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BIOGRAPHIES OF TWO INDIVIDUALS' ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARISON

ROBERT KINGSLEY AYIKU

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in
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ABSTRACT

BIOGRAPHIES OF TWO INDIVIDUALS' ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARISON

R.K. AYIKU

This comparative case study traces the artistic biographies of two graduate student peers of art education at Concordia University, Montreal. Participation includes the researcher with a Ghanaian artistic background, and a Patricia (Tish) Connors, with a Canadian background.

The artistic experiences of the researcher and respondent are explored through a personal narrative, and dialogical interviews respectively. The factors considered to be responsible for these experiences, and also for the similarities and/or commonalities as well as differences that exist between them are examined. The respondent's personal impressions, opinions, and views about the researcher's artistic experiences and activities are the hints upon which the concluding analysis is based.

The discussion of a pertinent question in relation to "free expression" in the Ghanaian art classroom leads to the proposition of classroom practices informed by democratic and emancipatory principles. Concepts such as 'socio-cultural hegemony', 'critical self-consciousness of students', and 'cooperative or collaborative learning' are recognized as factors which have important implications for education, including art education.

The findings of the study show that interactions among teacher peers in relation to their professional activities can be a way of revealing experiences, events, values, and belief structures purporting to be educational. Thus opportunities to render these accessible for discussion would assist teachers to attain higher levels of congruence between espoused theoretical educational principles and actual classroom practice; and hence making the practice of teaching more meaningful to the teacher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special indebtedness to Prof. Stanley Horner of the Department of Art Education, Concordia University, Montreal, who supervised this thesis and offered valuable suggestions at all stages of the work. His special patience and attention for me during discussions pertaining to this project are very much appreciated.

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I owe a substantial gratitude to Patricia Connors, alias Tish, a student peer of mine and the only interviewee for this study. Her candid response to the interview questionnaire has opened doors on many ideas which have subsequently contributed immensely to the successful completion of this project. I gratefully acknowledge her patience and devotion of time for the interviews.

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Before bringing this section to an end, I wish to express my gratitude to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, whose financial support and care have helped me to make my studies a success; my wife, Emelia, and daughters, Abigail, Betsy, and Celly Ayiku, for their understanding, patience, and moral support.

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Robert Ayiku
rch 1993

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, SCOPE, AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is a multiple-case study with a primary purpose of investigating the relationships that may exist between my art training profile in Ghana, and that of a Canadian student peer of mine. Both of us are currently undertaking studies in art education at the graduate level.

Prior to establishing the rationale for the study I deem it expedient to explain the phrasal term, "art training profile" as applied in the context of this study. Briefly, it is meant to represent the various art making activities and artistic experiences through which each participant has attained his or her current level of personal artistic development.

The object of the study is two-fold. On one hand, it is to enable me to bring to the knowledge of my Canadian student peers of art education, and other readers, the nature of art activities and experiences that constitute my personal art training profile in Ghana. As such, it reflects to a large extent some important types of art materials and media, and aspects of art making techniques and processes in my country. Secondly, it throws some amount of light on some of the factors that have been influential to art making activities in that part of the

world. These include sources of materials, social, cultural, and economic factors. On the other hand, the study of the art training profile of my Canadian peer provides the grounds for explaining the similarities and/or commonalities and differences that exist between her art experiences and mine. This investigation is based on the factors outlined above as being influential to art making. Thus through this means I would be enabled to find out what new didactic and pedagogical concepts or issues may arise that I could suitably tap upon to broaden my personal outlook about art for the enhancement of my teaching repertoire. Such arising concepts or issues may be in terms of new art materials, techniques, and processes, experiences, knowledge, skills, and behaviours pertaining to art making. This is basically the purpose of the study.

The idea of this study was triggered off as a result of a series of feedback offered me by a "course-mate" of mine in Educational Research on my personal journal reflections, rather than a pre-conceived intention. Its evolvement has been a motivation of what I would describe as a gradual awakening in me of a new sense of personal perception of myself, a strong concern for self-identity. This my new agendum, in my opinion, has been engendered in me by what I would term as my newly developed mode of thinking, reasoning, and inquiry in my studies. My personal outlook to learning or knowing has taken on a more 'humanistic' form. It seems to have gradually transcended its initial emphasis on subject-matter to incorporate that strong concern in me for a self-discovery and self-formation. Stated in simpler terms, I have developed the capacity for consulting

with my inner-self through my personal reflections on my lived experiences as a means of discovering my personality in its own uniqueness. The result of this is the development within me of an increased sense of personal consciousness with a decreased self-estrangement. Also becoming apparent to me is a special personal world view or model of reality, which tends to constantly reshape my belief structure about 'personal awareness', or the "self" factor in teaching and learning situations. This belief structure, I believe, is an inspiration from the ideal of education which views 'personal consciousness' or 'self-awareness' as being basic to learning or knowing, and thus, "essential to human growth and potential"[1]. Thus the notion of the self-concept, or self-reflectivity, I believe, is central to the critical consciousness that has developed in me. Hence, I view it as the vital factor motivating my understanding of my own personality as an artist and art teacher.

Indeed, this could have been simply the answer to the pertinent question, 'who am I?', which has usually inundated my mind during the periods of my personal reflections. Nevertheless, in my inner-most mind, I perceive that there is more to the question than that simple statement for answer - 'an artist and an art teacher'.

A reflection on my educational career in art and art education reveals a series of systematic experiences along its path. This brings to my awareness the fact that my personal identity as an artist and art teacher is experiential and historical. It thus clearly becomes evident that the most effective means of

providing a meaningful answer to the question is to reflect upon and trace those identifiable experiences along the path leading to my current level of artistic development Apparently, this biographical structure of my personal art experiences would provide a substantial amount of information about artistic processes, skills, attitudes and behaviours that would constitute my 'art training profile' - my paradox for my personal identity. This idea derives from a personal philosophical stance that any human being is a product of his or her personal experiences which could be traced down to the time of his or her birth. Thus tracing the biography of my artistic experiences, I believe, would yield a good amount of data with which to define the context of my personal history as far as my education in art is concerned. Obviously, it would unearth the various art activities and sequences of artistic experiences that have been responsible for my artistic development. The environmental resources as well as the social, cultural, and economic factors that have dictated and influenced the kinds of art activities in which I have been involved would also come to light. Clearly, the consequence of this approach to uncovering my personal identity, I believe, would bear some useful implications for my personal theorizing and practical orientation for my teaching in the future. This is the basis of the principle guiding this study.

As the foregoing indicates, the journal is the primary tool inspiring this personal reflective process. Previously, however, I was not used to personal journal writing because my previous education did not expose me to this exercise. Nonetheless, having been introduced to it as part of the course requirements for

'Research in Art Education', my awareness has been awakened to the fact that a regular use of the personal reflective journal could have useful academic implications for a student, in that it has the tendency of fostering in the individual an immense sense of critical thinking towards self-formation. Ideally, what has emerged out of it for me is a greater sense of personal history.

In the process of the journal reflections, the use of a student peer of mine as a critical observer and respondent to read through, or listen to and comment upon my reflections and to provide alternate perceptions proved to be very invaluable. This was in the person of Patricia Connors, alias Tish, a course-mate and personal friend of mine. What became immediately apparent through this exercise of sharing views and ideas about our individual personal reflections was some amount of perceivable similarities in relation to our art making experiences. These similarities reflect greatly certain factors influencing our individual art activities, as well as some aspects of the types of art in which each of us has been involved. Also emerging was the fact that Tish and I are about the same age, both of us commencing our educational careers in the late 1950s. Thus it is as a result of these observations coupled with a strong desire in me to investigate in detail those implicit relationships existing between our art experiences that this study has been inspired.

Objectives

The study has a two-fold objective. In the first instance, it explores the traits of various art making experiences inherent in each participant which have contributed to the current level of his or her artistic development. These include the types of art made, art materials or media, as well as art making processes used by each participant. In other words, it is aimed at tracing the historical path of artistic experiences that constitute the art training profile of each participant. The study is geared towards exploring the various 'key moments' in each participant's artistic experiences, as well as important factors that have been influential to his or her art making and decision to become an artist. The term 'key moments' is applied here to represent the 'peak learning experiences' that occurred during the participants' education in art These involve all moments and events of the participants' art activities and art making experiences which, though in the past, still remain vividly memorable to them as having made important contributions towards their artistic developments. Stated differently, the term 'key moments' embraces any art experience in which the participant had been involved, both in and outside school, which was totally absorbing, interesting, stimulating, and memorable to him or her.

The phrase, 'important factors that are influential to the participants' artistic development', implies the various factors that have both explicitly and implicitly influenced learning at different levels of their education in art. Two main factors have been explored here. These are factors pertaining to 'curricular' and 'non-

curricular' education respectively. In the context of this study, curricular education is defined as that which has been planned in a sequential order and has taken place "in an organized [programme] of study over a period of time"[2] Ideally, it refers to the art making experiences that have been acquired by the participant through organized art activities prescribed by the official school art curriculum. This embraces all forms of school or classroom art, as well as influences exerted by individual art teachers or the peers of the participant on his or her art making. The non-curricular education, on the other hand, is that which has been achieved by the learner "through random personal experiences"[3] as a result of his or her interaction with the social and cultural environment in which he or she lives. In short, such experiences include any plausible influences exerted by the community in which the individual grew up while acquiring his or her art training. Such influences pertain to those that are exerted by the participants' family members or siblings, friends, and peer groups on their art making.

There is need to remark at this juncture that it has been found expedient to explore both the curricular and non-curricular dimensions of education in this study because the two have been viewed as important components for the dissemination and acquisition of art experiences. Secondly, it has been observed that these two components, while each complements the other, neither could conveniently be substituted for the other as far as education in art is concerned. This therefore indicates that for an effective artistic development to occur in an individual learner, both components do operate at different levels. Miller and

Seller (1985) reflect this perspective by observing that both the explicit and implicit interactions in education contribute to "facilitate learning and development, and to impose meaning on experience"[4]. The contention here is that whereas the explicit interactions are reflected in the written curriculum and in courses of study, the implicit interactions are found in what the co-authors term as the 'hidden curriculum'. This thus indicates that the hidden curriculum involves learning interactions that transcend the usual occurrence between a learner and the school to embrace other learning interactions occurring between the learner and the community. Thus it is those inherent traits of artistic experiences acquired by each participant in such a holistic manner that the study explores.

The second aspect of the objectives is the exploration of the relationships existing between the art experiences of the two participants. Here the participants' art experiences are examined in relation to the other, bringing out their basic similarities, commonalities, or differences. The aim underlying this exercise is to find out what insights there are to be gained by both participants, as artists and art teachers, from each other's art making experiences. This is the implicit agenda underlying this second aspect of the study.

The Research Question/Problem

What can Graduate Art Education Students from two different countries, namely Canada and Ghana, learn from the each other's Artistic Experiences? This question has been posed as a means of preparing the minds of the

participants as to what to look for from studying each others' art making experiences. It is also to enable the researcher to determine the wording and sequential structure of the interview questionnaire. As a means of simplification, and for a working strategy, the research question has been broken down into two sub-questions.

The Sub-Questions

i. What do my artistic experiences in Ghana tell my Canadian peer about her art training?

ii. What do the artistic experiences of my respondent tell me about my art training in Ghana?

The theme: "Biographies of Two Individuals' Artistic Developments: A Comparison", has been worded as such to show that each participant's narrative about his or her individual artistic experiences portrays an historical order. Each narrative describes the biographical structure or succession of art making activities and experiences as recounted by the individual participant.

Delimitation

As its objectives exemplify, this study is aimed at tracing the artistic biographies of its participants and exploring the relationships between the participants' art experiences. It is important to remark that it is not within its

scope to examine the detailed personal biographies of the individual participants. Secondly, it was not part of its objectives to analyze by way of examining, or comparing and contrasting the official school art curricula through which the participants acquired their individual art training. Rather, it explores from the participants' point of view the art experiences acquired by the participants as direct outcomes of the pedagogical and didactic principles and processes through which each had gone at the classroom level. It also examines other configurative factors that have been influential to each participant's art training. These would include the social, cultural, economic, and resources of the environment within which he or she has developed as an artist. Actually, the study solicits information directly from each participant about his or her own art training. Giving of information by the participants has been wholly a work of memory based on personal recollections, each participant recounting as vividly as possible, the various art activities and experiences by which he or she has acquired his or her current level of development in artistry. While these series of art experiences are by no means a representation of any official school art curriculum, they are also not meant to represent any particular practice in art teaching, past or present.

Methodologies

Data collection involves:

i. a first-personal account by the researcher recounting the various art

making experiences that constitute his art training profile in Ghana;

ii. in-depth interviews by means of structured, open-ended questions in the form of questionnaires. The interviews are in two categories. The first category of questions are geared towards tracing the path of art making experiences (both in and outside school) constituting the respondent's artistic development. Questions in the second category have sought the opinions of the respondent about the researcher's art training in Ghana in relation to her own art training in Canada.

Procedure

The procedure is as follows:

i. The questionnaire for the first phase of the interview is structured and tendered for preliminary studies by the respondent for the shortfalls (if any) that might occur in it to be corrected by the researcher.

ii. The first personal account is documented by the researcher. This is to act as the basis for identifying specific aspects of the respondents art training that I would wish to understand when conducting the interview.

iii. The interview is conducted in two phases. In phase one, the questionnaire containing the first category of questions is administered and the responses are documented. In the second phase, the researcher's personal account is given out to the respondent for study to which she has responded by means of questionnaire with the second category of

questions. These responses are then used as a feedback exemplifying the respondent's views, impressions, or opinions about the researchers' art training profile, or the insights she has gained from it as an artist and art teacher. Ideally, the responses have provided some important hints and cues about what factors or specific aspects of art experiences to be addressed by the researcher at the analysis stage of the study.

iv. Each participant's art experiences are examined in relation to the other in terms of the types of art made, art materials and media, techniques or processes used. The aim here has been to explore the extent to which the two categories of art experiences are related to each other in terms of their similarities, commonalities, and differences. The findings about these relationships are categorized under two main domains of factors influencing the participants' art making activities. These include influences exerted by the school, on one hand, and those exerted by the social and cultural domain on the other hand. Interpreted in this manner, it has been contended that the findings about the relationships between the two categories of art experiences might reveal some new logically distinct features or forms of knowledge, which may have implications for art teaching. Such knowledge may include new ideas, concepts, or artistic operations and procedures which might contribute to some extent in improving upon my own teaching activities.

Facilities used for the study included assistance from academic professors, a typist (specifically a word processor), university libraries, and educational resource and audio-visual aid centres. Tools employed included a computer system with paper, a tape recorder with unrecorded cassettes, a microphone, field notebook, and pen.

The study is in six chapters. Chapter one serves as the introduction, clarifying the background, rationale, scope, and importance of the study. The methodologies, procedures, tools, and equipment employed for the collection and analysis of data, and other facilities used for the study are also discussed.

Chapter two constitutes a review of related literature for the study. It discusses the interconnectedness between art historical material and general studies in art including art education; and clarifies the role played by historical research in the development of art education. The section also identifies some individual art educators whose research activities have made significant contributions to the field of art education. For further development therefore, the consumers of such historical material, such as art teachers and students, are urged to consider themselves as part of the histories that interest them and get involved in historical research in the field.

Chapter three renders a first personal account of the researcher's artistic development, both in and outside school, in Ghana. In the school domain, the researcher's biographical development in artistry is recounted from the basic through the university levels of his education. The factors and circumstances that

have motivated and inspired his development are highlighted. Also, the artistic activities and experiences constituting his art training profile are vividly described.

Chapter four involves an interview with Patricia Connors. It is the first of the two-phased interview involved in the study. In this interview, the respondent recounts the artistic activities and experiences that constitute her art training in Canada. She also describes the factors and circumstances purported to have been responsible for her becoming an artist and art educator.

Chapter five involves the second phase of the interviews with Patricia Connors. Here, the respondent, after studying the researcher's artistic experiences, offers her impressions, views, and opinions about it. She also describes the insights she gained personally as an artist and art teacher from her study of the researcher's art training profile.

Chapter six constitutes the concluding analysis of the study. It describes the relationships between the art training profiles of the researcher and respondent. In addition, it strives to answer some questions in relation to art classroom practices arising through the interviews by proposing pedagogical practices that are informed by democratic and emancipatory principles. The insights to be gained by teachers through teacher peer interactions in relation to their professional activities are also explored to a considerable extent. This is finally followed by the list of references and other appendices.

Importance of the Study

It is assumed that a historical analysis or documentation of the paths to the professional development of the individual artist is relevant for pedagogical purposes in historical research in art education. It should be remarked that since both culturally and academically diverse student populations may represent a major challenge for the classroom teacher, it is imperative that a number of changes should occur in each teacher's teaching repertoire, if a high level of teaching and learning is to take place. Thus, it is hoped that this study would enable me to gain insight into new concepts and ideas, or issues that would be generative concerning the teaching and learning of art, which would be suitable for adoption and adaptation to improve my own teaching knowledge and activities. It is also hoped that the contents of the manuscript would be of some interest to students of art education and art teachers in Canada who wish to enrich their knowledge about what pertains in education through art in other parts of the world. It might also be of some importance to curriculum researchers and designers in art education, as well as all persons whose jobs are affiliated to art in one way or another. It might provide them with concise information about what pertains in art in a different part of the world with a different social, cultural, economic, and educational background.

ENDNOTES

[1]John D. McNeil, Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1977) 5

[2]Curricular and Non-Curricular Education. Art Education, The Journal of National Art Education, vol. 45, no. 4 (July 1992) 30.

[3]Ibid., 30

[4]John P. Miller, and Wayne Seller, Curriculum Perspectives and practice (New York and London: Longman, 1985) 3.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A reflection on the significance of historical studies in art reveals a depth of interconnectedness between art historical material and general studies in art, including art education. This evidence thus portrays the depth of contributions of historical research to the field of art education. It is therefore upon the examination of the role played by historical research in the development of art education over the years on which this literature review focuses.

A study of some literature on artists and their works, as well as some individuals' artistic biographies offers some substantial and valuable information in the form of journal articles and texts on historical research material. Some of the ideas and issues portrayed by this historical material bear immense relevance to this study, in that while they reflect the importance of historical research in art education, they also have the tendency of encouraging the historical method in the field.

For the sake of clarity, it may be expedient to begin this literature review with a brief overview of the rationale for historical research in art education.

Generally, the term 'history' though seemingly largely open-ended in meaning, may denote information about all past events and activities, and of certain personalities, that require to be remembered vividly as experienced, perceived, or told

to us by someone, in a chronological order. It also denotes events and activities constituting personal experiences which have meaning to us according to the priorities of our lives; and these normally constitute what may be termed as 'personal histories', about which this study is basically concerned. Whereas lives and memories may seem rather short, "historical narrative prolongs personal experience farther than each individual span, accumulating private meaning into broader perspectives within the parameters of human society"[1]. This further indicates that basically, at any point in time, within any given human society, history is constantly unfolding itself; and that, lived experience, coupled with self-reflection and memory tend to become the touchstones for recreating the past. Thus, that past ideas, events, activities, and experiences frequently have the tendency of exerting substantial influences and effects on the current human society indicates the need for opportunities for looking backwards to increase with each passing moment in time

Jean Rush in an article, "Experience Beyond Memory: Future Past Recall", reflects on the activities of historians as a means of portraying the meaning of 'history' th. gh the way it functions in society. She indicates among other ideas that "historians constitute others' memories by means of their own experience strengthened by evidence from artifacts and records in order to sum up from remaining scraps a once existing whole."[2] Thus in a nutshell, 'history' could be said to constitute facts and meaningful information about events and activities that took place in the past, and about people who lived beyond memory, filtered through a sentient being"[2]. Through this means the past becomes recreated as means of

constructing the present for the benefit of future generations

The foregoing ideas are indicative of the fact that historical research, like other forms of research involves the inductive activity of gathering evidence, which among other functions may approve or refute an hypothesis; or otherwise, break new grounds with completely new findings. Its major contribution to art education may be said to involve demythologizing the past of the field and uncovering questions and problems that may be applicable to its present practices. In this way, historical research provides precedents by means of historical material for current activities in the field, and critically examines their usefulness. It may therefore, be worthy of concluding tentatively that historical research normally constructs people's experiences in order to give meaning to contemporary circumstances, or to foresee their evolution. In effect, by means of the historical method, inferences are drawn from the past and applied to the present as a means of projecting the future

Thus far, it is very clear that inquiry through historical method in art education has over the years provided credible data for scholars and students to increase their knowledge of the field. And "it is an important activity without further purpose."[4] There is need to remark that historical literature has usually formed a bona fide part of the curriculum in educational foundations for art teachers in training Most art institutions, and also universities responsible for preparing pre-service as well as in-service art teachers frequently tend to ground their lessons and instructions in the historical method. And this is done to teach the students not only to become consumers of history, but also how to be involved in historical research as a means of broadening their outlook in their field of study and profession Thus the impact of

the study of art historical material in art education indicates that any attempt at promoting or projecting historical research activity in the field is an effort in the right direction. This is because an effort of this kind could raise issues which could profitably be projected into the future, thereby augmenting the legacy of historical material for studies in art education.

In view of this observation, and in terms of this study therefore, it has been found expedient to gather together and review some examples of historical research literature that pertain to the artistic experiences, lives, and works of some individual artists. A study of such literature, however, has revealed more material than can conveniently be utilized in this study review. For the sake of convenience, therefore, it has been found necessary to select from these materials, over a period of ten years (1982 - 1992), the literature that most suitably relates to the ideals of the study being undertaken. As such, this literature review reflects rather randomly selected entries of examples of historical material that portray the experiences, lives and works of some artists and art teachers over the said period. These selected materials have been examined in terms of their significance to the development of teaching and learning in art. Typical examples of such literature can be found in the works of the following authors.

Youngblood, (ed., 1982)[5] in a special tribute to Viktor Lowenfeld, titled, "Lowenfeld Revisited: an Introduction" offers some valuable personal accounts by some art educators and writers portraying Lowenfeld's contributions to the development of art education worldwide. Typical among these writers include Kenneth Beittel, Derwin Edwards, Jerome Hausman, Duke Madenfort, Edward Mattil,

John Michael, and Robert Saunders, all of whom knew Dr. Lowenfeld personally. In general, all their accounts indicate Lowenfeld's personality and humanistic values, and pose him "as a man who has had a profound effect upon art education, past and present."[6]

Edward Mattil portrays Lowenfeld as an educator with a genuine concern for every individual. He asserts that "with Viktor, you felt that there were only two people on earth, and you were one of the two, and you were equals."[7]

Jerome Hausman comments on the clarity and practicability of Lowenfeld's pedagogical ideas and the significant benefits gained from them by art educators. He observes that "Viktor Lowenfeld's work offered insights that were sufficiently structured and operationally clear as to enable adoption and use of his ideas by teachers and administrators."[8]

Duke Madenfort and Robert Saunders both portray some insights into Lowenfeld's philosophy and his teaching methods. However, Saunders, on his part, counters further some contemporary classroom practices which he attributes to Lowenfeldian philosophy. He describes some of the teaching methods actually adopted by Lowenfeld in motivating children's artistic development. To Saunders, "this seems to be the most practical aspect of his [Lowenfeld's] philosophy for art teachers and classroom teachers to learn."[9]

John Michael describes Dr. Lowenfeld as an educator who actually lived what he taught. He perceives Lowenfeld as a role model from who he learned a great deal to enrich his own teaching repertoire.

Kenneth Beittel appreciates the zeal with which Lowenfeld pursued his strongly

held beliefs and concepts about art education, and also, his devotion to art advocacy.

Derwin Edwards views Lowenfeld as a unique and outstanding "individual who more than any other person established art education, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, as a genuine discipline in the education of art and classroom teaching."[10]

The papers of other contributors such as Peter Smith and Mary Stockrocki who were not personally acquainted with Lowenfeld, provide interpretations of Lowenfeld's writing and philosophy, portraying his work as a "derivative of the contemporary art education zeitgeist."[11] Besides this, Mary Stockrocki, in a review of John Michael's edited "The Lowenfeld Lectures", finds the literature "a classic text [which] still speaks to us today."[12]

Those personal accounts all together provide unique views of Lowenfeld's profound impacts upon art education over the years. The observations made by the individual authors portray, to a large extent, Lowenfeld's achievements as a contemporary legacy which has fostered and promoted the values of art both in school and in society. Armed with this view, Youngblood has presented Viktor Lowenfeld's role in perpetuating art education in schools as an indispensable chapter in the history of art education.

Gregory (1983)[13], in an interview with Ralph Beekle, brings to light the origins of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). The discussion also uncovers the rationale for founding the national organization, as well as its accomplishments over the years. Ralph Beekle, who served the National Art Education Association as the first Executive Secretary, and also one time as President, has been closely associated

with the growth of a professional and organizational consciousness among American and Canadian art educators.

Initially, the National Organization which Beekle was to run as an executive secretary had been in existence for eight years, but not as one whole entity. It existed as four separate and autonomous regional art education associations, namely Eastern, Western, Southeasterned, and Pacific. Apart from having a history of independent focus on matters of more localized concern, each of these regional associations had its own system for membership recruitment, authority, policy, decision making, and other components of an established organization. Beekle's task was to play a leading role in merging up and consolidating the affairs of the four regional associations into a centralized operation.

The rationale for Gregory's research, it seems, has been basically to highlight the role played by the National Art Education Association in the development of art education in Canada by fostering a strong and mutual sense of professionalism among art educators and strengthening them through a national voice. In this way, the author brings to the art teacher and student of art education some insights about the humble beginnings of their professional field. It also reflects the trends and changes that have occurred in the field along the years in terms of research, development of curriculum and instruction, facilities for art, and provision of reading materials for teachers and students.

Chalmers (1984)[14], examining the career of David Phillip Blair (1850-1925) as an art educator, observes a great impact exerted by Blair on the development of art education by carrying the system to some far corners of the English speaking world.

Born in Scotland, Blair was educated at the National Art Training School in South Kensington, London. After graduation, he became an active art educator in England, New Zealand, and Canada. Blair, one time the headmaster of the Islington School of Art in London, was also credited with the founding and heading of the Canterbury College School of Art in Christchurch, New Zealand. Apart from these, he held the title of examiner in art for the Art Department at Kensington.

Blair's influences and impacts on art education reflected mainly his own art training profile. His agenda was the systematical study of practical art to be applied to the common uses of life, and to the requirements of trade and manufactures. Drawing, painting, designing, modelling, machine and building construction, and architecture were his favourite course areas. Thus during his involvement with the New Zealand Education Departments revision of elementary schools' drawing prescriptions in 1901, he redesigned them "to have a direct bearing on the industrial and decorative arts"[15]. While teaching at the Normal School in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1902, Blair prepared the "Canadian Drawing Series" based on freehand and geometrical drawing. The central object of his text had been to promote the idea of practical art in schools by assisting teachers in the training of the hand and eye of the child.

Bringing together his activities, and taking cognisance of his influences as an art educator in three separate parts of the world, it is apparent that Blair's contributions to the development of art education are by no means a small achievement. Thus it seems apparently an attempt at bringing Blair's contributions into the literature of the history of art education that the author has taken to examine

his career profile as a renown art educator during his time.

Judson (1984)[16] discusses the life of Henry Moore and the characteristics of his scultpure. Born in 1898, Moore grew up in Yorkshire, England. Although he initially trained as a teacher upon his father's advise, Henry was more intersted in being a sculptor. Having undergone apprenticeship in Leeds, he was accepted into the Royal College of Art in London. While there, he studied and carved exact copies of ancient Greek sculptures. He was also said to have practised drawing of the human figure from live models several days each week, and for an unbroken period of twenty years. By the age of thirty years, Moore had finished his studies and began making his own sculpture.

Henry Moore's sculpture involved wood and stone carving, as well as working in clay for casting in bronze. His themes centre around reclining figures, and "mother and child" compositions. Though his work often depict abstract forms, his human figures are usually recognizable. These are usually solid figures with hollow areas in them. The abstract elements in his sculpture are a re-presentation of the images of people, objects, as well as artifacts which he saw, appreciated, and collected throughout his life. Other items include works of other modern artists including Brancusi, Picasso, and Modigliani; and some archaic sculptures of Africa, Mexico, and Sumer which he had seen in museums. The combination of these ideas in his work gives Moore's sculpture a characteristic feeling of being both ancient and modern with an almost universal appeal.[17] His works can be found in England, Toronto, and especially New York City, where his monumental sculptures have been placed in parks in Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and others

In presenting the life and characteristics of Henry Moore's sculpture, the author brings to light how out of personal interest and determination to learn, Moore has achieved his aim of becoming a sculptor. He also portrays how Moore's willingness to explore and experiment with different materials and media for sculpture, as well as studying other people's works from various parts of the world has led to his success in sculpture making. Moore's sculptural activities and approaches to work as an artist have significant implications for teaching and learning, not only of sculpture, but also of other aspects of art. Both the teacher and student of art are informed about the importance in exploring and experimenting with different kinds of material and media for art making. Thus if emulated, Moore's approach to art making has the tendency of rendering both the teacher and student of art, and even the practising artist, more versatile in the use of art materials, as well as techniques and processes in art making. Also emerging from the discussion of the characteristics of Henry Moore's sculpture are examples of various types of materials for sculpture, as well as themes that motivate it. In addition is a list of recommended films and books dealing with Moore. These are to act as art students' and teachers' guides to looking at sculpture.

Gregory (1985)[18], in an interview with Arnold Bank, unearths the latter's artistic background and extensive teaching experiences, as well as his personal teaching innovations in the field of art education. Bank, one time Professor of Design at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has been adjudged one of the most inspiring teachers of calligraphy, palaeography, and typography, who has influenced many designers and teachers in the United States of America. His study of design and letter forms began at an early age and it was believed to have been

influenced by his father, who was a decorator, fresco painter, and grainer. However, according to Bank, most of what he learned in the area of handwriting, printing and lettering was on his own. He is quoted as saying that:

> Design was a minor, not a major subject in school....I specifically recall that mechanical drawing and free-hand drawing was much more important than hand-writing and printing with a resulting difference in attitudes towards lettering. The flat pen for example as a teaching device was unknown in the schools though a common tool in lettering studios.[19]

After High School, Bank's position as a freelance designer forced him to formalize his search for answers to design problems assigned him. Through correspondence with Alfred Fairbank of Great Britain, an author of "A Handwriting Manual", Bank was enabled to develop portfolios on Renaissance palaeography and italic handwriting now available in the Cambridge University Library in England for researchers. He contributed tremendously to curriculum development and instruction in lettering and calligraphy. He also prepared "The Arnold Bank Lettering Portfolio" in 1951.

> An excellent resource for teachers of calligraphy, it outlines lessons on analysis of proportions and instruction and exercises done with simple hands utilized in this century: Simple Hand, Book Hand, Roman, Blockletter, Set Italic, Sans Serif, Slab Serif, English Roundhands, Running English Round Hand, Spencerian, Palmer, Zaner-Blosser Business Cursives, and Enstrom.[20]

Major insights brought to the art educator by Gregory lie in her analysis of Bank's personal pedagogical innovations. In this analysis, the author highlights her interviewee's pedagogical methodology, termed, "The Triangle of Learning", which Bank utilizes to achieve a practical balance between letter forms, tools, materials, and techniques; and the art and craft, and uses of design. Commenting on this practice as part of his teacher training exercises, Bank is quoted by the author as having

alleged that:

> By listing every operation, every skill, every tool, every judgement, every material, ...used and known to us at that time in our experience, we were being shown how much we knew and how much of this we took for granted...I still jot down the number of ideas per session, per term, or per year that I think ought to be covered properly by a particular group of students...It does two things for me: it takes me out of what I was doing and thus prepares me to face my class and group and gives me a chance when I am done to review what was done and how well it was done.[21]

The foregoing portrays an example of an approach to sharing between teacher and student. In this practice, both the teacher and student are entreated to take inventory of everything necessary in their work for the purpose of evaluation. To many art educators, this practice may seem rather obvious, however, a closer study of it would provide answers to some of the critical pedagogical questions that many teachers tend to overlook. Thus when emulated, this practice would go a long way in helping art teachers to improve upon their pedagogical activities. To graphic artists and art historians this study is an asset as it lays bare the roots of lettering, calligraphy, typography, and palaeography as far as America is concerned.

Studying the life and work of Henri Matisse, Judson (1985)[22] shows how Matisse with a dormant artistic childhood, dramatically emerged as an artist during adulthood. Matisse gave up his promising career in law and took to art at the age of twenty-one years. His interest in art arose when his mother offered him a paint box and a "how to" book to help him pass time when recuperating from appendicitis. During the fifteen years that followed, Matisse engaged himself studying and assimilating the various styles of the day, which included Impressionism, Pointillism, and Cubism. He practised painting, drawing, and sculpture, as well as paper cut outs and stained glass windows. He also did large scale ceramic wall decorations.

The keynote in Matisse's artistic development includes his consistent decision to do art, his readiness to learn coupled with persistent exploration and practice with different types of art media. It thus seems evident that Judson has portrayed Matisse's unique way of bringing himself up to the lime light of the art world as a plausible example for students of art, especially the beginners, to emulate. The author's suggested art activities and exercises for the students at the end of the text on Matisse's artistic biography justify this assumption. There is yet an important insight to be gained from Judson's text by art educators. That Matisse's dormant artistic childhood is replaced by a dramatic artistic adulthood is indicative of the fact that an individual is actually capable of developing his or her artistic potentials at any point in life. This evidence therefore has the tendency of demystifying the view shared by some art educators that creativity in art (artistic development) usually ends with an individual's attainment of adulthood. Perhaps what is needed by an adult beginner for an effective development in art is a consistent decision and intention to do art, readiness to explore, and continuous practice.

Stark (1985)[23], in a biography of Johann Heinrich Hermann Krusi, offers some information about the latter's contributions to the field of art education during its early stages of development in America in the 19th century.

Between 1845 and 1847, while teaching at the Home and Colonial Institute in London, England, Krusi evolved a programme of "Inventive Drawing" (Drawing Principle), which later became known as "Krusi's Drawing Course". The programme consisted of systematically arranged exercises for students to follow The essence of this was to help the students to seek their own designs through a systematic study

of various forms and shapes. This programme was first introduced into America in Massachusetts by one Whitaker, who was Krusi's pupil in London. However, Krusi's appointment in 1867 as the first drawing and art teacher at what is today Oswego State College, and also as supervisor of drawing in the city schools, gave him the opportunity to introduce personally and practice his drawing courses in America. He later developed the inventive drawing programme into a book "and theorists believe that the system in drawing contributed significantly to the later development of Industrial Drawing." Commenting on the impact of Krusi's drawing programme on other writers in art education, Stark reminisces that "all work on this subject can clearly be traced back to Krusi from which later authors have freely borrowed."[24] To manifest this idea, Stark further observes that:

> Although no specific connection could be made between Krusi's drawing courses of 1879 and the later New York State Education Syllabi of Drawing Instructions, an unusual number of similarities in the purpose, developmental logic, and goals of drawing do appear. The methodology, form, and content are also quite similar.[25]

Given the magnitude of its influence on the development of art education, Krusi's inventive drawing programme becomes worthy of being mentioned, especially in studies of this nature in which historical material development in the field is the central concern.

In a research into English art education during the period between the two world wars, Holdsworth (1988)[26] gathers a wealth of important information about Marion Richardson (1892-1946), whom he describes as having contributed immensely to the development of art education during the period under investigation. She is also described as one of the pioneers of the "New Art Teaching Movement" (Child

Movement). However, her contribution to education in art "has been largely misunderstood until recent years, and has been in danger of being neglected altogether through lack of objective information on the circumstances surrounding her rise to fame."[27] Although Marion Richardson's name figures prominently and frequently in the literature of the history of art education, it is to the invention of the "Marion Richardson Writing and Writing Patterns" that her name is more readily attached, rather than her achievements in art education. This distortion of her relative importance has occurred due mainly to the fact that her ideas were not published in book form until after her death. Her book "Art and the Child", was finished on 11 November 1946, the day before she died. Nonetheless, prior to this, while teaching at Dudley Girls High School (1912-1928), Marion Richardson evolved some theory and practice which subsequently influenced a generation of teachers of art, craft, design, and handwriting, "and significantly affected the New Art Teaching Movement."[28]

Commenting on Marion Richardson's achievement, the author observes that.

> There were many factors involved in the New Art Teaching , but we can be sure that the work of Marion Richarson was one of the most important, and that she did more than any other teacher in Britain to promulgate the idea that children were capable of producing original works of art
>
> Her ideas are still relevant....This is especially true when classroom practice is informed by a thorough study and understanding of her theory and practice Art and design education is always capable of being enriched by the work of enlightened and influential school teachers, and we do well to study and test those that have existed in the past. Marion Richarson offers a supreme example of how we are in danger of neglecting and negating the work of our finest practising teachers, the careful study of which can help us to avoid re-inventing the wheel.[29]

Gaither (1990)[30] describes the lives and artistic objectives of four Afro-American artists who used art as a medium to portray their cultural identity in the multicultural society of the United States of America

Gaither's first subject, Augusta Savage, who was born in Florida in 1900 and studied art in New York in the 1920s, had distinguished herself as a leading sculptor in the Harlem art community. In 1929, she was a proud recipient of a "Rosenwald Fellowship for Gamin". Through her works, Savage helped to pioneer the acceptance of Black physiognomy by Afro-American artists at the beginning of the 1920s. Her largest and most outstanding work, "The Harp", dubbed "Lift Every Voice and Sing", was unveiled at the New York World's Fair in 1939. The work, a monumental sculpture commissioned in 1937 purposely for decorating the facade of the Contemporary Arts Building, was practically "one of the most heroic works ever executed by an Afro-American artist....It showed an arm stretching back to a sheltering hand"[31], along which stood choristers singing. Commenting on the theme of the work, Gaither reminisces that:

> Permeating "The Harp" was a deep sense of common purpose and harmony, as well as rich associations with the struggle for social justice and racial pride.
>
> [Thus], Afro-American art, which seeks to provide a statement to the humanity of black people, has remained solidly committed to the use of the figure as a vehicle for expressing human passions and aspirations.[32]

Gaither's second subject, Lenwood Morris, born in Philadelphia in the early years of the twentieth century, was active there as a portraitist. His best known work was a portrait of one Dr. Alain Leroy Locke, who was known as the "godfather" of the "Harlem Renaissance" era (an era of awakened black awareness in the United States

of America). The portrait was exhibited with the Harmon Foundations in the 1930s

Appreciating Morris' work, Gaither observes that the qualities which were captured in the portrait offered a pictorial equivalence of the personality traits possessed by Dr. Locke which included sophistication, elegance, intellectuality, and grace. Though a small man in structure, Locke's portrait was rendered to fill completely the picture space, which made him to be perceived "as having a large presence both physical and spiritual."[33]

In 1925, Locke distinguished himself as a figure of immense cultural importance. He called on Afro-American artists to create unique Negro arts rooted in the reclamation of their ancestral legacy and heritage. He also assembled and edited a special issue of a newspaper, "Survey Graphic" which was later published as "The New Negro". This enabled Locke to publicize his cultural views and thereby "became a principal spokesman for the movement towards a more assertive, more culturally astute Afro-American whom he popularized as the new Negro."[34] Thus through this position he instituted scholarly discussions of Afro-American art in the United States.

The third subject, William H. Johnson, was born in Florence, South Carolina in 1901. He studied at the National Academy in New York, and at Provincetown, Massachusetts. Although initially an academic, representational painter, he fell under the influence of German Expressionism while travelling in northern Europe by the mid-1930s. He finally settled with a style which seemed "primitive" or "naive", and continued painting in this manner until he was committed to an asylum in 1947. His best known work, "Jitterbug", 1940, was a representation of a popular 'swing' dance

with roots in black culture. Johnson's "Jitterbug" was one of the several works produced by Afro-American artists, inspired by their new cultural awareness and movement towards the reclamation of their ancestral legacy and cultural heritage.

Gaither's fourth subject, Romare Bearden, was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1914. He grew up in Harlem, and after receiving a degree in Mathematics from New York University, studied art at the Art Students' League. He became one of America's best known artists associated with the collage technique.

During the 1960s, a number of Afro-American artists in New York formed an organization, the "Spiral Group", which sought to find ways of complementing the civil rights movement. Discussing the best approach for them to take, Bearden suggested collage. He began working immediately and single-handedly, the result of which was "Carolina Interior a domestic scene. His style involved the use of windows or doors which open upon nearby scenes thereby creating a greater sense of space. The scene presented, though very ordinary, Bearden's careful choice of "mute" and narrow range of colours, gave it "an almost mythic presence"[35]. It was similar to many other works of Bearden in which black figures were usually used to depict Western religious or mythological themes.

Gaither presents Bearden as a person who "enjoyed showing that the heroic tales of the past could be captured through the images of everyday people."[36]

Summing up these pieces of information about Afro-American art and artists, Gaither portrays, to a large extent, how Afro-American art came to be known and used as a vehicle for creating cultural awareness in the American Negro. The author also reveals other thematic goals of Afro-American art, as well as some of the

personalities responsible for its evolvement, propagation, and perpetuation. In multicultural societies of today, it is expedient for educational curriculum researchers and developers, as well as classroom teachers, to be well-informed about other cultures of the world. This is to enable them to meet some of the numerous challenges they are faced with when designing instructional packages. Thus the importance of Gaither's research lies in this direction.

So far, the foregoing have shown some useful ways in which historical study material in art education can contribute to the scholarship of the field. That the present generation of art educators have been shaping the profession in a large part according to their understanding of the past, makes it imperative for historical research to be considered as an indispensable activity in the field. Certainly, for contemporary art educators to acquire a firmer understanding of how to foster and promote the values of art in our schools and society, they need to look to the past and present situations of the field. Stated differently, in order to be able to project an effective future for art education it is imperative for art educators to take a cue from the conditions that have prevailed in the field from the past to the present. Hence, the importance of the historical method in the field.

A general overview of the studies reviewed here shows that most of the authors have worked from primary sources. There is also evidence of each of them being quite thorough in his or her search for facts and ideas, as well as exhibiting great diligence in providing credible information. Each has approached art education from a different perspective and with varying goals for its future. However, a few of the authors have not made clear to the reader the frames of reference of their

research, thereby leaving the interpretation of their works open-ended. In other cases too, the interpretation of a work shows only a personal validity.

Jean Rush offers a practical approach to writing historical information. She contends that:

> Organizing data into a meaningful narrative is crucial to the success of the historical researcher. The writing of history should be accurate and interesting. Good writers give their characters life without sacrificing precision of detail and the integrity of the whole. Historians' literary style should be simple, descriptive, and energetic: the lens of a high-resolution instrument that enhances the robust character of people and events rather than a screen that obscures it.[37]

In spite of the stated shortfalls, however, the general interest in historical research within art scholarship and among art educators is indicative of our professional coming of age. Art studies and art education are an established discipline of study. There is therefore the need for all generations of artists and art educators to be well informed about their roots and the changes that occur in their profession. According to Rush, "if events or faces past recall still live through an historian's discerning prose, they augment our legacy."[38] If the consumers of history of art education should consider themselves as part of the histories that interest them, and therefore get actively involved in historical research, this would go a long way in augmenting the continuity of the development of the field.

ENDNOTES

[1]Jean C. Rush, Experience Beyond Memory, Future Past Recall. Studies in Art Education, Vol. 26, No. 2, (Winter 1985): 67-68.

[2]Ibid., 67.

[3]Ibid,. 67.

[4]Ibid., 67.

[5]Michael S. Youngblood, ed., Lowenfeld Revisited: An Introduction. Art Education, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 1982): 7.

[6]Ibid., 7.

[7]Edward Mattil, Yes, I Remember Viktor. Art Education, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 1982): 9.

[8]Jerome Hausman, Viktor Lowenfeld - Remembrances of a Friend and Colleague. Art Education, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 1982): 15.

[9]Robert Saunders, Lowenfeld Motivation. Art Education, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 1982): 20.

[10]Derwin Edwards, Lowenfeld as a Mentor. Art Education, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 1982): 38.

[11]Youngblood, Lowenfeld Revisited., 7.

[12]Ibid, 7.

[13]Anne Gregory, Origins of the NAFA: An Interview with Ralph Beekle. Art Education, Vol. 36, No. 4 (July 1983): 14-17.

[14]Graeme Chalmers, South Kensington and the Colonies: David Blair of New Zealand and Canada. Studies in Art Education, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Winter 1984): 69-74.

[15]Ibid., 71.

[16]Bay Judson, Henry Moore. School Arts, Vol. 84, No. 3 (November 1984): 23-28.

[17]Ibid., 23.

[18]Anne Gregory, An Interview with Arnold Bank: Designer, Letterer and Master Calligrapher. Art Education, Vol. 38, No. 2 (March 1985): 32-37.

[19]Ibid., 33.

[20]Ibid., 34.

[21]Ibid., 34.

[22]Bay Judson, Henri Matisse. School Arts, Vol. 84, No. 8 (April 1985): 27-31, 46.

[23]George Stark, Oswego Normal's (and Art Education's Forgotten Man: Johann Henrich Hermann Krusi, M.A. Art Education, Vol. 37, No. 1 (January 1985): 40-44.

[24]Ibid., 42.

[25]Ibid., 43.

[26]Bruce Holdsworth, Marion Richardson (1892-1946). Journal of Art and Design Education, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1988): 137-154.

[27]Ibid., 137.

[28]Ibid., 137.

[29]Ibid., 152.

[30]Edmund Gaither, Afro-American Art. Art Education, Vol 43, No. 6 (November 1990): 25-28, 37-40.

[31]Ibid., 26.

[32]Ibid., 26.

[33]Ibid., 27.

[34]Ibid., 33.

[35]Ibid., 39.

[36]Ibid., 39.

[37]Rush, Experience Beyond Memory, p. 68.

[38]Ibid., 68.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCHER'S ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHY: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

This account shows a biographical perspective of my personal artistic development both in and outside school. Stated differently, it recounts my development in artistry which invariably constitutes my art training profile in Ghana. There is need to remark that my artistic development is basically a direct motivation of school. However, I should mention that in addition to the influence exerted by the school I can recall certain activities in which I was involved as part of the way I lived as a child that have the tendency of being described as artistic.

Initially, I did not regard those activities as being artistic until I became an artist and art teacher. Typical of such activities include my assistance to an uncle of mine, an indigenous Ghanaian carver of wooden ladles and some other household utensils. My assistance to him began even before my enrolment in school. It began when my aunt took me to live with her in a village (country) where her brother lived as a farmer and carver after I lost my mother through death. Like two other older boys in the family, my part was to assist in carting the wood to be carved home from the bush, and turning it in the sunshine at periodic intervals to give it an even seasoning all over its surface. In addition I took part

in removing the bark of the wood after it had seasoned, a process known in sculpture as "blocking the wood". I also helped in giving the carved articles smooth finishing by rubbing them with sandpaper, after which they were marked with very hot, sharp metals for decoration. The decoration was in the form of one or two criss-cross markings, or parallel lines at one or two points on the carved object.

One other artistic activity in which I was involved was my having to help in weaving palm rachis into mats on which farm produce and other household utilities that were destined for drying were placed for the purpose. Apart from this, the woven palm rachis was also used for fencing out the backyard garden against the entry of domestic animals which were usually reared on free-range basis. To produce such a mat, the palm rachis were cut to a uniform length as desired by the weaver. These were then split lengthwise into two each. Three or four sticks of equal length but slightly longer than the width of the mat to be made were also cut and sharpened each at one end. These were held upright and the palm rachis pressed over their pointed ends, one after the other so that they were pierced through. These were then pressed together to form a compact mat.

Just like other children in the village I had to produce my own toys to play with. My interest was mostly in toy vehicles which I constructed or improvised from discarded empty tins, package boxes and other such items. The sole of discarded bathroom or beach sandals cut into disc shapes and held in place by

pieces of wire or broom-sticks served as tires and axles, respectively, for the vehicles.

At the age of about sixteen years, my elder brother, who was then a teacher and my guardian, introduced me to tie-and-dye and batik making which he did on part time basis. Although we sometimes dyed various types of cotton fabrics and clothing, we mostly worked on "T-shirts", which were then on high demand by youngsters during those days. This was very fascinating to me and I believe it may have influenced my decision to study textiles eventually.

I have stated that the school is the major factor motivating my artistic development. It began at the age of about six years as a result of my observing other children draw in my class. I then developed a natural instinct for drawing and partaking in other art activities with much interest and enthusiasm.

My elder brother, also an artist, who was then studying at a teacher education college, on noticing this artistic inclination in me, bought a drawing book and a set of wax-based crayons for me when I was eight years old and in class three. Perhaps, these two incidents were basically responsible for triggering of the initial interest in me for art making.

This interest grew stronger gradually as the years went by, and also, as my flare for art making developed. This is partly by my brother's encouragement and motivation through consistent supplies of crayons, coloured pencils, exercise books with plain sheets, and other school art requirements. However, it was not until I was about eighteen years old and at secondary school that my awareness

of the fact that I could become an artist was awakened by my art teacher, a Mr. Adjei. He was astonished about my leaving out art when I was selecting subjects for the School Certificate Ordinary Level examinations. He called my attention to my outstanding performance in art and the bright future he presumed art held for me. He also informed me about an opportunity of undertaking a preliminary degree programme in art at the university directly after secondary school. Obviously, this programme gave a student an advantage over his or her counterpart undergoing the normal two-year sixth form course leading to the School Certificate Advanced Level examinations before entering the university. It was this awakened awareness that motivated and sustained my interest in art, perhaps until today.

In this personal account, the historical perspective of my artistic development has been broken down into three divisions in accordance with the levels of the educational system through which I went. These include the basic, the second cycle or secondary school, and the tertiary or university levels. This breakdown has been found appropriate and necessary to vivify the artistic experiences I acquired at each of these levels.

The Basic Level

This consists of three stages, namely lower and upper primaries, each consisting of three years, and hence, six years for both, and then middle school with four years, thus bringing it to a total of ten years' duration.

Lower Primary

This embraces the first three classes of the school system for a three year duration. I was then between six and nine years old. Free drawing on wooden slates with coloured chalk formed the major art activity in class one. Human beings, lorries, and buildings were the common themes. Picture studies were also done involving religious pictures about which we were told bible stories by the teacher. Other art activities included colour identification involving red, blue, yellow, green, white, and black, and shading of drawn shapes and forms such as circles, squares, leaves, buckets, baskets and others, with crayons in different colours. Occasionally, we rolled clay into little balls which were left to dry and used as counters for arithmetic. One fascinating activity was the arrangement of empty containers such as match-boxes, milk tins, and others to form models of interest.

Free drawing with crayons and the collection of empty cans and boxes were also featured in classes two and three. Themes for the drawings were based on activities in society such as farming, cutting firewood, cooking and so on. Broom-making and clay modelling were outdoor art activities which took place in the shade of trees on the school compound. Brooms were made by scraping the leafy substance off the midribs of the leaves of the coconut or palm tree. The scraping was done by means of razor blades or small knives. The thin woody midribs were gathered into bunches with the thicker ends on one side. Each bunch was tied together with a piece of cord towards the thick end. See

fig. 1. The brooms were used in sweeping the school compound and classrooms. Sometimes, these were sold at the local market to raise funds for the school. Clay modelling involved free expression by the pupils. The themes usually centred around animals such as goats, sheep, cattle, pigs, cats, and dogs. Sometimes, household utensils, especially pots, ladles, dishes and others were made. Clay modelling procedures employed were mainly coiling, pinching, and building by means of slabs.

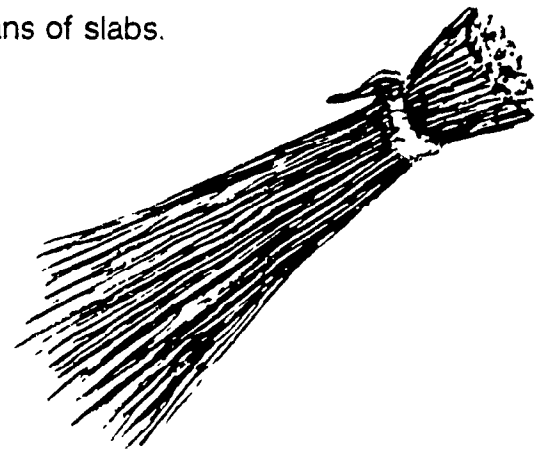
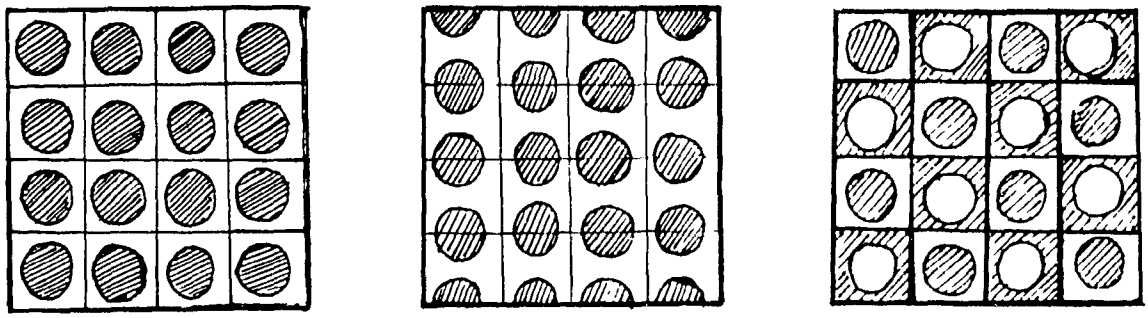


Fig. 1. A Broom

Upper Primary

This is the second stage of the basic level. It embraces year four to year six, with my age being between nine and twelve years. At this stage, free drawing was not a common feature in our art activities. It was used mostly for illustration purposes in hygiene and nature study lessons which involved animals, insects, and plants. Pattern making on blocks of tubers such as cassava, cocoyam, and yam was a common activity in art lessons. These were employed for block printing exercises. The patterns, which were usually geometric, were incised in

the surfaces of the blocks with old razor blades and pen-knives. The printing paste was prepared from powdered colour mixed with cooked cassava starch. To print, the paste was spread thinly on a flat surface, usually a piece of plywood or cardboard, by means of a ruler. The designed block surface was dipped into the paste and pressed gently and carefully onto the printing format which was usually a newsprint. I only later realized that the diverse ways in which the patterns were arranged on the format showed full-drop, half-drop, and counter-change effects as illustrated below.

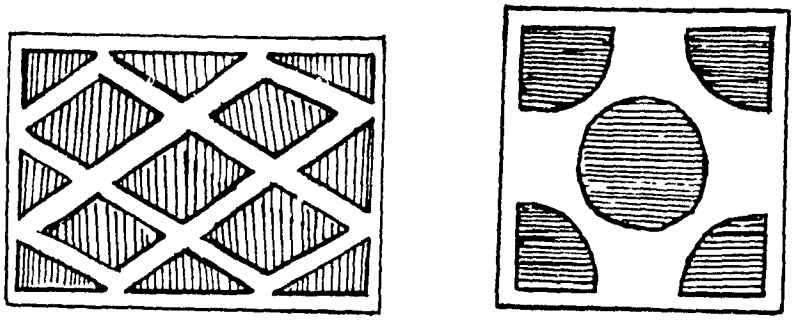


Full-drop effect | Half-drop effect | Counter-change effect

Fig. 2a. Patterns from Block Printing

Stencil printing was done to a great extent in class five. This involved the folding of a hard paper as desired by the individual pupil as shown in fig. 2b. The corners of the folded paper were cut off as desired. The paper was then unfolded to reveal beautifully cut out patterns which were used as the basis for printing with oil-based crayons. The patterns from both block and stencil printing were mounted on the walls of the classroom for decoration purposes.

Some paper foldings



Some cut out patterns

Fig. 2b. Some paper foldings and cut-out patterns

A major part of the art activities at the upper primary level was organized on cooperative and collaborative basis involving the boys in all the three classes. The girls did needle work during those collaborative art periods, which took place on Thursday afternoons. During those days school attendance was in two sessions daily. The morning session began at eight o'clock and ended at a half-past-ele n, while the afternoon session opened at a half-past-one and closed at twenty minutes to four o'clock

The boys from all the classes were brought together and divided into five

groups corresponding to five selected art activities. These included clay modelling, papier maché (mashed paper work), stuffed cushion-making, wood carving, and doormat making. The groups rotated from one activity to the other at three-week intervals. Most of the art materials were either picked and used directly, or processed from raw materials obtained from the school environment by the pupils. These included clay, sisal, and coconut fibres, wood, pieces of paper and grass. Other materials which were not readily within the reach of the pupils were procured by the school. These included cotton and capok fibres, twines as well as grey baft fabric and jute cloth for sewing into coverings for the stuffed cushions. Basic tools such as cutlasses, knives, needles and others were also provided by the school.

The procedures for each of the five activities are described below.

Clay modelling

The lumps of clay were soaked in water in large wooden bowls for about a week to soften. Each pupil then took a portion of it for kneading. By this means, hard lumps such as stones and other unwanted pebbles were picked out. Kneading also rendered the clay smooth, even-textured, and pliable.

Very often, the clay modelling group was subdivided into smaller groups, each comprising two or three pupils, to work on separate projects This was done to ensure a full involvement of each pupil. Sometimes, pupils were allowed to work on an individual basis. The theme for a particular project was usually

decided upon by the group or the individual working at it. Frequently, however, the themes were centred around compound houses (typical of the Ghanaian environment), the human figure, portraiture, animals, and household utensils such as cups, dishes, bowls, and cooking pots. See fig. 2c. The methods employed involved coiling, pinching, and building from whole lumps of clay.

Tools used in clay modelling activities were improvised by the pupils. These were fashioned from pieces of stick, the stalk of the elephant grass, and bark of the bamboo stem. Sometimes, pieces of flat metals served the purpose of modelling tools. To give the surfaces of pots and dishes a smooth finishing, a smooth stone of about the shape and size of an egg, often picked at the seashore or bank of a river, was usually dipped into water and rubbed over the desired surfaces. Fig. 2d illustrates some clay modelling tools improvised by the pupils.

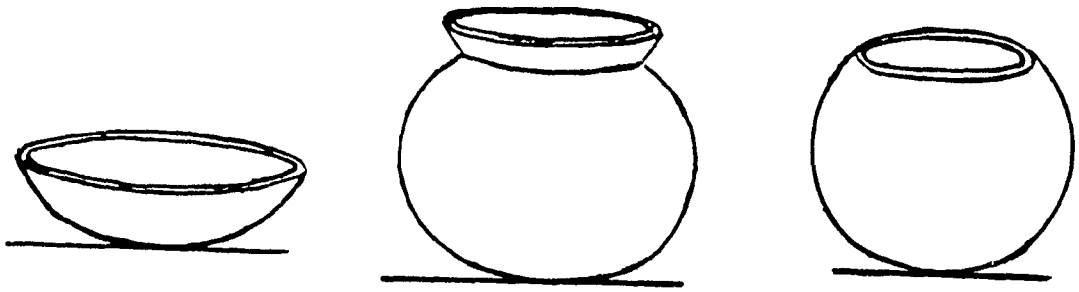


Fig. 2c. Some clay products

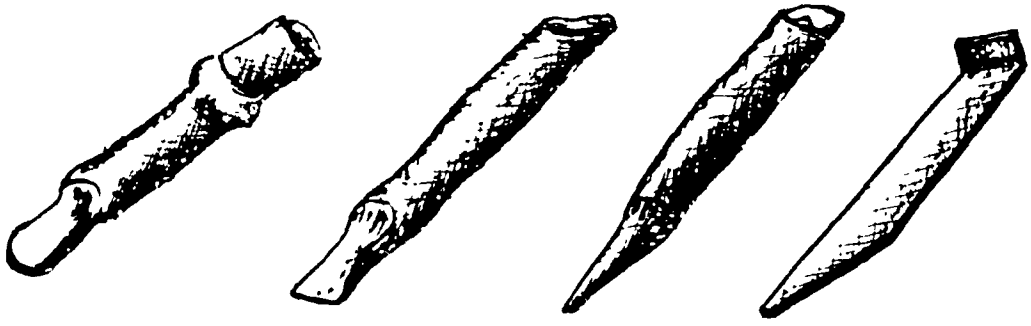


Fig. 2d. Some clay modelling tools

Firing of the clay ware was rarely done. However, on a few occasions, firing took place in the open. A bed of dried grass and leaves was prepared. The items to be fired were arranged on it. These were in turn covered completely with more dried grass, leaves and twigs, and then set on fire. The fire was set at the leeward side of the heap to enable it to burn slowly and gradually. The fire was allowed to die out by itself and the items allowed to cool before being removed.

Papier maché (mashed paper work)

Pieces of paper were soaked in water for about one week. The paper was removed and squeezed to get rid of the water. It was then pounded into a mash by means of a wooden mortar and pestle. Fig. 2e shows a typical mortar and pestle. The mashed paper was mixed with thickly cooked cassava starch amidst vigorous stirring and squeezing by hand to ensure a thorough mixture.

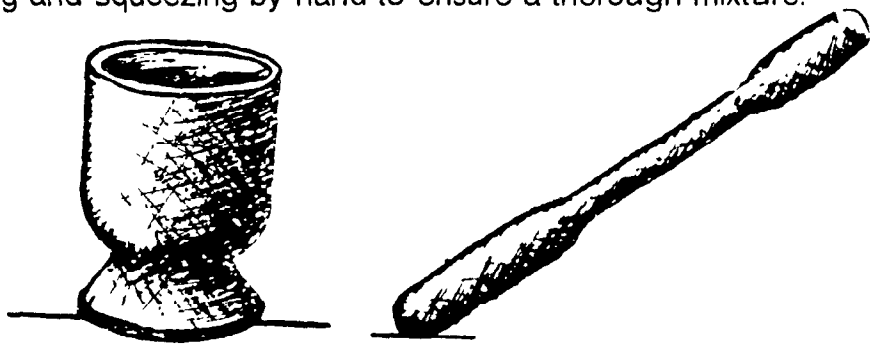


Fig. 2e A typical mortar and pestle

The mixture was used in modelling various kinds of fruits such as banana, pear, orange, coconut, and others. Masks, animals and birds were also made; but the casting of plates and bowls was the major aspect of the papier maché

activities.

To cast with mashed paper, an empty plate or bowl was placed upside down over a flat surface which had been previously covered with paper. The upturned bowl was then covered thoroughly with wet pieces of paper which were made to overlap with each other. The essence of this was to avoid a direct contact between the bowl and the mashed paper coating to be applied to it, thereby preventing them from sticking together. The mashed paper coating was done by building it gradually from the base of the upturned bowl towards the top to ensure an even thickness.

As a rule, the mashed paper products were not dried in the hot African sun while in the fresh state. This was to avoid the shapes of the ware from being contorted as a result of rapid drying. The items were, therefore, left in the shade of trees where there was free circulation of air for gradual evaporation of moisture from them and slow drying.

Stuffed cushion making

A bag was sewn from either grey baft or jute cloth according to the size of cushion required. Usually, an allowance of about 8 centimetres was added to the original measurements of the bag to make room for seams.

To get the thickness of the cushion which was usually about 10 centimetres, the bag was placed flat on the floor. A distance of 5 centimetres was measured from the edges inwards all round the bag. A 1 centimetre distance was

also measured from the 5 centimetre line inwards in the same manner as illustrated in fig. 2f1. Now, bending the fabric along the inner line, a seam was made along the outer line round the bag. This was repeated on its opposite side to give the bag the shape in fig. 2f2. The protrusions at the four corners were then pushed inside the bag and stitched along the corner lines to obtain the shape in fig. 2f3.

The bag was then stuffed with soft dried grass, feathers, capok, or cotton lint through an opening left for the purpose. After stitching up the opening, twine was passed from one side of the cushion by means of a long needle to the other and knotted firmly. This was repeated all over the surfaces of the two sides of the cushion at a uniform spacing of about 20 centimetre intervals. The essence was to hold the two sides of the cushion at the desired thickness and to give it puffy surfaces as shown in fig. 2f4. Some of the products were sold to drivers to cushion the wooden seats of their locally built mummy trucks.

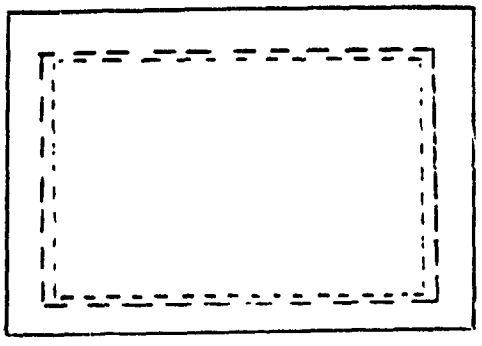


Fig. 2f1

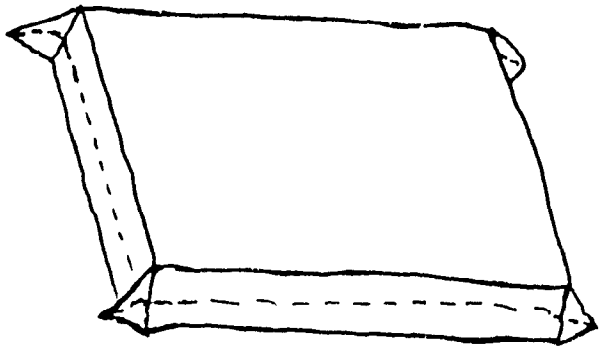


Fig. 2f2

Fig. 2f1 and 2f2. Preliminary stages in stuffed cushion making

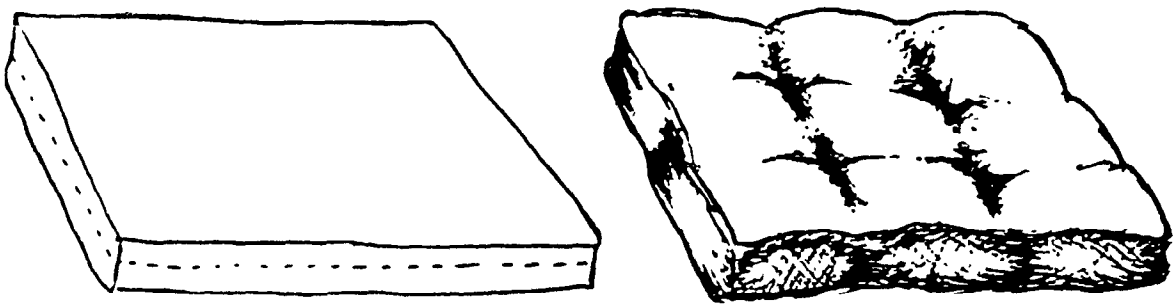


Fig. 2f3 *Fig. 2f4*

Fig. 2f3 and 2f4. Final stages in stuffed cushion making

Wood carving

Wood from the nim tree (Azadiracta Indica) was mostly carved. Basic household tools such as cutlasses and knives were used.

Usually, branches of the tree were cut down by the older boys. The wood was left to season before being carved. The items carved were mostly handles for domestic and farming tools and implements such as the axe, aze, and hoe. Another item that was carved on a large scale was a traditional flat-ended pestle for stirring various kinds of food. Fig. 2g illustrates some of the carved items. These were often sold at the local market.

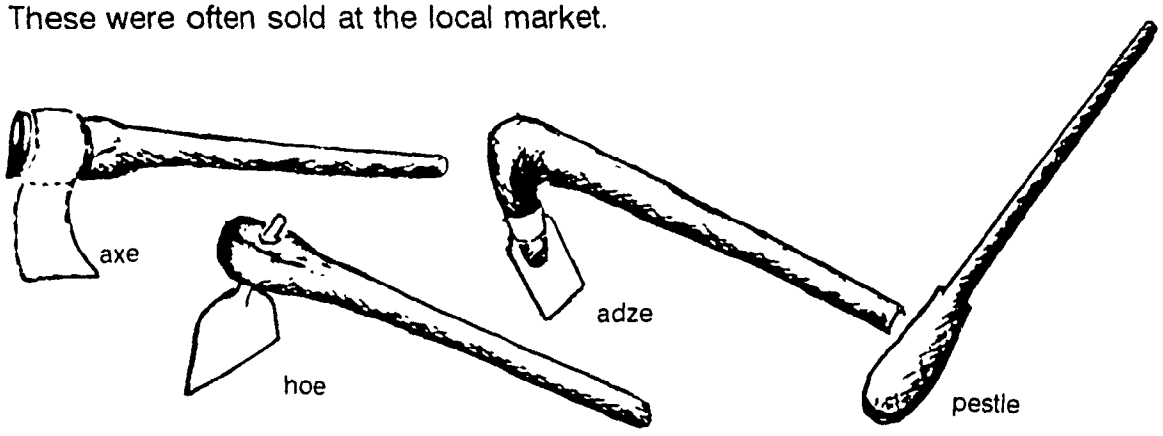


Fig. 2g. Some carved items

Doormat making

Doormats were woven from coir and sisal fibres. Coir is a fibre obtained from the outer covering of the coconut fruit, usually known as coconut husk. To extract the fibre, the husk was split lengthwise into pieces for convenient handling. Splitting the husk across would cut across the fibres, thereby reducing their staple lengths and damaging them. The pieces of husk were placed on a log and beaten gently with a wooden mallet to loosen the gummy substances that hold the fibres together. The fibres were then shaken vigorously to get rid of the loose particles of the gummy substances that hang on them, and then spread out to dry.

Sisal fibre was obtained from the leaves of the sisal plant. Sisal belongs to the pineapple family but its leaves are relatively thicker, longer, and softer. The fibre was extracted by splitting the leaves into long, narrow strips which were immersed in water for about five to seven days, a process known as retting. The softened bark was then shaken off to obtain creamy strands of fibre which were washed and dried.

The device for weaving the doormat was a square or rectangular wooden frame. Two opposite bars of the frame had an odd number of nails fixed into them at about 1 centimetre interval spacing. The nails projected for about 1 centimetre's length above the surface of the wood. Each nail was linked to the one that was directly opposite it with a twine as shown in fig. 2h. The twine served as the warp for weaving the fibre.

To weave, the fibres were divided into small tufts, about the thickness of a pencil, and 15 centimetres in length. The frame was leaned against a wall so that the warp strands had a vertical inclination. Weaving started from the base and progressed towards the top. A tuft of fibres was placed across the first two warp strands on the left-hand bottom of the frame so that its mid-point lay in between those warp strands. The left half of the tuft was bent over, then under the left warp strand and back to the surface between the two warp strands. The same process was repeated with the other half of the tuft on the right warp strand. See fig. 2i for illustration. The two ends of the tuft were brought together and held tightly in one hand while being pressed down against the lower bar of the frame with the other hand by means of a piece of flat stick shaped like a ruler.

The process continued with the next pair of warp strands and progressed in that order from one side of the frame to the other, forming a horizontal row. As a rule, weaving of the next row began from the right with the first two warp strands and progressed in the opposite direction to the first row.

Weaving ceased with about 8 centimetre length of warp strands left to be covered. The strands were cut at the base of the nails and knotted tightly in pairs to prevent the fibres from ravelling off.

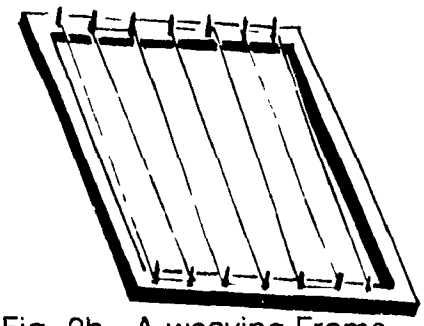


Fig. 2h. A weaving Frame

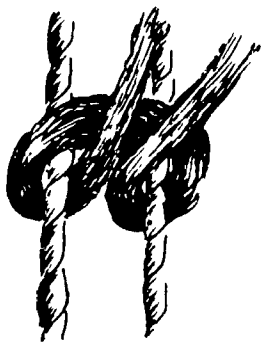


Fig. 2i. Weaving Procedure

Middle School

This was the third level of the school system with a four year duration leading to a Middle School Leaving Certificate (M.S.L.C.) It had been replaced gradually since 1987 by a Junior Secondary School programme, but was completely phased out in 1990. Like the upper primary level, art at the middle school was also organized both as classroom and outdoor activity. My age at the middle school level was between thirteen and sixteen years.

Classroom art activities included drawing and painting, printmaking by means of patterned blocks, spray-work, lettering and pen practise. Free drawing with pencils dominated the classroom art activities in middle one and two. Frequently, the pupils worked on their own themes which involved common activities in the society such as farming, fishing, cooking, or buying and selling at the market. Printing of patterns from blocks of cassava, cocoyam, yam or potato was also done in middle one, and it followed the same processes described at the upper primary level. Yet one very fascinating activity for the pupils at middle one was the process of making patterns by means of spray-work.

This process involved spreading out the format to be worked on over a flat surface. Shapes and patterns cut out of paper as well as leaves, pebbles and others were arranged over the format as desired. Powdered colour was mixed with water and poured into flat plates. The hairy surface of a shoe brush was dipped into the colour and shook gently to get rid of excess colour solution from it. It was then held with the hairy surface facing upwards but slightly inclined to

the surface of the format. A fine comb was run gently over the hairy surface of the brush toward the printer. In this way, the colour was sprinkled onto the format in very fine droplets. The leaves, shapes and pebbles were later removed to reveal eautiful patterns on the background. Apart from free drawing, there was not much classroom art activity in middle two.

Block lettering, pen practise (calligraphy), and painting were introduced at middle three. Block lettering was done by means of small squares as indicated in fig. 3a. Pen practise involved free-hand writing with broad nibs dipped into ink. The lessons were based on vertical, inclined and horizontal strokes as well as formation of the letters of the lower case of the alphabet. As broad nibs and pen-holders were rather too expensive and difficult to come by, the pupils were assisted by the class teacher to fashion this equipment from stalks of the elephant grass or bamboo branches. See fig. 3b. Painting was done with water based powdered colours. The themes were often derived from historical lessons treated in class or folk stories told by the teacher.

Outdoor art activities at the middle school were the same as at the upper primary level. However, stuffed cushion making was substituted with basketry. The hard outer covering of the palm rachis was the material mostly used in weaving baskets. Hand-spun twines and cords were also made from sisal fibres. The final year did not involve much in art because the pupils were then being prepared towards the Middle School Leaving Certificate which did not include art in its syllabus.

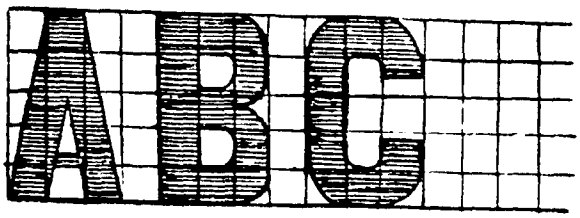


Fig. 3a. Block Lettering

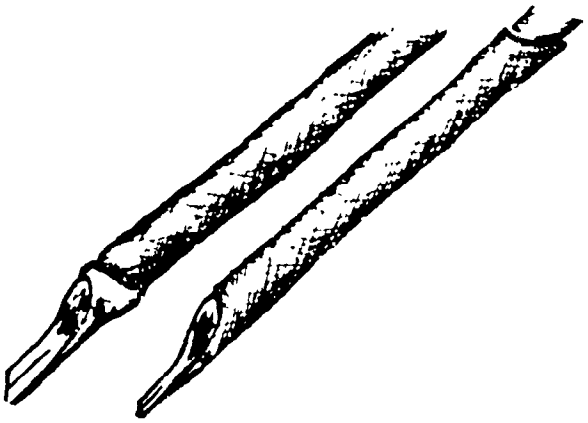


Fig. 3b. Lettering pens made from the stalks of Elephant grass and bamboo

From a personal point of view, I believe the headteachers of the primary and middle schools may have designed most of these art activities on a discretional basis. It seems they may have selected particular art activities they considered most suitable for the resources of the school's environment, for economic reasons. They might have done so as a means of raising funds for the procurement of some educational equipment that were lacking in the schools. Hence, the emphasis on the production of utility items during art activities for sale.

On the other hand, the group activities might have been planned as a means of alleviating the problems, which probably would have been faced by individual class teachers whose backgrounds in art were weak if such teachers were to work wholly on an individual basis. This is because art education was then not a "discipline" in the teacher education programme in Ghana. Art was non-examinable at the teacher educational finals, therefore, only a few teachers out of personal interest studied it with any great zeal. This, in my opinion, is one

of the major reasons why most of the teachers during my school days at the basic level might have faced difficulties in teaching art efficiently.

The Second Cycle or Secondary School Level

My art training at the second cycle level lasted for a five-year period at the secondary school with another two years of preliminaries at the university. I was then between sixteen and about twenty-one years old.

During the first phase which was basically at the secondary school, drawing and painting were the major art activities. Fabric dyeing and block lettering were also done, but to a lesser extent. It was at this stage that I became exposed to drawing from natural and still-life objects using charcoal, pen and ink, and pastels. The lessons emphasized the correct imitation of shapes of objects. These included round or circular objects, cylinders and cuboids. They also involved studying the relationships between different objects in compositions in terms of sizes, proportions, positions, and space, as well as drawing to show perspective. Figure drawing was also introduced at this level. It involved both quick sketches from short poses as well as full drawings and paintings of the human figure. Students of the class usually took turns posing.

In painting, I was introduced to the watercolour, poster, and pen and wash techniques. Pen and wash was my art teacher's favourite technique, which eventually became one of my favourite techniques too.

Imaginary compositions formed the basis of the lessons in painting with

themes usually decided by the individual student. Topics of the composition centred around activities in the Ghanaian environment. Marketing, farming, fishing, travelling, drumming and dancing, durbar of chiefs, and other indigenous activities formed the major themes. Landscapes, village scenes, seascapes and riverscapes were also painted. The lessons also covered the painting of natural objects such as leaves, fruits, flowers and vegetables, as well as still-life objects, which included household items, machine parts, and others. Sketching before painting was largely emphasized and it was through this exercise that I was introduced to outdoor sketching and the use of the sketch pad.

Lessons in fabric dyeing involved basically the tie-and-dye technique. The fabric used was bleached cotton and the dyestuff, the dylon type. Dylon was said to be a "direct dye" requiring no fixing agents or chemicals in its application, except common salt (sodium chloride) to boost its affinity for the fibre.

The procedure for dyeing involved washing of the fabric to get rid of the industrial starches from it. It was spread to dry and circles of about 15 centimetres in diameter were drawn all over the surface at regular intervals. Tyings were made along the markings with raffia fibres The dyebath was prepared by mixing the dylon with water and salt in a plastic bowl. The tied fabric was immersed in fresh water, squeezed of excess water, and immersed in the dyebath. While in the dyebath, the fabric was agitated and turned over at one-hour intervals for six hours. It was then removed and rinsed in cold water. The tyings were undone to reveal circular patterns over the surface of the fabric, which

was then spread out to dry.

These formed the basis of my art experiences for the first phase of the secondary school education. It covered a period of five years leading to the General Certificate of Education/School Certificate Examination (Ordinary Level). Teaching and learning activities at this level were purported to have followed a somewhat "criterion-referenced" curriculum. The syllabus was dictated by an external examining body: "The West African Examinations Council," which conducted the final examinations on the basis of the criteria set up in the syllabus. For this reason, the teacher tended to choose art activities which were considered best suitable for the students in terms of the provision of materials for class exercises.

The second phase which was to prepare me for the Advanced Level Certificate within a two-year period of sixth form education, was undertaken at the university under a Preliminary Degree Course in Art Programme. The art experiences here included intensive outdoor sketching, figure drawing, drawing from natural and still-life objects, painting, and history of African art. At this stage, my interest in art was centred around landscape painting with mountains, trees and rivers as my major subjects. Specifically, my interest was largely based on painting rocky and ragged terrain with the roots of plants creeping and working themselves round the rocks.

It is important to note that the stated age levels strictly apply to myself. This is because most of my colleagues with whom I was in the same class were

older than me. Most children during the 1950's and 1960's were not sent to school early in my country for one reason or another. However, the most apparent reason is that children living in some rural areas without schools had to grow enough to be able to cover the distances to the school centres by foot before being enroled. It was therefore, common to find a twelve year old among seven or eight year old children in the same class. Today, however, such wide disparities between the ages of children in the same class have been reduced considerably in Ghanaian schools.

Furthermore, through an on-going educational reform since September, 1987, pre-university education has been reduced from seventeen years as described in this section to twelve years.

The Tertiary or University Level

The first year of the university art programme, termed "Foundation, Basic Design and General Art Studies", introduced its students to the rudiments of various aspects of studio art studied in the university. Basically, it exposed students to the use of multi-media in art in the areas of drawing and painting, graphic art, sculpture, metals, textiles and ceramics. The theoretical aspects included seminars on creativity and idea development in art, history of art, and traditional studies.

The main objective of this programme was to help the individual student to develop the ability to imagine, explore, innovate, and invent Ideally, it was to

foster creativity in the student. It was also meant to afford the students a means of undertaking creative activities by expressing themselves freely with multi-media in art, leading them gradually towards personal fulfilment and self-actualization in the field of visual art.

The art activities here were based on the modes of application of different types of media as well as the elements and principles of design for idea development in art. The method employed was for each student to select an object of interest to be studied for idea development exercises. It could be natural or man-made and easily portable. This object was studied by drawing it several times at different postures. Each drawing emphasized the various shapes, forms, textures and colour that could be found on the object. Later, interesting parts, shapes and forms on the object were drawn separately and magnified. These were to be reassembled to form other shapes or forms that were three-dimensional in appearance or patterns. Eventually, these newly formed shapes, forms and patterns were identified as being suitable for carving, or modelling in clay or plaster of Paris. Others were found to be suitable for jewellery products, textile designs or motifs for logos. These activities covered the first half of the academic year.

The second half saw the rotation of the students from one art department to the other on a weekly basis, trying to carve, mould, build, cast, paint, weave, or print whatever product he or she had obtained through the idea development activities. It was upon this basis that the student selected the area of art that he

or she wished to study for specialization. However, separate lessons were organized for drawing, including figure, and painting The specialization took three additional years bringing the total to four years. Traditional studies which involved the study of the cultural heritage and repertoire of Ghana was stopped at the close of year one. Cultural studies was entwined with the study of art as a means of providing the student with the basis or background for the appreciation of the arts in Ghana, which fall within the domain of "Art for Life's Sake". History of art involved both the African and European aspects Both aspects were studied side by side up to the end of the third academic year

The second year of the university art programme marked the beginning of students' specialization in specific areas of art. Each student had to select two areas of his or her choice, one of these being a "main" and the other a "subsidiary". My main area of specialization was in Textiles (fibres), with Graphic Art as subsidiary. A point worth noting is that my training in textiles has been highly industrially inclined because textiles falls within the domain of the industrial arts in my country. However, the programme had some aspects which involved studio practices. These included intensive practical weaving on the broadloom (foot powered loom), pattern designing, tie-and-dye, and batik making, as well as fabric printing by means of block, stencil, and screen processes This was the first phase of my university education through art, leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree.

A second phase was art education, a one year programme leading to a

post-graduate Diploma Certificate. Here, art making involved basically multi-media in studio as a means of rendering would-be art teachers versatile in the classroom. There were lessons in painting, graphic art, collage making, and basic print making processes. There was much emphasis on three-dimensional art involving constructing and building with found objects. Craft making also emphasized the processes of utility items in the Ghanaian environment with such materials as paper, fibres, seeds, leather, rattan, bamboo, bones, calabash, and others.

The art programme at the university tends to reveal a curriculum with a sequential content and clearly defined goals pointing to the individual student's self-actualization and personal fulfilment in life through art.

The foregoing accounts reveal a variety of art activities and experiences, all of which had been very enjoyable and stimulating to me. However, I consider the activities at the graduate level as being more inspiring to me as a teacher. This is not because they have been the most recent of the activities described in this section. The reason is that its lessons embraced a wide range of art disciplines, thereby exposing me to the techniques in working with a variety of art media and materials

Teaching methodologies at all the five levels of my education through art had the tendency of exemplifying free expression as a general paradigm. However, artistic orientations at the secondary school level seemed somehow mimetic in nature Here teaching provided students with practical demonstrations

to follow as guides. Perhaps this was done as a means of exposing the student to the modes of application of new media in art. Generally, artistic activity, in my personal opinion, was viewed as an instrument that enabled the individual to adapt to his or her environment. Teaching was therefore designed to provide the student with problems that would give structure and meaning to his or her experience in the Ghanaian environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIA CONNORS
FIRST PHASE

This chapter portrays an interview with Patricia Connors, who is the second of the two participants, but the main interviewee in this study. Patricia, who is well known in private life as Tish, was born on 6 February 1951. She is currently in her second year pursuing a Master in Art Education Degree at Concordia University, Montreal.

After obtaining the Bachelor of Fine Art (B.F.A.) degree in 1987 and post-graduate Diploma Certificate in Art Education in 1989, Tish obtained two teaching positions simultaneously. One was in a private native high school where she was employed as a teaching assistant. Here, her responsibilities included teaching science and other subjects pertaining to general education (but excluding art) to grade eight students. Her other teaching position was in an after-school programme at a Verdun Community Centre, where she was an art animator working with five to twelve-year old children. Tish held this second position for almost three years. During the second year of her teaching career, Tish obtained a position as an art educator in a private Jewish school board where she taught art to grade seven and eight students from 1990 to 1992, a period of two years.

Currently a full-time student, Tish holds a teaching assistantship r sition, working with undergraduate students of art education at Concordia University.

The current interv ew with Tish is the first of a two-phased dialogue planned for this study. It has been designed to solicit information about the respondent's personal artistic biography, as well as the circumstances and/or factors responsible for her artistic development. In this interview, Tish offers information about her artistic life which includes her artistic training and specialities, highlighting the memorable and key moments of the artistic experiences. As a practising artist, she also discusses some aspects of the types of artistic activities in which she is currently involved. Also revealed through this interview, are some aspects of the respondent's art teaching activities and practices.

As a working strategy, and also for the sake of convenience, the researcher and respondent are referred to simply in this interview as "Question" and "Answer", respectively. Also, for a further simplification, the abbreviations, "Que" and "Ans", respectively are in turn substituted for the "Question" and "Answer". The interview is as follows.

QUE: In what province of Canada did you have your school education?

ANS: I had all my school education in the province of Quebec, where I was born, commencing in 1957. After completing high school in 1969, I enroled in a nursing assistantship training course at the Catherine Booth Hospital,

Montreal in 1970, where I underwent a twelve-month training completed in 1971.

QUE: At what stage, grade, or level of your educational career were you introduced to art making?

ANS: I was interested in art in all forms for as long as I can remember, like all of my life, both inside and outside of school, but did very little at school. I know I received some art making in my childhood years of education, but I do not recall very much of it, and it was not very exciting or memorable. I also do not recall any particular art making and/or drawing, per se, before school-going age which was about the age of six years. What I do recall that I experienced on my own, personally, while at school, were things such as enjoying and taking great pleasure in learning to write cursively (or in the cursive manner). I took great pride in trying to make my writing the best in the class. This was in grade two, where I was also showing great difficulty in learning to spell and feeling low about that, because I was always the first one out during the class "spelling bees". So, when I was "out", I would use that time to practice my handwriting, and I often earned a sticker and the chance to have my "writing exercise" put upon a wall in the classroom. This made up a little for the low self esteem caused from my poor performance in the spelling bees. A couple of school memories

attached to art making have to do with high school (grades 8 to 11) but I forget which grade level I was at when they occurred. One had to do with the subject of biology and the drawing of diagrams. I loved it and would easily spend hours on them and, as I recall, they were very good, and I learned the subject effortlessly. Another good high school experience had to do with helping to paint props and sets for a school play of Hansel & Gretel, and the art teacher was there to direct us. I do not recall having her for a teacher or the subject of art. I do recall having music classes and attempting to learn to play the clarinet, but I never took a moment of it seriously.

QUE: What was your age then?

ANS: As I explained above, I cannot recall the grade levels, so I cannot recall the age.

QUE: If your introduction to art making did not take place at school, then would you please describe how it came about?

ANS: When I was growing up my artistic development was happening but in a rather insidious and undirected way. By playing and making imaginary things like a farm out of cardboard boxes and paper maché, and then

painting it, I did improve as the years went on; it got easier. I hardly remember drawing first the things I wanted to make; they just sort of happened. What stands out in my memory in the building of the things is the whole set-up of the art work rather than what I had to do to get the project done. As I have already stated, I cannot be sure what age I was when I started to follow directions from books to make more complicated and sophisticated things like puppets, but I think I had to be ten or eleven years old. I also did a lot of "Paint by Numbers", cutouts and crafts, all by following book directions. I kept up this type of art making off and on into my teenage years when I attempted to do "real art". I bought an oil paint set, brushes and a small canvas board. I made what I considered to be a dismal attempt at a still life painting. It lacked something, and I could not progress on my own, so I gave it up until I was a working adult. Then, my artistic interests and abilities grew over a period of years of self motivation and self direction until I realized that this was more than a hobby or a side interest and I needed to go to school to learn and develop further as an artist.

QUE: At what stage, grade, or level in your student career (life) did your commitment to art as a career choice begin?

ANS: For as long as I can remember, I wanted a career in medicine. At first I

wanted to be an orthopaedic surgeon, then a physio-therapist, then a pediatric nurse. I ended up working as a nursing assistant at the Montreal Children's Hospital, mainly in an orthopaedic unit, from 1971 until 1987. It is at this unit, during those years, that my artistic interests and abilities were awakened and nurtured. I did all sorts of art projects, including painting and photography, for a number of years, always denying that I was an artist. When I reflect back on those years and even further into my childhood, I recognize that the artist was always there inside of me. It had just been shelved and ignored in favour of a more so-called realistic and purposeful career, as I had been led to believe. It all got triggered off by the simple direction to copy a picture from a Christmas card onto a window in the unit, and then to paint it. What I managed to accomplish in this artistic attempt pleased everyone and amazed me Little did I know that it was going to have such a major influence on the rest of my life by becoming the basis for a more meaningful and purposeful life-long career for me in the field of art as well as art education. I must say that I spent at least twelve years of being self taught in drawing, painting and photography. However, my commitment to art as a career choice began when my formal artistic education began in earnest in 1983 at Concordia University, when I entered the Art Education Programme. To me this was an ideal choice because it allowed me to develop as an artist and still have a career working with children.

QUE: What factors or events created and sustained your interest in art as a career?

ANS: Many of the factors or events that influenced and sustained my interest in art had to do with the way I lived and played. This in turn influenced the birthday or Christmas gifts that I was sometimes given. For example, I spent many an hour kneeling on a kitchen chair at my grandmother's table learning about baking and cooking by watching and doing. My 'Gram' would give me some butter or dough and let me make and invent anything I wanted to. I could emulate her or make my own pretend food or whatever. This, I think led her to buy me a special book one year that had all kinds of art making activities in it. I think I tried everything in that book. The special activity that I recall I was most attracted to was the one on puppets. I never liked dolls. I found them too boring and lifeless, but puppets I loved because they had character and could be made to move and come alive. Plus I had the added pleasure of making them. I am still very attracted to puppets to this day, in fact I am collecting them.

Other things that happened that stand out in my mind are things like building a farm from scratch with pieces of cardboard, scissors, and paste made from flour and water, and lots of imagination. Sometimes I did this alone and sometimes my older brother would join me. We would make the house, the barn with a silo (my favourite), and fences, and sometimes even

the animals and farm machinery. Sometimes this activity would go on for days and we would try to keep it all for as long as we could. We would attach it to big pieces of cardboard and slide it under our beds. I think we were influenced by a special aunt.

Also very important, is the unsuspected successful painting I did at the orthopaedic unit of the Montreal Children's Hospital. As I have already mentioned, it had been the major and immediate factor triggering off my creative and artistic interests, growth, and development.

In fact, I often express that I think I am a good example of someone who has "learned through art". I say this because of the many wonderful transformations that I experienced with so much personal growth occurring, all as I went through both my self-taught period as well as my art education. This factor was a major motivator for my wanting to become an art educator. I learned to see, to think, and feel differently about myself, life and the world. Once these changes were started they could not be stopped, neither could I turn away from them.

QUE: In what area(s) of art did you finally specialize?

ANS: There have been so many growing pains and stages that I have experienced and passed through to get to where I am today, as both a practising multi-media artist and art educator. Some of those stages

involved studio courses in a variety of media. I was truly amazed, fascinated and even passionate about many of them, and I wanted to be able to work in them all. This worried me for a while, because I could not know which one to chose to specialize in. I was very concerned about even being able to develop as an artist because almost every studio course I took I loved intensely: design, sculpture, ceramics, fibres, and photography. So I was worried about which area or media to choose as my specialty. That, however, became clear and settled for me once I took my multi-media course. This is because of my realization of the fact that once I took the multi-media course everything came together. I realized also that I would be able to work as a multi-media artist and do art in all of the media that I am drawn to. I therefore settled on the idea and the fact that I am a multi-media artist and thus can include all my passions in my work.

The way I usually work is I do something in mixed media first, then I expand and/or extend the work in a couple of other media. A specific explanation would be an example of a series of constructed paintings that I did in mixed materials. I did photographs of the paintings so as to fragment and abstract them, and did a collage montage with them. Then I abstracted the series even further by doing a fibres piece with dyes and inks; that is a wall hanging or tapestry. My starting point and medium changes with each new project, and the beauty of it all is that I get to work

with all my favourite materials and media.

QUE: Based on your personal recollections, please give a biography (sequential story) of the various school art activities leading to your development as an artist/art teacher. (Note: you may base your recollections on grade (class) levels; or the levels of school system(s) through which you went.)

- or -

Based on your personal recollections would you please highlight the key moments of your art experiences that have led to your current artistic development.

ANS: To begin with, I see my artistic development as an "on and off" process, it was not consistent, and geared more towards doing things practically on my own. That is, building and constructing with found objects rather than drawing and painting all at home rather than at school.

I have all kinds of memories of things that I loved to do as a child, that I only realized later in my life that I was artistically inclined. One of my fondest and most vivid memories of how I would play with snow. I do not mean just white fluffy, or soft sticky snow, doing snow sculptures etc., but I was particularly attracted to the snow on the roads and sidewalks that had changed colour with sand that was put down to prevent slipping. It looked like brown sugar to me, the white snow like white sugar I would

take my sleigh, my shovel and a box and collect the two kinds of snow and pretend I was mixing and making various kinds of sugar. Plus the snow that had been packed down and imprinted with tire treads or boot prints, I would pretend they were cookies or pastries and I would collect them and pretend I had a bakery, selling various homebaked goodies. I sense this was influenced by my experiences with my Grandmother. I cannot remember how old I was when I did all this, but it went on for a number of years and has stayed very vivid in my mind to this day, and is recalled every winter when I see the familiar colours and prints in the snow. It is a happy and contented feeling that goes with this memory.

Another thing that I used to do was collect interesting and unusual objects. I do not remember doing or making anything in particular with any of them, but I often sat and looked at them for long periods of time full of wonder and curiosity, and often this was when I was supposed to be doing my homework.

I also recall doing a number of different types of arts and crafts kits such as paint by numbers, mosaics and string art. I also did corking, knitting, crochet, embroidery and sewing. A lot of which was inspired by and taught to me by my Grandmother. Some I learned at girl guides, etc.

I also recall having bought myself oil paints in small tubes, in a set, with brushes, turpentine, and linseed oil. I remember trying to do a still life painting and being very disappointed and discouraged with the results. I

remember realizing there was more to this than I knew how to do, so I let it go.

I know there was one artistic interest and endeavour that I was totally involved in and I feel I had the opportunity to be very expressive through, and that was my ballet dancing and training. I was intensely involved in it from the age of eight to seventeen and I was one year into toeshoes before giving it up in favour of academic studies. I realized it was too expensive for my mother to keep up, especially if I was not going to make a career of it.

I never really got re-involved or reconnected with my creative soul until I was in my first nursing assistant position at the Montreal Children's Hospital (1971), where my inherent artistic and creative tendencies were discovered and nurtured. As I have already mentioned at two different instances in this dialogue, during one year, near Christmas time, someone said to me, "here draw and paint this on one of the windows", which I did satisfactorily, and then everything just snowballed from there. This experience triggered and touched something inside of me that I just could not ignore any longer. My creative, inventive, or artistic spirit and nature were let loose. I just kept on looking for and trying out new challenges from then on. I also was very fortunate to have a head nurse who encouraged, and even nurtured, this part of my personality. At first I only thought of it as a hobby, a special interest beside my nursing career, but

eventually it became more and more prominent, even dominant. As time went on, my artistic interests filled up most of my free time both at work and at home. All that time when people observed me and my art work they would tell me I was in the wrong profession. Of course in the beginning I would not agree, but eventually I faced up to it and I realized that I needed to get some education in this area. I started out first in 1976/77 as a mature student at Concordia University in a course called "Orientation to Art 101". Unfortunately, when I saw the calibre of work my classmates were capable of, I "chickened out" and did not return to school until 1983. This was when I felt forced to make an alternative career decision because the director of nursing at the Montreal Children's Hospital wanted to phase nursing assistants out of the acute care setting. She believed we were not adequately educated to be working there any longer. This was one heck of a painful shock and I had always planned on working there in orthopaedics, with children, until I retired. When the pain had subsided somehow, I realized I had a choice. I could sit around and feel sorry for myself or I could go back to school and get re-educated and start a new career, in art. I was not sure in what capacity but decided to finish up my pre-fine art credits first and check out various ideas, as I did so. It was during that time that I learned about the art education specialization programme. For me, this was just ideal, because it meant as I studied to become a better artist I would also learn to teach art, which

meant I would be able to continue working with children. Also, it made me feel good to know I could become an artist who would also be capable to teach, because a lot of artists turn to teaching to earn a living but are not necessarily good teachers. Also it is amazing how this choice of educational training took the pressure off me to have to become an outstanding artist, and made me focus on becoming an outstanding teacher.

Having been fully enroled in the programme, I have been working and showing my art all through my art education. But I have only recently began to sell myself and show my work more formally in an alternative art gallery. I have been in three group shows to date, one of which led to having one of my photographs published in a weekly newspaper. I am also now on the board of directors of the gallery. I am very proud and happy to be associated with this gallery because of its interest and focus on art education for all ages, in both the visual and performing arts.

As I began to work as an art educator (in training) during my undergraduate courses, I knew I had definitely found the field for me. In spite of the initial shock of the "generation gap" that I experienced, I knew with time that I would adjust to teaching in a school setting. I was fortunate to be able to start teaching in the same year as I graduated my diploma studies. In the month of October 1989, I started teaching two positions simultaneously, as I finished up my last nursing assistant

position. My first teaching position in a school setting was at a private native high school. I was hired as a teaching assistant for a couple of subjects, but before long I was teaching science to two grade eights. Although I did not get to teach art per se I did take the opportunity to incorporate it into the science lessons when we got to ecology. I had the students make three-dimensional models of an animal and its habitat. It worked very well for both me and the students.

The other teaching position that I began at the same time was as an art animator at a community centre in an after school program, with children ages five to twelve. I enjoyed and kept this position for three years.

It was during my second year of teaching that I obtained a position as an art educator. I worked for a private Jewish school board, teaching art to grades seven and eight for two years. The first year I commuted between two high schools, which was an interesting experience as the students were very different, as was the atmosphere in each school. The second year I worked at just one of the two schools, and I began to notice some benefits of having the same students for two consecutive years. The students knew what I expected of them and we were able to build on the art concepts that we had worked on the previous year. I was able to increase the challenge and help them to further develop their interests and abilities I had the pleasure of seeing them eager to take up the challenges and bring them to completion with pride and satisfaction. I

could not help wondering and imagining what we could accomplish together, given the opportunity, but art was not available in those schools after grade eight.

Now, that teaching position has ended and I am in my second year of working on my masters studies and have a great art education teaching assistantship at my university, for the second time. I now am looking forward to becoming qualified to work with the adult population in various stages of life, and in a variety of settings.

QUE: Other comments (if any)? For instance, considering your personal artistic experiences and development, how far do you relate these experiences to the idea of some art educators that the spontaneity in creative activity and artistic development in the individual come to an end when he/she enters adulthood?

ANS: As you can probably see from what I have described so far, my "art making/training", so to speak, was all very home based, rather than school based. This unfortunately makes me feel rather uncomfortable sometimes to analyze my artistic experiences in terms of a theoretical ideas such as this one. In any case, I think this idea may be true to some extent as far as some individuals may be concerned. However, in my opinion, I think this idea needs to be reviewed. Although my personal artistic development

seems quite unique, I believe it all depends on the individual's own interests and what he or she intends to achieve in life. I say this because I personally know some people, including myself, whose artistic development began when they were in their 'teens' and much more later in age. From my own personal experience, for example, I believed I was always meant to be an artist. But I was misguided or misdirected to be something else, and I only rediscovered my artistic soul and being after completing a career journey into a totally different area. While in that career, opportunities and experiences occurred that revealed what I was really meant to be and to do: an artist and art educator. Although I feel I would never make up for the lost years of developmental experience, my immense interests and desires are making up for some of the lost time as I am growing and developing as an artist, in leaps and bounds. I hope to continue developing in this way right up into old age.

Therefore, I believe that if a person should stop being actively involved in creative and spontaneous art activities in his/her youth, it does not mean that it is lost forever. It can be rediscovered and re-stimulated, and thus, fully developed.

So far, the above is an insightful story describing the artistic experiences, development, inclinations, and interests of Tish. In the dialogue that follows (interview, phase two), Tish describes her views about the artistic activities and experiences of the reasearcher.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIA CONNORS
SECOND PHASE

This chapter, like the preceding one, also involves an in-depth interview with Tish. As has already been explained, it constitutes the second and final part of the two-phased dialogical interview involved in this study. As an extension of the investigation begun in the first phase (previous chapter), the current interview comes after my respondent has thoroughly studied my artistic biography, acquainting herself with details of my artistic training and experiences. In this interview, the personal observations, impressions, opinions, and views of my respondent as an artist, art teacher and, currently, student of art education, are sought about my art training in Ghana in relation to her own training in Canada. In her response, Tish brings to light some important observations, and poses some sensitive questions that bear some valuable implications for the teaching and learning of art. She also discusses some useful insights she has gained from studying my art making experiences. The following portrays the dialogical interview.

QUE: Having studied my art training profile in Ghana, what are your views,

impressions, and/or opinions about it in relation to your own art training in Canada?

ANS: Having studied your art training profile in Ghana, my views, impressions, and/or opinions about it in relation to my own art training in Canada are many and varied. It is my impression that your "art training" as you describe it, was very extensive, and purposeful, which in turn seemed to be inspiring for you. You also describe two incidents that could be responsible for triggering off your initial interest in art making, which causes me to think that you may have always had a natural interest and desire to be involved in art making. One thing that also comes to mind for me in regards to your bother providing you with crayons and books, is that here in Canada, children usually have crayons and colouring books as part of their toy repertoire, as I certainly did. Therefore, I see this as social/cultural factor that also plays a role in the differences between our art training in our respective countries.

To my mind, the activities and projects in your educational system, especially at the "Basic Level", provide very structured and guided outlets for your artistic development and exploration. It occurs to me that you did not only enjoy these art making activities, but also you were very stimulated and inspired by them because your "interest grew stronger gradually as the years went by and also, your flare for art making

developed." I also sense that I myself would have thoroughly enjoyed all of the interesting art making projects that you had in school. I say this because I think a student's personality as well as personal interests play a major role in how school work and/or projects are received by a student. I can also imagine that the majority of children that I went to school with would more than likely not have liked them at all. They may have viewed it more as a chore, or work, than as a creative art making experience. I also sense that this could be so even in today's classrooms, but I will elaborate on this more in response to question number two. But in relation to my own art training in school, in Canada, your experience was tremendously different. It was a long time ago now since I was in the elementary and high schools, as it was for you, but I do not have any such outstanding memories of any such interesting or inspiring art making experiences.

As I recalled for you in the first phase of this paper, my art making experiences occurred at home, doing things on my own, or during after-school activities, such as Girl Guides, and rehearsals for Sunday School plays. It is also my personal opinion that I would have preferred to have had more art making activities during my school years. I think the benefit of this in turn could have helped to steer me to an artistic career sooner.

QUE: As a student of art education, and/or an art educator, what insights do you gain from studying my art training and/or artistic experiences in Ghana?

ANS: The insights, thoughts, ideas, and questions that occur to me in regards to your paper, as both an art education student and educator, are numerous. I think that most of what I am responding to and/or picking up on, has to do with very differe cultures and approaches to life and learning. For example, one of the insights that came to me is how it seems to be beneficial to incorporate art training and/or art making into the school curriculum, in a rather formal and purposeful manner, right from the earliest levels (i.e. the life-linked themes with simple materials such as chalk, crayons and clay.) This in my mind, transmits a message that art and art making are important and valid parts of both life and education. This, as an art educator, really appeals to me, as I feel it is something that is missing in our educational attitude and approach here in Canada. We need to make more of a connection between art and life and life and art, which I think your education covered very effectively.

I also took cognisance of the vital factor in your personal account that you had a very sensitive teacher, who was instrumental in guiding you on your artistic educational journey. This too, I feel is a necessary element of the art educators' attitude and approach to their profession, and to their students. It is important to be able to recognize students' abilities and interests and then encourage and guide them towards an appropriate career. This in turn re-enforces the validity of art as a worthwhile subject and element of life. This also made me wonder what you might have

chosen as a career if your teacher had not encouraged and inspired you? Another significant factor, in regards to your teacher that you mention, is that of his favourite art making activity, which became yours also. This makes me think about it and ask...why? Is it because of him being good at it, and/or possibly showed an interest in it as his special efforts to encourage his students?

I have some further thoughts, ideas and questions about some of the art making projects and activities provided at each of the school levels. I guess my main concerns have to do with how much freedom there was for creative expression within each project, versus how directed each endeavour had to be in order to achieve success. I get the sense that these art making activities were very discipline based. I also sense that this was in order to instill some basic skills, in both the handling of materials and the making of the objects and/or products. Also, this is an area where culture would play a major role. In my mind, children here in Canada seem to resist, and/or rebel against both too much direction and formality. I definitely like the idea of having art making projects linked to the students' lives and ways of living. Here in this country's culture and lifestyle, however, an art educator would have to choose carefully, so as not to turn the students off with something that resembles "work" such as making brooms, mats, and tools, rather than "fun". I think this would be true both in my school era, as well as in today's. Also, the manner in

which the projects are presented would make a difference in how they are received by the students, especially in school Clay, I feel would be well received, no matter what the art product was to be and, in addition, the idea of linking the art work to other countries and cultures, I know from experience, works well. The idea of school spirit and morale might be used to help inspire making such products as a means of raising funds for school equipment, but it would definitely not be seen or accepted as the normal way to go. It is usually expected that schools already have the budget and needed supplies, paid for via "taxes". For example, I know such projects would be well received in after-school programmes, such as I have been working in for the past three years. The change in setting seems to make the children feel more receptive towards doing such projects for interest and fun, rather than as an expected and formal learning experience.

QUE: Other comments (if any)?

ANS: The more time I spend reading, thinking, and responding to your paper, the more my memories are sparked about the many experiences I shared with my grandparents. Each grandparent showed me how to do many different things over the years, every time I was with them. With my grandmother, we mainly did things that had to do with household activities, such as baking, preserving, or embroidery, crocheting and knitting With

my grandfather we mainly did things that had to do with the outdoors and things such as carpentry (using tools), mechanical things such as the car or lawnmower One of my most favourite memories has to do with showing me how to build a ham radio, which involved using crystals of some sort. Unfortunately, I was very young when this experience occurred and I do not remember very many of the details. What does stand out in my memory, is how intrigued I was that he was able to make something so fascinating (and purposeful) out of practically nothing. I was so thrilled to see how he took just a few items and some wire and connected them all together, plugged into an electric circuit and it became alive, it worked! Then we had hours of fun tinkering around with it.

I realize more and more just how valuable my many experiences with my grandparents had such a big influence on inspiring and nurturing my creative spirit. Not only did they take the time to show me so many creative things, but what stands out in my mind is how they let me try these things out for myself. They let me take the risks to explore and experiment, and thus discover for myself, which in turn inspired me to want to do more. This, I feel, provided me with the very valuable hands on experience that my creative nature required to grow. They then followed this up by giving me many gifts over the years that involved further creative endeavours, such as paint by numbers, mosaics, string art, etc. The most special of these gifts was a big hard-covered book that was full of creative

activities. The activity that stands out as being the most tried and enjoyed was that of puppet making of all kinds, in various types of media This in turn led to such types of art making as sewing, painting, and building. Thus in my mind it is no wonder that I am a multi-media artist.

As you may have observed, the activities I have recounted here describe further my home based artistic experiences and development. Unfortunately, however, this is not necessarily what most other children experienced in my time, but was probably more likely to have been the case than it would be today. I get the feeling this is so because of the many changes in lifestyles today, the most drastic of which I believe to be television. I would also like to mention that I see some sort of a similarity between my home based art making/training and your school based one, in that our two experiences were about subjects, objects, and projects which I consider to be grounded in or linked with life and living Do you agree?

The foregoing conversation with Tish unearths some important relationships between our artistic experiences. It also reveals that the influences exerted by the social, cultural, economic, and other environmental factors on art education in any given society, are very immense. These factors, as well as other issues raised through this dialogue are viewed as important clues or hints, observations and/or findings to be explored and utilized in the concluding analysis of the study in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

The discussions that follow show the relationships between the art training profiles of the two participants of the study, namely myself (researcher) and Tish (my respondent). The discussions exemplify the relevance of the relationships between our artistic experiences to everyday learning and experiences in the field of general art studies, as well as art education. In addition, they take a critical view of traditional classroom practices and suggest some plausible ways of improving them, thereby making learning more meaningful and purposeful to the learner.

A study of the information gathered from the interview responses in relation to my personal narrative shows that the art activities in which both Tish and I have been involved reflect a common phenomenon. It shows that our individual art making activities have stemmed from personal experiences resulting from both sensual and intellectual influences. This in turn portrays the idea that our respective art activities have been largely a means for each of us in exploring and experiencing the world. Stated more simply, for both of us the narration of our individual artistic experiences has been a process of making sense or meaning

of our personal curricula in terms of our artistic history. While it has afforded us the opportunity to articulate "how" and "why" we have each become what we are (i.e. artists/art educators), and practice the types of art we do, it has also helped us to understand or identify ourselves. Apparently, this context is a justification for art as a significant process of learning

In addition, that art activities can be a valid means of exploring and experiencing or understanding one's world is a feature which renders art an important educational vehicle. This is because it is capable of engendering in the individual learner a sense of self-awareness, or a conscious rational mind for autonomous thinking. Certainly, this disposition of the learner, in turn, can be a valid basis for his or her ability to interpret knowledge meaningfully and to generate authentic knowledge, as well as discern the appropriate practical application of knowledge in everyday life. Perhaps it is this unique characteristic feature of art that justifies it as a major discipline of education.

Also becoming evident to me as a teacher from the narrative experience is my heightened awareness of the implications and necessity of cumulative personal reflections for education, especially learning and/or knowing I have observed that while recounting and redefining our individual personal artistic experiences, both Tish and I have been each involved in three important learning activities or exercises which have been occurring almost simultaneously. These could be described as unconscious and imaginative acts of revision, discrimination, and assimilation. Whereas the act of revision could be described

as a consequence of the on-going reflective and recollective activities in the mind, the act of discrimination on its part has been occurring between our individual current artistic experiences and myriad previous ones. Thus it is from these two sources (i.e. the previous and current experiences) that we each both instinctively and with due consideration, have recalled, reorganized, and recounted our individual artistic experiences. And while we undergo these activities, our minds have also been simultaneously involved in unconscious acts of assimilation of the personal artistic experiences which have been felt to be meaningful, memorable, or purposeful to each of us. What these activities have provided us is a sense of tying together experiences of the past and the present, and also a recognition of ourselves, each in relation to his or her art experiences

The state of the mind of each participant during the narrative process is analogous to Horner's (1986) paradigmatic concepts of "dream-space" and "deconstructive space-time" respectively[1]. The dream-space could somehow be likened to a dreaming situation. It refers to a situation in which the mind of a narrator in an attempt to recall past experiences becomes deeply involved or lost in thought about these experiences. In the context of this study, this situation is consistent with what may be described as the narrator's engagement in a metaphoric consultation or dialogue with his or her inner-mind or inner-self, as a means of reconstructing the past, which involves lived personal experiences. In this process, therefore, the narrator's mind is immensely involved in three major activities These include acts of reflection, deconstruction, and rearrangement in

an appropriate sequence, the components of the recalled events and experiences, all these occurring almost simultaneously.

The "deconstructive space-time" implies a situation in which the mind of a narrator is controlled by the:

> "awareness of time as a sequence of events, i.e., as a process ...this forms the basis of the narrative experience or the disclosure of a sequential process via memory."[2]

The "deconstruction space-time" in the context of this study, therefore, more accurately describes the span of time during which the narrator is involved in deliberating and meditating on the appropriate sequence in which to recompose the events and experiences being recalled. Thus in effect, during the narrative process, both Tish and I can be said to have duly experienced the dream-space as an "insidious act" before arriving at authentic sequence of events and experiences to narrate or verbalize.

Relating this context to the general principles and practice of education reveals that narrative experiences of this nature can have considerable integrating effects on the narrator's outlook to learning and knowing. The acts of reflectivity, remembering, and reconstruction of lived experiences can be equated to acts of revision and assimilation which reinforce knowledge, rendering it long-lasting and difficult to forget. While the narrative process is primarily self-motivated and experiential, it is also a basis for recognizing one's own history and achievement. Thus to both me and my respondent the narrative process has been a very inspiring and motivating experience.

Having involved acts of immense reflectivity, imagination, deliberation, recomposing and redefining of the narrators' lived artistic experiences, the narrative process itself can be viewed as a creative activity. In addition, the act of verbalization makes the participants' artistic experiences more real, clearly defined, and updated As such, the process of verbalizing one's own lived experiences, as I have observed from this study, can be an act of finding one's own voice, which in turn reveals one's personal identity. From the point of view of this context, therefore, the narrative process can be viewed as a basis for self-discovery Thus considering the magnitude of the importance of the "self" and its implications for learning, it is evident that the narrative experiences of both myself and my respondent have contributed considerably in reshaping our individual attitudes and outlooks to art making Our artistic interests and inclinations for the future have also been influenced to a large extent. As a teacher, therefore, the major insight I have gained from this context lies in my recognition of the implicit importance of personal reflections, as well as narrative activities and experiences, for institutionalized learning.

Examination of the relationships between my art training profile and that of Tish reveals some commonalities, or similar activities, experiences, and interests. These could be found in terms of our individual initial motivations to art making, the type of art made, and to some extent, the media in which the individual works. However, within these commonalties there exist some differences that pertain to our individual specific fields of specialization. Apart from this, there is yet another

difference, which though seemingly hidden, has been considered as an important factor influencing our individual attitudes and approaches to both art making and art appreciation. This difference lies in our individual perceptions, notions, and concepts of art. In other words, the body of ideas and views we each hold about art, and perhaps, our attitudes towards it, due to the influences of our individual ideological orientations. More specifically, these ideological orientations refer to the differences in the perception of art in the African and Western contexts, to which I and my counterpart respectively belong.

In light of the foregoing observations, and also as a working strategy, my art making activities and those of Tish are analyzed in relation to the media and practices associated with them. Also, the analysis is placed within the context of the basic factors influencing each participant's art making activities and experiences. These include the school domain on one hand, and the social, cultural, economic and other environmental factors on the other. To some extent, the discussions are related to each participant's background perceptions of art In addition I try tc provide answers to some pertinent questions raised by my respondent concerning some aspects of my art training.

As has already been intimated, both Tish and I seem to have undergone similar beginnings in terms of each individuals' exposure and motivation to art making activities. Our initial artistic activities and experiences seem to have been dominated by what may be described as a "playway" process. This could be inferred from the way each of us lived and played during our respective childhood

days For instance, while I had to construct my own toys through improvisation from discarded package boxes and other such materials, Tish also adopted similar articles as play objects besides her traditional toys. In much the same vein, my assistance to my "sculptor" uncle with its associated artistic activities and experiences has its equivalence in my counterpart's involvement with her grandparents in baking and in constructing things for their home. My other domestic activities that are artistically inclined, such as weaving mats for fencing the backyard garden and drying farm produce, or doing tie-and-dye with my brother, are also parallel to the carpentry, sewing and other chores in which Tish was involved.

On the other hand, however, whereas my later childhood artistic experiences and further artistic development have been largely influenced by the school domain and almost wholly teacher-directed, the case of Tish is different. A major aspect of her early artistic experiences and later attempts at art making have been a result of self-interest, self-approach, and self-direction from art books in her toy repertoire, in addition to the way she lived and played. This notion is portrayed in her account of her personal artistic development, indicating that she had been involved in more artistic activities at home than at school. This is probably part of the reasons why Tish seems to have found it rather difficult to recall sequentially the art activities in which she has been involved during her pre-university education. Nonetheless, it seems evident that it is her involvement and experience with diverse art materials like cardboard, papier maché and others in

building various structures such as puppets, miniature farms with livestock, farm houses, machinery and so on, that may have led to her ultimate specialization as a multi-media artist.

At the university level where Tish specialized as a multi-media artist, her involvement in different types of arts and crafts including ceramics, mosaics, string art, knitting, macramé, crochet, embroidery and the like, have involved her in working with clay, pebbles, fibres, threads, fabrics, and other materials. These are to a large extent similar to the materials used in my own art making Whereas the fibres stand as basic raw materials for textiles which is my area of specialty, the other aforementioned materials are some of the items for the general art activities in which I have been involved for a greater part of my education through art in Ghana. This is especially true at the basic level and during my first year at the university; and also, in art education studios at the graduate level.

As I have intimated earlier, the main difference between our training profiles lies with what constitutes the definition of the term "art" (the perceptual ideas about art) in the part of the world where each of us has had his or her education in art. In my opinion, this is in turn dependent on the ultimate function (end use) of artifacts in our respective societies. From my African artistic background, for instance, all art objects, whether two or three dimensional in nature, are either "decorative" or "utilitarian". The former term applies to artifacts produced mainly for the purposes of the viewer's admiration, appreciation and aesthetic pleasure As such art within this context has normally been described as "art for it's own

sake", or simply as "art for art's sake". This applies to the "western" concept of art which pertains to the background of Tish. In the utilitarian domain, art combines the appreciation aspects with other life oriented functions, which render it to be described as "art for life's sake". This is the context in which art is viewed in Africa, which forms the basis of my artistic background in Ghana.

It is important to remark that the concept of art in Ghana, as in other African societies, assumes a broad term description as "art for life's sake" as a consequence of how the people there regard art products in relation to life and living. Tish, responding to the art activities constituting my art training in Ghana, has made this observation rightly in her remarks. In this context, the arts are viewed as a necessity, an integral force and a part of living. Thus here, all artifacts have specific and purposeful functions to perform in connection with life and living in society. This is therefore the exact context within which my type of art falls. That, originally, there is no appropriate Ghanaian word to be equated to the word, "art" is a justification for this point. There is need, however, to mention that there are words in the various Ghanaian languages for "design" or "handiwork" or "craftsman".

Considering it in its broad-based context, the term "art for life's sake" may encompass all human history and activities, including the social, cultural, political, and religious realms of life. Also, considering the magnitude of its psychological and emotional effects on society, the concept "art for life's sake", may be described as being anthropological. This therefore makes it clear that the

emphasis on the production of art for utility purposes as has been exemplified by my art training profile, is but a direct stimulation from the idea of wanting to satisfy the social, cultural, psychological, and emotional requirements of the Ghanaian society. Here, art is a holistic term embracing both two and three dimensional artifacts; and these are identified individually as, for example, a painting, graphic art, sculpture, textiles, ceramics, leather art, and others. These are considered as visual representations or constituent parts of the socio-cultural repertoire. Thus in an "unspecialized" society as Ghana where there is no abstract concept of "art" and every art object constitutes an aspect of the livelihood of the people, a clear dichotomy between "art" and "craft" is practically non-existent. All crafts are arts As such, the process for making them are considered as creative activities requiring skill and a sense of aesthetics. Here, the aesthetic qualities of an art object are not only determined by the language of art such as lines, shapes, colour, rhythm, balance, and so on. They are also determined by the philosophical principles that guide the Ghanaian society. Such principles include the ethics and values of the people. Ideally, they are the general ideals and ideas that usually predominate or deeply saturate the consciousness of the members of the society, known in educational terms as "hegemony"

Grundy (1991) defines hegemony as "an organized assemblage of meanings and practices, the central, effective and dominant system of meanings, values, and actions which are lived...[in society]."[3] Thus hegemony may be viewed as being similar to the common sense view of what may be termed as the

ideology of a people. In simpler terms, it refers to the set of ideas, or choices and opinions which dominate the ways of thinking of that group of people, or are commonly shared by them as the things most cherished by the general society. In a nutshell, it implies the dominant way in which members of a particular culture view and experience the world.

In such a highly modernized, advanced, and specialized society as Canada, where Tish has had her art training, the arts are unconcerned with "ritual" or any other purpose. In other words, the arts exist for their own sake, that is, "art for art's sake". This point of view renders art to be defined in a relatively narrower sense, which suggests that art has no other purpose than to be and to provide opportunities for enjoyment and other forms of aesthetic experience. Basically, this experience depicts a special form of feeling or concern that elucidates "taste" in terms of "beauty". More often than not, however, it tends to portray an attitude that is independent of one's own personal interests in an art object, its utility, or its social and cultural ramifications. Thus in the presence of a work of art, a viewer has no higher calling than to open up to those experiences which are offered by the art work itself. An art object is therefore a body of a hidden message or knowledge which is "complete" in itself. The context of the message or knowledge is not pre-defined. Rather, its interpretation depends on the disposition of the viewer and the temporal and experiential context of that unique situation.

From the foregoing, it is quite clear that although my art training profile in

Ghana bears immense similarities to that of my Canadian counterpart in the practical sense, the notions behind the practices are different as a result of our individual background concepts of the term 'art', or what it constitutes in each other's society. In my opinion, however, whether the definition of one's art puts it in the context of "art for life's sake" or "art for art's sake", the one most important requirement is to be able to tell whether one's practices could be classified as, or equated to, art activities. A second point is to be able to tell whether an object or item produced through one's activities could be considered as a work of art or not. Thirdly, whether the item in question should be categorized as a work of "fine" art or "craft".

While it is not within the jurisdiction of this study to clarify what constitutes a fine art work or craft, personal observations have shown that many an artist and art critic has often been faced with the problem of drawing a dichotomy between works of fine art and crafts. Aesthetic judgement, whose principles are the clarification of standards of beauty and excellence in craftsmanship, has therefore often been based on the media and techniques used in making works of art. The utilitarian aspects are frequently ignored whether the objects are "flat" in appearance, or have volume. Through this means, most utilitarian art objects tend to be pushed automatically into the category of crafts. And this is exactly the category to which my own art training seems to belong. My main concern here is that all works of art are either two or three dimensional in appearance Also, all works of art (whether "decorative" or "utilitarian") have the tendency of

performing one function or another towards human satisfaction. Hence, categorizing them into works of "fine" art and crafts on the basis of the "traditional" aesthetic principles ignoring the utility aspect is to use inadequate criterion. Consider, for instance, the problem to be encountered in itemizing into arts and crafts, a tapestry and a collage, both constructed with fibres; or a terra-cotta sculpture figure and a flower pot, both made from clay and given a bisque-firing finish.

As a result of the stated observations, in my opinion it seems no longer sufficient to view or define art in terms of its form material or techniques used to create it. My aim is not to downplay the idea of the fact that differences exist between works of fine art and crafts. What I am trying to suggest is that today's cross-cultural way of life makes it expedient for artists, especially those in the multi-media sector, to begin crossing between conventional art media and those of crafts with attempts at exploring new avenues for tapping into the creative process. It may also be expedient for artists, art educators, curators, art critics, museum educators, and all who deal with art to begin exploring ways and means of embracing this fluidity being proposed. It may suffice for them to examine the new objects, their makers, and marketplace, and propose further aesthetic values that would institute new ways of viewing the "crafts". Perhaps an approach of this nature may help in answering some of the questions as to what should constitute fine art, or crafts, as well as widen the scope of multi-media art.

The major didactic insight I have gained from the ongoing discussions lies

in my awakened awareness of the magnitude of the importance of the social, cultural, and economic contexts and their implications for education. The motivating factor of this personal awareness derives from my recognition of the fact that, while my art activities and experiences seem quite similar to those of Tish, the differences in our socio-cultural backgrounds still reflect in our perceptions about some educational practices. This could be inferred from the way my counterpart has reacted to the idea of selling students' art products to raise funds for my school in Ghana. While such an idea is totally inconceivable in Canada, it is a common practice in most third world countries, even today. It is a way of achieving two important ends through a single means. For instance, on one hand, the art activities provide the learner with knowledge about art materials and tools and their sources in the Ghanaian environment. In addition, they teach the learner the manipulative processes and techniques of the materials, as well as offer him or her psychomotor skills. On the other hand, the product of the learning process after being sold is ploughed back into the school system in the form of learning materials to foster further learning.

Needless to say, the acquisition of these educational materials would have been quite difficult through other means in a developing country like Ghana where the educational requirements often tend to exceed the available resources. Thus a decision by any school authorities to supplement educational grants in such a way is viewed generally as a step in the right direction. Unlike the Canadian student who might view such art activities as "work" (as Tish observes), the

average Ghanaian student seems to be rather content with the situation. He or she is aware of it, understands it, and as such, views it as a personal contribution towards his or her own welfare and educational development. Perhaps, it is for a further development of such activities in Ghanaian schools that in a recent educational reform programme, the government of Ghana decided to make education more vocational oriented, (among other major objectives) as a means of meeting some of the socio-economic needs of the country.

An important pedagogical insight I have gained from this discussion lies in my realization of the role played by the socio-cultural hegemony of a society in shaping teaching and learning in that society. It teaches me that for an effective education to take place, curricula need to be grounded firmly in the philosophical ideology (hegemony) of the society in which learning occurs. In this way, the ideals, or values and norms, choices, opinions, and expectations of the society would be reflected in teaching and learning activities. Underlying this notion is the premise that since ideology provides the basis of the general ideals that predominate the consciousness of society, it is clear that it is those ideals which constitute the principal values and principles that guide or inform the learners' thinking, emotions, behaviours, attitudes, and idea-formation processes. Hence, it is by tapping or drawing on these emotions and values that the affective qualities (subjective qualities) of the learner would be brought to the surface to integrate with, and transform the cognitive knowledge into an authentic one.

McNeil (1977) reflects this idea in what he terms "a confluent curriculum", which he describes as an "add on" curriculum, whereby "the emotional dimensions of the learner are added to conventional subject matter so that there is personal meaning to what is learned."[4] This idea is parallel to the concept of the hidden curriculum and its implications for learning It brings to the attention of the teacher that one of the primary objectives of teaching should be to bring to the surface the learner's personal hidden curriculum. The aim, however, is not to downplay objective knowledge in favour of subjectivity. Rather it would help to link together both objectivity and subjectivity so as to engender in the learner open-mindedness for the reconstruction of knowledge.

Responding to my art experiences, Tish raises a question pertaining to whether or not there was any room for "free expression" during the art activities in which I was involved at school. This question of "free expression", I believe, may have arisen from the personal impressions that my respondent may have obtained from studying my art training, which she describes as "very structured and totally teacher-directed". The question may have originated from a hypothetical assumption that due to its seemingly rigid structure, my art training would not have any room for "thinking and behaving freely" by the learner during the art activities.

The question draws my attention to two important pedagogical issues in art education. The first concerns the "free expression paradigm", a concept which views the learning of art as a total child-centred process that is wholly motivated

by nature. Thus, any intervention by a teacher or parent would disrupt the free flow of the natural instincts in the child that enables him or her to create art. The second issue lies with the idea of the teacher creating a free atmosphere for the learner to work in, the teacher offering guidance to the learner as and when necessary. Thus here, the teacher is the motivator of the child's imaginative and learning tendencies. The teacher may stimulate the child's imagination through practical demonstrations or questioning among other activities. This is to enable the child to develop autonomous ideas and express them freely through his or her work.

I view my art training as being consistent with the latter concept to a large extent. This is because in spite of the seemingly highly structured nature of the activities constituting my art training, their implementation at the classroom level did not involve imposition of ideas by the teacher. Once an activity and its media and tools were introduced and discussed, and its techniques and processes demonstrated, the pupils were left to work on their own. The teacher then became a supervisor and consultant. Whereas some individual pupils often chose to work on their own, group activity was a major element, especially during the "outdoor" art activities at the basic level of my education. By working in the small cooperative teams, the pupils did not only learn to participate in group activities, they also became adept at sharing ideas, respecting each other's views, and learning from each other. This is not to say, however, that group activity is a perfect means of instruction in art, as any teaching method has its own

shortcomings occurring at one instance or another.

From my personal subjective point of view, the idea of "free expression" as raised by Tish has an undertone of the "free expression paradigm" discussed earlier on. In other words, the question tends to have as its term of reference, the "free expression paradigm", rather than a concept of learning occurring under "democratic classroom conditions". While it is not within the scope of this study to analyze any pedagogical principles or theories in art education, this has been found important at this juncture. It is to enable me to share with my respondent some intrinsic pedagogical issues pertaining to "free expression" as a classroom principle. Both of us being currently students of art education, these issues, in my opinion, may have important didactic implications for our studies, as well as our respective teaching activities in the future.

That the organization of the learning activities in certain traditional classrooms often tends to lack freedom for learners to express themselves in accord with their individual interest and drives, is a fact that needs not be overemphasized. For instance, frequently some teachers tend to regard the learner as "an object" rather than "a subject". Implicit in this concept is the notion that the learner is a mere possessor of a consciousness, an empty mind which is passively open to the reception of deposits of information, ideas, attitudes, skills, and behaviours from the teacher. In this view, the teacher is the only thinker and prescriber of ideas for the learner. Most often than not, the principles and practices adopted in the classroom tend to portray the teacher as rather

domineering, an imposter, and at best, a dictator. His or her attitudes and praxis tend to interfere with, rather than foster or promote the learner's ontological and historical vocation to be fully human, a rational being, or wholly himself or herself.

By not being wholly oneself may mean a situation whereby one is deprived of the ability or freedom by unsuspected circumstances to think for oneself, to be authentic, act in one's own right, and to find one's own voice. Freire (1972) views a person in such a situation as having been oppressed He refers to any such situation in which a person objectively hinders another person's pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible being in society as one of oppression. Thus, in effect, a teacher who subjects his or her student to such a situation by virtue of authority or power is an oppressor.

Invariably, oppression in the classroom frequently has the tendency of causing the learner to suffer certain complexes which may become permanently established in his or her innermost being. In the absence of the requisite freedom to think, feel, and act authentically, the mind of the learner becomes alienated from generating autonomous knowledge. He or she feels an irresistible attraction towards the teacher's behaviour by trying to imitate and observe the order which serves the teacher's interests. In effect, the learner's mentality becomes colonized by the teacher.

In light of this context, it is clear that traditional educational practices have often failed to function effectively and efficiently in the development of the mind of the learner by providing him or her with critical and subjective thinking skills for

constructing knowledge. Thus to him or her learning tends to be examination-oriented. Both the teacher and learner thus tend to view examinations as an "end" to knowledge transmission and acquisition. Hence, to the learner, knowledge becomes something to be acquired through memorization and rote learning instead of being internalized, adopted and adapted for purposive and rational or strategic action for life's sake. In brief, the learner is not affected psychologically, emotionally, morally, and creatively by the acquired knowledge Thus far, traditional education has for long only been able to provide the learner with cognitive skills, which form only a third of the basic skills it is purported to offer. The affective and psychomotor (manipulative or practical) domains often tend to be unsuspectedly neglected. In effect, therefore, education fails to meet its basic ideal of developing the learner wholly by training him or her, head, heart, and hands. That is, by providing the learner with the ability to think, express his or her feelings, and behave (act) authentically.

This context therefore suggests that there is need for teachers to gear their classroom practices towards addressing the theory-practice contradictions in education. Ideally, they need to adopt teaching methods that would help in alleviating the teacher-learner contradictions that have frequently plagued many traditional classrooms. This further suggests the need for liberatory educational principles that would emancipate the classrooms from the constraints of the traditional power relationships between the teacher and learners. This means a situation in which power in the classroom is not absolutely owned by the teacher

but is shared between the teacher and learner through dialogue. In a dialcgical method of liberatory education, teaching and learning are based on a participatory format such that both teacher and learner are free to express their thoughts and ideas about the subject matter. This exemplifies "free expression" as a major element in emancipating the classroom from the contradictions in teacher-learner relationships. This unique feature of "free expression", therefore, renders it an important principle for the teaching a' l learning of art.

However, the concept that in art, the child (learner) is himself/herself his/her own teacher as portrayed by the "free expression paradigm" theory, is a questionable pedagogical issue in art education today. For instance, that there should be no room for formal and sequential didactic instruction or intervention in a child's artistic learning process, leaves a number of practical pedagogical oversights that require ratification. This is particulary important if the teaching and learning of art should improve up to the expectations of today's society. It is true that naturally, the child is endowed with inherent active explorative tendencies and growing interests to constantly achieve new structures for understanding the world. However, it should be noted that these inherent traits usually observed in a child are not ends in themselves as they are inadequate for the total development of the child. Rather, they operate as hints that afford the teacher the knowledge of the level at which the child is currently functioning so that lessons can be introduced accordingly. Thus the key to intervention is to provide experiences and stimulations that are related to the child's current level of functioning.

It is evident from both pedagogical and life experiences that no child can successfully develop independent of any influence from the society in which he or she grows, even if the essence of the school and the teachers should be ruled out completely. This therefore suggests that when the implications of the assumptions of the child's inherent traits are applied to education, including art education, a number of principles of educational practice would usually come to light, which would counteract the free expression paradigm as being central to a child's learning process. It should be anticipated that at the end of an educational program, the learner should demonstrate a sense of critical consciousness, imagination, and inventiveness through explorative and creative behaviours. He or she should also exhibit basic life skills as evidence of personal meaningfulness and purposefulness of his or her education. In addition, the learner should be able to apply these learning experiences for personal fulfilment in life, and also, for identifying problems affecting human well-being and growth so as to take action to solve them systematically. It is therefore clear that if this rationale for education is to be met effectively, then, the need for some form of intervention to foster such a development in the learner is inevitable.

Being a phenomenon of the mind, art making is itself a constant problem-solving activity. Apparently, therefore, there may be some advantage in interacting with the students and helping them to identify ways and means of solving basic problems in art, rather than leaving them to their own fate This also does not mean that the teacher should provide "specific answers" for the students,

or impose his or her personal ideas for them for copying or direct imitation. It is expedient at this juncture to stress that the teacher who would provide the task as well as the solution would be doing the students as much disservice as the teacher who sits back and lets his or her students learn through self-direction (without guidance). Such a teaching style, in my opinion, would have the tendency of hampering the flow of the student's personal inborn tendencies to his or her outer-self. Thus the imaginative, creative, innovative, and inventive tendencies upon which the student draws ideas for self-expression, both kinaesthetically and verbally, would be rendered dormant.

What seems needed, therefore, is a teacher who can be sensitive to the individual student's needs, interests, and aspirations. Tish reflects this necessity in her comments in relation to my secondary school art teacher's instrumentality in guiding me on my artistic educational and career development journey. I must intimate that although my other best subject areas were mathematics, geography, biology, and economics when I was in the secondary school, I received no formal guidance from the teachers concerned as to what benefits were to be gained from them in the future. This is not to say that these subjects had no potential future careers for me. What I am trying to point out is that these subjects were taught rather "mechanically" and were not related to actual life situations. Thus the guidance and consent I received from my art teacher in relation to how to attain a career through art invariably became a vital factor that raised my interest in art through the close relationships that later developed between this teacher and I,

and also, my consistent interactions with him that influenced my interest in his personal favourite style of painting (i.e. a pen and wash technique).

This personal experience teaches me that a teacher's ability to recognize students' abilities, interests, and needs is a necessary element in teaching This therefore requires that the teacher should be the type that would provide suggestions and alternate suggestions, and also give encouragement and motivation that would reinforce the students' confidence and thus make them feel that the activities in which they are involved are worthwhile. Such a teaching method is a process which implies the teacher's collaboration with the students in finding appropriate forms relevant to their individual interests, values, and experiences. A practical approach would be to stimulate the individual student's mind so as to make him or her constantly reflect upon, and relate to his or her work. Such a pedagogical approach may provide fertile grounds for fostering and preserving the innate creative and aesthetic impulses of the student, which he or she would carry actively into adulthood. Thus an art classroom principle which would engage the students' interests and drives in such a manner is that which is essential to the "child-centred" approach to art education, which "free expression" should ideally specify.

In today's rapidly changing, complex, and dynamic society, coupled with differences in individual student's interests and belief structures about the world, however, there is hardly any single, discrete and stagnant method of teaching that can provide learners with the means of authenticating knowledge Both

knowledge and society are complex and dynamic, and society's expectations of education are continuously changing It is therefore expedient for teachers to adopt teaching and learning strategies that will show learners:

> ...how to become adept at discerning: [first] what is needed to adapt to and become proficient in a new situation, and [second] how and/or where to go about locating and assessing any needed information."[5]

It is important, therefore, for the teacher to adopt teaching techniques that have the tendency of creating a democratic atmosphere in the classroom. This would enable students to think, feel, and act according to their individual personal interests and drives. Ideally, the principles and practice of teaching and learning adopted in the classroom should be informed by both "practical" and "emancipatory" interests.

The main characteristic feature of the practical interest is a concern for meaningfulness of learning experiences to the learner. It "focuses on strategies that facilitate inquiry"[6] and autonomous learning. It is open-ended such that it assists the learner to generate knowledge reflectively through a personal meaning-making process. Then, this knowledge, in turn, informs an appropriate practical action to be taken in terms of its practical application to life's situations.

The emancipatory interest is interactive oriented. It involves teaching strategies informed by consensus arrived at through practical discourse among the teacher and learner in the consciousness of their common interests and expectations. Emancipatory education is basically concerned with theory-practice relationships. It assumes a "knowledge transformation" position, in which

teaching and learning strategies are geared towards helping the learner to make connections between his or her inner and outer worlds for autonomous meaning-making. This is to render the learner capable of personalizing and/or authenticating the knowledge and other forms of information acquired through the learning process. Thus through this means, the learner would develop not as a passive receiver, but rather as an active "co-creator" of knowledge along with the teacher. Cosgrove (1982) as interpreted by Grundy (1991) refers to this act of learning in which the learner becomes an active participant in the construction of his or her own knowledge as a "negotiated curriculum".

The foregoing context indicates that for a meaningful learning to occur for the generation of personal and authentic knowledge, the learning experience must be meaningful to the learner. For this to occur in a meaningful way, classroom practices should be geared towards helping the learner to develop a sense of personal inquiry and autonomous learning activities, based on the individual learner's personal interests. The conditions under which learning occurs must also be cordial. This entails classroom practices that would portray both teacher and learner as subjects within a democratic atmosphere, where teaching-learning strategies are a matter of negotiation. Grundy in reference to Cosgrove reflects this perspective by explaining that:

> "Negotiating the curriculum involves the development of the teacher's understanding of the learning processes and of how to provide conditions in which learning can occur...thus emancipating classroom practice from the constraints of traditional power relationships, demands prudence on the part of the practitioner.

> Prudence is not simply an individual attribute. It is developed in conjunction with others. Sometimes this development occurs through confrontation and the necessity to justify action to others...At other times it develops through the collegial support of others for our actions within groups organized to facilitate enlightenment and action."[7]

Freire (1972) reflects the foregoing context in his concept of principles and practices of "Critical Pedagogy and Liberatory Education". He proposes the "problem-posing" (i.e. problem-solving or brain-storming) concept of education to illustrate some ideal ways of sharing knowledge between a teacher and his or her student in the classroom, which are consistent with principles of emancipatory education.

This concept of education negates the idea of projecting an absolute ignorance onto students by a teacher. Under the problem-posing concept, education and knowledge are viewed as processes of inquiry involving both teacher and learner. Stated differently, from the outset the teacher needs to be an empathetic type of educator who sees "eye-to-eye" with the learner. He or she should also be the revolutionary type whose attitudes entail reconciling the poles of the teacher-learner contradictions, so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. The teacher's efforts should be imbued with a profound trust in the potential thinking, imaginative and creative power of the learner. For these reasons, the teacher's efforts should not isolate those of the learner. The two should coincide so that both teacher and learner would engage in critical acts of inquiry in a problem-solving way.

This suggests a mutual teacher-learner relationship in which the teacher's

thinking is authenticated by the learner's. In this way subordination of the learner to the teacher would be negated giving way to dialogical relations between the two. This implies that both teacher and learner should cooperate in perceiving the same subject matter with a quest for mutual knowledge. Thus through such teacher-learner dialogue and exchange of ideas, the issue of the "teacher-of-the-students" and the "students-of-the-teacher" would cease to exist. The teacher should not be merely "the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with his students, who in turn, while being taught also teach."[8] As such, both teacher and learner would become jointly responsible for a learning process from which both would benefit. Ideally, a teaching-learning process consisting basically in acts of inquiry, and not transferrals of information, is that which may be termed "critical pedagogy" or "emancipatory" or "liberatory education".

The following are some suggested strategies that may be useful to the teacher in fostering diverse abilities of learners in a democratic or emancipated classroom. These strategies are consistent with Stainback et al's (1992) concept of the "inclusive classroom", the co-authors' version of a democratic classroom.

Cooperative learning should be encouraged by "setting up flexible learning objectives" to give learners the freedom to share ideas in the classroom. This should be organized towards a "holistic, constructivistic perspective"[9], by helping to alleviate apathy on the part of the learner. It should make learning interesting and meaningful for all students and encourage them to actively participate in class activities. It is important for the teacher to take a critical look at the needs

of each learner. "Although the basic educational goals for all students may remain the same, the specific curricular learning objectives may be individualized in some instances to fit the unique needs, skills, interests, and abilities of students"[10]. Learners with common, identical, or similar interests may be grouped together to share ideas and help each other in finding answers to problems being posed by a cognitive object being studied or observed.

The teacher may encourage learners to keep personal journals in which to log and record particular learning activities and experiences that have been meaningful and purposeful to them; or react to their own, or their peers' works. The ways in which they pursue and achieve their learning objectives should also be noted. Stainback and co-authors refer to such a practice as 'activity adaptation and peer involvement". This idea is particularly important in the teaching and learning of art. It is consistent with the long-established portfolio tradition in the visual arts. Wolf (1988) suggests three methods by which students of art could be assisted in building and using personal portfolios of works of art in meaningful ways for further artistic developments. First, students can record "the 'biography' of a work from its initial sketch to finished piece." This implies that in addition to a final work, students should save all doodles and sketches from which that particular work has been developed. These would collectively yield the biography of the individual finished work. Second, students can be helped to make "a developmental sequence based on several such biographies". Third, students can be asked to reflect on the course" of their works[11].

Techniques such as personal reflective journal writing and reacting to the works of other student peers may form part of the learning repertoire in art classrooms

For Wolf, the portfolio process "indexes not just the progression in fixed pieces," but also helps the students in creating detailed accounts of their progress and long-term artistic developments. Well developed, a portfolio might help the student (artist) to see processes and techniques or styles (in the sketches) that may be interesting, but which may be invisible in the finished work. Thus by reorganizing and integrating such techniques in his or her work, the student might improve upon the work very considerably. As a source of reference, a student's portfolio may provide a teacher with concise information about the progress of development of that particular student and the level at which he or she is currently functioning. Thus students' portfolios would serve as a basis for a teacher in planning future learning activities for the students in question

In a multi-cultural society, a teacher may at times face difficulties in administering and/or adapting a general art education curriculum to meet all students' needs. Where this occurs, it may be expedient for the teacher to adopt a "team approach" to teaching. Here, the teacher may involve parents, communication experts, educational psychologists and therapists, the learner's peers, or local craftsmen as resource personnel. This approach is especially important in a non-specialized society like Ghana where art is very broadly defined. Functional skills, (i.e. traditional life skills), because of their practical utility for students, may be adopted and adapted in the art classroom to bring real

life situations into school learning activities. "Students who require practical opportunities to learn practical living, working and social skills can be provided guidance and opportunities to do so".[12]

In summary, teachers should create an atmosphere conducive for free expression of ideas and collaborative learning by students. For learning to become a collaborative and emancipatory act, classroom principles should be geared towards:

- developing the critical consciousness of the learner as a means of uncovering his or her hidden curriculum;
- curriculum negotiation accords with the democratic and emancipatory principle that "learners should have the democratic right to help determine the activities in which they will participate"[13];
- making learners reflect upon their own history for the purpose of self-discovery and discerning how to make learning meaningful and purposeful to themselves.

The ongoing context suggests that in all classroom activities the teacher should play the role of a consultant, advisor, guidance counsellor, facilitator, and resource person or subject specialist, enabling the students to discover themselves. Grey (1992) reflects this idea by identifying three styles or modes of art teaching. He observes that in the classroom the art teacher usually functions as "conductor", "team captain", or "consultant".

As a conductor, the teacher offers a

> "formal rhetorical-expository presentation of background information, rationale, major points, skill demonstration, precisely timed productive activities, evaluation, review and connections to future activity."[14]

The teacher then conducts and controls events in the classroom by monitoring the students' works, interacting with the students, and offering them feedback on individual basis.

As a team captain, the teacher begins by making explicit his or her objectives and strategies according to what is to be done. After brief overviews of expectations, the teacher moves from student to student assisting and encouraging them; and also helping them to review the contents of their sketchbook journals. In this way, as could be inferred from Grey's concept, the teacher's role could be likened to a coach, the students being his or her team members.

As a consultant, the teacher directs students' attention to the relevant details of the process of the on-going project to be followed by every student. While the students work, the teacher assumes the position of a consultant offering advice and directions or responding to the students on a one-to-one basis according to their individual questions and requests or needs

In all the three modes or styles of teaching identified above, the art teacher can be viewed as playing the role of a technical advisor, critic, counsellor, and monitor. "The common and dominant art teaching dynamic [also] appears to be the consequence of teacher responsiveness according to variable student

needs".[15]

One other important insight that I have acquired from this study lies in my recognition that while artistry in most individuals often begins at early childhood, in certain individuals it may not begin until adulthood but may continue for life. This shows, therefore, that to say that the artistic development in an individual comes to a stop on the individual's attainment of adulthood as purport some theories in art education, is to make an over-generalized assertion. I say this in agreement with Tish in her doubt of the validity of the theoretical concept under discussion. Experience shows that it is rather at the stage of adulthood that the individual can take an actual decision to pursue art as a career if he or she so wishes. Thus, with good intentions and proper focus, coupled with the adult individuals' broad knowledge about the "world" (including sources of art materials), such an individual can develop skills and spontaneity in art making just like any other artist.

This context brings to my awareness that educational theories (concepts and ideas expressed in books) need not be taken into possession by teachers as specified final authorities. Rather, they should be regarded as provisional specifications that require to be tested in actual practice. According to Stenhouse (1975), such proposals claim to be intelligent rather than correct." Thus they invite "critical testing rather than acceptance."[16] To the teacher, therefore, all educational ideas should be translated into "hypotheses" testable in classroom practice. The ideal is that the uniqueness of each school setting or classroom

situation implies that any educational proposal should be well interpreted, tested, verified, and adapted by each teacher in his or her classroom. Stated differently, it is expedient for teachers to adopt and utilize such educational proposals in their personal research and development programs. Through such means, I believe, teachers would improve their understanding of their work, each of them bettering his or her teaching repertoire.

Finally, what I have learned in the general point of view from this study is that interactions among teachers in relation to their profession can be a potential source for their own professional growth. This idea is deduced from my personal impressions gained through interacting with Tish in this study. Being in a unique profession, the behaviour and thinking of teachers are steered by a set of beliefs and values that underpin their practice. Thus teacher interactions can be a way of revealing experiences, events, and material in the form of intuitive knowledge and diverse belief structures purporting to be educational. Because teachers' professional development is largely dependent on these values and belief structures, opportunities to make them accessible for discussion would yield immense implications for education. For instance, the teacher's consistent awareness of the principles and values of teaching would render them to become part of his or her reflexive process. As such, the teacher would attain a higher level of congruence between espoused theories about the principles of teaching and actual classroom practice. Thus the principles and practice of teaching would become more meaningful to the teacher. The ideal here is that as potential

sources of knowledge about classroom practice, teacher's experiences, values, and belief structures can be adopted and utilized in imaginative and productive ways to improve classroom processes.

ENDNOTES

[1]Stanley Horner, Varieties of Museum Experience, Unpublished paper, Concordia University (1986) 1 of unpaged excerpts.

[2]Ibid., 3 of unpaged excerpts.

[3]Shirley Grundy, Curriculum: Product or Praxis, (Mellksham, Wiltshire, Redwood Press Limited, 1991), 109.

[4]John D. McNeil, Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction, (Boston, Little, Brown & Company Ltd., 1977), 4.

[5]William Stainback, et al., Curriculum Considerations in Inclusive Classrooms, (Baltimore: P.H. Brooks Publishing Co., 1992), 69.

[6]John P. Miller and Wayne Seller, Curriculum: Perspectives and Practice, (New York & London: Longman, 1985), 12.

[7]Shirley Grundy, op. cit., 135 and 138.

[8]Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972), 153.

[9]William Stainback, et al., op. cit., 72.

[10]R. Villa and J. Thousand (1988) in Wiiliam Stainback, et al., op. cit., 72.

[11]Dennie Wolf, Artistic Learning: What and Where Is It?, Journal of Aesthetic Education, Vol. 22, No. 1, (Spring, 1988), 153.

[12]William Stainback, et al., op. cit., 78-79.

[13]S. Cosgrove (1982) in Shirley Grundy, op. cit., 138.

[14]James U. Grey, An Art Teacher is an Art Teacher.. Fortunately!, Art Education: The Journal of the National Art Education Association, Vol. 45, No. 4 (July, 1992), 20.

[15]Ibid, 21.

[16]L. Stenhouse, An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development, (London: Heinemann, 1975), 142-143.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Tish,

As part of my thesis research in Art Education, I am undertaking a study into the historical perspectives of individual persons' artistic developments under the theme: "Biographies of Two Individuals' Artistic Development: A Comparison".

The research question: "What can Graduate Art Education Students from two different countries, namely Canada and Ghana, learn from each other's artistic experiences?" *has been posed as the means of soliciting information for the study. I would therefore be grateful to share your artistic experiences having been an art teacher and graduate student of art education.*

The following questionnaire has been drawn up to solicit your kind contribution to this research project. Your indulgence is craved to respond to the questions as candidly as possible. Your responses and results of this study would be used for educational purposes only, including possible publication and presentation to academic and professional groups.

I wish to inform you that you will be named or identified in the written transcript of this interview, and in the subsequent analysis or publication of the study results.

Thank you in anticipation.

_____

Robert Ayiku

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW - PHASE ONE

1. In what province of Canada did you have your school education?

2. At what stage, grade, or level of your educational career were you introduced to art making?

3. What was your age then?

4. If your introduction to art making did not take place at school, then would please describe how it came about?

5. At what stage, grade, or level in your student career (life) did your commitment to art as a career choice begin?

6. What factors or events created and sustained your interest in art as a career?

7. In what area(s) of art did you finally specialize?

8. Based on your personal recollections, please give a biography (sequential story) of the various school art activities leading to your development as an artist/art teacher. (Note: you may base your recollections on grade (class) levels; or the levels of school system(s) through which you went.)

   - or -

   Based on your personal recollections would you please highlight the key moments of your art experiences that have led to your current artistic development.

9. Other comments (if any)? For instance, considering your personal artistic experiences and development, how far do you relate these experiences to the idea of some art educators that the spontaneity in creative activity and artistic development in the individual come to an end when he/she enters adulthood?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW - PHASE TWO

1. Having studied my art training profile in Ghana, what are your views, impressions, and/or opinions about it in relation to your own art training in Canada?

2. As a student of art education, and/or an art educator, what insights do you gain from studying my art training and/or artistic experiences in Ghana?

3. Other comments, if any?