



*"...The line that  
submission  
to*

*Elements of the collage from the National Gallery of Art*

*separates ultimately connects  
to mastery, event to sign, experience  
curriculum, & self to other..."*



*Source: André Willy*

## *The Line Is Drawn*

MADELEINE R. GRUMET

The things of art stand away from the world that surrounds them. The text is, literally, bound; the painting framed. The play ends to applause. The dance ceases. The sweep of marble reaches just so far. Whether the boundaries are the definitive dramatic dimensions prescribed in Aristotle's *Poetics*, or the problem to be solved in a performance piece from the 1970s, somewhere in space and time the line is drawn.

Because the things of art have form, they invite perception and can be described. Because the things of art are deliberately bounded in space and time, they are set off from the tools of trade, the bird's song, the neighbor's complaint, and the funeral cortege. Anthropologists, philosophers, and art critics regularly inspect the boundary that distinguishes art from life, seeking to understand them both. They examine the objects that fall to either side of the line as well as the allegiances and manners of those who identify with each territory. They are most intrigued when the border drawn between art and life, due to frequent or infrequent crossings, falls into disrepair, requiring negotiation, judgment, and specification. The art of teaching invites this inspection of its boundaries and territory, for if teaching is an aesthetic experience, it is also a form of labor, and an accommodation to bureaucracy. It is both subject to and extends social control.

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***"Yet when we summon women to adopt a form of practice that is aesthetic, we find that the workplace replicates those structures in domesticity and in female identity that repudiate freedom and action."***

The school day with its lessons and communal rituals, costumes, flags, and *dramatis personae* seems to move to the pulse of aesthetic time and to fill the frame of aesthetic space. Curriculum is, after all, artifice, deliberately designed to direct attention, provoke response, and express value; it reorders experience so as to make it accessible to perception and reflection. The study of life in schools draws upon aesthetic theory to reveal the essence of educational experience and to illuminate the relation of curriculum to the rhythms of history and biography and to the lived spaces of home, factory, and church.

None of us, neither teacher nor artist, dwells on one side of the line or the other. Even though aesthetic objects and aesthetic experience are spread out on the other side of the boundary from the places where money, supper, and trouble are made, the artist regularly passes back and forth between the actual and the possible, and we are, all of us, commuters.

If I am a teacher, I rise early. It may still be dark. I check to see if my children are up. I made their lunches last night. My oldest can't find her shoes. My youngest worries that I will forget to sign her permission slip for the field trip. I worry that I will dash out of the house and leave the stencil that I need for my second period class in the typewriter. Maybe it will be light when I get to school. Maybe there will be no homeroom announcements and I can slip out to run the stencil off. Maybe there will be a fire drill and second period will self-destruct. Maybe the entire morning will be drenched in bleary anxiety, filtered through chalk dust, recorded only in the incomplete circles my coffee cup leaves on the cover of my grade book. Or maybe the winter sun will shine with a summer's heat and on the very day that we are reading Frost, the world will exhibit its essential para-

dox in mud and snow and they will feel metaphor seep through the soles of their shoes and know it from the ground up.

The point is that to be an artist is to perpetually negotiate the boundary that separates aesthetic from mundane experience. The degree to which the crossing is difficult or the voyager suspect varies with the values of a culture, its conception of work, community, nature, gender, and family. I want to explore what it means to take up teaching as an art at this place and at this time. For some years I have relied upon aesthetic forms to study educational experience. I have used autobiography to disclose the student's understanding of education, scanning her narrative for point of view, for a logic of action, a theory of cognition, for the detail that suggests motives hardly whispered in the text. I have employed theater to portray the public events that curriculum becomes, the shifting status of actors and audience, the relation of intention to improvisation, or text to action.



A metaphor for educational experience will illuminate some aspects of educational practice and leave others in shadows. A metaphor will not only influence what is described; it will also influence the form the description takes, its knowledge claims, and the response of those who attend to it. The selection of these metaphors for educational experience combines observation with hope. They serve as emblems for a good deal of educational practice while providing an ideal toward which that practice might move.

I am suggesting that a metaphor for schooling can function both as a model for as well as of what it describes. Clifford Geertz has maintained that religion functions in this way; it is drawn from our multitudinous and diverse experiences in everyday life while it simultaneously shapes our perceptions and interpretations of those experiences.<sup>1</sup>

Now it is not obvious what it is we are talking about when we refer to aesthetic experience as a metaphor for education. Arguments about what is beauty, about the relationship between art and reality are threaded through the recorded history of human thought. The following propositions do not exhaust the definition of aesthetic experience. Drawn from the philosophical writings of Johan Huizinga, Suzanne Langer, F. David Martin, and Herbert Marcuse, these statements address those features of aesthetic experience that I find most pertinent to teaching.<sup>2</sup> They concern form: its relation to the fluidity of experience and to the community of persons who create, perceive, and respond to it.

1. Participation in aesthetic experience is voluntary.
2. Aesthetic experience is bounded in time and space.
3. Aesthetic experience is not subordinated to instrumental purposes.

4. Aesthetic forms express knowledge about feeling.

5. Aesthetic forms express an implicit acquiescence or resistance to social and political conventions.

6. The meaning of aesthetic forms is constituted in the dialogue that takes place between the artist's work and its audience.

It is necessary to provide some conceptual skeleton for the discussion that follows, and for the past few years it has been very necessary to identify the assumptions and values of aesthetics in order to articulate an alternate theory of learning and instruction and to defend it against behaviorist and technical approaches to schooling. Even if we could, with some certainty, outline the elements of some ideal conception of aesthetic form, practice, or experience, we could never provide a portrait of the ideal artist. Who would be our model? There are, after all, only real artists and real teachers. We need to be reminded that the real artists and the real teachers who created and distributed the symbolic codes that constitute the culture of this nation were hardly the expressive individualistic revolutionaries whom we associate with contemporary art. I have gathered some of their history so that we may understand the traditions that link their work to ours, and I will turn to the feminist art of Judy Chicago to show how women artists have used that understanding to transform the conditions and possibilities of their own work.

The artist is a worker, a parent. She pays rent, owes a letter to a friend in Denver, and yearns for ripe peaches in February. What I wish to explore in this essay are the conditions and traditions of teaching and the degree to which they support practice that we would designate as aesthetic. I believe that to adopt the stance of the artist is to challenge the taken-for-granted values and culture

that one shares with others. Because most of the people who teach our children in the public schools are women, we must ask whether there are particular conditions surrounding women's lives that will influence our capacity to take up and live out an aesthetic approach to our work in the classroom. I want to ascertain what it is that we are asking a teacher to do when we exhort her to see teaching as an art. I want to discover what is possible in a world of stencils, permission slips, and revelations that glimmer in pools of melting snow and mud.

#### **The Subordination of Art to the Cult of Nature**

It is the function of art to reorganize experience so it is perceived freshly. At the very least, the painting, the poem,

***"It is the function of art to reorganize experience so it is perceived freshly."***

or the play cleanses a familiar scene, washing away the film of habit and dust collected over time so that it is seen anew. When it is most radical, the work of art simultaneously draws the viewer to it, engaging expectations, memories, recognitions, and then interrupts the viewer's customary response, contradicting expectations with new possibilities, violating memories, displacing recognition with estrangement.

The distinction between art and craft rests on this process of estrangement. For the object that is contained within the category of craft is destined for daily use and intended to enhance the common order, not to disrupt it. It is only with the passage of time that the works of craft achieve the function of cultural commentary, when the balance and economy that sustain daily life have changed sufficiently for the object whose form has expressed yesterday's social order to achieve the distance needed for critique. If teachers have often found themselves caught within the conventional confines of craft, artists have too.

Neil Harris' history of the American artist from colonial times to the Civil War reveals a culture dominated by craft rather than art, and we can find very little evidence of the independence and expressiveness that we associate with art in Harris' chronicle.<sup>3</sup> Colonials, Harris argues, associated art with the abuses of nobility, and they spurned the signs of vanity and despotism associated with a greedy monarchy and church. Harris gives even greater weight to the colonial perception that government was, itself, artifice. Madison and Franklin maintained that when the forms of government are imposed or fail to express the true and constant character of the people, they must inevitably falter. So, Harris argues, a certain suspicion of form accompanied the birth of a national self-consciousness that repudi-

ated artifice in favor of nature. If we agree that it is an essential property of art to challenge convention, then in a new country with few conventions, and in a nation consciously repudiating the conventional religious and class structures of European traditions, the artist is hard pressed to find a culture to counter. Furthermore, aesthetic activity was seen as a waste of time in a new society dedicated to mobility, physical effort, and productivity.

Harris suggests that it was the project to develop a national ethos and character that dominated the artists of the 18th and early 19th centuries, for if artistic forms expressed variety, in portraits, historical renderings of the war for independence, or landscapes, they rarely expressed dissent.<sup>4</sup> It was this fear of divisiveness that dominated the school controversies of the early 1800s as well. While education in the colonies had been dominated by the Church, it was Horace Mann's support for "neutralism," secular moral instruction, that prevailed in the common schools after the turn of the century. This movement to forge a common culture through the education of the young echoed architecture's readiness to provide a secular and common imagery for the new nation by adapting classical Greek designs to public buildings.

An avowed preference for nature over culture was accentuated when artists, teachers, and clergy joined together to condemn industrial and urban development. On canvas, in classrooms, and in churches they celebrated nature and grieved for our pastoral origins and lost innocence. Life in the growing manufacturing centers horrified both the religious conservatives and the transcendentalist avant-garde bringing about what Harris describes as an unlikely coalition that deplored what it considered to be the materialism, decadence, and disorder of city life. The transcendentalists praised nature as the visible expression of universal morality:

"The universal soul is *the* alone creator of the useful and the beautiful, the individual must be submitted to the universal mind." . . . The power of nature "predominates over the human will in all works of even the fine arts. . . . Nature paints the best part of the picture; carves the best part of the statue; builds the best part of the house." The artist who would be great must "disindividualize himself, and be a man of no party, and no manner, and no age . . . an organ through which the universal mind acts."<sup>5</sup>

Harris tells us that there were few paintings of American city life before



the Civil War. Similarly, artists were summoned to provide an antidote to the disorder of cities by providing works that would tame the city mobs as the palaces and museums of Europe were thought to have cultivated and tranquilized the citizens of Florence, London, and Paris. Sentimental, nationalistic, and supported both monetarily and intellectually, artists were promoted by the educated middle and upper classes to provide the imagery that would facilitate social control of urban workers.

#### The Subordination of Teaching to the Cult of Motherhood

It is during this era of industrialization that women, displaced from homes that were no longer centers of economic productivity, sought employment in the common schools. Underpaid, constrained from marrying, poorly prepared to face the chaos and harsh discipline of the urban classroom or the isolation of the rural schoolhouse, young women poured into the common schools when their male counterparts turned away from teaching to positions in the new industrial economy, and when the classroom, the mill, and domestic service were the only options available to a woman who wished employment. Although teaching provided one of the few ways that women could see themselves as participants in the world outside the home, the rationale for their presence in the classroom replicated the sentimental rhetoric of child nurturance that was being heaped on motherhood. Transformed from a producer of commodities to a consumer, bearing the children that prosperity invited, in homes bereft of fathers and sons drawn into the factories, mothers were trapped and isolated in childcare.<sup>6</sup> Their daughters who entered teaching to flee a suffocating

domesticity were absorbed by the institutional paternalism that substituted the discipline of the state, of the school day, its language, rituals, and coercion for the moral responsibility of the family. Women were not asked to create this moral leadership in either the home or the school, but they were expected to be the medium through which the laws, rules, language, and order of the father, the principal, the employer were communicated to the child. Their own passivity was to provide the model of obedience for the young to emulate.

What the society denied to the women of the 19th century was a vigorous, active motherhood. With one hand it took away the men and the children, shunting the men into the factories and the children into the schools, and with the other it bestowed the cult of motherhood, replete with a rhetoric of false praise. In her foreword to Froebel's collection of instructive songs and games, entitled *Mother Play and Nursery Songs*, Elizabeth Peabody (Horace Mann's sister-in-law) glorified submissiveness in this passage:

The only perfect guardian and cherisher of free self-activity is the mother's love, who respects it in her own child by an instinct deeper than all thought, restraining her own self-will and calling out a voluntary obedience (the only obedience worthy of the name) because it proceeds from hearts that "the forms of young imagination have kept pure."<sup>7</sup>

Mother and child would form the perfect vessel. Into the constricted routine of the mother's domestic isolation would be poured the clear fluid of the child's inexperience. The education for this cult of motherhood required mastery of self-denial as this excerpt from the journal of ten-year-old Louisa May Alcott indicates:

### A Sample of Our Lessons

"What virtues do you wish more of?" asks Mr. L.

I answer:

Patience,	Love,	Silence,
Obedience,	Generosity,	Perseverance,
Industry,	Respect,	Self-denial.
"What vices less of?"		
Idleness,	Wilfulness,	Vanity,
Impatience,	Impudence,	Pride,
Selfishness,	Activity,	Love of cats. <sup>8</sup>

This sentimentalism, this rhetorically inflated and practically deflated function of mothering, was not an isolated phenomenon. It accompanied the concentration of population in urban centers and the complexity and the confusion that these pluralistic cities brought to families who had moved there either from European villages or from small towns and farms of rural America. Philippe Ariès has argued that the concept of childhood itself was drawn from the nostalgia and resistance to urban life that had developed in Europe by the 17th century.<sup>9</sup> Bernard Wishy's study of the child nurture literature of the 19th century makes the similar claim that, as Americans surrendered the ordered and familiar ways of rural life, they projected their yearning for lost innocence onto their children and onto the women who would care for them.<sup>10</sup> The profound rupture created by the shift from farm to city was never mended, nor was it left behind or outgrown. It too became part of urban life, glimpsed in the growing schism between public and private, work and home, men and women, adults and children. Aesthetic sensibility, like child nurturance, was at first associated with the pastoral childhood of the nation as the line was drawn between those who produced the culture

and those who received it and rationalized it. Working men were on one side of the line; women, children, artists, and teachers on the other. As we will see, it was only the artists who were able to give expression to the view of society that they developed from their side of the divide. Women and children subordinated to the family and the school remained muted in the sentimental images of their vulnerability, and teachers have yet to figure out which side of the line they are on.

The contradictions implicit in this image of the ideal woman and the ideal mother were extended into the training and work of the ideal teacher. The intimacy, spirituality, and the innocence that teachers and students were to inherit from the mother-child bond—the prototype for their relationship—collapsed into strategies for control. The ideal teacher was one who could control the children and be controlled by her superiors. In 1867, a visitor to Boston's Emerson school noted its exemplary order: "Every pupil appears to be in anxious waiting for the word of the teacher, and when issued, it is promptly obeyed by the class. The movements and utterances of the class are as nearly simultaneous and similar as they can be."<sup>11</sup> Compliance was the key to success for teachers as well as for students, as this report of the Boston School Committee in 1841 attests: "They [female teachers] are less intent on scheming for future honors or emoluments [than men]. As a class they never look forward, as young men almost invariably do, to a period of legal emancipation from parental control."<sup>12</sup>

The self-abnegation and submission

to universal principles of morality, decorum, and beauty constrained teachers, as they had artists, from developing a style of practice with which they were personally identified and for which they felt personally responsible.<sup>13</sup>

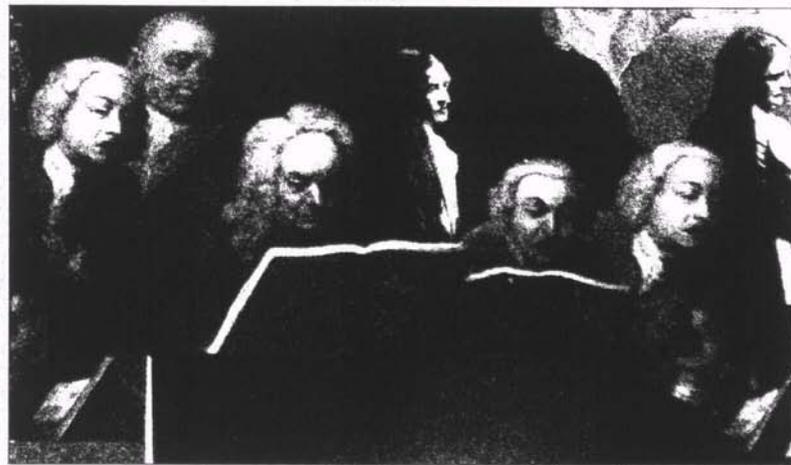
The anti-naturalism movement that developed in Europe after 1910 transformed the artist's relation to common perception. That development had been heralded by Constable in 1836: "Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an enquiry into the laws of nature. Why then, may not landscape be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but experiments."<sup>14</sup> This approach to art as research was taken up by the artists of the 20th century who, supported by the insights of Marxism, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and phenomenology, grasped the degree to which the designation of any phenomenon as natural masked the social construction of perception. Impressionism, Abstraction, Dadaism, Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism are some of the experiments that this research movement supported.

While artists escaped the cage of nature and made it over the wall to where it was legitimate to reveal the "ordinary as strange and in need of some explanation," teachers who were by now predominantly women remained ensnared by the supposedly "natural" imperatives that established parameters for their experience, perception, and expression.<sup>15</sup>

### Drawing Lines

The dilemma facing teachers may pre-empt the paradox that other women will confront as they participate more fully in the public world. Women dominate the ranks of teachers and have for many years. Yet when we summon women to adopt a form of practice that is aesthetic, we find that the workplace replicates those structures in domesticity and in female identity that repudiate freedom and action.

First of all, the structure of the school replicates the patriarchal structure of the family. The women who maintain daily contact with children and nurture them are, themselves, trained, supervised, and evaluated by men. Now we must recognize the degree to which women who teach are complicit in this distribution of power between the sexes in the education establishment. In other words, if there are so many women in the classrooms, how come the school *still* feels like home? Consciousness rais-





***“And so it is often the response of the teacher . . . to create some window of time or space within the school day.”***

ing, that conversation between women that called us to describe the arrangements of our lives, revealed more to its participants than the oppressive stipulations of patriarchy. It also revealed our fears of responsibility, of our own anger, of isolation, and our fear of being identified with women. Now we hardly expect the teacher who is an artist to be a free soul, exempt from attack from without and qualms from within. When the ego expands to incorporate what has been heretofore an alien impulse or fantasy into a repertoire of personal action, our identity defenses are challenged, and we feel threatened. Consciousness raising provided support for women learning to see themselves and their world in new ways. What community provides support for teachers who would be artists?

The failure of teachers to create such a community for ourselves may come from our reluctance to acknowledge our commitment to our work. Although many women teach to provide income for our families and/or ourselves, it is also possible that the expected allegiance to home and family that has framed women's work in the world has exaggerated a subsistence motive in or-

der to camouflage the illegitimate pleasure that the woman who teaches finds in the work itself. Ostensibly secondary to maternal and conjugal responsibilities, teaching is relegated to a secondary position when women deal with the conflicting demands of home and family. The advanced study, travel, internships that could be tapped to enrich work deemed important are relinquished in order to maintain the illusion that teaching is not directly identified with one's own ego identity.

In many ways the temporal structures of teaching resemble the routines of domesticity. Fluid and ubiquitous, housework and childcare have required women to accept patterns of work and time that have no boundaries. To those who sustain the emotional and physical lives of others, there is no time out, no short week, no sabbatical, no lay-off. Chodorow and Dinnerstein have both argued that because the woman is not only the primary parent in our culture but also the only person who sustains an intimate relation with a young infant, mother becomes the only person whom the child desires when needy.<sup>16</sup> Even as adults we maintain patterns of emotional dependency on women that involve both mothers and children in a symbiosis that each simultaneously requires and resents. The maternal ethos of altruism, self-abnegation, and repetitive labor has created a class of persons with little narrative capacity, for to tell a story is to impose form on experience. Deprived of the opportunity to design the structures of their own lives, many women, mothers and teachers, live through other people's stories. Having relinquished their own beginnings, middles, and ends, they are attracted to soap operas whose narratives are also frequently interrupted, repetitive, and endless.<sup>17</sup>

Judy Chicago tells us that when she assembled her first women's art class and challenged its members to talk seriously about their work and their ideas, she was greeted with dead silence.<sup>18</sup> But expressive speech, Merleau-Ponty teaches us, “does not simply choose a sign for an already defined signification, as one goes to look for a hammer in order to drive a nail . . . or to put the matter another way we must uncover the silence that speech is mixed together with.”<sup>19</sup> The actor who trains with Jerzy Grotowski also learns to harvest silence. Grotowski's instruction is a *via nega-*

tiva, not a tirade of instructions or a manual of codes, but a series of exercises designed to reveal what it is that blocks expression.<sup>20</sup> Freedom, like silence, runs deep, way below the babble of habitual speech. We need space and time to find it.<sup>21</sup>

I am joining Virginia Woolf and Tillie Olson, Hawthorne, Melville, Conrad, and Kafka when I call upon teachers to make a place for themselves where they can find the silence that will permit them to draw their experience and understanding into expression.<sup>22</sup> Now the world is not silent; drenched in media, announcements, commercials, instructions, and discussions neither the classroom nor the kitchen are the places to cook up a good lesson. This assertion does, I realize, extend the boundary that defines the aesthetic object or event to contain aesthetic processes in general, suggesting that aesthetic experience is necessarily defined against the standard of daily experience which it in some way contradicts or challenges. This is the opposition that John Dewey struggled to reconcile. In both his aesthetic and educational writings, Dewey deplored the polarities that distort our experience, severing one piece from another and distributing aesthetic, technical, intellectual, emotional varieties of experience to different categories of citizens.

His conviction that the "aesthetic is no intruder in experience from without, whether by way of idle luxury or transcendent ideality, but that it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience" roots the aesthetic object in common experience.<sup>23</sup> It is distinguished from the flow of daily experiences, the phone conversation, the walk to the corner store only by the intensity, completeness, and unity of its elements and by a form that calls forth a level of perception that is in itself, satisfying. I have no quarrel with Dewey's aim to recover the freedom and continuity of human experience from the institutions that had divided, catalogued, and sequestered it so that it could be distributed rather than claimed. But despite Dewey's attempt to piece together what man had pulled asunder, I am arguing that women must construct a special place for themselves if their work as teachers is to achieve the clarity, communication, and insight of aesthetic practice; if it is, in short, to be research and not merely representation.

### The Studio and the Gallery

It is not immediately clear what kind of a studio we require. The ambivalence that is strung between the teacher and the school is present as well between the female artist and the art establishment. If you are engaged in expressive work, but find that the symbols and content of expression that dominate the field as well as the condition and relations of work are alien to you, what do you do? This is the problem of women in educational theory who would talk about responsibility rather than accountability, who would talk about reproduction rather than production, about the relationships between the experience of those who bear and nurture children and teaching and learning, rather than the relationships of the school to the factory, or the corporation.

Judy Chicago found many women artists caught in this dilemma, both the women who had retreated to studios in their attics or in mudrooms tucked behind their kitchens as well as those who had brought work into a public space:

The alternatives represented by the woman's situations were dismal indeed, and they were alternatives that I had struggled with. Either be oneself as a woman in one's work and live outside the art community or be recognized as an artist at the price of hiding your womanliness. . . . I saw that the women who had opted for their personal subject matter had suffered the price of never seeing their work enter the world. The women like me whose work had become visible had sacrificed a part of their personalities to do so.<sup>24</sup>

Now our "natural" history has shown us that despite paeans for the teacher's tenderness and sweetness, expressiveness has never been a quality of pedagogy encouraged in teachers. Charters' exhaustive 1928 study of the attributes of teachers and characteristics of teaching repeats the familiar litany of self-control and denial of emotion:

#### Traits which serve as example to pupils

Striving systematically to set pupils a good example; exercising self-control in the face of irritation; being polite and courteous to impolite pupils; being on time when pupils are detained by other teachers; setting an example of openmindedness by setting prejudices aside.

#### Traits involved in winning of pupils' respect

Keeping one's temper, repressing anger, irritation, desire to punish; not waiting for pupils to start something, taking initiative, seizing opportunities to show command of the situation; avoid confidences, maintaining reserve, preserving dignity without being unfriendly.



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Even recent projects, ostensibly developed to bring more expressiveness into the classroom, like the humanistic education initiatives of the late 60s, featured a Rogerian, client-centered, self-abnegating facilitation of another's expression, rather than dialogue that just might be abrasive, challenging, revealing, and estranging for teacher and student alike.

I want to argue that we need to fortify the aesthetic boundaries that define teaching. We need to recreate safe places, even in schools, where teachers can concentrate, can attend to their

experience of children and of the world, and we need to create community spaces where the forms that express that experience are shared. The process of creating these spaces will be as important as the places themselves. And should we rely on the state or the affluent, we will find ourselves, like the 19th century artist, coopted by our patrons.

Furthermore, we must take care that in recreating spaces that offer privacy, we do not merely encourage the repetition of forms that have sequestered and hidden women's perceptions rather than revealed them. The teacher who sees basic skills as an impoverished, reductive approach to thought, who is nevertheless distributing dreary, time-consuming materials that keep each student quiet and busy, and are thus "individualized," can go along with the prescribed curriculum and keep her job, try to change it and risk her job, or wait for a few moments alone with her class when she may have the time and the opportunity to undo the damage. Apple, concerned about this "deskilling" of

teachers, provides this teacher's response to the rationalized curriculum:

Kids are too young to travel between classrooms all the time. They need someone there that they can always go to, who's close to them. Anyway, subjects are less important than feelings.<sup>26</sup>

Apple appropriately warns us against the retreat into what has been traditionally considered the woman's sphere: the support of feelings. By identifying the perception of emotion with a form of solace rather than with action and communication, we replicate the patterns constituted by patriarchal relations in history and society and its divisions of public and private experience. Although the concepts of "deskilling" and "reskilling" may serve to describe the teachers' subordination to a highly rationalized and bureaucratic curriculum, they also import a language drawn from the task analysis of the factory and the market place that by its very associations perpetuates the split between feeling and action. Even if women are highly "skilled" they would still be signaling to a world that expects their work to look and sound different than it does. Teachers hide the work they care about in their own classrooms just as artists stack it in their attics. "Behind the classroom door" used to be the phrase that stood for the domain where the teacher ran the show. The closing of the door, the drawing of the line. Now it begins. This is what matters. Now we are together. This is our space.

It has been the pattern of recent pedagogy to view that teacher, sequestered with children for long hours behind the classroom door, as an old-fashioned isolate. The call for accountability has required visibility. All hands on deck. Progress measured across the grade, facilitated by specialists. The beat of Sesame Street goes on. Keep 'em busy. Keep 'em moving. Team planning, team teaching. Stating our objectives, meeting our goals. It is one giant fund drive. Let's get those scores over the top. The lure for teachers thus degraded is professionalism, a status attractive to women when it promises to defend their work from the intrusions of the state and from male dominance.<sup>27</sup>

It was the refusal, however, to replicate the patterns of dominance and subordination so essential to ranks within the professions and as well as to relations of professionals to their clients that led Judy Chicago and her associates to form another kind of community that

would support and protect women's art. In *Through the Flower*, which relates her own development as an artist and the development of a women's art community in California, Chicago quotes Virginia Woolf, who, even in the 30s, saw straight through the privileges promised to the professions to the inequities and insensitivities that constituted those privileges:

If people are highly successful in the professions they lose their senses. Sight goes. They have no time to look at pictures. Sound goes. They have no time to listen to music. Speech goes. They have no time for conversation. They lose their sense of proportion—the relations between one thing and another. Humanity goes. . . . What then remains of a human being who has lost sight, sound, and sense of proportion? Only a cripple in a cave.<sup>28</sup>

And so it is often the response of the teacher who would keep her senses alive to leave the "system," or, if she is able, to create some window of time or space within the school day. (Recently programs for the "gifted" have provided havens for those willing to support their aesthetic habit by dealing with those who peddle the myth of meritocracy.) Combining seniority with determination, with a reputation for eccentricity, and a little larceny, such a teacher makes her classroom a studio. It holds her books, her record of Dylan Thomas reading "A Child's Christmas in Wales," and an old record player that doesn't need to be ordered from AV three days in advance. It has places to keep what Didion calls "bits of the mind's string too short to use."<sup>29</sup> I mourn every ditto I ever threw away because there was no place to keep it: the notes for the unit we never did, the parody of *The Wasteland* that an 11th grade class wrote. I miss the collection of poems that I chose after sitting for hours on the living room couch, Swedish modern it was in those days and not very comfortable, until two or three in the morning. I don't know when I would ever use a collection of poems about cats again, but its absence reminds me of the childhood charm bracelet that I lost in college or that huge stainless steel bowl we used to keep the Halloween candy in that also disappeared. Why do we cherish the places where artists have worked? Listen to Nancy Hale, as she rummaged through the studio that her mother, an artist, left when she died:

These objects seem more ineffable than material, like voices. At their realist, they are objects of virtue, keys to release the life that

trembles behind them in the void and that I otherwise would never have suspected was there. It is as if you whirled around very quickly and caught the furniture in the room up to something; or as if, by a trick, you had at last been able to catch the uncatchable—the blind spot in your vision where anything can happen.<sup>30</sup>

The objects stand, sentinels guarding the silence that is the source of new forms.

In a 1930 Woolf journal entry:

I cannot yet write naturally in my new room, because the table is not the right height and I must stoop to warm my hands. Everything must be absolutely what I am used to. . . . I am stuck fast in that book.<sup>31</sup>

Woolf was certain that women needed rooms of their own for work and decried the economic dependency that denied that privacy. The woman who has chosen to teach because this work also permits her to be home with her family particularly craves a space that bears her signature, holds her resources. Many teachers find such spaces by choosing particular portions of the curriculum (those often less monitored by supervisors) that can provide this ground.

The danger is that a room of one's own becomes a bunker. It becomes a place where we quietly sabotage the skills program without releasing the methods and meaning that we have devised so that they may attract attention, stir comment, ultimately influence textbook selection, state requirements, and the inservice program. Terrible vulnerability accompanies aesthetic practice. Where do we find the courage to reveal our work, the confidence to be as vulnerable as Judy Chicago?

For a solid month before the opening, I suffered from depressions, anxiety attacks, even rashes. I felt that the openings of the building and the exhibition of my new work truly revealed my commitment, my ideas and my values, and I was afraid that they would be rejected.<sup>32</sup>

Or as vulnerable as Virginia Woolf?

FRIDAY, APRIL 8TH. 10 MINUTES TO 11 A.M. And I ought to be writing Jacob's Room; and I can't, and instead I shall write down the main reason why I can't—this diary being a kindly blankfaced old confidante. Well, you see, I'm a failure as a writer. I'm out of fashion: old: shan't do any better: have no headpiece: the spring is everywhere: my book out (prematurely) and nipped, a damp firework. . . . Well, this question of praise and fame must be faced. . . . One wants, as Roger said very truly yesterday, to be kept up to the mark; that people should be interested and watch one's work. What depresses me is the thought that I have ceased to interest people—at the very moment when, by the help of the press, I thought I was becoming

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more myself. . . . As I write, there rises somewhere in my head that queer and very pleasant sense of something which I want to write; my own point of view. I wonder, though, whether this feeling that I write for half a dozen instead of 1500 will pervert this?—make me eccentric—no, I think not. But, as I said, one must face the despicable vanity which is at the root of all this niggling and haggling. I think the only prescription for me is to have a thousand interests—if one is damaged, to be able to instantly to let my energy flow into Russian, or Greek, or the press, or the garden, or people, or some activity disconnected with my own writing.<sup>33</sup>

The privatization of teaching repeats the exile to domesticity that has split public from private life and drained each domain of its vitality. Woolf sought seclusion, was terrified of rejection, and flourished in the support of the Bloomsbury group so long as that companionship survived to sustain her. Chicago, who forced herself to regularly leave her studio to work with other women in an educational project, The Feminist Studio Workshop, did so, she tells us, because the female artist needed to learn not to succumb to isolation. The creative process is not just about bringing experience to form; it is also about expressing our thoughts and feelings about that experience to someone else and finding out what she thinks about it.

There is a dialectic of withdrawal and extension, isolation and community, assertion and submission to aesthetic practice that requires both the studio where the artist harvests silence and the gallery where she serves the fruit of her inquiry to others. Just as I would send the teacher to a room of her own where she can shed the preconceptions that blind her to the responses of her students, I would ask her to bring the forms that express her understanding of the child and the world to the children, to her sisters who are her colleagues, and to her sisters who are the mothers of the children. The distrust that divides the women who care for children grows in the dark like mold. The challenge for women who would be artists in their classrooms is to create the community that will encourage and receive their expression:

When one goes from the order of events to the order of expression, one does not change the world; the same circumstances which were previously submitted to now become a signifying system. Hollowed out, worked from within, and finally freed from that weight upon us that makes them painful and wounding, they become transparent or even luminous, and capable of clarifying not only aspects of the world that resemble them, but others too. . . .<sup>34</sup>

So the line that separates ultimately connects submission to mastery, event to sign, experience to curriculum, and self to other. All that we need to decide, each day, when we are ready and the light is right, is where and when to draw the line.<sup>35</sup>□

<sup>1</sup>Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). Suzanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). F. David Martin, *Art and the Religious Experience: The Language of the Sacred* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1972). Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977). I also recommend Stephen Pepper's analytic scheme presented in *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

<sup>3</sup>All the references to the history of American art prior to the Civil War are drawn from Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>6</sup>Ann Douglas describes the consequences of this transformation of American women from producers to consumers in *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon Books, 1978).

<sup>7</sup>See Elizabeth Peabody's "American Preface" to Friedrich Froebel's *Mother Play and Nursery Songs* (Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1906, p. 7.)

<sup>8</sup>Mary Moffat and Charolette Painter, eds., *Revelations* (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Phillipe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. R. Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

<sup>10</sup>Bernard Wisby, *The Child and the Republic* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

<sup>11</sup>David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 54.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup>See Madeleine Grumet, "Pedagogy for Patriarchy: The Feminization of Teaching," *Interchange* 12, 2-3 (1981), for an earlier and more detailed discussion of gender and teaching.

<sup>14</sup>Cited in Herbert Read, *The Philosophy of Modern Art* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup>This phrase describing phenomenological method is drawn from Maurice Roche, *Phenomenology, Language, and the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

<sup>16</sup>Their presentation of object relation theory traces contemporary gender relation to

the child's response to its family's parenting patterns. See Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (New Harper and Row, 1976).

<sup>17</sup>I am indebted to Joan Stone for this observation and for her critical reading of this essay.

<sup>18</sup>Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1977), p. 74.

<sup>19</sup>Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Voices and the Language of Silence," in *Signs*, trans. R. C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 46. I regularly return to the writings of Merleau-Ponty for his sense of how speech gathers up and "sings" the world.

<sup>20</sup>Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

<sup>21</sup>See Margaret Hunsberger, "Phenomenology of Reading: When Child and Curriculum Meet," for an insightful discussion of the place of silence in pedagogical discourse. AERA presentation, 1982. Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>22</sup>Tillie Olson's text *Silences* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1978) describes the conditions that encourage creativity and honors those silenced by social strictures, child care, housework, and wage labor.

<sup>23</sup>John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1934), p. 46.

<sup>24</sup>Chicago, *Through the Flower*, p. 100.

<sup>25</sup>Werrett Wallace Charters and Douglas Waples, *The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>26</sup>Michael Apple, "Work, Gender, and Teaching," *Teachers College Record*, in press.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup>Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, cited in Chicago, *Through the Flower*, p. 197.

<sup>29</sup>Joan Didion, "On Keeping a Notebook," in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (New York: Dell, 1961), p. 136.

<sup>30</sup>Nancy Hale, *The Life in the Studio* (New York: Avon Books, 1957), p. 80.

<sup>31</sup>Cited in Olson, *Silences*, p. 160.

<sup>32</sup>Chicago, *Through the Flower*, p. 204.

<sup>33</sup>Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1953), pp. 30-31.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup>Margaret Anderson is a painter now living in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. We shared years when she, the painter, and I, the teacher, were busy having, nursing, changing, and rocking our babies. She painted my portrait in a few late afternoons while her daughters napped just a week or so before my first child was born. The portrait, never quite finished, understandably, speaks to me still of women's capacity to support and celebrate the creativity of other women. All that I have studied since merely confirms what her visions of our experience taught me then. This essay honors her work.

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