The Promises of Art Appreciation: The Foundations of Aesthetic Education

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I. A history of appreciation could quickly multiply into a collection of histories, some tracing theories of appreciation as a phenomenon of mind and some tracing appreciation as a pedagogical subject or goal. In order to limit the directions a history of appreciation could take, this paper assumes that art appreciation in pedagogy encompasses and reflects various theories of art appreciation as a process of mind and thus focuses on the institutionalization of art appreciation.

Even with this narrowing, the historical ground of the study continues to shift. Because understandings of both mind and education have been imprecise and dynamic, references to appreciation or to various activities associated with art appreciation are often ambiguous. For example, college catalogs, which constitute a principle source of information on the early history of art appreciation studies, establish an array of factual information on when and where art appreciation emerged as well as how the subject was conceived. But catalog information must be interpreted with caution. As Elaine Foster (1970) notes in her study of the art offerings at what is today Columbia University, lectures in Roman Antiquities offered in the inaugural years of 1860-61 turn out not to be the earliest art history or even among the earliest courses about art in higher education. Foster determined that "antiquities" in the nineteenth century was a word that could refer equally to ancient literature as to artworks. In fact, the Columbia course dealt very little, if at all, with artworks (Foster,1970, p. 37).

The shifting sense of academic terms is not the only potential problem in mining college catalogs for a history of art appreciation. In like manner, the changing departmental structure of higher education also presents a problem. Possible nineteenth-century ancestors of today's college courses in art appreciation were dispersed among such varied departments as Pure Mathematics in the School of Applied Sciences (where Columbia's first drawing courses appeared), Classics (through which archaeological studies entered the curriculum), Philosophy, and Pedagogy. Moreover, information about offerings in these various departments did not always find its way into annual catalogs. Foster found much important information also in special bulletins and other occasional college publications. Thus, it must be acknowledged at the start that this history may have missed important information in its examination of individual institutions. But by looking at some 30 colleges and universities of different types and from different geographical regions, a generally accurate picture of the development of art appreciation studies emerges.

The most difficult problem of writing this history — but also the most intriguing — is sorting out the many (even contradictory) expectations discernible in descriptions of art department offerings as well as in public pronouncements and in textbooks. By comparing words from various sources, it appears that by the late nineteenth century, the widespread goals of improving the taste and moral tone of individuals coexisted with a variety of socio-political purposes. Some of these purposes concerned narrow professional matters within the university; others echoed larger contemporaneous issues as broad and blunt as social control.

II. Early references to art education follow soon on the heels of the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson had already submitted his plans for education and incorporated in them his belief that the arts should have a place in the curriculum. Later, in a letter to Peter Carr of 1814, Jefferson even suggests that institutions of higher education might include a school of fine arts for "the gentleman, the architect, the pleasure gardener, painter, and musician" (Hubbard, 1962, p. 115). But Jefferson's interests in the arts were not shared. Quite the contrary, many in post-revolutionary America disparaged art's study because they associated it with feminine pursuits on one hand and with aristocratic privilege on the other, "both of which were the anathema of serious minded men when engaged in the formidable task of governing a new and proud Democracy" (Hubbard, p. 115).

Before aesthetic matters would be thought a worthy addition to school curricula, the subject needed some moral support. This was supplied by the many books of John Ruskin and William Morris (some, it appears, specifically for a female readership). Following Ruskin, American art historian and critic James Jackson Jarvis viewed the arts as "signs of moral stages in developing societies" and published his beliefs that "Beauty could help men [and women] perform their moral duties [as well as] inspire morality and high ideals" (Saisselin,1984, p. 94). Such ideas found fertile ground in American education and by the last quarter of the nineteenth century many American educators at every level had become convinced of art's reformatory powers.

In the nineteenth century, moral instruction became an ever greater focus of college education. Especially after the Great Awakening, ministers of all denominations began to sit on boards of trustees in increasing numbers and, with missionary zeal, progressively recast the college curriculum. Ministers became deeply involved in college education precisely because they saw it as "higher education," that is, as the education of "spiritual faculties" and, therefore, as central to the preparation of ministers. Strengthening the "spiritual faculties" in turn was seen by guardians of faith as the best defense against materialism, naturalism, and "environmentalism" (see Butts and Cremin, 1953, p. 200) which loomed on the horizon, threatening the cultural hegemony of religion.

More conservative ministers saw art's study as another threat and fought to keep it out of women's institutions where it was first formally introduced: "Serious Puritans . . . were horrified at the way in which the frothy smattering of this and that embellishment crowded out the teaching of morals and religion" (Curti, 1935/1959, p. 175). To such puritans, the idea

hat art should carry the moral standard for society must have appeared to liminish the power and the authority of the church or worse, to establish an lternate religion.

Despite early misgivings, however, a review of the catalogs of selected chools reveals that a variety of mostly Ivy League schools incorporated art tudies into their curricula by the 1870s, many explicitly to provide moral finishing." The earliest reference among leading institutions is found in an 865 *Prospectus of the Vassar Female College*. Under "Social Education," the ineteenth century ideal of women's role — and the part art instruction was o play in that role — is annunciated:

> In society also, woman has a special place and mission, which should not be lost sight of in the composition or conduct of her educational course. It is hers to refine, illumine, purify, adorn — not, under any ordinary circumstances, to govern or contend. She should be as intelligent as man, as broad in the range of her information, as alert and facile (if less robust) in the use of her faculties, more delicate and pure in her tastes; her moral tone equally high: but her *methods* should be all her own, always and only *womanly*. Oratory and debate (whether public or private) are not feminine accomplishments; and there will be nothing in the College arrangements to encourage the practice of them. Conversation, reading, and the beautiful arts, are; so are letter-writing, and other forms of elegant composition: and these should be cultivated to the highest pitch compatible with the natural gifts of the student and consistent with her circumstances in life (catalog's emphasis, p. 18).

More specifically concerning the visual arts, the prospectus promises that:

> The History of Art, and principles of intelligent Art-criticism, will be carefully taught. In connection with the ordinary collegiate instruction in Theoretical Æsthetics, the rich materials of the Art-Gallery will be used systematically for purposes of illustration. The progress of Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Engraving, Decorative Art, &c., from the earliest to the present times; the different schools and phases through which each passed; its various materials, instruments, and methods, and the peculiar effects of each; together with the *criteria* of a sound taste by which the results are to be tried and judged — will all be taught from actual specimens or reliable pictorial representations, under the eye of the learner (pp. 21-22).

This ambitious program of study today sounds much like many collegiate programs to prepare students for careers in the visual arts, but in the middle of the last century the purpose was more proscribed, as the catalog's list of "practical lessons" makes clear:

> Practical lessons will also be given, by proper officer, in the Arts of Decoration as applied to the common purposes of life; as, for instance, to the laying out of a garden plot or ornamental piece of ground, the planting of a parterre of flowers, the composition of colors in a lady's dress with reference to each other and the complexion of the wearer, the disposition of jewelry and other personal ornaments, the embellishment of a home-interior by the judicious selection and arrangement of furniture, carpets, curtains, paper-hangings, table-ware, pictures, statuettes, flower-vases, and other articles of bijouterie, &c., &c. — where so much bad taste is continually displayed 'without regard to expense,' and where intelligence and good taste may be made as economical as they are admirable. Matters of this kind enter so largely into the daily business of every home, and are so generally committed to woman's direction, that she should not be left uninstructed in the principles of taste, discretion, or morality, that ought to regulate them. These will all form appropriate and interesting topics for sensible conversation and friendly discussion in the social circles (p. 22).

The thrust of such initial instruction in art appears to have been, then, a somewhat technical preparation for "women's work," but improving taste as the hallmark of high moral stature was the overriding concern.

At least in art studies, Vassar's curriculum seems to have been little more than a formalized version of the finishing school or seminary where "the teaching was designed to promote taste and propriety, and to provide a veneer of artificial graces and a superficial knowledge of drawing, painting, modern languages, and music" (Curti, 1935/1959, p. 175). Such courses of study — as Curti's description itself makes clear — did not lacked for critics. Sensitive to such criticism, Vassar President Dr. John Howard Raymond nevertheless recommended that a liberal education for women should include art:

> Provisions for aesthetic culture should have a recognized and prominent, though not a dominating, place in the scheme; and music and drawing should be taught, not merely as pretty accomplishments, but as intellectual arts — ennobling and purifying the taste, instead of debasing and enfeebling it, as is too often the effect of these fashionable acquirements (Orton, 1873/1986, p. 35).

Critics not withstanding, leading women's institutions like Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (est. 1837) and Vassar insisted that art studies could beneficially affect moral training and sought ways to incorporate them into their curricula.

By 1885, the study of art at Vassar had settled into a department where instruction leading to a Diploma could be pursued only by special permission. The curriculum displayed a three-fold emphasis on the *theory* of what

were called the "major arts," *practice* or "application to the ornamentation of rooms, to furniture, dress, etc." (catalog emphasis, *Twenty-first Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1885-86, p. 27), and "the *history* of these arts" (emphasis added, *Twenty-first Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1885-86, p. 27). Only in 1892, did art's study achieve parity with other college work leading to a Baccalaureate degree. In the 1892-93 Vassar catalog, "Course A" titled "Theory of the Art of Design" details for the first time what the Theory component of the art curriculum was thought to entail:

> This course comprises a study of Beauty in Art, intellectual and optical beauty. Unity, its application to different modes of expression. Definition of Architecture, laws derived from nature: Materials used in Architecture, their effect on construction: Lintel and column; round- arch and dome; pointed arch and buttress; the truss: Decorations in Architecture. Definition of Sculpture; the Statue; low, medium, and high relief: laws of relief: Materials used in Sculpture and subjects treated. Definition of Painting; Imitation; Materials used in Painting. Etching, Engraving, Lithograph, Photography. Composition, the Sketch, the Studies. Drawing; its importance, Stereography, Orthography, Stenography. Perspective, the definition, the perspective of a point. Parallel perspective, Oblique perspective, problems. The Human form in Art, Proportion, Anatomy, Expression: Gesture, Drapery, Costume, Attributes. Chiaroscuro, tone. Colour [*sic*]. Touch. Various kinds of pictures; historical, portrait, genre, landscape, animal, battle, marine, architectural, flower, fruit, still-life, scene and ornamental paintings (*Twenty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1892-93, pp. 55-56).

This course was followed by two semesters of art history under the titles of "History of Art, Architecture and Sculpture" and "Painting." Judging by descriptions of their contents, all three courses were now clearly specialized as an introduction to an art major. In addition to these courses, however, all members of the college were offered a series of "twelve illustrated stereopticon lectures, which bring all the prominent works of art on a large scale before them" (*Twenty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1892-93, p. 55).

By 1898-99, the theory course (whose contents the catalog no longer specified) had become a part of the upper division, with art history as its prerequisite, thus (as will be shown) bringing the curriculum at Vassar in line with prevailing curricular practices. By 1902-03, art history had been expanded to four courses, all of which were prerequisites to a theory course titled "Structural Aesthetics and Constructive Art Criticism." The description of this course was decidedly formalist turn:

> The topics discussed will be *Architecture*: the determination and value of planes of light and shade. Effect upon the development of form. Theory applied to the Doric Order. Architectural refinements. The influence of clere-story construction upon the interior embellishments of structures. *Painting*: Morelli's theory — application of Berenson's theories to Lorenzo Lotto. Relative value of Renaissance and Modern work. Assigned work in Gallery of Metropolitan Museum (catalog's emphasis, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1902-03, p. 62).

Yet despite the ever stronger specialization, the fine arts section of the catalog ends with a brief statement intended to broaden the department's mission:

> The purpose of the department is to offer *all* students, whether possessed of natural talent or not, a broad introduction into fields of the fine arts, and through the application of the critical and historical method to arouse and train the aesthetic sense to a rational appreciation of what is good in art (catalog's emphasis, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1902-03, p. 62).

In the following year, however, aesthetics became further specialized and was moved to the philosophy department. A general introduction to the visual arts was left to historical studies and no other type of introduction would be offered at Vassar again until 1924.

III. As the brief review of Vassar's offerings suggests, the origin of contemporary art appreciation courses was diffused among quite different emphases and torn between forces within academe moving toward specialization, on the one hand, and forces within society favoring a general education of morals and taste, on the other. Indeed, Vassar provides an example of what were widespread curricular patterns. The three-part division of the art field, the gradual acquisition of academic parity within the curriculum through specialization, the making of studies *about* art available for upper-division credit while also offering general, initially non-credit lectures on the subject, all would be repeated not just at schools for women, but also at co-educational institutions and schools for men, such as Syracuse, Yale, and Columbia. At these and other schools, general education developed parallel to a professional education, both in its specialized language and its "scientific" approach.

The continuing assumption that art could provide a degree of (moral) "finish" for "rough" undergraduates perhaps explains why some of the earliest ancestors of art appreciation courses — i.e., lectures in aesthetics and art history — often made their first appearance in the curriculum as general requirements in the *upper* division (as they did at Syracuse). Why else would a school like City College of New York make the series of lectures called "Philosophy of Beauty" (introduced in 1872-73) a required course for seniors in the following year under the title "Architecture, Study of the Antique and Figure, Philosophy of Beauty" (*Twenty-Sixth Annual Register*, 1874-75)? Even at schools where art lectures were not required of all upper

division students, such as at Yale and Columbia, they were still restricted to junior and senior electives.

Courses *about* art such as aesthetics and art history at both Syracuse and Yale were required also because these subjects came to be viewed as necessary for the professional preparation offered by both schools. The professional emphasis at Yale and at other leading schools shows up clearly in the increasingly technical quality of course descriptions. The field of art — already divided into theory, practice, and history — became further divided into principles and elements of art. By the early 1890s, an emphasis on art's components was found in many course descriptions, as Yale's lecture course "In the Principles and Means of Art" (offered in the 1891-92 catalog) illustrates:

> [A] course of lectures is provided, fully illustrated, embracing the subjects of Line, Chiaroscuro, Color, Composition, and Expression, — following the path of the artist in his work. A course of lectures discussing the technical methods of the Painter, the Sculptor, the Architect, and the Engraver, including an historical account of the technical development of these arts, is also provided (*Catalogue of Yale University — CXCII Year*, 1891-1892, p. 143).

Along similar lines, the preface to offerings in the Departments of Architecture and Painting in the 1890 Syracuse *Annual* emphasizes the professional character of art instruction:

> The course of study already established includes systematic and progressive instruction in the theory, history and practice of Architecture and Painting, and in those branches of mathematics, natural science, history, language and philosophy which bear most intimately and directly upon these arts, and without a knowledge of which success in the higher domain of art is impossible (*Twentieth Annual of the Syracuse University*, 1890-91, p. 44).

Moral refinement and professional preparation were not, however, the only force reshaping catalog descriptions of college offerings.

The broad capitalization of nouns in nineteenth-century catalog descriptions, so like German language practices, suggests another power magnifying the technical aspects of college art instruction. Not only professional preparation but also the latest in educational thinking was at work. By the end of the last century, higher education in America had largely adopted the German model of university training and, with it, a focus on specialization. American universities found specialization attractive for a number of reasons. In the largest sense, it was an effective bulwark for keeping a controversial post-Darwinian world aloof from sectarian intrusions (Craige, 1986, p. 1). In the developing art curriculum, specialization offered fledgling art studies a way to establish a niche in the expanding curriculum of higher education. After all, if understanding art were not a technical matter, then presumably *anyone* could "appreciate" art

and there would be no need to give it formal study. Further, specialization also supplied a mechanism for maintaining what was thought to be an "ennobling" distance between art and life. Indeed, for art studies to be in a position to offer moral instruction, such studies had to take higher moral ground and stand removed from the valleys of the commonplace.

The post-Darwinian world — with its new conceptions of nature and of change — would profoundly affect language and ideas about art. The restrictions and rhetoric surrounding the earliest ancestors to contemporary art appreciation courses in higher education increasingly reflected influences from advances in natural sciences and from conceptions in the newly established social sciences. In this regard, Elaine Foster's study of the early art curriculum at Columbia supplies some illustration. For example, in an article titled 'The Fine Arts and Classical Archaeology,' published in an 1898 issue of the *Columbia University Quarterly*, Professor of Greek James R Wheeler makes the following case for art's permanent inclusion in Columbia's curriculum:

> . . . There are. . . certain subjects which appear to lend themselves more readily than others to the diffusion of culture; and among these are such as awaken the intellect through the eye. . . and those of us who have abiding faith in the educating power of Greek ideals cannot help hoping that a greater familiarity with the beauties of Greek art. . . may spread abroad those ideals. . . . [U]ntil quite recently American education has neglected the truth that there exists in men a latent capacity for the appreciation of beauty, the development of which will constantly tend to call forth better emotions (in Foster, p. 64).

The professor's words not only project the sort of faith that would allow one to rise in the artworld (Wheeler later became Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Columbia), but also suggest many widely circulated ideas about art and culture that secured a place in higher education for various sorts of art studies. Wheeler's claims for the infectiousness of Greek ideals and for a "latent capacity" to appreciate beauty also reflect the profound influence of new scientific ideas — specifically, germ theory and evolution.

Wheeler seems to have believed that the transforming (moral) power of art — like a cleansing fever that results from getting one's feet wet — could work on an individual by mere exposure. The notion that an appreciation of art could be "caught" appears earlier in M.A. Dwight's (1880) essays. He rhetorically queries: "How was it possible for the ignorant to see daily such works as the Parthenon in its best days, and such a multitude of statues, tripods, and all the most finished works of art, without acquiring a love for the beautiful?" (pp. 38-39). Many in the last century who adhered to this notion urged art's study at every level of schooling convinced that widespread exposure to art would fortify the "aesthetic faculties" and thereby furnish a means for inoculating society against moral backsliding and other ethical "diseases."

Wheeler's reference to a "latent capacity" for appreciation may reflect a further belief in some new evolutionary understanding of human nature

and human society. Many at the end of the last century, most notably Herbert Spencer and G. Stanley Hall, began to conceive of all changes in terms of larger evolutionary patterns outlined in widely discussed versions of "culture-epoch theory." Based on the idea that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, development of the individual or of society was thought to repeat the whole history of Western culture. Robert Wiebe (1967) describes beliefs in culture-epoch theory as a blend of naturalism and idealism where the spiritual gained ascendancy over the material in orderly stages of development:

> Although descriptions of this orderly progress varied in form, their substance remained constant. In *Dynamic Sociology* (1883), the pioneer Lester F. Ward analyzed society's evolution in four stages. Following the anarchic conditions of natural man, society formed loose aggregates, then congealed into national state, and finally achieved universal integration. In the penultimate stage the state was assigned extensive powers in order to prepare society's collective intelligence for the arrival of world unity (Wiebe, p. 141).

By virtue of their intellectual tidiness, in part, stage theories of development swept through university departments with remarkable speed.

In the art curriculum and elsewhere, culture-epoch theory translated into units of instruction that were tailored to run parallel to the supposed developmental stages of civilization from primitive man to modern industrial civilization. Developments became an important focus of course content. Some teachers stepped away from religious orthodoxy by assimilating change — in society, in individuals, in art — to natural laws. (1) In a way the opposite of the "caught" theory of appreciation, these educators asserted that since the development of a more refined appreciation was inevitable and "natural," then latent capacities should be susceptible to accelerated cultivation through special instruction. Here, then, was a rationale for a systematic instruction in art appreciation through a focus on compositional principles and elements, a "basic" approach that would win over increasing numbers of professors. To many of them, the "scientific" orientation of culture-epoch theory seemed perfectly in step with the technical orientation that had already developed in the curriculum. But this coincidence with trends toward a specialized, professional education was only part of the reason why culture-epoch theory enjoyed such remarkable popularity. Equally important was the fact that, like the still powerful Hegelian philosophy, culture-epoch theory promised the salve of Progress for the wounds of change.

IV. Progress, that shibboleth of modernity, was synonymous with "scientific" understandings, a permanency of change, an inexorable evolution to Something Better, Something Bigger. Progress in the nineteenth-century brought an urban-industrial socio-economic system which reorganized older patterns of life into new "progressive" ones increasingly bent

on reform and efficiency. Specialization came to seem the result of a "natural" growth pattern, one fully in tune with the ways of nature as newly conceived by natural science. In colleges and universities, course contents in all fields became increasingly technical in character and divided into component aspects.

In education, classical humanist idealism with its universal and invariant (moral) truths was challenged by new more dynamic visions that emphasized development and the necessity of ongoing, practical adjustments to the changing conditions of modern life. In art education, conceptions of appreciation as caught by exposure to noble examples of morally superior artworks drawn from the "Golden Ages" of art history gave ground to conceptions designed to instill more generally useful understandings of art. In some sense, the "practical" benefits of art's study had never been far from mind. Already in Vassar's catalog descriptions — the earliest cited here — art lessons were understood as aids to gardening, interior decoration, and social intercourse. Similarly, the conception of art studies as a necessary background for fully professional practice — first expressed for architecture — sounded a decidedly practical note. But in the early twentieth century, new practical justifications for art studies joined these older purposes. The study of art was increasingly seen as a means for social adjustment and, at the turn of the century when unanticipated changes and even anarchy apparently threatened to overwhelm the nation, as an instrument of social control.

In order for the nation to retain national unity and regain domestic tranquility, many educators began to advocate social adjustment and social control as legitimate educational missions: "Hardly an annual meeting of the National Education Association was concluded without an appeal on the part of leading educators for the help of the teacher in quelling strikes and checking the spread of socialism and anarchism. Commissioners of education and editors of educational periodicals summoned their forces to the same end" (Curti, 1935/1959, p. 218). Feeling the need for new weapons in this national effort to counteract social discontent and "racial" upheaval, educators turned to ideas generated by the newly established social sciences, particularly the sociology of Lester Ward and the psychology of William James.

For some educators, a new "social" education meant helping students with new and necessary social adjustments: "getting students to cooperate with and adjust to the rules of social institutions" (Welsh, 1980, p. 25). For others, new education meant indoctrinating students more carefully in traditional "social habits" of "self-control, respect for other's rights, thoughtful consideration, manners, cleanliness, appropriate styles of dress .... the ethics of brotherhood, teamwork, and responsibility" (Welsh, 1980, p. 23). Both approaches were thought to offer mechanisms of social control. The Arts and Crafts idea that aesthetic education rendered a service to society by helping individuals to adjust to the changing conditions of labor, thereby reducing social tensions, quickly crept into concepts of college education. Many educators in the 1880s who opposed the introduction of a specifically "industrial" education attuned to specific job requirements, nevertheless embraced the task of developing the "social character of the working classes" to suit a modern industrial state (see Herschbach, 1973, p.

84). It had long been implied that education about art prepared the individual for life by improving character. In the late nineteenth-century, the improvement of character acquired an ever brighter aura of socio-economic utility.

At times, art education's contribution to this new practical education was stated in terms of mental benefits afforded by knowing culture. The theme of a cultured mind relieving laborious work was argued as early as 1871, for example, in relation to women's domestic work:

> The chances are that a woman of culture will perform her duties better than one who is illiterate. Even in the kitchen, intellectual power will show itself .... [T]he labors of the kitchen are not mere physical drudgery to her, but are in a sense, glorified, by familiarity with literature and art, and by a sense of intellectual superiority. When Burns was beaten in a reaping match, he exclaimed in tones of triumph, "But, Jamie, I wrote a song while I reaped" (from the *The William's Review* , October 1871, in Orton, pp. 198-199).

In another instance, Charles Waldstein (1896) suggested that aesthetic education by focusing on disinterestedness could directly reduce violence and mitigate other undesirable tendencies:

> In the general thirst for pleasure, which is so potent a stimulus to action and to efforts in life, the more we can divert this current of our passion from the channels of direct self-interest and cupidity into the various courses of the disinterestedness and playful delights that flow through eye and ear to heart and mind, the more shall we have drawn the violence out of passion, the more shall we have refined our whole emotional nature. Passion then becomes sympathy, as greed for possession becomes delight in contemplation (p. 111).

Indeed, as Waldstein's words suggest, the time-honored concept of aesthetic distance which had long been the central mechanism of art appreciation now would be co-opted to serve new socio-economic purposes.

Although no longer fully supported by eighteenth-century notions of faculty psychology, nor by nineteenth-century idealism's spiritual definitions, ideas of aesthetic distance had survived in accounts of appreciation for a number of reasons. After a century of discussions, the concept had certainly become an intellectual habit, a part of the conventional wisdom. As already noted, the dualism of aesthetic distance had also become involved in art's jockeying for a place in higher education's curriculum and, as such, had acquired something of a political life. But in the troubled times around the turn of the century, the disinterestedness of aesthetic distance gained new life as a way to bend teaching about art to the task of social control. In a particularly disturbing example, the influential art educator Hugo Münsterberg (1904/1905) suggests in his *Principles of Art Education* that the perception of the beautiful requires attention to the "thing itself"

disconnected from "external concerns." Based on this conception of aesthetic distance, he avers: "This suppression of thought of where the road is leading needs ... careful preparation.... Art instruction in the school is the great social scheme which the community has at its disposal to train this power" (pp. 33-34).

In conclusion, it seems inevitable that some accommodation should have been found in America between (spiritual) art and (material) commerce. By the end of the nineteenth-century, bankers, lawyers, and businessmen had replaced ministers on boards of trustees. No less committed to Progress than the ministers, the new board members were, however, more likely to see progress in secular and material terms. They were acutely aware of the new urban-industrial world evolving in America and demanded a new, more appropriate (practical) education. Administrators and educators responded both by admitting vocational studies with their emphasis on education for living and by adapting the contents of courses across the curriculum to new conceptions of life as described by the new fields of sociology and psychology. In the process, art appreciation which had been a mark of elevated (moral) character, of appropriate (professional) preparation, in fact of a kind of (class) superiority, also became an agency of social adjustment and social control to help insure (socio-economic) Progress.

Footnotes

1 An example already cited, Vassar's "Theory of the Art of design" course description: "This course comprises a study of Beauty in Art, intellectual and optical beauty. Unity, its application to different modes of expression. Definition of Architecture, laws derived from nature . . ." (*Twenty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Vassar College*, 1892-93, pp. 55-56). Also the description of "Esthetics" at Syracuse: "Instruction is given by lectures in the general principles of the science of Esthetics, which is the foundation of all the Fine Arts" (*Annual of the Syracuse University for the Collegiate Year 1890-91*, p. 46). And, from Philip Gilbert Hamerton's (1871) *Thoughts About Art*, there is this tribute to the "science" of art: "The progressive element in our art is the scientific element, not the poetic; ... it must not be forgotten that the scientific portion of any work of pictorial art is a very large portion of it — is, in short, the whole body of it" (p. 178).

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The Limits of Linear Modes of Inquiry into Naturalistic World-Views: A Case Study of Cherokee Culture*

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We begin with the cultural-anthropological assumption that a people's world-view is based in concepts of time and process, and is reflected in the ceremonies, customs, rituals, and other traditional patterns of social conduct within the society. In a case study of the Native American Cherokee, linear modes of inquiry, characteristic of Western science, are shown to be limited in their capacity to examine and appreciate these dimensions of culture in pre-literate societies. It is suggested that those aspects of our own culture which are grounded in aesthetic value may also be relatively inaccessible, for the same reason. By examining meanings of time and process in Cherokee culture, we discover traditions of life processes occurring within cyclical rhythms of nature as well as a sense of personal identity. The hope is that, armed with such awareness, we may be better able to move beyond a confining ethnocentrism toward a more comprehensive understanding of our selves within a world-view that is more integrated and participatory.

Key to an understanding of a people's world-view are the concepts of time and process (Brown, 1982). Embedded in the world-view of the native American Cherokee is their belief in time and process as cyclical and reciprocal, and in a relationship of individuals and nature best described as naturalistic and aesthetic. Grasping their aesthetic sense of time and the notion of a reciprocal relationship of the individual in nature is a key to an appreciation of Cherokee culture.

More formally, the term world-view is used here in the sense of cultural heritage. It can be defined as the composite of implicit, basic assumptions about reality embraced in a society which are given expression in rites of passage, religious rituals, linguistic mannerisms, and codes of conduct. These cultural patterns of beliefs and values are typically transmitted via myths and folktales, or dance and drama, more so than by means of formal, explicit ethical or legal codes. Approximate synonyms are "cultural milieu," *weltanschauung*.

James Moodey's (1897-1898) *Myths of the Cherokee* (Part 1) contains a folktale titled "Man is Punished by the Animals," which may give some idea of the richness of the symbolism in Cherokee mythology reflecting this outlook on life. It tells of spirit gods which have power to affect health and sickness and the giving and taking of life. These spirit gods are not remote, distant beings detached from human affairs and activities, but rather take the form of councils of bear and deer, frogs and grubworms, and various plant life forms. In fact, in this tale it is the trees, grasses, and mosses who