space, and that their members personalize the space that is assigned to them.

Another matter brought up at this conference but rarely discussed in the literature on organizations is the concept "ambience." Instead, the meteorological term "climate" continues to be relied upon although there is no consensus as to its meaning or how to measure it (Naylor, 1980). Perhaps worse is the connotation of the word: people might complain about the climate but there is little they can do to change it. While this might still be true of natural phenomena like the weather, we are coming to realize that organizations are human creations. As the presentations by Taylor and Pearse demonstrate, the character and quality of an organizational milieu are very much an outcome of interpersonal relations and their symbolic expression. Therefore, the appropriate concept seems to be not climate so much as ambience. And the word "ambience" is fundamentally an aesthetic concept. Herein lies an important fact.

Organizations have been studied largely by people trained in quantitative methods, not qualitative research. It is in the nature of questionnaires, poles and so on that they distance the researchers from the people whose beliefs and behavior are studied. This research is almost mechanistic, like the model and paradigm on the basis of which organizations have been studied, designed and managed for decades. In contrast, qualitative methods require the perspective of the insider, and focus on individuals' motives as well as the community of shared symbols, sentiments, and meanings. Uniquely, the participants in this mini-conference on the conference as ritual are examining the organization from the inside, as members who are using largely qualitative methods. Perhaps most significant, the organization in question is one composed of art educators. Since their focus is on artistic phenomena, they are more likely than most researchers to examine the aesthetic qualities of organizations.

Conclusions

Two major reasons for researching most anything about the human condition are to understand the phenomenon in question and then, armed with this understanding, to act - hopefully in such a way as to perpetuate that which functions for the common weal and to improve that which works against human welfare.

At this NAEA convention (8-12, April 1988, Los Angeles), nearly a dozen presentations in two half-day sessions have explored how occupational identity, group awareness, and expressive behavior are displayed, acknowledged, reinforced, challenged, and sometimes manipulated during the annual convention. Much has been learned about human behavior, about organizations, and about behavior of people within a particular organization. In these discoveries are ramifications and implications.

Amy Brook Snider and her colleagues have raised some of the most important questions one can pose about an organization. What is its system of values, its cherished beliefs, and the symbols that express these? How do people affect, and in turn how are they affected by, the organization? How can communication be improved, leadership enhanced, and the organization's goals strengthened?

In addressing these questions, this mini-convention reinforces some aspects of the character and value system of the organization while simultaneously exposing other aspects to critical scrutiny and change. This is what much of symbolic behavior in an organization does: either reinforcing the culture or challenging it. The end result is often the same, that of improving the organization and helping it work for, rather than against, people. This mini-conference may be a model for how members themselves can reflect on the culture and lore of their organization, gaining greater understanding and also taking action.

Definitions of Terms and Concepts

Organizational climate

"There are few constructs in organizational psychology as confusing and as universally misunderstood as the construct of organizational climate," writes Naylor (1980, p. 251). "The major source of this confusion centers around the extreme difficulty that has been experienced in attempting to define climate." Although there is controversy about its meaning and how to measure it, organizational climate generally is taken to be how members perceive an organization's practices, the effects of this on ways of thinking about the organization, and the impact of both on members' behavior (Tosi, 1985, p. 129; Naylor, 1980).

In this conceptualization, "climate" as a metaphor is true to its meteorological origins. That is, climate as a geographical phenomenon refers to the atmospheric conditions or weather conditions in relation to temperature, degree of dryness or humidity, wind, clearness of the sky and so on as these affect life in a particular region. Climate is a given; organisms can react or respond to it but not alter it. (This is in keeping with the mechanistic
paradigm that has dominated organizational theory for decades, and fits the mechanical model of organization; but with the shift to a more organic paradigm and the use of culture as root metaphor, the construct "climate" seems to be a "survival" or example of "culture lag."

Ambience, on the other hand, arises out of a combination of actors, and the relationships, and settings over which human beings certainly do have control. Most dictionaries define the term as the mood, character, quality, tone, atmosphere of an environment or milieu. Ambience is, thus, an aesthetic or atmosphere of an environment or milieu. Problems may be assigned to human interaction which also are the product of human creation that both affects and is affected by people's identities, attitudes, and interactions. As such, it seems a more appropriate construct in the study of organizations, which are also human artifacts.

Symbolic and Culture

Nearly everyone agrees on what symbolic means. The word "symbol" refers to a visible sign of something invisible, such as an idea or a quality. Problems arise in application. Virtually anything and everything may be assigned meaning by anyone at anytime. Some symbols are individual; others are social. Meanings change. This is probably why some researchers of organization behavior (e.g., Schein, 1985) eschew the documenting of stories and other symbolic forms as sources of information about assumptions and values. However, most of our communication and interaction takes the form of narrating, the use of metaphorical speech, ritualizing, and so forth - which folklorists have long recognized as traditions or folklore, that is, symbolic forms and processes of communication, which are manifested in people's interaction and exhibit continuities or consistencies over time or space, respectively.

No one agrees on the meaning or components of culture. To some, culture is simply "how things are done around here" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) while others consider it shared values (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Yet others conceive of culture as both customs and traditions on the one hand, and values on the other (Louis, 1980). Or it is basic assumptions that determine espoused values which then are expressed in visible artifacts (Schein, 1985).

I use the word "culture" to refer to pervasive or dominant assumptions and values as well as the customs, traditions, and other symbolic forms and processes that communicate them but also are affected by them. For example, a ritual (a symbolic form) or the act of narrating (a symbolic process) may express organizational values which are informed by basic assumptions about nature and human activities; but people's assumptions as social and values may be influenced by the ritual or the act of narrating as an event and communicative process. You cannot say that "the culture is expressed symbolically;" rather, symbolic behavior (especially folklore) as expressed symbolically. "Climate" or "ambience" is the character of the milieu in which the culture as a whole produces, i.e., a "pleasant, friendly environment in which to work, with cooperation and support of all members including management," or something else.

For some, "symbolic" connotes superficiality as opposed to substance. Many managers and organization theorists, therefore, differentiate between the "instrumental" and the "symbolic" (e.g., Pfeffer, 1981). Computers, funds to maintain operating expenses, and so on are practical matters. However, their presence in one unit and absence in another, or the ease or difficulty of obtaining them from higher up, may be interpreted as indicative of beliefs, attitudes, and values in the organization; hence, these things and the behaviors that surround them are seen as symbolic. In addition, if it generates cohesiveness or enhances performance, then expressive behavior (e.g., rituals, language, or stories) has immediate, practical consequences and therefore, although "symbolic," is also highly instrumental.

To many, a "leader" is a charismatic figure, inspiring others and causing them to behave in ways they probably would not have without his or her influence (Hunt, 1985; Lantis, 1987). A leader manages. But a manager also leads, setting the tone of an organization. Because they are expected to provide guidance and resources as well as feedback, recognition, and rewards, managers become symbols: what they say or do is meaningful, and is assigned meanings. It is essential, therefore, that managers be aware of what they are communicating through the things they do (or don't do) and how they do them.

Many standard survey instruments and assessment tools are interpreting something elusive, ephemeral, and often ambiguous as symbolic communication and interaction, or that which is so taken for granted as assumptions and values. Qualitative methods are essential. But field-based studies of organizational culture rarely ever reveal the specific procedures employed in inquiry. Even contributors to Kilmann et al. (1985) do not provide detailed discussions of how to gain control of the corporate culture in research or management. Guides to cultural research (Schein, 1985; Sathe, 1985) offer only generalized procedures. What is required at this stage is to turn to an extensive body of ethnographic literature, much of which seems to have been overlooked in organization studies, and to render the most promising techniques serviceable to research on specific organizational issues.

One way to obtain information about climate or ambience, for example, is to observe people's demeanor and countenance, dress and appearance, personalization of work space, and social routines including ritualistic interaction. Telling in this respect are the presence of or absence of joking, foodsharing, festive events, and so forth. Listening to the stories they tell and analyzing the expressions they use are likewise helpful. Specific questions might include "What's it like to work here? Why is it this way? What gets done, or does not get done because of this?" Ask for examples. Elicit stories and metaphors.

To uncover organizational assumptions and values, one must observe and inquire about such matters as those indicated above as well as communication, recognition, rewards, decision-making, and so forth. One can request descriptions of "critical incidents" or "organizational dramas," noting recurrent themes indicating whether changes were by constraint or choice (the difference is wording between "forced," "caused," "we had to" versus "decide," "intention," "our desire was"); isolating claims of unique-
ness (and analyzing their nature); and identifying goals, objectives, and philosophy. To discover notions about the nature of human nature, one could ask for examples of (and elicit stories about) successful as well as unsuccessful individuals in the company, whom one sees as a leader (and why), and the kind, amount, and usefulness of training. Yet other queries can solicit ideas about the nature of human relations and activities, time, and the basis of decisions in the organization.

The inquiry also needs to differentiate espoused from latent values, the ideal from actuality, and the degree of consistency between what is professed and what is practiced. In doing so, the researcher must pay particular attention to behavior that is symbolic, i.e., assigned meanings and believed to be meaningful. Most of the symbolic behavior in organizations is one or another form of folklore.

Organizational folklore

By "organizational folklore" I mean the subject matter for study, which may consist of, variously, folklore in organizational settings, folklore about organizations, or examples of folklore as instances of organizing. For example, in the Academic Resources Center Math-Science Tutorials - one of many units being studied at UCLA in a pilot project on management - all three kinds of "organizational folklore" are evident (Jones, 1987). A softball team and its games, annual Halloween parties and other impromptu, spontaneous, and ad hoc traditions exemplify folklore as instances of informal organizing. Stories about members or former members of the unit, and stories told by others about the unit and its members, are examples of folklore concerning organizations. A whole host of traditions generated in tutorial sessions, among networks of tutors, and among the various levels of informal organizing. In other words, the referent is not just occupation; it is organization. Hence, the subject matter is not simply or exclusively "occupational" lore. In addition, there are implications and ramifications for understanding the concept organization and improving existing organizations.

By "organizational folklore studies" I mean that inquiry into expressive forms and processes manifested in people's interactions in which the concepts of organization and/or organizing are primary. An analysis of how traditions are spontaneously generated and informally organized, a study of informal organization within a formal and enduring institution, and research on the impact of formal organization on folklore (and vice versa) - all are examples of organizational folklore studies. So, too, is considering the implications of folklore for improving work conditions, management philosophy and attitude, and organizational design. "Organizational folklore studies" extend "occupational folklore research" when it recognizes that some of the traditions are generated within, about, or because of organizations. Organizational folklore studies also develop and extend occupational folklore research by consciously exploring the concepts "organization" and "organizing" and/or by considering the relationship between traditions and the character of the organization in which they are manifested. For more discussion and exemplification of organizational folklore and organizational folklore studies, see Michael Owen Jones, 1987.

References


Discussion

An open letter to members of the Caucus on Social Theory & Art Education: A remark on Re(mark!)

In the last Caucus Newsletter, we announced the results of the poll about the name of the Bulletin of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. Of thirteen responses received, ten supported the change from Bulletin to Journal. There were six votes against the introduction of an additional word and flavor into the title: two because they did not like the esoteric nature of the suggested word(s); two because they did not want a greater length to the title. One suggested reducing the name to the Bulletin: Journal on Social Theory and Art Education.

Of the seven who voted favorably, preferences distributed themselves:

- Re(Marks) = 2;
- Re(Mark) = 3;
- Re(Mark)! = 1;
- Re(mark) = 1.

Readers with a particular passion were invited to write up their arguments for the Newsletter and so win converts to their persuasion. The following are the results of that invitation: -Elleda Katan

Dear friends,

As you know, due to the hard work and continual vigilance and perseverance of such members as Elleda Katan, and Arthur Guagliumi, a tally of the votes for the possibility of the journal's new name Re(mark!): Journal of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education was defeated—by a narrow margin I should add. None of us (I hope) do not misrepresent the membership) felt that the word “bulletin” should be retained because
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the submissions of articles have a quality about them that deserve the recognition of a refereed journal. This move helps us to continue to legitimate ourselves at the universities and play the publishing game with some control. More importantly, it has (on some occasions) enabled us to write material normally too political to be published elsewhere. Unfortunately, we need many more such articles that lean over the edge. Nevertheless, we also purport to be a democratic organization and, let’s face it, during National Art Education conventions which are attended by those who can afford to go, whose professional development depends on such affairs and who continually band together under the label of this Caucus, there are likely to be Dionysian moments of madness when crazy schemas are cooked up. This was one of them, however I would like to defend the madness of that moment. To suggest that the re-naming of the journal to Re(mark) is to say that it is a remarkably great, nay incredible fortuitous idea. In this letter I wish to remain within the democratic guidelines and argue, nay beg members to reconsider the evocative force and potential role this Caucus might have in a postindustrial, postmodern world. What follows is the type of rational I wish I could have written as an editorial for the new volume of Re(mark)!

My primary argument to capture your vote is to consider the incredible play of meaning that the title “Re(mark)” would provide. This play of meaning comes write/rite/right from what many semiologists have written about: the syntagmatic and paradigmatic play of the field of words within the title’s horizon. Joyfully, I point out (in the sense to both direct and identify), that the word “mark” nesting within the enclosed brackets ( ), framed, if you like - refers both to the written word and to the drawn visual image. It bridges, what I would argue, to be a false dichotomy between art and writing, the fondness of art educators to quote Susanne Langer’s dichotomous views between art as a non-discursive ‘symbolic language’ and the written language, - which now becomes a discursive, logical form, burdened with fixed association. The postmodernist tenets of deconstruction have put such dichotomies in question. Poststructuralists treat both the visual and the written as text questioning the position of the subject as s/he views/reads the text. Dichotomies plague art education. They plague the entire project of Western metaphysical thought. Why should our corner of the market be an exception? Don’t art educators antiteach? Don’t we believe in the more natural and pure studio activities where the classical activities of painting, printmaking, sculpting, visual design go on? Why bother with computer tech, photography, video, film arts? Don’t we still dichotomize crafts/art, popular art/high art, kitch/elite art? In each case one term dominates the Other and defines the Other. (Like feminists who argue from a poststructuralist persuasion that in the dichotomization of man/woman, woman is the subordinate term, the Other which is defined in terms of the male significer. She is non-male, not a man. Her differences are ignored). Art educators attempt to keep the visual experience pure. The work of art is supposed to speak on its own; intuitively, transcendentally, essentially - magically. An artwork is self-sufficient, closed, requiring no written documentation; written words merely get in the way. At their best, they are supplementary for they take away the visual experience of the artwork. Yet, no matter how hard art educators attempt to chastise the written print from the visual, it continues to creep in, in all manner of ways: sometimes directly, as in the work of conceptual artists, as titles (some works are purposefully misnamed to increase the ironical play of the title and the visual), as catalogues where criticism written from a postmodern position is as difficult to decipher as the works themselves. No longer do the art critics find favor with the public. The public becomes annoyed that they are not doing the Deweyian thing - offering helpful explanations to a naive audience about what the artworks mean. Critics are no longer explaining the texts, rather through their criticism they are attempting to re-write/re-rite/re(right) them. The criticism becomes a supplement to the exhibit in order to de-frame them. Pointing to the blindness of a visual exhibition is the height of postmodern irony. Another obvious way which writing creeps in is through the voice of the teacher, the curator, the museum educator in dialogue with students about the exhibition or any individual work. You know, - through the infallible Feldman method. Poststructuralists have really had fun with this one. Derrida was one of the first to point to the phonicentric bias of presence which is claimed to be superior to the silent written text. A written text, of course cannot ‘speak’ back, whereas a live body can qualify any ‘misunderstandings’ in the emerging dialogue. It has taken about two decades of his continual deconstruction of the binary opposition of the voice/written word to show how both sides belong to the same linguistic sign system. It is, paradoxically, in the ephemeralness of our good intentioned dialogue that children are socialized into the normative modernist belief that art is something private, hung up on walls, in galleries or put out for public display for critique, a product which may also be bought and sold. By freezing the dialogical exchanges when recording the event (through audio tapes, and video tapes) it is possible to rewrite/re-rite/re-right the event; to expose the blindness of the dialogical exchange. Poststructuralist anthropology is wise to this — why can’t we be?

I am delighted by the prefix “re” which exists outside the protective brackets of the (mark). In this sense the (mark) becomes the sight/site/cite of écriture, (I thought I would use this word only once. Its special meaning in French poststructuralist lingo is a particular form of writing/rite-ing/righting which exposes the blindness of texts which are essentially ‘author’less. The notion of ‘the death of the Author’ is a common theme in antihumanist debates who have redefined the subject as being decentered. It is a sobering thought as I write/rite/right this letter knowing that I am blind to my own Self, despite authoring the text with a small a and a small i. Someone must deconstruct this text to give me insight into myself. I must listen to the Other. For me that is a very humbling experience. — I also know that this is the most difficult thing for me to do, - to swallow my inflated ego.)

The prefix “re” positions the subject as a re-examiner, a re-lector, a re-interpreter who again, re-reading, re-writing, re-drawing the frames of art and education that frame us. And here is what delights me more. The original sense of the Latin use of re is ‘back’ It is our ‘back’ which we cannot see - perceive. That is why we need écriture, a writing/rite-ing/righting to expose our ‘back.’ Gasché (I could not resist beckoning another
sight/site/cite) calls this 'back' - the tain of the mirror. Tain is tinfoil which is put on glass to make it become a mirror. What is being suggested by writers such as Gascâ is that we cannot reflect on our reflection as the humanist tradition thought. We are 'blind' to the tain of the mirror. We are blind to what is making our reflection possible to ourselves. We are blind because of our 'back.' What an irony for visual arts education! If reflecting on our reflection won't expose our blindness — what will? Ectriple of course. And what does écriture do? Why it exposes the tain of the mirror - our 'back.' In the use of the triple word pun write/rite/right and sight/site/cite it lies between the play of the visual and the written. We are neither left brained not right but use both — fine, but the transformation takes place in the corpus collosum which is absent when we are present to ourselves. (okay, enough of that medical, physiological crap — too reductive). To make one last jargon statement - to expose our 'back' we need to turn ourselves around. The fancy word is that écriture has to create an aporia. Such an aporia is in complete contradiction to the identification of what attracts the viewer/reader in the frame. Any chosen tack should make us cautious, for in the 'hailing' (Althusser) of this track our own ideology is enforced and reinstated. No new insight/in-site/incite emerges. If we cannot do that for ourselves, the critic must show us what is 'framing' our 'readings' of the text.

I come now to the exclamation mark! The exclamation mark, for me, does two things. First, it is a reminder that writing, that is script is visual. Scriptural visuality which is so evident in hieroglyphic writing and continued to be maintained through calligraphy has been lost through standardization by the modern means of reproduction and the belief that knowledge (as information) is found in cognition, in the invention of the book which is a closed text. I could fill out the background of the standardization of spelling, the standardization of meaning through dictionaries etc. — but you know what I mean. Secondly, the exclamation mark as a visual remnant, marginal to the written text, is a reminder that exclamationary expression is one of an outcry. Exclamatory feeling is emphatic, painful, strong, loud, angry, full of surprise. Such feelings characterise the aporia of deconstructive écriture. The exclamation mark embodies the irony of a visual arts journal which deals in blindness: the reader and the writer/rite/righter are as much the "marks" as are the essays - the journal's exclaimable dis "contents." They will leave their mark on the sight/site/cite of the reader. Too long we have been caught by the positivistic, enlightenment vision of the "book" where all knowledge is still to be found within its "frame." The writing of such journals, done in proper APA style to standardize the 'look' of scholarly information, is dead, not deadly, not exclaimable. Life is left carrying the exclamation mark under its armpit. But we (you and I) have a chance to en-title a journal which intentionally "de-frames," which makes us examine our borders and the policemen who control them. We (you and I) have a chance to 'scribble,' to use the modern means of computer electronics to implode the visual with the written.

If this journal is to differentiate itself, be different from other journals in art education, I would argue it must turn toward the debates of postmodernism. Journals such as Art and Text, and October, ought to give us some encouragement. So Re(mark)! has that wonderful place in the signifying system of our language to examine the hidden site - to discover our secret hiding places, to become children again at play. Both the visual and the written may be played with in apA, ApA, PaA, PAA...-style! It is an 'inexplosive' tie-tell, to allude to Lyotard. It collapses and erases the two separate spheres.

I realize that poststructuralism and postmodernism is a preoccupation of mine and many of the ideas expressed above have been explored by many writers and artists. However, the art education journals have only one essay on the issue. Absolutely unbelievable considering that postmodernist issues have infiltrated every department that I know (Science has chaos theory and the poetics of micro and macro physics to play with). We, as a Caucus, have a chance to raise the entire critique of modernism which pervades our schools and the intellectual leaders of art education. The time is write/rite/right/r and riper. New rhetoric is needed to match the rhetoric of strong conservative forces, who wish us to go "back to the future." I would argue it is the wrong 'back' that we should go to. The issues are crucial to countries, like Canada and the United States who have recently elected governments that are/rite/rightcenter in order to continue their support of multinational interests which continue to exploit people and slide Gaia into further ecological disaster. It is often said that an editor, particularly a neophyte like myself, should not take strong sides, should remain neutral, should allow all manners of essays as long as they are "well written" to APA format. It has been said that changing the journal's name to Re[mark]! is too gimmicky. I say just the opposite. I am not naive to think that floods of "exclamatory," deconstructive essays shall pour into my desk, but I do believe that many Caucus members have the ability to write/rite/right against the grain. Let us make the initial move towards such a direction by voting for a tie-tell change: Re[mark]!

Sincerely yours,

J. Jagodzinski

Antieditor

PS. I hope you, the member, didn't mind the playfulness of the text. It is serious-as the matter is serious. I further hope you don't mind the intentional use of we when I desired to position you on my side, and the conscious use of you, when I wanted to address you as Other. The deconstructive space is the "" which exists between the i/eye. If you want to address this sight/site/cite, please do so through the Newsletter or perhaps as a commentary in the upcoming journal itself.
Helen Muth: Past Editor:
The recent Newsletter debate seems merely to be an undirected exercise. Considering that ART BULLETIN is a rather prestigious journal, a change in name from Bulletin for the Caucus journal for reasons of prestige seems suspect. And represents a loss of continuity assuming we have built some in the last nine years.

My preference is not offered in your recent letter, but nonetheless I will state my preference since I was unaware that such a change was being contemplated within the Caucus, not that I have moved as your correspondence implies. Hopefully, I have not failed to receive material for review.

I would stay with Bulletin and state on the front of the issue that it is the Journal for Social Theory in Art Education.

THE BULLETIN: Journal for Social Theory in Art Education

On the credits page, I would state that it is published by the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. I don't see this as a name change, per se. Others might. Otherwise I would be in favour of the shortened version Journal for the Social Theory in Art Education simply because it's shorter.

Tenure decisions will not be decided by what we call this publication. Those in "power" have the authority to decide which journals count. It's like "taste." I can say you don't have it and you can't prove that you do. And vice versa. Good faith in the quality of work or value of ideas is not given. The politics of tenure is a many headed monster.

Robert Saunders: Art Consultant, Department of Education, State of Connecticut: And so/sow/sew dear Jan/Jon/John that is my interest. Before finishing, I would like to remark on (Re)mark!: You missed a mark remark. To remark also means to mark again, and to mark means to mark one/won up, which is to score. To score means different things to a hustler, a composer, a teacher and a football player. In which case does rescore mean to score again in the same place? Ask the hustler?

You might add Taine (Hippolyte Adolphe-French philosophe and literary historian, 1828-1893) to the other side of your mirrored metaphor for whatever he is worth.

Some things I do not understand well enough yet. I could probably understand/standunder poststructuralism more if I had understood/stoodunder structuralism better. Postmodernism is easier because we lived through modernism which was everywhere therefore we thought we understood it because we were familiar with it which is not the same thing.

Anyway/anyweigh/anywhey you/ewe may or/oar maynot/MayKnot come/cum 10/too/two my way/weigh/whey of thinking but/butt/bute/beut where does Deconstructionism end and Gertrude Stein begin (1)?

Book Reviews

Herb Perr, Making Art Together Step-by-Step
Illustrations by Seth Tobocman
Soft cover, 127 pages.

Do not bother with this book unless you are adventurous. Herb Perr expects you to travel on roads unmarked by the deepening rut's of today's heavy bandwagon traffic, often choosing paths that deviate from the four directions pointed to on the more trendy art education compasses. Follow Perr and you could find yourself in front of billboards, theaters, and window displays instead of museums and galleries. You're not likely to run into Ralph Smith.

But if you are ready for a little adventure, Perr and Tobocman may be just the people to act as guides. Their book contains 24 lessons, each with enough information to get you where you are going, but not so much that your total itinerary is a foregone conclusion. Although Perr has thoroughly scouted the trails that he is recommending, no two trips through this territory are likely to be the same.

The 24 lessons each require students to work together to arrive at an artistic statement that reflects their own social realities. As Perr describes them, "the projects range from the creation of socially concerned chalk symbols and a reinterpretation of advertising messages made by advertising agencies to the exploration of symbols representing an imaginary society" (p. 7). The resulting pieces may therefore be better categorized as applied rather than fine art, though projects such as "Performance Art: Multi-Media Presentation" (pp. 96-99) challenge those categories. The book also challenges categories such as Eisner's (1972) "essentialism" and "contextualism", since in Perr's mind the social context is part of the art's essence, so there is no dichotomy between the two. The degree to which you agree with Perr on this point may well determine your reaction to this book.

Perr also sees no dichotomy between individual and social goals. He thus takes a position in what Wygant (1988) describes as a long-standing but unresolved debate in art education, a debate illustrated by the contrasting views of Margaret Naumberg and John Dewey. Influenced by Freud, Naumberg believed the art teacher must stress individual values over social. Dewey, on the other hand, believed that it is through social experience that the individual becomes fulfilled. MacIver (1989) sees Dewey as the clear winner in this debate since "virtually anything a teacher does will be socially determined and will encroach in some ways on the 'freedom of impulse' that Naumberg was so anxious to protect." Perr, too, is on the same side as Dewey, with a stated aim of his book being:

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the development of strong individuals within the context of the group. Throughout [the book], there is a marked emphasis on cooperative group thinking and creative working processes. I see this as essential for the development of self-actualizing individuals (Perr, p. 7).

This self-actualization is fostered, Perr argues, because students will "be responsible for the creation of the intellectual climate where their learning will take place" (p. 8). Perr, however, never fully addresses a related question: to what degree can students actually exercise such responsibility within the context of schooling? It would be naive to think that the students will remain untainted by the system's structure and the teacher's bias. Perr, in fact, admits this when he implies that these lessons will lead to certain types of social and political attitudes. These attitudes are more liberal than they are subversive or revolutionary. The intent is to create cooperative, thinking citizens, suitable for participating in our current democratic society. While I question how well these lessons will actually meet that objective, the book does provide a different starting point than art curricula based on Naumberg-like notions of "self-expression" that promote self-centered individualism and what Freedman (1989) has identified as narcissism.

We can better understand Perr's views on the relationship between individualization and socialization by comparing his ideas to those of earlier advocates of group art activities. Lowenfeld (1957) for one, claimed that group murals were a "therapeutic means" for nine to eleven year olds to overcome natural tendencies toward egocentrism (pp. 189, 198-200). For older adolescents, however, Lowenfeld warned that in making group murals "The strongly creative individual can be hampered by 'cooperation' with others" (p. 353). For both age groups, it was the psychological well-being of the individual that Lowenfeld felt should be the principal concern. D'Amico, too, stressed the individual over the group, cautioning teachers that group projects that failed to give this stress could "injure the child, both psychologically and creatively" (D'Amico & Buchman, 1972, p. 206). For Lowenfeld and D'Amico, then, the emphasis was on the "I", while for Perr it is on the "We".

Not that Lowenfeld and D'Amico denied art education's role in socialization. On the contrary, they saw it as a basic aim (Freedman, 1987). Indeed, the social goals that Freedman describes for Lowenfeld's art program are in some ways similar to Perr's. Both, for example, aim to foster democratic tendencies in students. But the difference between the "I" and the "We" remains. Lowenfeld, like Naumberg, placed his principal stress on psychologizing art teaching, which, Freedman argues,

desensitized people to social life. By focussing on the personal, curriculum denied the importance of culture and politics. The contexts of time and place, of history and community, were lost (1987, pp. 26-27).

In contrast, it is precisely these contexts that Perr sees as the essence of the art activities he advocates.

Perr's emphasis on contextualization also sets his book apart from much of the Getty-promoted discipline-based art education literature, which many feel is wallowing in formalist aesthetics. And, ironically, if you go beyond the surface of DBAE marketing slogans, you may find that Perr's lessons are, indeed, more truly disciplined-centered than many contemporary art programs that claim to be such. As Bruner (1960) originally conceived it, discipline-based education does not simply mean teaching content from selected disciplines, it means teaching the discipline's structure. In art education, Barkan (1966) interpreted this to mean that the student took on the role of a practitioner of the discipline (Efland, 1988). This is exactly what Perr encourages. But he does not shake his thinking with the current doctrine that there are precisely four art-related disciplines. He wants students to act not only like artists, critics, and historians, but also like curators, craftspeople, researchers, performers, and designers.

In clear then that, although Perr is not catering to current fashions, his ideas grow out of strong traditions in art education. In fact, in addition to traditions already discussed, there are obvious links in this book to the work of June McFee, Vincent Lanier, and Graeme Chalmers. It is also clear that Perr is building on these traditions, advancing the field's scholarship by posing new questions and arriving at new answers. Unlike many student texts that simply organize and disseminate what we already know, Perr's book is involved with new ideas. Scholarly curriculum design went into the book, and a challenge to our and our students' beliefs will likely come out of it.

Of course, new curriculum ideas will not succeed unless the practical matters are attended to. In this regard, not every art teacher will be able to implement each of Perr's lessons. To do so would require, among other things, plenty of art time with each class, resources for visuals and other necessary teaching aids, an art room that is not used for a lot of other subjects, and money to get your students out of the art room and into the community. You do not need a Cadillac of an art program to explore the by-ways that Perr recommends, but it would help to at least have a used Yugo, which leaves out the many art educators who are reduced to hitch-hiking, making it extremely difficult to go anywhere except for on the heavily travelled routes.

In addition, even if you are able to venture off in the directions that Perr indicates, be warned that he does not always prepare you for the trouble spots you are likely to encounter. For instance, just because group activities require cooperation does not mean that the cooperation will happen. One trick, of course, is to keep everybody busy, so Perr suggests dividing students into committees, each with specific tasks. But often the described tasks cannot be done simultaneously, as when one group first does the designing and then another does the production. The teacher, then, has to go beyond Perr's suggestions, organizing meaningful alternative activities that students can do while waiting their turn.

In general, however, these lessons are very workable. You can tell that Perr has spent a lot of time in classrooms and has watched lessons like
these in action. Too often, “field-testing” for this type of text really means {
\textit{market} testing, with potential sales, not pedagogical merit, being the main criterion for publishing. That is not the case here. It appears that the principal criteria for Perr were “Will this succeed in the classroom?” and “Is it theoretically sound?”

I think the answer to both questions is “yes”. And not only is the content sound, it is well presented. Perr’s writing is refreshing. He knows what he wants to say, and he says it without jargon, pedantry, ambiguity, or excess verbiage. Tobocman’s straightforward illustrations are thoughtful and effective, providing visual overviews of each lesson and making it easy to find your way around the book without always having to refer to the table of contents.

Yes, implementing Perr’s lessons will require some effort, but it will be worth it if you agree with his premises. Putting aside my reviewer’s pen and speaking as a teacher, I can say that I am excited by this book. I know from my junior high teaching days that lessons like these can lead to stimulating educational experiences. That is why I have ordered a copy of {
\textit{Making Art Together} for my Department, another for our university library, and three to distribute among my student teachers out in the field. Since you are adventurous enough to seek ideas in the Social Caucus Journal, you will also want to order a copy - if, of course, you do not already have one.

Donald Soucy
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References


Note

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\textit{Making art together step-by-step} is available in the United States from Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St., #290, San Jose, CA 95112, and in Canada from Trinity Press distributors, 960 Gateway, Burlington, Ontario, L7L 5K7 at the cost $12.95 US (Add $1.50 for postage and handling. CA residents add 6% sales tax).
In tracing the formation and breakup of ethnographic authority in the 20th century, social anthropology has been faced with the problem of how human groups have been represented to others. Clifford's views are helpful in studying contemporary cultures in that he develops the interconnections amongst the disciplinary base and views of the investigator, the nature of fieldwork and participant observation, and the problems of style and authorship in writing representative text. These are all problems that art educators or others face in the study of cultures today. The shift from observation to interpretation in representing other cultures from within another cultural perspective is well documented. Particular attention is paid Griaule's conception of fieldwork that led to documentary and a more personalized involvement with another culture, the Dogon. The resistance of a people to an ethnographer's questions and inquiries results in either very prolonged cultural interactions or, in Griaule's case, a more confrontational approach resulting in moral tensions, violence, drama, and fiction.

Ethnographic subjectivity that has emerged in the recent era is examined in the works of Malinowski and Conrad as paradigmatic of ethnographic subjectivity. Self-conscious hermeneutic contemporary ethnographers, according to Clifford, owe a debt to the pioneering self-reflexive writings of Conrad and Malinowski.

The multi-faceted and disjointed view of ethnography sketched by Clifford is further emphasized by his attention to ethnographic surrealism of the French deriving from the work of Mauss, and other French intellectuals from varied disciplines. In Part Two, Displacements, Clifford concentrates on ethnography and surrealism in France between the two world wars. Elements of art, literature, and aesthetics are intertwined with ethnography. Ethnography from a surreal perspective is seen as a theory and practice of juxtaposition, a collage of events contrasted to the views of ethnography as a science of human behavior or as an interpretation of cultures. The incongruous is played upon in contrast to the orderly and naturalistic in questioning whether or not there may be a bit of the surreal in all ethnographic accounts. Clifford singles out Victor Segalen's accounts of travels in Tahiti and China and Michel Leiris' travels in search of self. The vibrant personal accounts of interactions with other cultures by these and other Frenchy travelers contrasts markedly to other ethnographers' distillations or generalizations.

While the Surrealist ethnography contains interesting accounts of cultures, Part Three, Collections, focuses on the relationships of art and culture that are directly pertinent to art education studies today. Clifford suggests that modern views of culture and art ideas function as an art-culture system. Culture with a capital "C" represents order over time, continuity and depth, and wholeness that is built into the Western view of art and cultural linkages that go back, at least, to the Greeks. In contrast, Clifford has really suggested a disputed, torn, and collaged view of culture. Clifford questions the Art and Culture linkages and uses in Modern exhibitions. In particular, he points to A Family of Art at MOMA in which the affinities of modern and tribal art are presented in an orderly fashion suggesting universal informing principles transcending culture, politics, and history. It is this type of appropriation that Clifford questions.

James Clifford. The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988
Soft cover; 384 pages

This is a book about change that brings into focus some of the issues that many of us have thought about and had vague feelings about, but which have not been articulated. The Predicament of Culture extends to ethnography and anthropology the growing realization that universal transcendental forms of knowledge and values fail to recognize the contextualization and relativism of contemporary reality. Along with the redefinition of art education to include the study of diverse visual forms of varying cultural orientations there has been a growing uneasiness about how we define and orient ourselves to non-Western societies. Clifford recognizes that culture is defined from one's position in another culture within a particular political and social context. The questions of "Whose views, and whose values?" are often central to Clifford's examination of authority and authenticity in defining culture.

As African and other countries have emerged from the remnants of colonialism, I have observed international art education students struggling with defining cultural values and authenticity from their positions situated between traditional and contemporary society. The meaning of authenticity and tradition in these very real situations are some of the predicaments that Clifford addresses.

Clifford's book is divided into four parts: Discourses, Displacements, Collections, and Histories, representing in his words "a spliced ethnographic object, and incomplete collection" which does not "add up to a seamless vision" (p. 13). The form of the book parallels and reflects the disjointed nature of Western views of culture today. In effect, the book's form is used as a device to partially convey his message of the hybrid nature of ethnography and the problematic nature of writing about culture from within another culture. In Part One, Clifford examines the nature and evolution of ethnography through the changes in ethnographic authority, evolving through the interactions and dialogues among authorities such as Malinowski, Boas, Griaule, and Conrad. Clifford's writing is packed with Malinowski, Boas, Griaule, and Conrad. Clifford's writing is packed with details of major ethnographers' field work, and their views and approaches to writing about culture. The ethnography about which Clifford writes demonstrates that the Western view of culture is not seamless, but that the personal and human interactions of authorities has evolved out of the personal and human interactions of authorities that have contributed to the changes in looking at and writing about other cultures.
While the institutionalized object systems of art and anthropology are seen as powerful, Clifford suggests a change in collecting art and culture in which tribal art is gaining a broader audience including members of those groups associated with its creation as part of the appropriation of collected artifacts from museum collections.

*The Predicament of Culture* will be immensely influential in how students of art, aesthetics, and culture, including art educators, study and define culture; it forces a switch from a top-down to bottom-up views of culture. Clifford has also raised issues of how cultures are represented in writing cultural text that cannot be ignored. Issues of how one approaches and studies another culture, whether as observer, participant-observer, interpreter, documentor, or confronter, raises very real questions that students of culture must seriously consider. *The Predicament of Culture* is not a seamless account of culture, as Clifford readily admits; but, for those willing to follow the many rich avenues, asides and juxtapositions, this book raises important issues and questions that will influence how the serious student views culture.

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**Notes on Contributors**

Paul Duncum is a Lecturer in Education, Capricornia Institute of Education, Rockhampton. He has published widely in Australia and overseas and is the former editor of the Journal of the Institute of Art Education. Michael Emme is a doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia Department of Visual and Performing Arts. His interests are in the area of media studies, especially photography. Doug Blandy is an Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon, Department of Art Education and co-editor with K. Congdon of Art in a Democracy. Karen Hamblen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University and is the author of numerous articles in *Studies and Art Education*. She has been recognized by the Women’s Caucus in Art Education as a leading figure in the field. Laurie Hicks is an Assistant Professor at the University of Maine in the Department of Art. Her interests are in social critical theory and has taken on the position as Treasurer for CSTAE as 1989. Barbara Boyer is an Associate Professor at the California State University, Art Department, Los Angeles. Her concerns are in critical social thought. Amy Brook Snider is Professor and Chair of Art Education at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y. She was the former Coordinator for the Women’s Caucus of the NAEA and is known for her innovative projects with children and adults. Ronald MacGregor is Professor and Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia. Probably the best known Canadian Art Educator, he is the author of two books in art education and numerous articles. Brent Wilson is Professor and Chair of Art Education at the Pennsylvania State University, well known for his writing and research into the drawing abilities of children. He is the author of several books and numerous articles. Harold Pearse is a Professor at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada and the former Chair of the Art Education Department. He is a recognized Canadian art educator who has published widely both in *Studies and Art Education* as well as the *Canadian Review of Art Education Research.* Cynthia Taylor is an Associate Professor at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She is known for her insightful and innovative art education programs. She has strong interests in the area of phenomenology and hermeneutics and has published in these areas. Elleda Katan is the present coordinator of the Caucus. Formerly at Teachers College at Columbia, she is now an art consultant in the Boston Area after leaving a position where she coordinated advocacy art programs which promoted a liaison between artists and schools. Her interest lies in the politics of art education. Michael Owen Jones is Professor and Director of the Folklore and Mythology Center at UCLA. He is widely published in the area of folklore and organizational theory. Don Soucy is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Curriculum and Division at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. He is the current editor of the *Canadian Review* and is best known for his writings and presentations on the historical aspects of art education. Ronald W. Neperud is Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Graduate Studies in Art Education. Author of numerous articles in *Studies in Art Education*, he has recently edited with Frank H. Farley, *The Foundations of Aesthetics, Art and Art Education.*