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AN INVOCATION TO MONA
RELIGION AND LEARNING
AN ALCHEMISTS DREAM

Nancy Davina Herbert

A THESIS
in
The Department
of
Fine Arts

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Art Education at
Sir George Williams University
Montreal, Canada

January, 1974

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1974

ABSTRACT

PROJECT

ART OBJECT - BOX

Contents:

MONA - an illustrated book

Slides - tape - animated film

TO ANNE PRESENT AT CERRIDWENS CAULDRON

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A PERSONAL TESTAMENT

Within all of us there is a powerful force which enables us to distil from life an elixir. This life-power transmutes 'lead to gold' whilst elevating the spirit of man. Let no man brake this life-force in another for then this unique elixir will dissipate and be lost to all humanity.

I bring you these offerings inside my box tape manuscript illustrated book slides animated film which I believe express new truths. I do not reject the past but encompass it with my knowledge of Christianity Greek myth Welsh myth alchemy art. Treasuring the old nurturing the new. By so doing I have wanted to transcend time place and space.

In Canadian life I have discovered an explosive energy with its particular qualities which when combined with my own spirit produced a new art form. This my own unique form has appeared through sincerity of feeling and meaningful decision-making. Oftentimes defying disapproval defying success defying failure. Awareness and understanding generated by the process and the product created a personal freedom and independence within my being as I see it this essence of

freedom has the necessary attributes to pervade all parts of society - even to the whole universe. This freedom speaks up does not enjoy fools gladly is no coward.

Without this direct touch of freedom society is a timid mole. I shall speak now more specifically of problems in Education. The educator has direct experience of failures in teaching inadequate support from his community lack of funds and all the rest. On the other hand we know of talented Canadian youths and their eagerness to venture into the unknown. Educators do care be assured yet political altercations on education mirror the purposelessness of a nationwide policy ignoring the realities of a contemporary world.

The real issues are practical ones using science effectively in the cause of human welfare dealing with the aggressive the hungry the ignorant building new schools for human beings and housing the impoverished. However in the race to overtake countries governed by other ideologies money has been spent to produce the instant scientist and technologist with little thought given to the 'frivolous arts and humanities'. We have wasted money on luxuries and have disregarded the soul of man we have not challenged his initiative nor have we challenged his will to create. In other

words we have ignored the measure of man the common denominator.

Our contemporary society demands the 'whole man' the integrated in all disciplines. Imagination intuition insight are not coveted by poet and painter alone. They are also necessary to engineer and scientist. Impulses to create the meaningful from the meaningless the meaningless from the meaningful are spiritual in origin and so inhabit all manner of men.

We all know that science has revolutionized our twentieth century world. We all know the imaginative scientist is called upon to cope with a gargantuan industrialized world-society but he must never forget the heartbeat of the common man. The aim of all those in the field of education must therefore be to elevate the system so that it is certain the enjoyment of both arts and sciences will reach student and teacher alike. They can then become involved in and 'act out' aesthetic moral and social issues.

Yet it has never failed to astonish me that in this age of psychological enlightenment there has also been a surfeit of understanding in the field of education in fact it seems that psychology has cast the learner rudderless into

a broiling whirlpool. Often, ~~the teacher finds~~ that those who are taught to be analytical and critical do not necessarily act on their own theories. Rarely does the young critic who demands guidance in authority and intellectual discipline grant his superiors the right to their own opinions. In many instances we witness emotional dysentery in the young who have had to make their own decisions without the help of wisdom and experience to back them up.

It was only the other day I heard a radio discussion in which students lamented the lack of tension lack of authority the overly-understanding teacher the boring vacuum is here to stay they said. This is the same boredom perpetuated by the superior human being who gazes disdainfully at mass culture mass education. Here then we have another dilemma midst modern art enlightened psychology and enlightened education.

How does the Art Educator fare in this turmoil of ennui in our complex haphazard society. Certainly he must stand up to the truth that art is not the panacea some pretend it is. Nevertheless he must stand firm in the belief that the visual arts (process and product) contain a body of knowledge and understanding (literacy and grammar) which

provides for a unique way of thinking seeing and feeling. Furthermore this unique way of thinking seeing and feeling helps in understanding at an elevated level other disciplines.

The Art Educator concerns himself and involves his students with the philosophy politics economics history and science of that world which supports or rejects the cultural values most dear to him. He does well to shoulder those responsibilities which encourage action through the sensibilities of art. Making visible the good and bad the true and false the beautiful and ugly. In the meantime the goddess waits quietly demanding nothing silently stretching out to touch all men with equanimity. She is proud but not puffed up. I am telling you this so that you will recognize her when you see her.

As educators our main responsibility - after we have discovered within ourselves a set of values which helps us find our own way - is to see that the young discover a philosophy by which they can live and encourage them find a personal identity. Thus we enable them to penetrate the depths of consciousness and unconsciousness and motivate them towards a spontaneity of new insight which develops a meaningful state

of inquiry. The student will then complete his own process.

There are dangers within our complex society and educational system of which the teacher must be fully aware.

He must be capable of transcending the organized bigotry in the educational system and be perceptive to the difficulties the young have to face. It is difficult for a student to judge between the credible lie, sophistry and the truth. It is difficult for the vulnerable to affirm and reaffirm moral courage and stand by personal conclusions when he is constantly threatened by group hysteria. Yet we all reserve the right in a democracy to make our own mistakes, our own decisions, our own discoveries. At the core of all moral-conscience is that privacy which when threatened by outside forces can cause a disintegration of the personality. - on the other hand the challenge may lead the individual into self-revelation through standing up for his own values. Only now does that long spiritual quest begin. The school a microcosm of the democratic society in which we live selects experiences to teach those basic values concerned with individual freedoms which are transmitted from one generation unto another.

We want our children to have a feeling of purpose, to be capable of joy and dignity to be just, honest, sympa-

thetic and generous towards other cultures different from their own to be sensitive to beauty and ugliness to have a wealth of knowledge and understanding capable of emotion and logic. In other words aware of a spiritual quest into the labyrinth through the double task of learning something which will enrichen the individual and enrichen society.

It would be foolish to suggest that the university is the only establishment which teaches the principles that bring about these desired qualities. Values and principles are learned consciously and unconsciously - by direct and indirect influences of employers friends neighbours parents teachers and relatives. that is by the infinitely specific and infinitely general things of life. True freedom is obtained by learning to feel free. We learn what art is by a personal response to the creative act and to the art object. When the small child explores clay dances a jig hums a tune learns to read fights with a friend he is a maker. Only then begins the integration of body and mind for the child learns the disciplines of the maker-artist by becoming one himself. Only after the revelation of the art experience is gained can we discuss that experience honestly and then of course the usefulness of the discussion is only important

when we know this will lead to new experiences and insights.

It seems most obvious to me that art can only be taught -
learned if those who are concerned in the teaching-learning
process are themselves actively concerned in the making of an
art object. You see performance helps - for we all recreate
our practical experiences when we draw analogies twixt those
selfsame practical experiences and the SYMBOLIC EXPERIENCES
encompassed by the work of art.

I have served my apprenticeship. I have learned to
reproduce the world accurately to create order on my canvas
to express my emotions even to create my own world of fantasy.

Suspend your disbelief awhile and fly away with me then
to a dream place

a place unreal to things unreal

but this place is real these things exist. Blue clouds
are there green frost on the pane red face in the fire.
gray hand in the cracks yellow finger in marble. Animals
change upside down inside out into the strangest of men
he speaks my machine - cries when he's in pain brick flies
through kite I see through the concrete curtain touch my
flying rocks when I think - you see my thoughts. Men and
mountains are my brothers.

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I must away again to make my box in which I shall place my elixir tape manuscript illustrated book slides animated film. This is my magic world. Wherein my heart beats in unison with the universe. This is not an unusual experience. I have heard of it happen to all manner of men. For me the most vivid of all these experiences was when I suddenly came upon a glorious knot inside the 'Big Tent' which I was making at that time. The senses were filled with incredible colour line shape form texture until nothing was there anymore. - oblivion. I had become one with the cosmos where infinite sky infinite sea meet and mingle with the spirit of man.

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