

"THE MOBILE DICHOTOMY OF AESTHETIC EVALUATION AND
AN ART CURRICULUM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE"

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BY

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To Liane, my wife.

PREFACE

This dissertation discusses the school, the class and its demotics. In the latter part, I have concentrated mainly on the unstructured art classes which I have been conducting for four years in a structured environment. Most of the statements that I make are firmly based on personal experience and convictions.

Also, I have included an Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire with its results. This questionnaire aims to give the art educator some prevailing insight into the personal aesthetic objectives of high school students.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank Professor Stanley Horner, who was my thesis advisor and is my personal friend, for helping me complete this paper.

New York, July 1970.

P. J. V.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	A MOBILE DICHOTOMY	1
II.	TO A MOUSE	6
III.	EDUCATUS	9
IV.	ART IS...	11
V.	CREATIVITY	19
VI.	SCHOOL	24
VII.	THE CLASS AND ITS DEMOTICS	27
VIII.	ART CURRICULUM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE - WITH RESULTS	31
	A. Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire	32
	B. Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire Results	42
	C. Comments given by students to: Other (explain)_____	46
IX.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	48
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

CHAPTER I

A MOBILE DICHOTOMY

Now this is the Law of the Jungle - as old
and as true as the sky;
And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper,
but the Wolf that shall break it must die.

As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk,
the Law runneth forward and back -
For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf,
and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.

- Rudyard Kipling

We live in a mobile dichotomy and are pushed through many ambivalent situations day by day. Technology and science seem to confront man to the extent of human extermination. Mass-production and non-individualistic attitudes seem to have become our socioeconomic war-cry and power-profit motto. The relationship between man and machine is approximately zero on a level of intellectual perceptivity. F. R. Leavis states:

The initial effect of the Machine/Computer Age is to hurt the worker physically and mentally. It kills him, maims him, infects, poisons, and above all bores him, as perhaps no other culture has ever done. And the accumulations of science have meant the growth

of man's power over nature; but who has guarded the application of that power?

Science, the product of a few men's brains, has produced vast machinery. But what sort of man has the machine produced? What sort of man is best adapted to turn a lever from left to right all day long in a factory? And, invoking this same law of Darwin's that gave us so much comfort a few years ago, what type of man is best fitted to survive in such an environment? Do we suppose that the mechanical assimilation of a little book learning, which we so proudly call our educational system, will alter the whole of the nature of man in a single generation?

Since Darwin, science has been in its ascendancy, but in its teachings there has been little conscious attempt to cultivate beauty or to instruct reverence or love. No humanistic philosophy has yet grown out of science. Now that the world of mankind is becoming so automated and mechanical it might be more beneficial for the human race if our "structured feelings" be channeled into the education of a single generation of children for their better understanding of themselves and the patterns of nature. However, today our schools are making our children similar to the amoeba of the slimemold: identical, unspecialized, competitive, and predictable in their mechanical behavior. It would seem that the educational

¹ F. R. Leavis & Thompson, Culture and Environment.

system today is designed to discourage the kind of human understanding necessary for the development of a highly cooperative society. From the student's first years in school until he leaves college, often as a mature man, his success is never measured by his ability to cooperate but by his competitive prowess. John Dewey said that competition among students was so thoroughly the prevailing atmosphere and goal of education that for one child to help another in his task became a school crime. Perhaps the emphasis upon never assisting one's fellow may be a poor way to prepare a child for his role in the future society. Anthropologist Edmund Leach decries the competitiveness in England's educational system, saying:

Only a tiny minority thinks of education as a means by which individuals are given human interests and values so that they can fit together into the total jigsaw of society: for most of us, education is an instrument of war, a weapon by which the individual beats down his competitors² and defends himself against adversity.

George Crile states:

Recent advances in science and technology have brought about challenges to many of man's most firmly fixed definitions and beliefs. Physicians, confronted with the feasibility of transplanting vital organs from one person to another, are finding it difficult to define the point at which death occurs and a donor's vital organs can justifiably be transplanted into another person. The availability of the contraceptive pill has made it difficult for theologians to define the point at

² Edmund Leach, by G. Crile, A Naturalistic View of Man.

which life begins. The possibility of 'directed mutation' of both man and animals is being seriously considered and discussed in the light of what has been learned about the genetic code. The exponential growth of populations and its threat to the earth's ecology has raised the question of whether people have the right to have as many children as they want. Traditional ways of rearing infants and young children are being challenged. Conventional methods of teaching are being supplanted by computerized programs of individual instruction. The concept of the book-filled library as the repository of information may soon be supplanted by electronic methods of storing and retrieving knowledge. Freudian beliefs are being rapidly replaced by those of the behavioral psychologists. Not only has it been alleged that 'God is dead,' but it is also being widely accepted that the mind of man differs from that of other higher animals only in degree and not in any absolute sense. Moreover, the synthesis of the genetic material DNA* has broken the last qualitative barrier between what we call life and what we have hitherto thought of as inanimate chemical processes. For most modern philosophies, it is the first time in history that man is beginning to comprehend the unity of the universe and the interrelationships of the processes that have made it possible for him to exist. These changes in our points of view about life, society, and the place of the individual within society are proceeding so rapidly that tenets and techniques that were taught in school and college are often obsolete by the time the student has been graduated. It is therefore necessary to keep re-examining even our³ most cherished and certain beliefs.

George Crile further claims that it has never been more

* transference of memory from cell to cell.

³ George Crile, Jr., M. D., A Naturalistic View of Man.

essential that men of all technologically advanced nations forbear from teaching their children their particular nationalistic, chauvinistic, racial, aesthetic, or religious dogmas. Crile also believes that the time has come to cooperate in rearing a generation unified in a common knowledge of science and in dedication to peace.....

Nonetheless, he probably realizes that in order to make this utopian plan a reality, it will be necessary to have the urgency of the threat and the critical state of the world's present ecology fully understood by the political and religious leaders of the world. They will have to be persuaded to support an educational program of a type that has never before existed. Perhaps this will be possible, for the current crisis is like that of a country being laid waste by tribal warfare, but which, when attacked from without, stops its internal feuding and unites to resist the common enemy. If they could be persuaded to do so, they could build a plastic and adaptable world and hierarchy to administrate an educational system based on love and cooperation. We should be more interested in the quality of life than in its length, more concerned with what we feel and enjoy than with the technology of production. If a belief is instilled in a child before he develops the ability to criticize or reason, the child is likely to be imprinted with it so strongly that it becomes a part of his personality.

CHAPTER II

TO A MOUSE

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous Beastie,
O what a panic's in the breastie.

Thou need no start awa sae hasty,

Wi' bickering brattle.

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee

Wi' murd'ring pattle.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion

Has broken nature's social union,

An' justifies that ill opinion

Which makes thee startle

At me, thy poor earth-born companion,

An' fellow-mortal.

Robert Burns

It will be universally admitted that instincts are as important as corporeal structures for the welfare of each species under its present conditions of life. ¹

¹ Charles Darwin, Origin of Species.

We cannot know the consequences of suffocating a spontaneous action at the time when the child is just beginning to be active; perhaps we suffocate life itself.

- Madame Montessori

"The end product will take care of itself. If the child has the love and freedom to function as a human being equal to his parents, teachers, or any adult, he will have the chance to live a happy life." ²

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air; and they shall tell thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

- Job 12:7-10.

² Herb Snitzer, Living at Summerhill.

One had to cram all this stuff into one's mind, whether one liked it or not. This coercion had such a deterring effect that, after I had passed the final examination, I found the consideration of any scientific problems distasteful to me for an entire year.

- Albert Einstein

...it is hard for an American child to grow toward independence, to find his identity, to retain his curiosity and initiative, and to acquire a scientific attitude, scholarly habits, productive enterprise, poetic speech.

- Paul Goodman

CHAPTER III

EDUCATUS

Schools with rigid curricula that force all children, regardless of their aptitudes and personal interests, into the same mold, expose many of the slower learners to material that they are not yet mature enough to find interesting or challenging. If a child is slow in comprehending mathematics, as many in my experience are, his failure to pass the subject excludes him automatically from the exposure and study of sciences for which mathematics has been made a prerequisite.....

About twenty years ago, when I was a child myself, I clearly recall the deep hatred which I believed I possessed for the 'academic subjects' with mathematics in the foreground; I doted on the 'not-so academic areas' such as history, art, handicrafts. Consequently, I continuously stayed behind in many areas of my scientifically oriented schooling. Much later, I began to realize that I am, and perhaps always was, extremely interested in animal behavior and natural sciences..... As a result, a child grows up ignorant not only of the nature of the world he lives in, but also of his own nature. The ignorance is totally unnecessary since a basic comprehension of most sciences can be obtained without more than an elementary understanding of mathematics.

My education was of the most ordinary description, consisting of little more than the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic at a common day school. My hours out of school were¹ passed at home and in the streets.

Michael Faraday, who had little mathematics and no formal schooling beyond the primary grades, is celebrated as an experimenter who discovered the induction of electricity. He was one of the great founders of modern physics. It is generally acknowledged that Faraday's ignorance of mathematics contributed to his inspiration, that it compelled him to develop a simple, non-mathematical concept when he looked for an explanation of² his electrical and magnetic phenomena.

At the turn of the century, John Dewey said,

We even go as far as to assume that the mind is averse to learning naturally. Which is like assuming that the digestive organs are averse to food and have to be coaxed or bullied into having anything to do with it. We fail to see that such aversion is in reality a condemnation of our methods, a sign that we are presenting material for which the mind in its existing state of growth has no need, or else presenting it in such a way as to cover up the real need... Surely the adult is more likely to learn the things befitting him when his hunger for learning has been kept alive continuously than after a premature diet of adult nutriment had deadened his desire to know.³

¹ Michael Faraday, by Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage.

² Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage.

³ John Dewey, Art As Experience.

CHAPTER IV

ART IS....

'Art is anything you can get away with.'

The Balinese say:

'We have no art.

We do everything as well as we can.'

Museum curator:

'I wouldn't be seen dead with a
living work of art.'

A. K. Coomaraswamy:

'We are proud of our museums where we display
a way of living that we have made possible. ¹

'You can say about Art (meaning the inner psychological side of the creative process) that it is the process of solving problems that cannot be stated clearly before they are solved. The process of orientation to a new problem is practically one hundred per cent of the solution.' ²

¹ Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage.

² Piet Hein, source unknown.

"...new combinations are rarely if ever found by straining for them consciously, but rather by a process of free association..." ³

"In the old days, pictures went forward towards completion by stages. A picture used to be a sum of additions. In my case, a picture is a sum of destruction. I do a picture...then I destroy it. In the end, though, nothing is lost: the red I took away from one place turns up somewhere else." ⁴

"...I sometimes begin a drawing with no pre-conceived problem to solve, with only the desire to use pencil and paper, and make lines, tones, and shapes with no conscious aim; but as my mind takes in what is so produced, a point arrives where some idea becomes conscious and crystallizes, and then a control and ordering begin to take place.

Or sometimes I start with a set subject; or to solve, in a block of stone of unknown dimensions, a sculptural problem I've given myself, and then consciously attempt to build an ordered relationship of forms, which shall express my idea. But if the work is to be more than just a sculptural exercise, unexplain-

³ Lawrence S. Kubie, Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process.

⁴ E. A. Gallatin, Of Art: Plato to Picasso.

able jumps in the process of thought; and the imagination plays its part." ⁵

"There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who with the help of their art and their intelligence transform a yellow spot into the sun." ⁶

"The painter passes through states of fullness and of emptying. That is the whole secret of art. I can take a walk in the forest of Fontainebleau. There I get an indigestion of greenness; I must empty this sensation into a picture. Green dominates it." ⁷

"It might seem from what I have said of shape and form that I regard them as ends in themselves. Far from it. I am very much aware that an associational, psychological factor plays a large part in sculpture. The meaning and significance of form itself probably depends on the countless association of man's history. For example, rounded forms convey an idea of fruitfulness, maturity, probably because the earth, women's breasts, and most fruits are rounded, and these shapes are important because

⁵ Robert L. Herbert, Modern Artists on Art, Ten Unabridged Essays.

⁶ E. A. Gallatin, Of Art: Plato to Picasso.

⁷ Ibid.

they have this background in our habits of perception." ⁸

"Leonardo counseled the painter to stimulate his imagination by looking attentively on weather-stains on old walls, or the veins of marble, and letting his fancy discover in them suggestive pictorial ideas." ⁹

"Paul Klee seems to handle colors and dreams as if they both come out of a box of children's toys. He plays and dreams with whatever he finds." ¹⁰

"Art is the communication (transmission) of feeling, necessary for civilized life and the moral progress of humanity." ¹¹

The ordinary man is firmly convinced that all questions of art may be simply and clearly solved by acknowledging "beauty" to be the content of art. This kind of attitude is rather common, and perhaps valid in itself. However, what is art truly if we put aside the conception of beauty, which only confuses the search? Could one rely on definitions presented to us by some obviously intelli-

⁸ Robert L. Herbert, Modern Artists on Art, Ten Unabridged Essays.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ P. J. Voormeij, An Essay: What is Art?

gent thinkers? I often wonder. For instance, Charles Darwin, whom I greatly admire as a scientist, brought forward this physiological-evolutionary definition on what he believed art to be, "Art is an activity arising even in the animal kingdom, and springing from sexual desire and the propensity to play...accompanied by a pleasurable excitement of the nervous system." ¹² A fine statement, and if one would take the proper time to evaluate what Darwin said about the activity of art and what art is, a person would soon discover that this statement is rather difficult to emulate. But Santayana, on the other hand, is more concerned with the artistic attitudes themselves, which Darwin left unattended, and states, "Art is the external manifestation, by means of lines, colors, movements, sounds, or words, of emotions felt by man." ¹³ However, this too could very well be inexact, because a man may express his emotions by means of lines, colors, movements, sounds, or words; and yet may not act on others by such expression; and then the manifestation of his emotions is not art.

Notwithstanding the superiority of most definitions and the metaphysical explanations which are presented over and over again, they are yet far from exact. The inaccuracy of all these definitions arises from the fact that

¹² Sprague and Taylor, Knowledge and Value.

¹³ Ibid.

in all of them the object considered is the pleasure that art may give, and not the very purpose it may serve in the life of man and humanity. One should not fail to observe that art is one of the means of intercourse between man and man, and not the delectation that the interchange may create.

Art begins when one person, with the object of joining another or others to himself in one and the same feeling, expresses that feeling by certain external indications. To take a simple example: A man having experienced fear on encountering death relates that encounter, and in order to evoke in others the feeling he has experienced, describes himself, his condition before the encounter, the surroundings, the road, his own light-heartedness, and then the truck's appearance, its speed, the closeness between himself and the truck, and so forth. All this--if only the man, when telling the story again, experiences the feeling he had lived through, and infects his hearers and compels them to feel what he had experienced--is art. And just the same example of what art is can be used in the following: If a man, having experienced either the fear of suffering or the attraction of enjoyment (whether in reality or in imagination), expresses these feelings on canvas or in stone so that others are infected by them, this too is art. Leo Tolstoy stated in his philosophical essay, "What is Art," the following:

Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the

manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty or God; it is not, as the aesthetic physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; above all...it is not pleasure...; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity. ¹⁴

Herbert Read, when asked to give his personal definition of what is art, said:

The question, "What is art?", is one which many wise men have tried to answer, but never to everybody's satisfaction. Art is one of those things which, like air or soil, is everywhere about us, but which we rarely stop to consider. For art is not something we find in museums and art galleries, or in old cities like Florence or Rome. Art, however we may define it, is present in everything we make to please our senses...But there is no genuine work of art which does not primarily appeal to our senses--our physical organs of perception--and when we ask: "What is art?" we are really asking what is the quality or peculiarity in a work of art that appeals to our senses." ¹⁵

Because the senses are so universal, so open to all kinds of impressions and so interwoven with one another, because the mind is like an automatic telephone exchange with senses ringing up every second and asking to be connected in every direction, because of these characteristics of the mind of man, there is no answer to the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Herbert Read, Education Through Art.

question, "What is art?"

Perhaps that is the answer.....

CHAPTER V

CREATIVITY

"Wisdom and experience are necessary to make the world go round, creativity to make it go forward."

- David Wechsler

The average person is inclined to think of a creative individual as one who is a doer, rather than a thinker, for it has been emphasized by such authorities as Guilford, Thurstone and Anastasi that creative talent is not necessarily to be equated with academic ability. David P. Ausubel reports:

The noncreative, high I.Q. individual who does very well on academic tasks and is vocationally successful, but who never generates an original idea, is a very familiar figure in our culture. Contrariwise, many highly creative individuals¹ do not sport spectacularly high I.Q.'s

Yet neither can it be said that the two qualities are mutually exclusive, for in the comparatively new area of research in creativity, most of the investigation has been directed toward discovering creative researchers in the fields of science and engineering, both areas which require academically demanding periods of professional

¹ David P. Ausubel, Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View.

preparation. Rather, it begins to appear that creativity and non-creativity are related ways of thinking, defined by Guilford as "divergent" and "convergent." Convergent thinking tends to lead to the "right" answer, and divergent thinking is the kind of thinking that leads to the kind of imaginative approach that will discover twenty-five new ways to use an empty coke bottle. It is not too presumptuous to reason one step further and assume that the convergent thinker may well be the straight A, high academic achiever in examination-oriented curricula, and the divergent thinker is the one who becomes a source of irritation to the teacher who has a program to cover and little time for discussion or digression. The latter type of thinker may well become bored with the restrictions of the prescribed curriculum and be the "gifted underachiever" or future dropout.

Frank Barron, a research psychologist at the University of California's Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, set out to study the characteristics of creative persons. He suggests in his monograph, "The Psychology of Imagination," that certain uniformities do not seem to characterize highly original scientists and artists:

The way in which the common need for order is related to the constructive possibilities and fruitful changes which may be found in apparent disorder provided the focus for an early series of our experimental studies at the institute. One dictionary definition of disorder links it

to such terms as 'confusion, neglect of rule, irregularity, disarrangement, tumult and disease.' There is little doubt that most people dislike being confronted with disorder. In individuals who turn out original work in science or art, however, a reversal of the usual attitude may be observed. ²

In contrast to analytic thinking, intuitive thinking characteristically does not advance in careful, well-defined steps. Indeed, it tends to involve maneuvers based seemingly on an implicit perception of the total problem. The thinker arrives at an answer, which may be right or wrong, with little, if any, awareness of the process by which he reached it. He rarely can provide an adequate account of how he obtained his answer, and he may be unaware of just what aspects of the problem situation he has been responding to. Usually, intuitive thinking rests on familiarity with the domain of knowledge involved and with its structure, which makes it possible for the thinker to leap about, skipping steps and employing short cuts in a manner that requires a later rechecking of conclusions by a more analytic means, whether inductive or deductive. ³

The creative process depends for its freedom upon the play of those pre-conscious functions which are balanced precariously between the rigidity of conscious function at one end (with its anchorage in reality), and the rigidity of unconscious function at the other end (with its anchorage in the stereotyped and repetitive symbolism of unconscious processes). It is a measure of the profound and tragic failure of our educational process that it does not accept the challenge of this problem, but tends, if anything, to reinforce the imprisonment of the pre-conscious function...new combinations are rarely if ever found by straining for them consciously,

² Frank Barron, The Psychology of Imagination.

³ Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education.

but rather by a process of free association...⁴

We must not assume from the onset that unconscious functioning is different in principle from conscious functioning. In fact if, for simplicity's sake, we assume that what we call creativity is perceptual--and, of course, is mostly a combination of both--then we find that intellectual as well as perceptual problem solving can take place either consciously or unconsciously. (I call "intellectual" the handling of abstract concepts.) There is ample evidence that the mind can work on typically intellectual problems, as for instance, certain types of scientific discovery, below the level of consciousness, and have the solution come as a surprise. The psychical mechanisms behind neurotic behavior, so brilliantly reconstructed by Freud, also involve a great deal of intellectual reasoning. Presumably the same holds true for the artist's activities, such as when he passes judgment on the relevance of a theme or subject-matter without consciously knowing why he chose what he did...By 'perceptual reasoning' I mean creative work that involves the handling of sensory qualities, such as size, movement, space, shape, or color. Albert Einstein once described his thinking as a 'combinatory play' of 'certain signs and more or less clear images,' either visual or muscular, the results of which had to be laboriously translated into words and other abstract signs afterward. Apparently these operations were sometimes quite conscious, sometimes not, for Einstein asserted at the same occasion that 'full consciousness is a limited state which can never be fully accomplished.' In similar manner, an artist works out his perceptual reasoning, which is steered by processes taking place below the level of consciousness. ⁵

⁴ Lawrence S. Kubie, Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process.

⁵ Rudolf Arnheim, Toward a Psychology of Art.

The behavioral technologist equates "knowledge" and "understanding" with behavior. He argues that there need not be any concern as to whether knowledge is basically behavior or not. The significant consideration is that the only tangible evidence of "knowledge" is behavioral evidence. He specifies the behavior which man, during his process of "learning," is to acquire. (Behavior is considered as evidence of knowledge.) He specifies, performs, constructs, and tests the metaphor through which education is presently conceived.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL

Metaphorically speaking, education is the foundation of the society we have constructed. Hence, any alteration in this system of education would affect our total way of life. Since any sort of drastic change is not considered feasible in our economic super-structure, we have apparently doomed progressive education to perpetuating it. We have private, high-standard institutions for the wealthy minority, public schooling for the middle class, and respectively indifferent facilities for the lower caste of society.

As well as preserving an economic uniformity, education conforms itself to the requirements of the community. Nursery and Kindergarten classes ease mother's "worry" of having her burden around constantly. (Besides, mom has to work to help finance all the payments and credits.) Elementary grades provide more "baby-sitting" and "training" for the high school. Then the high schools and technical institutions produce further preparation for either college or a future vocation.

Children and young adults are "taken care of" for a legal amount of years, and then the larger proportion of these are expected to fit in nicely with the rest of society. In most cases, high schools and universities

loiter through the fascinating "maze" performance of "building" human machines that are tailored to suit their counterparts waiting in thick, stupid clusters for them on the "outside" of these secure stone wombs.

Trouble-makers, dropouts, and a few other minor "mis-products" are less appreciated, but then other noble establishments are erected to accommodate these "mis-products," such as, Social Welfare, Unemployment Offices, The Salvation Army, houses of correction, penitentiaries, death cells, and lest we forget, psychiatric hospitals... to name a few. According to the United Nations, three million people actually die of starvation every year. Yet, very few of us cry...other than those directly involved with the crime. The news media, which is so deftly supported by McLuhan, may show an occasional glimpse of this kind of horror, but it is presented in such a fashion that its effects on the public are little different from Boris Karloff's performance on the late-late show.

If our so-called sympathetic affluent society is so apathetic towards major crimes, then how can they ever comprehend the slow but incontestable eruption of youth and our shaking and trembling education system?

It is said that our schools are geared to "middle-class values," but this is a false and misleading use of terms. The schools less and less represent any human values, but simply adjustment to a mechanical system. Because of the increasing failure of the schools with the poor urban

mass, there has developed a line of criticism--e.g., Oscar Lewis, Patricia Sexton, Frank Riesman, and even Edgar Friedenberg--asserting that there is a "culture of poverty" which the middle-class schools do not fit, but which has its own virtues of spontaneity, sociality, animality. The implication is that the middle-class, for all its virtues, is¹ obsessional, prejudiced, prudish.

¹ Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education and the Community of Scholars.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLASS AND ITS DEMOTICS

In my opinion, and conclusion of this essay, I firmly believe that the most important "function" of any teacher is to continuously motivate and stimulate the pupils under his "care" with love, human understanding and complete equality. (Even though this may sound "old-fashioned.")

Appallingly few instructors are able (or interested) to fulfill this very basic duty. Many keep their classes only as a captive audience and administrators turn a "blind eye," probably because they are either unfit and/or tied down by valueless ethics, beliefs, and union laws. This could very well be one of the major causes and reasons why so many young people, particularly in the public high schools, skip courses and may develop into truants, both physically and mentally. In the upper middle caste of society, "potential dropouts" are cajoled back into the fold of concealed indifference and tedium. Not one student at the high school level should "quit" before he is properly "finished" and thereby lose out on his precious education. In the school with which I am involved, this is a common situation. We force the student into duplicity and make him trade pretense for purpose. Consequently, many students search for a class

where they may be candid and allow their imaginations to emanate. This is the manner in which I have been trying to conduct my classes for the past four years. Having absolute faith in a collective joint esteem between student and teacher, I have "done away with" the art programme prescribed by the Department of Education (text-books which dated from 1951, and an archaic structure of art appreciation). There is no provision for humaneness created by this "good-for-the-majority" edifice. In forty-five minute periods, we devote our time either to practical artwork, art history, discussion on whatever anyone finds important enough to bring up, all or none of these, or anything that we as a group of human beings would like to react to. The dialogue is never on art alone, but I try to keep it spontaneous and as closely intertwined with the humanities as the circumstances will permit. Each of my students has the freedom to choose not to attend my class if he believes that this is what he wants. I make no reports or give detentions (the use of detentions and other choice punishments are strongly urged by the administrators as an excellent method of class control, and they are frequently greedily and cowardly practised by a rather large number of the teaching staff). I have no rules against eating, smoking, talking, laughing, kissing, drinking, coming late, et cetera. Projects to work on are determined by the individual students, although I must admit, sometimes I attempt to stimulate by

arousing or re-enforcing their thought and dream processes by presenting them with ideas such as:

"What would you feel like inside an egg?

Imagine yourself to be a worm, eating your way through a corpse.

How would you react if you were a cooking pot or a matchbox?"

During the year, I have taken them wandering through numerous art galleries, parks and cities, any place suggested by the students as being of interest to us. Always, I have and shall encourage self-discipline, self-discovery to know thyself, and research into the natural world.

"We don't tell children what to do,
we only teach them love and technique."

- A. S. Neill

THE FACE OF THE WATERS

I am told now that the particles in an atom's inner core
Are so small that no one knows if they are particles at all;
They no longer seem to take up any space,
Being but bits of energy, existing without form.

As one looks into space within the atom,
The concepts of form and matter seem to vanish
And in their place is nothing but energy
In an organization we do not understand.

I thought of Genesis, Chapter one, Verse two:
AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID;
AND THE DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP.
AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS.

Now, as in the beginning, there is the concept
Of the unity of the universe;
Mass and energy are interchangeable;
We can no longer separate the spirit from the flesh.

- George Crile, M.D.

CHAPTER VIII

ART CURRICULUM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE - WITH RESULTS

A. Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire

B. Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire Results

C. Comments given by students to: Other (explain)-----

ART CURRICULUM SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE

1970

FEMALE _____ MALE _____

AGE _____ GRADE _____

NAME OF PRESENT ART TEACHER _____

HAVE YOU STUDIED ART BEFORE THIS YEAR? _____

IF SO, FOR HOW LONG? _____

NAME/S OF PAST ART TEACHER/S _____

YOUR NAME (OPTIONAL, NOT NECESSARY) _____

DIRECTIONS: THIS IS NOT A TEST.

It is a list of questions that I would like you to answer as frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply circle the letter or letters of each choice that you make. Since an answer is worthless unless it is your own judgment, do not discuss these questions with anyone; put down your first reaction.

Your selections will hopefully assist me in discovering what the Art student would like his Art program to consist of.

Also, I am interested in your candid remarks about the present Art program to which you have been subjected. If you so desire, use the back page of this questionnaire for additional comments.

Thank you,

PJV:gb
May 4, 1970

Peter John Voormeij
Head, Art Department

1. In taking this questionnaire, do you feel that it is:
 - a. Useless
 - b. No one's business
 - c. Useful
 - d. Other (explain) _____

2. In general, I share my attitudes and characteristics with:
 - a. No one
 - b. Very few
 - c. Everybody
 - d. Other (explain) _____

3. Do you think you are artistic?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Somewhat

4. My opinion of my Art teacher is:
 - a. Too directive - (bossy)
 - b. Not strict enough in telling me what to do
 - c. Good artist, no teacher
 - d. Good teacher, no artist
 - e. Shows no interest in students
 - f. Other (explain) _____

5. Do you think that your Art teacher cares about you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Little
 - d. Other (explain) _____

6. Would you like to have more than one Art teacher instructing you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain) _____

7. Do you believe that you could study Art without an Art teacher?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Part of the year
 - d. Most of the year
 - e. Other (explain) _____

8. If you had to choose between the following two art studies, which one would you favor?
 - a. Only Art theory (History, Architecture, etc.)
 - b. Only practical Art work (Painting, Sculpture, etc.)

9. Would you prefer it if an equal amount of time were devoted to both Art theory and practical Art work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain) _____

10. When did you last visit an Art Gallery?
 - a. Recently
 - b. More than a month ago.
 - c. More than a year ago.
 - d. I have never been to an Art Gallery.
 - e. Other (explain) _____

11. How often should Art classes meet?
 - a. Each day.
 - b. Once a week.
 - c. Once a month.
 - d. Twice a day.
 - e. Other (explain) _____

12. What should the student/teacher ratio be?
 - a. 1/1
 - b. 30/1
 - c. 15/1
 - d. Other (explain) _____

13. Do you sometimes work on additional Art projects at home?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (explain) _____
14. Do you prefer to work by yourself?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain) _____
15. Would you enjoy meeting a "famous" (well-known) artist?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain) _____
16. Do you believe in a free choice of topics in your Art class?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain) _____
17. Would you rather have the Art teacher suggest what you should do?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain) _____
18. Art equipment should be supplied by the:
- a. School
 - b. Student
 - c. Both
 - d. Other (explain) _____

19. Do you think that an Art textbook should be issued by the teacher?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain)_____

20. Would you like to study from the Art books in the Library resource center?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain)_____

21. Which of the following would you be most interested in reading? (Mention first choice, second choice, etc.)
 - a. Art History_____
 - b. Art and Architecture_____
 - c. Advertising Art_____
 - d. Fashion design_____
 - e. Other (explain)_____

22. Would you like to subscribe to an Art magazine? (Cost below one dollar per year.)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (explain)_____

23. What is your reaction to Art homework?
 - a. Useless
 - b. Up to the Art teacher
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Student's choice
 - e. Other (explain)_____

24. Art exams are essential.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Nonsense
 - d. Other (explain)_____

25. An Art teacher should be able to evaluate a student's progress without tests:
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Nonsense
 - d. Other (explain) _____
26. When you don't complete your Art project, what is your usual reason/s?
- a. I always complete my art projects.
 - b. Lose interest.
 - c. No time.
 - d. New ideas
 - e. Other (explain) _____
27. Keeping an Art notebook is useful.
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain) _____
28. Which kind of film would you rather see:
- a. Renaissance Art
 - b. The Impressionists
 - c. Modern Art
 - d. Other (explain) _____
29. Does a cluttered and fully occupied Art room bother you?
- a. Yes
 - b. Not at all
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Other (explain) _____
30. My three favorite colors are (name three colors in order of preference):
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

31. What is your favorite animal? (Name three if you so desire.)
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
32. Which animal do you like least? (Name three if you so desire.)
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
33. Circle all the subjects that appeal to you. (No order of preference needed.)
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Art History | i. Stage Design |
| b. Architecture | j. Costume Design |
| c. Technical Drawing | k. Sculpture |
| d. Drafting | l. Painting |
| e. Pottery and Ceramics | m. Drawing |
| f. Fashion Design | n. Graphics (Print-making) |
| g. Advertising Art | o. Batik Dyeing |
| h. Jewelry Making | p. Photography/Film-making |
| q. Other (explain) _____ | |
34. Do you enjoy solving interesting problems and puzzles?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (explain) _____
35. Would you be interested in studying about Afro-American art?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (explain) _____
36. Do you enjoy watching movies?
- a. Very much
 - b. Not much
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain) _____

37. Which of the following would you find more interesting?
(Mention first choice, second choice, etc.)
- a. A lecture by a well-known Art critic_____
 - b. A demonstration of Eskimo soap-stone carving_____
 - c. An excursion to an Art college_____
 - d. Other (explain)_____
38. Circle all the movies which appeal to you most. (No order of preference needed.)
- a. Animated films (cartoons)
 - b. Art films (films which are created and viewed mainly for their artistic value.)
 - c. Comedies
 - d. Dramas
 - e. Film festivals (Humphrey Bogart, Charlie Chaplin, etc.)
 - f. Documentaries
 - g. Historical movies
 - h. Social commentaries (films which reveal or criticize various aspects of our society.)
 - i. Other (explain)_____
39. Do you find that seeing a film about a well-known artist makes it much easier to remember him than reading about him in a book, or hearing of him at a lecture?
- a. Not really
 - b. Yes
 - c. Depends on what kind of movie
 - d. Other (explain)_____
40. Which of the following subjects would you prefer to draw?
- a. A dog looking very alert.
 - b. The interior of a bus crowded with people.
 - c. A detailed study of a butterfly.
 - d. The warmth of the sun on your face.
 - e. Other (explain)_____
41. Do you find that music stimulates your imagination?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Other (explain)_____

42. Do you enjoy excursions to Art galleries and museums?
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
 - Other (explain) _____
43. If it were possible to visit different Art exhibitions throughout the school year, how often would you like to participate?
- Once a month
 - Three times a year
 - Once a year
 - Other (explain) _____
44. Are you uncomfortable viewing nudity in Art?
- No
 - Yes
 - Little
 - Other (explain) _____
45. Are you in favor of students' Art exhibits?
- Yes
 - No
 - Other (explain) _____
46. Would you prefer to have Art classes out of doors? (Weather permitting.)
- No
 - Yes
 - Indifferent
 - Other (explain) _____
47. Circle all the following media that you are familiar with:
- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Oil paints | g. Lino/wood cutting sets |
| b. Water colors | h. Etching tools |
| c. Acrylic paint | i. Drafting tools |
| d. Charcoal | j. Clay |
| e. Pastel | k. Plaster |
| f. Indian Ink | l. Other _____ |

48. Which would you prefer:
- a. A 40-minute period of Art every school day.
 - b. Only one morning or afternoon of Art each week (3 hours solid per week).
 - c. Other (explain) _____
49. Should Art remain optional (student's choice) or become compulsory?
- a. Optional
 - b. Compulsory
 - c. Other (explain) _____
50. Do you plan to continue studying Art after High School?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - d. Other (explain) _____

THANK YOU.

ART CURRICULUM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

RESULTS

Grades eight and nine. A total of 70. (35 boys and 35 girls)

MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1.a. 3	3	9.a. 30	35
b. 2	0	b. 7	1
c. 26	24	c. 1	0
d. 5	7	d. 1	3
2.a. 0	2	10.a. 2	6
b. 16	19	b. 5	5
c. 16	11	c. 13	12
d. 3	5	d. 17	12
3.a. 11	7	e. 1	1
b. 10	14	11.a. 17	27
c. 18	16	b. 6	2
4.a. 17	7	c. 1	0
b. 5	6	d. 4	3
c. 7	6	e. 9	4
d. 4	2	12.a. 3	4
e. 1	2	b. 7	6
f. 8	16	c. 24	21
5.a. 14	12	d. 3	4
b. 17	11	13.a. 19	18
c. 7	13	b. 18	13
d. 1	1	c. 2	6
6.a. 11	18	14.a. 14	7
b. 18	9	b. 15	18
c. 7	9	c. 8	11
d. 1	1	d. 0	0
7.a. 7	7	15.a. 22	22
b. 21	16	b. 7	7
c. 6	12	c. 4	7
d. 0	3	d. 2	2
e. 1	0	16.a. 5	8
8.a. 2	0	b. 28	24
b. 32	35	c. 1	2
		d. 3	3

MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
17.a.	11	9		24.a.	25	21	
b.	12	6		b.	4	8	
c.	15	20		c.	6	6	
d.	0	2		d.	2	3	
18.a.	22	17		25.a.	29	34	
b.	2	2		b.	4	2	
c.	14	17		c.	1	0	
d.	0	2		d.	2	1	
19.a.	7	12		26.a.	8	9	
b.	28	21		b.	11	14	
c.	0	3		c.	9	10	
d.	4	1		d.	7	4	
				e.	7	4	
20.a.	27	26		27.a.	9	12	
b.	4	7		b.	13	12	
c.	2	3		c.	12	14	
d.	4	0		d.	1	1	
21.1st.	10b	12d		28.a.	2	5	
	5c	4c		b.	7	1	
	6d	3a		c.	10	21	
	2a	0b		d.	8	8	
2nd.	10c	10c		29.a.	17	10	
	5b	8d		b.	16	20	
	1d	2a		c.	1	4	
	7a	0b		d.	3	1	
3rd.	12a	16b		30.	32 blue	26 blue	
	7b	2a			18 green	17 green	
	3d	3c			15 red	10 red	
4th.	7a	23a			9 orange	1 orange	
	7d	5b			2 turquoise	1 turquoise	
	2c	2c			4 yellow	5 yellow	
	3b	0d			6 black	4 black	
22.a.	16	15			3 purple	6 purple	
b.	16	21			2 grey	3 grey	
c.	4	2			2 brown	2 brown	
23.a.	17	14			1 mauve	5 mauve	
b.	5	5			1 violet	3 gold	
c.	7	8				5 pink	
d.	7	8				1 pale pink	
e.	1	4				4 white	
						1 beige	
						1 indigo	
						1 pale blue	

MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
31. 23 dog	25 dog	2 brother	
5 tiger	2 tiger	1 sister	
1 moose		1 elephant	1 elephant
3 lion		1 bat	
2 snake		3 worm	7 worm
3 elephant		1 teacher	
16 horse	27 horse	1 turtle	
1 panther	1 panther	1 mosquito	
5 cat	10 cat	1 sheep	
3 leopard	1 leopard	1 I don't	3 I like all
2 cougar		hate any	animals.
3 deer		animal.	
1 bird	2 bird		6 mouse
3 bear			1 dog
1 insect			1 gorilla
1 antelope			3 bee
1 grizzly			
4 rabbit	1 rabbit	33.a. 4	2
1 salmon		b. 17	5
1 female	1 boy	c. 23	3
1 mouse	2 mouse	d. 14	3
1 woodchuck		e. 5	25
1 fish		f. 4	27
	4 fawn	g. 15	15
	1 zebra	h. 4	20
	2 squirrel	i. 3	9
	1 dolphin	j. 4	21
	1 raccoon	k. 16	19
	1 chipmunk	l. 12	22
	1 guinea pig	m. 15	21
	1 monkey	n. 8	4
		o. 1	7
		p. 22	17
		q. 1	1
32. 10 rat	1 rat	34.a. 22	20
5 insect	7 insect	b. 9	10
1 ant		c. 4	7
2 pig			
2 hippo	1 hippo	35.a. 12	8
8 cat	5 cat	b. 16	20
2 lizard	4 lizard	c. 6	7
1 people			
8 snake	7 snake	36.a. 29	24
3 frog	1 frog	b. 1	0
1 skunk	1 skunk	c. 2	10
2 fish	3 fish	d. 1	3
2 bird			
1 anteater			
1 warthog			
1 spider	7 spider		
1 alligator			

MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
37.a.	8-3 2-2 1-1	11-3 4-2 4-1	45.a.	17 b. 15 c. 2	25 6 3		
b.	12-1 2-2	7-1 4-3	46.a.	4 b. 27 c. 1 d. 1	2 29 0 3		
c.	6-2 5-1 2-3	7-2 7-2 14-1 3-3	47.a.	24 b. 31 c. 3 d. 30 e. 31 f. 32 g. 5 h. 2 i. 2 j. 21 k. 19 l. 1	24 30 1 33 31 29 3 3 1 16 16 2		
38.a.	24 b. 6 c. 31 d. 16 e. 13 f. 18 g. 23 h. 13 i. 8	21 10 32 23 9 4 8 10 5	48.a.	20 b. 6 c. 5	21 6 7		
39.a.	10 b. 13 c. 13	6 21 9	49.a.	30 b. 0 c. 1	32 2 0		
40.a.	7 b. 7 c. 6 d. 2 e. 8	11 3 9 9 5	50.a.	4 b. 10 c. 18	10 13 11		
41.a.	7 b. 20 c. 6 d. 1	4 22 13 0					
42.a.	16 b. 8 c. 8 d. 1	14 7 11 2					
43.a.	16 b. 6 c. 6 d. 3	21 6 3 1					
44.a.	33 b. 2 c. 0 d. 2	32 2 2 0					

COMMENTS GIVEN BY STUDENTS TO: Other (explain) _____

BOYS

1. Stupid, no good, if used.
4. Good artist, no good, no control, too much talking.
5. Teacher is mental, hate teacher.
7. No interest in art.
11. Indifferent, 3 times a week.
12. 10/2.
16. Some guidance.
19. Depends on book.
20. Don't know
21. Indifferent, cartoons, portraits.
25. Depends on student.
26. No work given, lazy (2), can't draw.
28. Cartoons, portraits.
31. Nothing to do with art.
32. Nothing to do with art.
34. Sometimes (2).
35. Never heard of it (2).
36. Depends on movie (2), lose interest.
37. None
38. Horror, fiction, adventure.

GIRLS

1. Fun.
2. A friend (2), whoever I want.
4. Fair, looks for trouble, no control, bad teacher (4), too much talking (2).
9. More art.
11. 3 times a week.
12. 5/1, can't care, 20/1, 3/1.
13. Sometimes.
16. Sometimes.
17. Suggest only (often underlined), explain technique, not influencing students.
19. Only for theory (3).
23. Teacher chooses chums, teacher is favorist (4).
24. Sometimes.
25. Only assignments.
26. Never had art home work (3).
27. Only when having a test.
28. Indifferent (4), Woodstock.
34. Depends on my mood (3), sometimes (4).
35. Don't care, no thank you, not really, not sure, what is it?

BOYS

- 40. Cars, bra, abstract, wild life scene.
- 43. Never, 2 times a month, on school time (2).
- 44. No, it is beautiful.
- 45. Yes, each students' work, even if it is bad, don't care (2).
- 48. 40 minutes a week, 3 times a week.

GIRLS

- 37. None.
- 38. Adult only films, love, horror, woodstock, mystery.
- 39. Don't care.
- 40. A horse very alert, people, face.
- 42. Never been.
- 43. Very often, never, 2 times a month (2).
- 45. Sometimes, comparing the good and bad is not so good.
- 46. Sometimes (2).
- 48. Depends on teacher, 2 times out of six day cycle, 1 hour 40 minutes a day.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The decisive factor for me to create this questionnaire was to allow students the freedom to criticize, react, suggest, or abandon the present art curriculum which is, in many instances, forced upon them involuntarily by our "benevolent" educational system. For some years, I have permitted art students under my care to be entities unto themselves, reacting to other environmental unities according to their own coherence and understanding. The Art Curriculum Survey Questionnaire is formed by me through personal experience, and will, with the appropriate application and patience, forecast a rather accurate picture of the student's attitudes towards his immediate environment, and his relationship with aesthetics.

This questionnaire was presented to 70 students at the eighth and ninth grade levels. Purposefully, I decided against using any of my own students as they might not have been totally impartial in answering this questionnaire. I therefore selected approximately 25 students from three different art teachers. The students have an average age of thirteen. They are mainly from an Anglo-Saxon background. Their parents belong to the affluent high middle class and the wealthy, who have their large impressive homes and estates situated in the western part of Montreal.

There the rich suburbs endeavor to create and maintain a culture by erecting precious art galleries and libraries, vigilantly heeded by a handful of beau monde patricians. Nonetheless, the answers I received on question 10 (When did you last visit an art gallery?) clearly show that this suburban culture is only there to blanket the aesthetic ignorance of the pietistical rich. More than half of the students apparently had never been to an art gallery. Question 30, among others, demonstrates distinctly that there are very few independent students with a stream of consciousness; 58 out of 70 chose the color blue, only one decided on "pale" blue.....With question 31, again 58 chose the dog as their favorite animal and 43, the horse. Yet, only one student preferred an antelope and one, a raccoon. I had designed Question 40 to discover how many students would rather choose the most apparent, realistic theme to draw, and how many would choose the more abstract. I counted a mere eleven students who chose to draw "The warmth of the sun on your face." Preoccupation with sex was outstanding with twelve students, and 65 claim not to be uncomfortable viewing nudity in art class (Question 44). Further, a keen observer may notice that 67 students prefer practical art work (Painting, Sculpture, etc.) over non-practical art work (Art History). Also, 45 students would like the student/teacher ratio to be 15 to 1 (Question 12).

The art educator will observe that students prefer to meet each day (Question 11) in place of once a week.

And, 52 students believe in a free choice of topics and that art examinations are not essential (Question 24). Well over 60 students believe that an art teacher should be able to evaluate a student's progress without exams or tests (Question 25). Furthermore, the reply to question 29 indicates that more than half of the students may continue studying art after high school, which may well point out that art still has not lost its appeal.

This survey has in all its larval stages a great deal of opportunity for further utilization and development in discovering what students may require in their exposure to aesthetic evaluation.

I would therefore recommend that the art educator should allow each student the ultimate freedom of discrimination, predilection, preference, adoption of all objects and feelings, and, above all, a choice in the composition of an art curriculum.

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