IMAGINATIONS OF DEMOCRACY: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES
OF ARTISTS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL CHANGE

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The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the experiences of teacher/artists who engage in art making with social change as the end-in-view. Building on Dewey’s notion of educative experience (1938) and art as experience (1934), the study illuminates particular experiences of personal and social transformation through this way of working. Although considerable theorizing has explored the relationship between art making and social change, this study explores this theorizing as it applies to teacher/artists.

Through qualitative methodologies of narrative and phenomenological analysis, data from field observations and participant interviews were coded for narrative constructions and then a narrative for each participant was constructed from the data. Next, phenomenological analysis revealed themes that were confirmed and further developed in the focus group session.

Findings of the study indicated the following integrated categories of experiential transformation at both personal and social levels: mind, body, and spirit. Within these categories, the data revealed the significance of embodied knowing, physical presence, identity and voice, finding locations of memory and awareness, cross-difference dialogue, spiritual presence and emergent working, finding guidance concerning purpose and truth making, sustenance and nurture, as well as pain and loss.
Implications for this study include further consideration of the nature of the experiences provided for students as well as the entire community of learners with regard to experiences with the arts. Epistemological and ontological positions allowing for experiences with the arts as a means to gain understanding and to seek truth might provide a means by which teachers might develop sophisticated educational artistry. Implications for further research include exploring art making as a dialogic experience, especially in cross-difference dialogue. Exploration of research protocol among arts-based researchers might reveal means by which data is gathered and analyzed so that it might become more consistent with arts informed practice. Further research is implied for the development of educational artistry through experiences with art.
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction: The Broader Problem

We are in the midst of a crisis. Our ability to imagine meaningful and connected ways to live in community is at risk. Political divisions of right and left, Democrat and Republican, have magnified in intensity. Although the separation of peoples based on race, gender, and sexual orientation remains a concern, an ever-widening gap between those who are economically privileged and those who struggle to find shelter and food divides us even further. The sustainability of the planet remains in question as we see before us the impact of global warming on weather patterns that have devastated so many in recent years. Our continued struggle in Iraq leads many to question the means by which we envision the global expanse of democracy. In the midst of these struggles, our capacity to consider Dewey’s notion of “the good life” (1934a) diminishes as many are less and less able to understand that this process of envisioning is a community endeavor, dependent on our ability to realize our connectedness to diverse others.

Judith Green (1999), in her call for us to consider moving from a formal democracy to a deeper democracy, noted that our inability to engage with one another is caused by our ontological rootless created by our lack of attachment to place and to community. The upwardly mobile move from place to place in search of economic improvement, increasingly more disengaged with their communities. Further, she cited Cornel West’s (1994) notion of existential nihilism as “a highly virulent form of
dangerous malaise that has been spreading across differing geopolitical and cultural locations within American society, even among the relatively privileged” (p. vii). The result has been a collective loss of interest in creating social change.

Robert Putnam (2000) described a similar sense of social disengagement. Noting that Americans once participated in numerous group activities, even recreational bowling, many now engage in such activities alone. He described a collective loss of engagement in common social activities that once were a part of the fabric of social life within our nation. He was concerned about the impact on our mental and physical health, as well as our ability to effectively engage with one another in the democratic process.

At the same time many Americans have become disengaged in the democratic process, corporate interest and entanglement with the affairs of the public sector has increased significantly. Daily, we see evidence of the corporate ownership of entities formerly managed by the public sector such as civic centers, parks, and schools, as well as major media networks. Although warned of the consequences of the “military industrial complex” by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, we are seeing the results of complicated entanglement of the military, the business sector, conservative think tanks, and the Congress of the United States (Jarecki, 2006).

Our nation’s schools reflect these same struggles. The poverty reflected in our largest urban centers has had a crushing impact on the capacity of young people to even consider the possibility of a future. Disparate opportunities evoke deep anger from those whose opportunities are limited or denied. Levels of achievement as measured on state mandated achievement tests further outline the disparity between the economically
advantaged and the economically disadvantaged. Corporate interest in public schools is evident through the testing industry as well as through the movement to privatize school for profit.

Many Americans are deeply divided concerning our sense of the very purpose for which we provide a public education for all. For some, the role of public schooling is to ensure a capable workforce that will support the aims of the business community. Public schools are encouraged to develop partnerships with the business sector where funding is provided in exchange for decision-making power regarding the school curriculum. For others, the inculcation of traditional values is primary. Still others see our collective academic success a matter of national security. And some still find the centering purpose of public schooling to be, like Dewey (1916), the development of young people who can fully participate in a democratic society. These differing visions collide at the point of the lived experience of those who spend their professional days within our nation’s schools. We have lost much of our collective will and ability to engage with one another to envision much of anything, much less to envision a system of schooling focused on human growth and development, as well as the very sustainability of our existence.

Finally, without the ability to envision and create that which supports our collective good, we lack hope. Paulo Freire (1992) described the critical nature of hope: “I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. Hope is an ontological need” (p. 8). Further, he stated, “Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism” (p. 9).
It is at this juncture of conflicting visions of education, ontological rootlessness, immobilization, and existential nihilism, that a common faith (Dewey, 1934a) might move us to envision a deeper democracy as described by Judith Green (1999). Dewey (1934b) noted that the arts are most critical to the process of envisioning social change. He stated: “Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art” (p. 346). To this, Maxine Greene (1995) added:

Yes, one tendency in education today is to shape malleable young people to serve the needs of technology and the postindustrial society. However, there is another tendency that has to do with the growth of persons, with the education of persons to become different, to find their voices, and to play participatory and articulate parts in a community in the making. Encounters with the arts and activities in the domains of art can nurture the growth of persons who will reach out to one another as they seek clearings in their experience and try to be more ardently in the world. If the significance of the arts for growth and inventiveness and problem solving is recognized at last, a desperate stasis may be overcome and hopes may be raised, the hopes of felt possibility. (p. 132)

Perhaps the arts might be, as Judith Green (1999) described, a means by which diverse others might engage in conversation toward the end of creating sustainable democratic community.
Statement of the Problem

Teachers and administrators in our nation’s schools live daily with the problems I have described as our broader crisis. Certainly, they are frustrated with the social issues that seem to impede student success. Increasingly, many teachers are frustrated with the solutions to disparate achievement required by the standardized management paradigm (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). Teachers are trained to follow pre-determined curriculum plans without allowance for their intuitive and/or educated understanding of “curriculum as lived experience” (Aoki, 2005a; Pinar, 2004; Pinar, Stick, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Slattery, 1995, 2007). The pervasive impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) has left teachers and administrators without the energy to do more than comply with the requirements of the act. Additionally, many seem to lack the understanding needed to effectively address the situation. In short, we are not fully exercising our moral imaginations. We lack vision.

In order to utilize our moral imaginations, we must first consider that we have the capacity, as well as the responsibility, to embrace our freedom to imagine and create a better future (Greene, 1988). This existential question of the nature of freedom is at the root of our sense of helplessness to address our social problems. Additionally, our modes of inquiry might, in themselves, have limited our ability to develop our moral imaginations.

I have long considered the possibility that the arts might provide a significant means by which we can engage in autobiographical inquiry (Slattery, 2001), inquire collectively within community, as well as social justice work. This intersection represents
my familial heritage as well as my way of living in a state of “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1995). Raised by a musician/minister and an artist/teacher actively involved in social justice work, I experienced this intersection of inquiry modes within family life and within the context of a spiritual community. I have experimented with visual form since childhood and have often turned to color, line, shape, and so forth, to metaphorically inquire into an abstract idea. Music, patterned sound, has surrounded me in many settings for all of my life. An appreciation for written expression through poetry, novels, and rich narrative have further developed my interest in the ways we experience the arts.

As a classroom teacher in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I began to explore the ways in which the arts enriched the experience of student learning. I found my students deeply engaged with arts-based experiences in the midst of thematic units of study. In addition, I had begun a master’s program in curriculum with an emphasis on the education of academically talented students. As part of this course of study, my study of creativity and its role in human experience (Piirto, 2004) encouraged me to continue this line of inquiry.

I was motivated to continue this exploration in my role as an elementary principal for the next eight years. In one district, our school developed a relationship with the Cleveland Orchestra in which teachers, administrators, and musicians developed curriculum integrating required standards with music. The staff developed a vision of the school as one integrating the richness of the arts for the purpose of enhanced learning and the building of community. In another district, a yearly artist-in-residence program was developed to achieve the same goal. Additionally, faculty members experiencing
significant grief surrounding the serious illnesses and death of fellow faculty members explored the grief process through arts-based experiences (McElfresh, 2000). I had many opportunities to observe the nature of the experiences of students, but for the first time, began to ponder the nature of the experiences of the teachers within a learning community (Henderson & Kesson, 2004).

In 2004, I conducted a research study (McElfresh, 2004) in which I was able to look at the experiences of a high school art teacher, within a high poverty area in a major American city, whose goal was to encourage the discussion of social issues and thereby create social change. Again, I found that student art making experiences, as reported by their teacher, had offered them engaged learning, a desire to attend school, as well as hope in situations of despair. Additionally, I discovered that the teacher’s identity as an artist shifted from one who creates products of art to one who creates experiences for students. Today, I continue to wonder about the nature of this teacher’s experience as an artist, an artist/teacher within the context of a community. How does she experience Dewey’s (1934b, 1938) notions of interaction and continuity? How does the process of art making contribute to the making of meaning? How does she experience these same dynamics within the context of her classroom and/or school community? What has changed in her own life and in the lives of her students as a result of their art-making surrounding themes of social justice?

For the past two years, I have been teaching undergraduate and graduate level education students at two liberal arts institutions, one in the Midwest and one in the Northeast region of the United States. Courses were focused on various topics such as
educational foundations, human diversity, curriculum studies, and educational leadership, all courses involving issues of social justice. In each of these areas, I asked students to consider course concepts through the lens of the arts. They were also asked to demonstrate their understanding through final projects such as installation art or performance art. I had the opportunity to observe the nature of students’ experiences as they made meaning in this alternative manner, and I continue to wonder about the storied nature of our experiences with art and how these stories might add to our understanding of art making as a means of developing our moral imaginations.

Although there has been considerable theorizing regarding the relationship of art to social change (Dewey, 1934b; Gablik, 1991; Green, 1999; Greene, 1995; hooks, 1995; Jackson, 1998; McElfresh-Spehler & Slattery, 1999; Slattery, 1995, 2001; Slattery & Rapp, 2003), there is a lack of studies conducted to support or further explore this theorizing as it applies to teacher/artists who engage their students in art making as a way of promoting positive social change. As this study contributes to our understanding of teacher/artists who work in this way, we might understand something about this mode of inquiry and its role in the development of the moral imagination.

Purpose of the Study

If we are to have hope in our ability to address the various issues that collectively comprise the essence of our national crisis, we must be able to engage the imagination in such a way as to envision a better future (Dewey, 1934b; Greene, 1995; Slattery, 1995). Teacher/artists, working within the context of our nation’s P-12 schools and in university settings, have a significant role to play in the development of the imagination so
necessary for this process. We have yet to learn much about the nature of the experiences of those who work in this way within the context of learning communities. The purpose of this study is to explore Dewey’s concept of educative experience (1938) and his concept of art as experience (1934b) as it can be viewed through the lived experiences of teacher artists who consider social change their end-in-view. By studying their experiences, I hope to contribute to this under theorized area in order to think about how we might work with teachers and administrators through arts-based inquiry to develop their capacity to live fully in a state of wide-awakeness (Greene, 1995) and to envision ways to design experiences with and for students that offer them the same opportunity.

Conceptual Base

The philosophical roots for this work can be found at the intersection of several ways of understanding the nature of the good life. Pragmatism, with roots in classical American philosophy, and the work of John Dewey, continental philosophies informing the existential understandings of Maxine Greene (1988), as well as the work in critical theory (Paulo Freire, 1968/1970; bell hooks, 1994) inform this study. Finally, the work of Alain Badiou (2001, 2002) provided a way to understand how we might respond to this crisis through ethical fidelity.

The field of curriculum studies provides a context for this study. School curriculum has long been a place of contention as various interests have sought to control students’ experiences in the classroom. Religious, economic, and national security interests have directed change in curriculum throughout our nation’s history. The very vision of the field of curriculum studies has been a place of contention for some time
(Pinar et al., 1995; Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000; Slattery, 1995, 2007) between those who view curriculum as a body of knowledge to be imparted to students and those who view curriculum as a journey of lived experience.

Specifically, this study represents the intersection of three ways of working out Dewey’s (1934a) notion of the good life. Spirituality, or inward meaning making, as well as the pursuit of loving and just community (Green, 1999) are deepened by working within the context of the arts (Dewey, 1934b; Green, 1999; Greene, 1995; Jackson, 1998; McElfresh-Spehler & Slattery, 1999; Slattery, 2001; Slattery & Rapp, 2003). Such inward working within the context of community and through arts-based forms of inquiry may be a means by which imaginative visions of democracy might move into action.

Dewey’s (1938) notion of *educative experience* provides insight into educating for personal and social transformation, while Dewey’s (1934) notion of *art as experience* provides insight into the power of arts-based experience. Collectively, these two foundational concepts inform explorations into the enhancement of educational experience through interaction with art forms. *Experience and Education* was written to present a succinct summary of Dewey’s theory of experience for the purpose of critiquing progressive educational practices in the 1930’s, and *Art as Experience* was published as a collection of Dewey’s lectures on the aesthetics underlying his pragmatic inquiries.

**Research Questions**

The research questions listed below foreground the exploration of Dewey’s (1938) notion of educative experience as an interaction between inward and outward forces (interaction), and as a continual interaction of the past, present, and the future
(continuity). The questions explored the teacher/artist’s individual life as well as life within a classroom/school community.

1. How does art making engage the teacher/artist in personal transformation moving toward social justice?

2. Within the context of community, how does art making engage the teacher/artist in social transformation moving toward social justice?

Assumptions

It was assumed that the artist/teacher participants, Denise, Charles, Sam and Theresa, have the prerequisite skills to express themselves through their preferred medium. This assumption is based on the fact that they have each been working in this way for many years. Although formal training is not a requirement for participation, skills demonstrated by those who have been formally trained are also present in the work of those who are not.

It was also assumed that Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa, who have already demonstrated a pattern of social justice work over time, bring with them a sense of agency about their work. They are not beginners, but have displayed a sense of fidelity (Badiou, 2001) toward their work. They each have demonstrated efforts to mentor others into this work.

Finally, it is assumed that each has gained new insight for their work from this attempt to engage in a complicated conversation (Pinar et al., 1995) about this work. I located a place to begin this conversation within the work of John Dewey (1934b, 1938).
Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa explored his ideas of interaction and continuity at the beginning of this study.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, it is necessary to utilize purposeful sampling because the study requires exploring the experiences of teacher/artist who are also committed to the work of social justice in at least one of a number of ways. Each participant must represent all three categories of experience: teacher, artist, engagement with social justice work. Because this study is not funded, it was necessary to locate participants within the same geographical region so that they might engage with all the processes of this research project.

Another limitation of this study is its reliance on metaphorical images (language and visual). While it is possible to analyze language through formalized data analysis procedures, we have nothing similar to work with in the area of visual images. Therefore, the visual images created needed to be interpreted by their creator through language. Meaning may have been lost in translation between visual image and language.

Finally, subjectivity is always a limitation to be negotiated in qualitative studies. As a teacher/artist, I have explored the nature of my own experiences throughout my lifetime. I have participated in the art making phase of this study through regular study and production of drawings and paintings in order to enhance my ability to interview and lead focus groups. Although this generated increased possibility for meaning making, it also increased the subjectivity of my research. In order to address this issue, I conducted member checking at each phase of data collection and analysis to make sure that I
represented the stories of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa as they were told to me. A peer review committee and an external auditor were also utilized to address the issue of subjectivity.

Significance of the Study

Teachers live within school environments greatly impacted by a standardized management paradigm (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). In these prescribed and highly regulated environments, imaginative visions of better schools, as well as a better society, are given little space to develop. Dewey (1934b) noted, “Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art” (pp. 345-346). It is significant, then, that we turn to teacher/artists to understand something about their experiences of art making and their experiences of providing these same opportunities for students. Through the telling of their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Van Manen, 1990), I hope to illuminate ways in which we all might work outside of this standardized framework that inhibits our growth and places limits on our freedom to become what we envision, both individually and collectively.

Summary

This study was designed to contribute to the complicated conversation (Pinar et al., 1995) within the field of curriculum studies concerning the nature of curriculum as lived experience. Within that very conversation, multiple ways of working provide a variety of voices contributing meaning to this inquiry. This study illuminates, not only the contribution of those working with forms of art, but highlights variations within their
ways of working as well and points to the possibility of moving the complicated conversation forward into yet unexplored, cross-textual conversation.

Chapter 2 of this study highlights the literature supporting the conceptual base of the study. Included is a discussion of the history of the field of curriculum studies that describes the conflicting visions characteristic of our current milieu. Additionally, a discussion of the various sub-texts contributing to the complicated conversation (Pinar, et al., 1995) adds dimensionality supporting the experiences of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. Various philosophers are included as their voices have contributed to these sub-texts within curriculum studies. Finally, contributions of others outside the field of curriculum studies, particularly from the field of depth psychology, add to the discussion of the nature of the experiences of those who create art for the purpose of social change.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this study, highlighting the nature of narrative inquiry and phenomenological/hermeneutical inquiry and the appropriateness for the intersection of these two methodologies to address the questions asked by this inquiry. Details are provided including the nature of the selection of the participants, the procedures followed and the timeline by which they were addressed, the data analysis process, and a discussion of the ways in which the integrity of the research process was assured.

Chapter 4 of this study includes the results of the inquiry process. The chapter begins with the constructed narratives of each of the four participants, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. This allows the reader to more fully move into their lived experiences prior to the discussion of the emergent themes of the study. Following next is a
discussion of the results of the narrative and phenomenological coding process that resulted in emergent themes for focus group discussion. A narrative of the focus group experience follows next. A narrative was constructed for this part of the research process due to the unusual nature of the focus group experience. Finally, the chapter includes a discussion of the emergent themes uncovered through the focus group process as well as the email discussion that followed.

The final chapter of this study is a discussion of the conclusions, implications, and future possibilities of the study. However, these ideas are presented in the format of a scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004) so that I can fully integrate my own lived experiences as an artist/teacher/researcher through a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004), a way of “rendering the self through arts-based living inquiry.”
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction: A Complicated, Multi-Textual Conversation

This study was designed to address the question of the nature of the transformational experiences of teacher/artists who create art with social change as their end-in-view. By understanding something about these experiences, I hope to contribute to the complicated, multi-textual conversation (Pinar et al., 1995) within the field of curriculum studies. Various academic disciplines are represented in this conversation through the contributions of scholars within and outside the field of curriculum studies. In particular, this study encompasses eight subtexts and proposes, in the end, a conversation among and across them.

Because the purpose of this study is to explore Dewey’s concept of educative experience (1938) and his concept of art as experience (1934b) as it can be viewed through the lived experiences of teacher artists who consider social change their end-in-view, the review of the literature begins with these ideas. These notions of experience are then enhanced by the various subtexts within the field of curriculum studies. Therefore, this chapter also includes a brief historical perspective of the field of curriculum studies, highlighting the nature of conflicting visions for the field that have characterized its scholarly work from its beginning (Marshall et al., 2000; Pinar et al., 1995). Next, the philosophical subtext (Dewey, 1934b, 1938; Greene, 1988, 1995; Slattery & Morris, 1999) focuses on the ontological, epistemological, and axiological implications of this
work. The body of scholarship involving the arts, the aesthetic subtext (Eisner, 1998a, 1998b, 2002; Greene, 1995; Irwin & De Cosson, 2004; Sameshima, 2007; Slattery, 1995, 2007; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008; Sullivan, 2005), adds to our understanding of the role of the arts in cognition, inquiry (research), teaching, social change, as well as the contribution of the arts to our well-being as individuals and within community. The phenomenological subtext (van Manen, 1990) addresses the nature of lived experience whereas the autobiographical subtext (Edgerton, 1996; Pinar, 2004; Slattery, 2001) addresses the idea of curriculum as a human journey (verb) rather than as a set of learning outcomes (noun) for students. The theological subtext (O’Malley, 2003; Slattery, 1989, 2007) addresses the nature of the meaning we make of our lives. Within this literature review, the notion of cosmology and its relationship to depth psychology is addressed along with the contribution of liberation theology. Within the political subtext, critical (Apple, 1996, 2001; Freire, 1970, 1992; Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 1997) and feminist theories (Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1994; Miller, 2005) provide the perspective needed to address issues of social justice. Finally, the organizational subtext allows us to consider how the lived experiences of teacher/artists are mitigated by the organizational structures within which they work and make curriculum decisions (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Henderson & Kesson, 1999, 2004).

John Dewey and the Educative Experience

Dewey’s 1938 work, *Experience and Education* provides his response to the critique of the progressive education movement of his time. He called for movement beyond “isms” noting that “any movement that thinks and acts in terms of an ‘ism
becomes so involved in reaction against other ‘isms that it is unwittingly controlled by them” (p. 6). Instead, he argued for the development of a theory of educative experience that addresses the strengths and weaknesses of traditional and progressive education in order to avoid the bifurcation of two important ideas: development from within and formation from without. Dewey combined this idea, called interaction, with another, called continuity, through which we might “select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (p. 28). Clarifying the critique of the progressive agenda, Dewey emphasized that the quality of the experience was far more significant than the existence of an experience itself. In contemporary terms, the existence of “hands on” activities says little about the quality of the experience generated from the activities, even though we may value active learning.

Interaction

Through the principle of interaction, Dewey (1938) supported the strengths of both progressive and traditional education each offering something important to an educative experience. He proposed that a quality educative experience “assigns equal rights to both factors in experience—objective and internal conditions” (p. 42). Further, he noted that traditional education did not err in its emphasis on external imposition of learning conditions, but that it failed to take fully into account the internal conditions of the student. He argued, therefore, for an interaction between external and internal conditions.

Noting that teachers are able to control many external conditions of learning, the teacher has “the duty of determining that environment which will interact with the
existing capacities and needs of those taught to create a worth-while experience” (Dewey, 1838, p. 45). In other words, the teacher must exercise judgment so that the student will be placed in a situation in which his or her internal needs are a match for way in which learning is approached in the environment. Therefore, “they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while” (p. 40). In other words, it is important for teachers to connect instruction to “the powers and purposes of those taught” (p. 45).

Dewey’s theory of interaction has been appropriated by many in the current milieu of instructional practice who adhere to constructivist ways of making meaning (Brooks & Brooks, 2001). In constructivist classrooms, the environment is set up with materials as well as other learners, and students are led through activities that allow them to construct meaning on their own, or in groups, with the guidance of the teacher. In this way, the external conditions consisting of the learning goals to be met as well as the materials and activities used, meet the students current internal understanding of an idea in such a way that they construct new understanding.

**Continuity**

Like interaction, continuity explores the idea of the manner in which learners connect with the material learned as well as the nature of the change that results from learning. Noting that “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those that come after” (Dewey, 1938, p. 35), more is needed in order to discriminate between experiences of quality and
ordinary experiences. The result of an experience of quality is to connect fully with experiences of the past so that the present experience is full and meaningful. As a result of the quality of the experience, it becomes an educative experience rather than a mis-educative experience. Dewey defined an educative experience as one moves forward into future experiences.

In this way, as experiences of the present connect with experiences of the past, and as they live into future experiences, learners experience a full continuity of time in which past, present, and future interact in the present moment. “The principle of continuity in its educational application means, nevertheless, that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process” (Dewey, 1938, p. 47). Juxtaposed with this idea is Dewey’s notion that it is not only the future that must be considered, but present moment as well.

When preparation is made the controlling end, then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a suppositious future. When this happens, the actual preparation for the future is missed or distorted. The ideal of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. (p. 49)

In contemporary terms, then, students past experiences must be considered as instruction is planned so that their prior experiences (learning) will connect to present experiences. As quality experiences provide rich and meaningful moments in the present, they are more likely to live fully into the future. As such, they are a preparation for the future but this preparation has not been an end in itself.
Art as Experience

Dewey’s (1934b) work Art as Experience argues for the significance of experiences with the arts due to the nature of the educative experiences they can provide. Further, he described the nature of the problem to be addressed as one “of recovering the continuity of esthetic experience with normal processes of living” (p. 10). His argument counters the argument of his contemporaries who view the objects of art as elite entities, inaccessible to many. Instead, Dewey offered a philosophical framework in which the arts might provide a means to enhance our experience of living through greater attentiveness to the present moment, through the experience of interaction between the object of art and the viewer, through continuity of experience, through a significant vehicle for expression, and as a means of experiencing life within community. As described by Jay (2005, p. 296), “Artistic self-realization thus implied more than the creation of beautiful objects; it meant living a beautiful life, a life of harmonic variation, balanced growth, and the highest cultivation of the senses.”

Initially, encounters with the arts require attentiveness to the present moment, or presence (Tolle, 2005) in which we offer ourselves fully as sensing beings to the experience at hand. Dewey (1934b, p. 53) noted: “The esthetic or undergoing phase of experience is receptive. It involves surrender.” Noting the difference between the idea of presence and other forms of experience, he said (p. 53),

In much of our intercourse with our surroundings we withdraw; sometimes from fear, if only of expending unduly our store of energy; sometimes from
preoccupation with other matters, as in the case of recognition. Perception is an act of the going out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy.

Due to the kind of attentiveness required through experiences with the arts, the experience of interaction is a natural result. Weinstein (2004) noted that “the encounter with arts offers, then, a rare form of self-encounter; it enables a voyage into our own depths” (p. xxiii). It is the interaction between the object of art and the viewer that creates the dynamic described. Although we assume that the experience of interaction lies solely within the viewer, Dewey also boldly suggested that, metaphorically, the art object itself has been recreated. “But as a work of art, it is recreated every time it is esthetically experienced” (Dewey, 1934b, p. 108).

Noting that “when excitement about subject matter goes deep, it stirs up a store of attitudes and meanings derived from prior experience,” Dewey (1934b, p. 63) described encounters with the arts as holding within them the experience of continuity. When such an experience of prior experience is combined with full attentiveness to the present moment, possibilities for the future also become part of the experience. “Possibilities are embodied in works of art that are not elsewhere actualized; this embodiment is the best evidence that can be found of the true nature of imagination” (p. 268).

Dewey also noted the importance of the expressive capacity of experience with the arts. “Many a person is unhappy, tortured within, because he has at command no art of expressive action. What under happier conditions might be used to convert objective material into material of an intense and clear experience seethes within in unruly turmoil which finally dies down after, perhaps, a painful inner disruption (Dewey, 1934b, p. 63).
Through this expressive action, Jackson (1998, p. 187) noted Dewey’s emphasis on “a process resembling alchemy,” in which raw materials undergo a process of transformation. “As a result of the artist’s labor, what initially was dumb gains a voice. It becomes a vehicle of meaning. It takes on significance. It begins to make sense” (Jackson, 1998, p. 187).

Finally, experiences with arts provide an interactive connection between the self of the artist and the social world through the creation and engagement of community. “Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life” (Dewey, 1934b, p. 81). Additionally, he noted that such experiences move us toward “greater order and unity” (p. 81), as works of art connect us to a larger whole: Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development, and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization (p. 326).

The Historical Subtext: Conflicting Visions—A Brief History

Throughout its history, the field of curriculum studies has reflected the conflicts within the larger culture in terms of its vision of the good life. Marshall et al. (2000) described the continuing historical conflict surrounding curriculum issues as focusing on the elements of subject matter, learners, and society. To this list, they add conflicts surrounding what is worth knowing, and conflicts surrounding who holds the power to make curriculum decisions. The history of curriculum studies can be viewed through shifting of values related to these five questions.
It is helpful to understand the conflicting philosophical purposes for education that are the basis for these struggles. Although there is some linearity to these shifting ideas, it is important to consider that all these perspectives are present in the current moment even though particular time periods have a stronger emphasis on one paradigm or another.

Pinar et al. (1995) considered the beginnings of the field of curriculum studies in American education to be the early 1800s, a time in which the notion of faculty psychology was the dominant paradigm. The purpose of curriculum was to exercise the “muscle” of the mind, the lack thereof resulting in an atrophy of mental capacity. The curricular focus was on classical studies that were thought to enhance mental discipline. The beginnings of public schools (common schools) supported the notion that a well educated citizenry was necessary for a successful society.

By the end of the 19th century, there was an interest in organizing the curricular experiences of students. Three significant committees formed in 1895 to address the organization of curriculum: The Committee of Ten, the Committee of Fifteen, and the Committee on College Entrance Requirements (Pinar et al., 1995). The outcome of the work of these committees was a structure of presentation of the curriculum to students in consideration of their ages and the length of time needed for various courses. In speaking about the rationale for such a change, Pinar et al. (1995) noted: “These arbitrary organizations of school life became rationalized in administrative theory and in various developmental psychologies, such as that of Piaget and Kohlberg” (p. 77).
Pinar et al. (1995) described the period of the 1920s and the 1930s when two visions of curriculum competed for dominance. On the one hand, Franklin Bobbitt’s organization of curriculum supported a model of social efficiency which supported the interests of the business community by emphasizing the acquisition of skills important for newly graduated persons entering the work force. On the other hand, John Dewey’s notion of progressive education emphasized the child and the importance of growth as an end in itself. Additionally, his emphasis on democratic living and the preparation for participation in a democratic society marked the progressive movement. Within the progressive movement, however, two camps seemed to divide the energy of those seeking to promote progressivism. Some were focused on a child-centered curriculum whereas others were focused on the development of a social vision of progressivism. The unfortunate result was a division of effort and a waning of the movement. Pinar et al. (1995) noted that Dewey (1938) himself was deeply troubled by the division amongst the progressives and spoke about the nature of their dualistic thinking in his work.

The time period of the 1940s was marked by a rejection of progressivism and an emphasis on the application of a scientific paradigm to the development of curriculum. Most notably, it was the time period in which Ralph Tyler promoted the development of behavioral objectives written with measurable outcomes consistent with the scientific notion of measurability. With energies of this decade focused on WWII and the recovery following it, progressivism diminished significantly in influence over the field with the Tyler rationale gaining prominence (Pinar et al., 1995). Foreshadowing, they noted:
As the history of curriculum reform has already suggested, even while one orientation occupies center stage, forces gather on the periphery waiting for their moment of ascendancy. The 1947 University of Chicago Conference “Toward Improved Curriculum Theory” both signaled and authorized such possibilities even while it heralded the triumph of Tyler and curriculum functionality. It would take two decades, however, for conditions to favor the realization of those possibilities for a fundamental Reconceptualization of the field. (p. 151)

The decade of the 1950s brought about a renewed concern about the abilities of graduates to maintain the superiority of the United States in the space race and in the nuclear arms race. Curricular emphasis on mathematics and science was demanded by a public in fear of the ramifications of the Cold War. The National Defense Act of 1958 provided funding for curriculum development, but with the specification that the expertise be shifted from curriculum specialists to disciplinary specialists (Pinar et al., 1995). The National Science Foundation became the major recipient of the grant monies provided through the National Defense Act.

As the 1960s approached, Jerome Brunner advocated for the support of disciplinary understandings and promoted the notion of the structure of disciplines in which each discipline provided its own ways of approaching problems, of organizing its knowledge. In this way, he lent support to the notion that subject area specialists were indeed the experts in curriculum development. Additionally, continued support of mathematics and science curriculum resulted in a lack of such support in the arts and
social sciences. Positivism, a paradigm in which empirical understanding is valued over other ways of knowing, reigned.

With the arrival of the 1970s, reaction to the positivism of the previous decades became known as the Reconceptualization. Joseph Schwab, as cited in Marshall et al. (2000), has been credited with marking the beginnings of the Reconceptualization with his essay declaring the state of the curriculum field as moribund:

I shall have three points. The first is this: that the field of curriculum is moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods. The second point:

The curriculum field has reached this unhappy state by inveterate and unexamined reliance on theory in an area where theory is partly inappropriate in the first place and where theories extant, even where appropriate, are inadequate to the tasks which the curriculum field sets them. The third point which constitutes my thesis: there will be a renaissance of the field of curriculum . . . only if the bulk of curriculum energies are diverted from the theoretic to the practical, to the quasi-practical and to the eclectic. (p. 95)

This moribund state of affairs prompted Schwab, along with others, to consider how the field might be revitalized. Marshall et al. (2000) noted that a small group of curriculum workers had been gathering behind the scenes for some time. They stated, “This small and scattered tribe of renegades understood all too well that the decade’s social, political, personal, and cultural metamorphoses could not be separated from their lives and professional work” (p. 102). However, as they described the work of this “scattered tribe”
during the decades that followed, it is interesting to note the difficulty of the participants in dealing with their own differences described as “egotistical and ideological spats that splintered their collective strength” (p. 140).

With the election of Ronald Regan, the 1980s ushered in a period of political and economic conservatism that would have an impact on the direction of curriculum work. The release of the 1983 report, *The Nation at Risk*, new attention was given to the inadequacy of the nation’s schools. Similar to the 1950s outcry for higher achievement in science and mathematics, the political ramifications of this report were significant to the experiences of students in classrooms. An emphasis on accountability to the delivery of a standardized curriculum expanded through the end of the century and in the five years since the beginning of the 21st century. The ability of teachers to exercise curriculum wisdom (Henderson & Kesson, 2004) has been constrained by the degree of standardization required by a state mandated curriculum.

The No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) has, perhaps, become the most wide-sweeping piece of legislation to impact the experiences of students and teachers in public school classrooms. Supporting Tyler’s (1949) emphasis on behavioral objectives, this body of legislation requires regular testing of students to determine their performance related to pre-determined standards. Similar accountability is required for educational researchers who seek to understand experiences of students in a variety of ways.

“Evidence based practices” and “scientific based research,” mentioned over one hundred times in the NCLB, have become code words for randomized
experimental studies in which participants, programs, or activities are assigned to different “treatments” with appropriate “controls” so that an “effect” can be measured. (Arhar & McElfresh, 2004, p. 19)

Within the field of curriculum studies, several groups have emerged to counter this standardized paradigm. Developed during the Reconceptualization (Pinar et al., 1995; Miller, 2005), the Bergamo Conference became a site of theorizing where those immersed in a variety of curriculum “texts” could present their research and theorizing. Scholars working within curriculum studies focused on curriculum as historical, phenomenological, autobiographical, political, aesthetic, theological, racial, gendered, poststructuralist, deconstructed, postmodern, and institutionalized texts (Pinar et al., 1995; Slattery, 1995, 2007). Another group, The Curriculum and Pedagogy Conference developed through a critique of the mission and governance of the Bergamo Conference. The mission of the Curriculum and Pedagogy group “can be articulated as understanding, enacting and embodying the synergistic relationship between curriculum studies and pedagogical artistry” (Henderson & Slattery, in press).

In response, Pinar (2006) has critiqued the conjoining of curriculum studies with pedagogical studies, viewing this as “institutionalized social engineering at the site of the teacher” (p. 110). He preferred, instead, to focus on the idea of “study” in which students bear the responsibility for their learning rather than teachers who have refined their pedagogical practice toward the end of increased achievement scores.

Pinar et al. (1995) stated:
At this point in the field’s development we risk balkanization, guiding nearly identical fiefdoms which do not contribute to a “common faith” or to movement in the field as a whole. Perhaps we need a “United Nations” of scholarship sectors to formalize dialogue across discourse borders. (p. 856)

To advance the notion of dialogue across these borders, Henderson and Slattery (in press) reviewed Pinar’s (2007) notion of disciplinarity of horizontal and vertical dimensions. Clarified as “discipline-from-within,” they proposed a disciplined openness comprised of deliberative artistry, diversified inquiry, and democratic fidelity leading to the possibility of complicated (Pinar et al., 1995), cross-textual conversation.

The Philosophical Subtext

The philosophical text within curriculum studies provides a way to address the ontological, epistemological, and axiological questions about the nature of truth, knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics. This particular review draws upon three philosophical positions that contribute to the framework of this study: existentialism, pragmatism, and poststructuralism. Finally, I have emphasized the need to reunite the study of ethics and aesthetics, formerly addressed as the study of axiology. The discussion of the philosophical text within curriculum studies is largely inclusive of those within the field who have appropriated these philosophies within their own work rather than a review of the philosophers whose work is foundational to curriculum theorists.

Existentialism

Originating from continental philosophy, existentialism found an anchoring in American educational philosophy through the work of Maxine Greene. She described
herself as working out the main theme of her life through her inquiry into the nature of freedom (1988, p. xii), a matter of considerable importance to the notion of existentialism. For the existentialist, this freedom is the result of the human dilemma in which we are left in the world without knowable or understandable absolute truths around which we can create our notions of meaningful life. Our responsibility, then, is to create a meaningful life by bringing such a life into being.

Greene (1988) described two notions of freedom. One, she described as a negative freedom in which we strive to be removed from the constraints others place on our freedom of choice. Such constraints might take the form of human oppression of one sort or another experienced by minorities, women, and the economically disadvantaged. The second, a positive freedom, she described as the ability to imagine and create our lives from the possibilities that exist before us. In order to do so, our imaginations must be enlivened and we must embrace the existential choice to move within this freedom. However, Greene stated,

It is not only a matter of the capacity to act to attain one’s purposes. We shall be concerned with intelligent choosing and, yes, humane choosing as we shall be with the kinds of conditions necessary for empowering persons to act on what they choose. (p. 4)

Greene (1988) described the contribution of the American education system to the malaise in which many find themselves, a malaise born of the lack of opportunity and thus, the inability to imagine what might be better. We are, instead, at the beck and call of a culture that supports education only when it serves the greater purpose of promoting the
dominant cultural values of consumerism, technological advances, or world dominance. Without the freedom to resist the dominant paradigm, we are not free to move onward to create a different future.

Greene (1988) continued to describe our American notion of freedom from the point of view of those who are advantaged. In this case, a hunger for freedom has not translated into concern for others who may lack it, but a desire to maintain one’s own safety and security, and, at the same time, experience freedom from those who would suggest our obligation to care for others who have not experienced such a freedom.

It is in the light of these two notions of freedom that Greene (1988, 1995) explored the idea that the arts might play a critical role in the promotion of both aspects of freedom. First, in the promotion of negative freedom, the arts might disturb us, might cause us to awaken to the oppressions suffered by others. For example, Eve Ensler (2000) explored the exploitations of women through her book and performance of *The Vagina Monologues*. As noted by McElfresh-Spehler and Slattery (1999), artist Anselm Kiefer explored themes of environmental degradation through visual art. However, the arts might also play a role in the ability of others to imagine other future possibilities. Greene (1995) explored this notion of releasing the imagination for this very purpose, as she stated:

One of the reasons I have come to concentrate on imagination as a means through which we can assemble a coherent world is that imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible. It is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called “other” over the years. If those others
are willing to give us clues, we can look in some manner through strangers’ eyes and hear through their ears. That is because, of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. (p. 3)

Pragmatism

Seigfried (1996) described pragmatism as an historical movement with beginnings in the late 19th century America in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the location of the Metaphysical Club. Later, pragmatism was expanded through the work of John Dewey and the Chicago School of pragmatism. Pragmatism critiqued the lack of connection between theory and practice evident in the schools of philosophy of the time. Additionally, Seigfried noted the importance of collaborative knowing: “knowledge is developed interactively among communities of inquirers and given conditions” (p. 4). As a result of the connection between theory and practice, as well as the collaborative nature of the inquiry, she noted the following:

Pragmatism, as a philosophy that stresses the relation of theory to practice, takes the continuity of experience and nature as revealed through the outcome of directed action as the starting point for reflection. Experience is the ongoing transaction of organism and environment; in other words, both subject and object are constituted in the process. When intelligently ordered, initial conditions are deliberately transformed according to ends-in-view, that is, intentionality, into a subsequent state of affairs thought to be more desirable. (p. 6.7)
Dewey’s deep desire to see theory connected to practice caused him to think about this notion with relationship to our American democracy and with the nature of the democratic experience within the nation’s schools. Concerned about the unraveling of democracy at the local level, Dewey sought to examine the nature of experience and its fuller expression in community through face to face communities in which inquiry into the nature of the good life might be conducted for the benefit of all (Green, 1999).

The motivation for participation in this common endeavor rests with our common faith (Dewey, 1934a) in which we might be freed from the supernatural emphasis of religious experience and might, instead, focus on the nature of its pragmatic application for the benefit of all. He stated:

It demands that in imagination we wipe the slate clean and start afresh by asking what would be the idea of the unseen, of the manner of its control over us and the ways in which reverence and obedience would be manifested, if whatever is basically religious in experience had the opportunity to express itself free from all historic encumbrances. (p. 6)

Further, Dewey (1934a) suggested that the object of our common faith is not a divine force in which our “end-in-view” already exists but in our capacity to imagine. “The aims and ideals that move us are generated through imagination” (p. 49).

Dewey’s project became a matter of moving others toward an understanding of the possibility of envisioning this end-in-view from which we might begin to work such that this guiding vision directs our current practice. Slattery (2007) expanded this idea through the notion of proleptic hope in which the past, present, and future might all be
present in the current moment such that our hope for a better future might direct our current action.

Dewey’s (1938) concern for the application of pragmatist ideals to the educative process resulted in the development of a theory of experience in which the connection of learning to experience might guide the choices of those responsible for designing the learning experiences of children. He noted the dualism present in the debate between traditional and progressive education and called for movement in thought that moves beyond the “either-or” to a space in which we might consider the relationship of past knowledge to current experience and future possibilities. In fact, experience must take into account the continuity of experience in the form of the relationship of current experience to the past and to the future in a way that make future experiences more fruitful. Additionally, experience must involve an interaction between the objective and the subjective, the inner and the outer expressions of knowing.

Dewey (1934b) also explored the role of art in the generation of quality experiences. He noted that “change in the climate of the imagination is the precursor of the changes that affect more than the details of life” (p. 346). Dewey insisted that the experience of art should not be separate from the experiences of common life, elevated to the experience of only the elite. Instead, the common experience of art, the aesthetic experience promotes the experience of a full life, one that is connected temporally, past, present, and future.
Post-Structuralism

Post-structuralism arose “in France in the 1760’s as a response to the intellectual scene in Paris” (Pinar et al., 1995). This philosophical position critiques existentialism’s proposition that the individual is free to choose. For the poststructuralist, the ability to freely choose one’s path is significantly limited by the social structures inherent in one’s position in life. The role of the poststructuralist, then, is to deconstruct the structures that promote class difference.

Critical theory seeks to examine the structures present in society that prevent the free and equal access of all persons to the resources necessary for the pursuit of the good life. Through the deconstruction (Pinar et al., 1995) of these structures, they hope to provide liberation from oppression. Critical theorists seek to find locations of marginalization by examining the power structures inherent in any setting. Several questions are asked. Who holds power? Who is centered within that power? Who has been marginalized and thereby denied power? Sirotnik (1991) noted, “To be critical, an inquiry must also challenge directly underlying human interests and ideologies.” Additionally, critical inquiry necessitates a move toward action aimed at justice.

Green (1999) critiqued Dewey’s pragmatism in a similar manner to Seigfried (1996). Both are concerned that the element of critical theory is lacking in Dewey’s theory of experience and his advocacy for a common faith of democratic proportions. They are concerned that the lack of the critical perspective, perhaps through the lens of feminism, makes the democratic experience far less possible. In the field of curriculum studies, a number of scholars have viewed their work through a critical lens from a
variety of perspectives. Their work is highlighted under the section titled *The Political Subtext.*

**Reunion of Ethics and Aesthetics**

Of particular interest to this study is an examination of the branch of philosophy known as axiology. Slattery and Rapp (2003, p. 152) noted

Modernism, however, has tended to separate aesthetics and ethics into distinct disciplines, no longer viewing them as contributing to each other. Such bifurcation, in our estimation, is at the heart of the loss of imagination, vision, and prophetic voice.

McElfresh-Spehler and Slattery (1999) described the work of Anselm Keifer as well as the work of Edward and Nancy Kienholz whose work promoted social change through the reunification of ethical issues with aesthetic treatment. It is within this reunification of ethics and aesthetics that this study is situated.

Scholar of art criticism, Suzi Gablik (1991), described this reunification as the re-enchantment of art. She noted (p. 148),

The truth slowly being recognized today is that we cannot look at art solely in aesthetic terms. We now know, thanks to deconstruction, that a work of art is never pure, never self-contained, never autonomous. Indirectly, a belief system is being reinforced.

She called for an ethics of participation in which artists connect their work with its greater cultural purpose.
Ethical Possibilities: Alain Badiou

Existentialism, pragmatism, and post-structuralism answer the ontological question regarding the nature of truth in a similar way. In the absence of an absolute source of truth, we are free to find our own. Clearly, the pursuit of personal truth making results in conflicts when the truth of one impinges on the rights of another. Pragmatism seeks to address this dilemma by considering the nature of the common good, the well-being of the society. Post-structuralism examines the nature of power and its effect on the ethical choices of human beings. Without a source of absolute truth, we are left to embrace ambiguity (Slattery & Morris, 1999). Given the “balkanized” (Pinar et al., 1995) nature of the field of curriculum studies as well as the difficulty of living in a world with individuals, communities, and nations of vastly differing ontological orientations, Alain Badiou (2001) theorized about ethics, and in particular, the nature of evil.

Although some sort of objective truth may exist, it remains inaccessible to us as a “void” (Badiou, 2005a). Our best way of living is to place ourselves always at the edge of this void, a place where we can pursue ethical fidelity (Badiou, 2001) demonstrated by our continued search for truth and ethical action even though we will never, ultimately, move into the void. Badiou (2005b) proposed that our truth journey is comprised, not of events of our choosing, but of our response to those “events” in our lives that throw us off balance and require either a movement toward a path of fidelity, or a return to living our lives within the realm of the daily circumstances in which we live. In other words, we may either elect to follow a path of conscious or unconscious living (Campbell, 1988; Tolle, 2005).
Badiou’s (2001) notion of evil is important to consider. If we are, in fact, freely able to pursue truth from any particular “location” on the edge of the void, we must have some way to think from a critical perspective about the limitations placed on others due to the choices we make. His thinking about evil is grounded in the idea that we are each a part of something called One/All, an entity bigger than ourselves but also representing our individuality. Using set theory as the basis for his thinking, Badiou noted that there exist an infinite number of subsets within the set. In other words, we are both free agents and a part of a larger whole. Given this framework, Badiou proposed three tests by which we can determine the nature of evil. First, ethical decisions must be based on the well being of all, not on the interests of any particular subset of humanity. Second, betrayal occurs when we move away from our own journey of truth to follow our self-interests. Finally, when any truth journey becomes the absolute truth (impossible outside of the void), disaster results.

Badiou’s work (2001, 2005a, 2005b) has tremendous implications for the field of curriculum studies as we struggle with the multiplicity of texts within which we work as well as forces that seek to standardize knowledge and practice within the field of education and beyond. A radical, self-located knowledge and search for truth alongside a way of thinking about the nature of ethical choices may enable us to consider possibilities for our work in schools in a very new way.

The Aesthetic Subtext

A variety of scholars have worked within the aesthetic text throughout the history of the curriculum studies field. Initially, the work of John Dewey (1934b), Art as
Experience, provided strong support for the role of the arts in human development, not only within schools, but within the context of the culture as well. He stated, “Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art” (pp. 345-346). “Change in the climate of the imagination is the precursor of the changes that affect more than the details of life” (p. 346).

Cognitive Processes

Following Dewey’s (1934b) plea for the role of the arts within the lives of individuals and of society, the field of curriculum studies focused mainly on the role of the arts in cognitive processes. Some work has focused on establishing a strong correlation between experiences in the arts (particularly music) with specific academic achievement (Campbell, 1997; Jensen, 2001). Campbell noted that “the College Entrance Examination Board reported in 1996 that students with experience in musical performance scored 51 points higher on the math section than the national average” (p. 177). Additionally, “a study of approximately 7,500 students at a medium size university between 1983 and 1988, music and music education majors had the highest reading scores of any students on campus, including those in English, biology, chemistry, and mathematics” (p. 177). Eisner (1998b) critiqued these particular studies in terms of the integrity of the research design, while suggesting what a quality study might entail. More significant, however, he proposed that the wrong question is addressed through this research. Eisner noted (p. 95), “Problems begin to emerge when the values for which the
arts are prized in schools are located primarily in someone’s version of the basics when those basics have little or nothing to do with the arts.”

As arts programs experience reduction or elimination in public schools, these studies have been utilized to build a case for the arts as a means of supporting academic achievement in content areas such as language arts and mathematics. However, from within the field of curriculum studies, some have focused on the kinds of thinking the arts promote without the need to legitimize the arts based on the way in which they serve achievement gains in mathematics and language arts (Arnheim, 1969; Broudy, 1987; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 1998b, 2002).

These arts education scholars have noted the particular kinds of thinking that are developed through the arts. In some cases, these thinking processes may be unique to the kinds of experiences the arts provide. In his 2002 work, *Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Eisner detailed the particular habits of mind developed through experiences with the arts: attention to relationships, flexible purposing, using materials as medium, shaping form to create expressive content, the exercise of imagination, learning to frame the world from an aesthetic perspective, and the ability to transform qualities of experience into speech and text.

First, since music can be described as patterned sound, visual art as patterned images, and dance as patterned movement, Eisner (2002) suggested that learning in the arts develops the learners attention to relationships among “parts that constitute a whole” (p. 75). Of particular importance is the necessity to develop a sense of nuanced qualities.
For the visual artist, this ability comes into play as the artist determines the appropriate fit of a given image or a sense of when the work is completed.

Flexible purposing, a term Eisner borrowed from Dewey (1938), refers to the ability to intelligently improvise. “The intelligence I speak of is the ability to shift direction, even to redefine one’s aims when better options emerge in the course of one’s work” (Eisner, 2002, p. 77). Such flexibility often provides the experience of surprise and requires the willingness to take risks, to find alternate paths to solving particular problems.

“Each material and each art form imposes its own possibilities” (Eisner, 2002, p. 70). Students of the arts must consider what each media will offer to the expression of ideas. As a medium is selected, the student must consider how communication of ideas will be mediated differently according to the choices made.

Aesthetic experience provides connection to our emotions. Student artists learn to use their chosen media to shape such experiences. “Our involvement in these works speaks to us in different ways, and their messages evoke responses in different aspects of our being. In a sense, their form finds its echo in our soma” (Eisner, 2002, p. 82). As students mature in their use of media, they gain greater skill in their ability to use form to elicit emotion.

Significant to this study, Eisner (2002) suggested that the exercise of the imagination is important to our individual and collective ability to imagine a better future. He noted (p. 83), “The arts provide a platform for seeing things in ways other than they are normally seen. In so doing they help us wonder, ‘why not?’” He noted the role the
arts sometimes play in provoking greater awareness within the culture. McElfresh-Spehler and Slattery (1999) referred to this role as the artist/prophet who is able to call others to attend to matters of significance.

The ability to see the world from an aesthetic perspective is a habit of mind learned through experiences with the arts. In a way, it is about being able to see differently, to notice subtle differences in quality in such a way as to be moved by the beauty observed. Eisner (2002, p. 84) noted, “It is a way of being moved, of finding out something about our own capacity to be moved; it is a way of exploring the deepest parts of our interior landscape. In its best moments it is a way of experiencing joy.”

Finally, Eisner (2002) noted that experiences with the arts develop the capacity to transform experiences with the arts into linguistic forms. The practice of critique within visual arts instruction provides students with such an opportunity as dialogic experience related to visual form enhances their ability to communicate. The use of visual metaphor enables students to practice using linguistic forms that are outside the realm of simple description. In this way, he hoped that students would develop imaginative language with which they could communicate to others about the nature of their aesthetic experiences.

**Aesthetic Inquiry**

Related to the role the arts play in cognitive development is the idea of aesthetic epistemology (Pinar et al., 1995), that the arts offer a way of knowing and enable inquirers to find knowledge in different ways. Additionally, a group of scholars within curriculum studies have worked to give credibility to arts-based techniques for the purpose of gathering and representing research data. The Arts Based Educational
Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, working within Division B—Curriculum Studies, have advanced this research agenda.

Again, Elliot Eisner’s work (1998a) emphasized the importance the arts play in developing our capacity to distinguish qualities, a most important ability for those engaging in educational research from a qualitative perspective. “If the visual arts teach us one lesson, it’s that seeing is central to making” (p. 1). For Dewey (1934a), the arts are foundational to the idea of experience. Through experience, we create interaction between inward and outward forces, and the artist/inquirer is able to make deep connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge, between inner knowing and the conditions of the world. Every inquiry is, in a sense, an opportunity for interaction to occur. For Dewey, the presence of the arts in this process increases the possibility of the experience carrying forward into the future experiences of the inquirer.

Contemporary arts-based researchers (Barone, 1990; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; O Donoghue & Springgay, 2004; Sameshima, 2007; Slattery, 2001; Springgay et al., 2007; Sullivan, 2005) have promoted arts-based inquiry through data collection and data representation strategies more consistent with practice in the arts. For example, Pauline Sameshima’s (2007) epistolary novel examined the nature of “artful scholarly inquiry.” Through fiction, enhanced by her own visual images and poetry, she created for the reader an opportunity to see inside her intimately evolving and shifting understanding. Rishma Dunlop’s (2000) novel, Boundary Bay, represented the findings of her ethnographic research study of beginning secondary teachers. Shortly before she completed her degree, she participated in a panel discussion including Elliot Eisner and
Howard Gardner at the 1999 American Educational Research Association held in Montreal, Canada, in which the pair debated the appropriateness of the novel as representation of doctoral research. Although Elliot Eisner offered support for this form of representation, Gardner preferred to maintain the tradition of the academy. It is important to note that Eisner only went as far as to support linguistic forms of representation for dissertation research.

Largely working from the University of British Columbia, a group of scholars have explored the boundaries between roles of artists, researchers, and teachers and have called their form of inquiry a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2007). Working within the conjunction of the three roles from which they each inquire, artist, researcher, and teacher, these scholars seek to integrate theoria (knowing), praxis (doing), and poesis (making; Irwin, 2004). This way of working within the borderlands of different ways of working, or métissage, “encourages thirdness, an in between space that exits between and among categories” (p. 28). She noted that working in the manner promotes “a more complex intertextuality and intratextuality of categories” (p. 28).

Additionally, a/r/tography unite art and writing by “complimenting, refuting, or enhancing one another. Image and text do not duplicate one another but rather teach something different yet similar, allowing us to inquire more deeply into our practices” (Irwin, 2004, p. 31). Further,

Teachers perform their knowing through visual and textual means with the learner’s need and readiness in mind. As artist-researcher-teachers living métissage and living theory, the integration of text and image is an act of
borderland pedagogy, a way of sharing a third space between knowing and ignorance. (p. 33)

Donal O Donoghue (2008) offered a critique of this work in arts-based educational research supported also by the theorizing of Graeme Sullivan (2005). O Donoghue sought to extend current thinking so that the practice of artists informs the work of educational research.

Identifying what’s different and similar in between and across both fields can suggest ways forward as we articulate what we understand as art, research and as arts-based research and continue to imagine the possibilities that arts-based research offers for inquiring into the educational worlds. (p. 21)

Furthermore, he added,

Moreover, a commitment to the arts as an approach to educational research requires us to locate and develop our practices firmly in the professional fields of the arts, as much as it does in the field of education and educational research. (p. 21)

In addition to creating more connection to artistic ways of knowing, O Donoghue’s desire to move forward in this way may also provide a space for the representation of findings to move beyond language to visual, sound, and movement related form. Currently, even language based art forms such as poetry or the novel are contested as appropriate formats for dissertation research although a few have found committees willing to support this work (Dunlop, 2000; Sameshima, 2007).
Aesthetic Teaching as a Performative Act

Building upon Eisner’s work supporting aesthetic ways of knowing, a body of scholarship has linked the act of teaching with the notion of performative ways of approaching pedagogy. Louis Rubin’s (1985) work called *The Artistry of Teaching* utilized ways of being common to artists as a model for teaching. He noted: “Artist teachers achieve these qualities by knowing both their subject matter and their students; by guiding the learning with deft control—a control that itself is born out of perception, intuition, and creative impulse” (p. 9). In addition to these aspects of artful teaching, Rubin worked with the idea of teaching as theater. Building on this work, David Dees (1999) theorized about teacher and student transactions through the lens of performing arts traditions. Likening teaching to theatrical performance, Dees looked at the moments in which teaching became a performative act in which teacher and student transacted as likened to the performances of actors, dancers, and musicians.

Personal and Social Transformation

The arts have been a location of scholarship around personal and social transformation. Largely, the field of art therapy (McNiff, 1992) most significantly promotes the aspect of personal transformation and healing through experiences with the arts. Gregg Levoy (1997, p. 125) noted that “self knowledge, I think, is likewise holy, and art is perfect for the job of acquiring it.” Art therapy techniques utilize materials as a location of interaction (Dewey, 1938) between the individual’s inward and outward self such that exploration of the inner landscape might occur.
Within the field of curriculum studies, Patrick Slattery (2001) proposed the idea of the artist as educational researcher working within. As a means of autoethnographic research, the educational artist/researcher engages the subconscious through expressive art in order to discover aspects of one’s self formally unknown. Maxine Greene (1995) described the idea of “wide-awakeness” through encounters with the arts in which the imagination is released and available for transformation.

McElfresh-Spehler and Slattery (1999) called for the artist to take on the role of prophet in the process of social change. Building on the work of art critic Suzi Gablik (1991), this essay called for a reunification of aesthetics and ethics such that works of art move others to attend to matters of significance. Gablik noted the significance of installation art for this purpose because the viewer is able to move about the work, within it, outside of it, and this experience removes the separation between the subject (the viewer) and the object (the art). In a similar way, bell hooks (1995) called for art to be a liberating force within the African American community. With regard to the art of photography, she noted (p. 60) that “the camera allowed black folks to combine image making, resistance struggle, and pleasure.” She noted the ability of the camera to create new vision for a better future (p. 64):

We are awed by what our snapshots reveal, what they enable us to remember. The word remember (re-member) evokes the coming together of severed parts, fragments becoming a whole. Photography has been and is, central to that aspect of decolonization that calls us back to the past and offers a way to reclaim and renew life-affirming bonds. Using images, we connect ourselves to a recuperative,
redemptive memory that enables us to construct radical identities, images of
ourselves that transcend the limits of the colonizing eye.

As Dewey expressed (1938, pp. 345-346) regarding the ability of art to transform, “Only
imaginative vision elicit the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the
actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are
always found in works of art.”

The Phenomenological Subtext

The phenomenological text within the field of curriculum studies addressed issues
of lived experience. Van Manen (1990) discussed epistemological issues of human
science inquiry by noting that “the act of researching—questioning—theorizing is the
intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or
better, to become the world” (p. 5). In this way, the research act becomes an act of caring
in which we “serve and share our being with the one we love” (p. 5). Furthermore, van
Manen (p. 36) noted the transformative nature of the phenomenological research process.

The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual
expression if its essence—in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a
reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a
notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived
experience.

In particular, since the Reconceptualization, interest in the epistemological
questions raised by phenomenological research has focused on the authority of lived
experience. Within the context of ontological flexibility, the authority of lived experience
has become more credible. Phenomenological interests within the field of curriculum studies have focused on the nature of the lived experiences of students, teachers, researchers, and scholars. Aoki (as cited in Pinar & Irwin, 2005) described a crisis of western reason in which a fundamental contradiction exists between technological progress and personal, situated life that is lived within the field of curriculum where teachers are stripped of their subjectivity. “I wish to propose an alternative view of implementation, one, which is grounded in human experiences within the classroom situation” (p. 3). Phenomenological inquiry provides for such a subjectivity situated in the lives of teachers. Of particular interest to this research study are the topics of autobiographical inquiry, particularly the notion of currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), the development of narrative inquiry as a means of looking at phenomena, as well as the notion of embodied knowing.

**Autobiographical Inquiry as Currere**

Pinar and Grumet (1976) introduced the idea of curriculum as “currere” during the period of the Reconceptualization. Working with the idea of curriculum as a verb, currere refers to a lived journey, a path of understanding. This notion is in stark contrast to curriculum as a noun, a set of objectives students are expected to learn over the course of a period of time. Aoki (2005b) described a teacher’s lived experience as being one lived in between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experience.

And so, if we are to experience curriculum as a path on which we move, shift, change directions along the way, we must connect with our own story from past to the future, within the present moment (Pinar, 2004; Slattery, 1995, 2007). The method of
currere “provides a strategy for students of curriculum to study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction” (Pinar, 2004, p. 35). As such, Pinar viewed autobiography as a revolutionary act that legitimizes the authority of the individual along the journey of understanding and becomes a means by which we might engage in cultural criticism for persons “located in historical time and cultural place” (p. 36).

Four events occur in the process of currere: the regressive moment, the progressive moment, the analytical moment, and the synthetical moment (Pinar, 2004). Based on psychoanalytic practice, the regressive moment allows for the recollection of the past and allows for the recognition of the role these memories place in present situations. In other words, past memories become a source of data for inner inquiry. The progressive moment provides a way to imagine possibilities for the future with recognition of proleptic hope (Slattery, 1995, 2007) in which the sense of possibility is enlivened by hope for its eventual outcome. Through these first two moments, the past, the present, and the future have all existed in the present moment within the inner spaces of the inquirer.

The third moment, the analytical, allows for a space in which the past is understood in its present context. Pinar (2004, p. 36) noted that this is “akin to phenomenological bracketing; one’s distantiation from past and future functions to create a subjective space of freedom in the present.” Aoki (2005b) described this same notion of bracketing. “In critical reflection the everyday type of attitude is placed in ‘brackets’, as it were, and examined in an attempt to go beyond the immediate level of interpretation” (p.
Aoki continued, “Critical reflection thus leads to an understanding of what is beyond; it is oriented toward making the unconscious conscious” (p. 131).

Finally, the synthetical moment is the place where we, fully present, are able to comprehend the meaning of our situated experiences. While some might consider this process to be self-focused narcissism, Pinar (2004, pp. 37-38) saw this process differently and suggested its importance in the lives of those who seek to live in democratic communities:

Curriculum theory asks you, as a prospective or practicing teacher, to consider your position as engaged with yourself and your students and colleagues in the construction of a public sphere, a public sphere not yet born, a future that cannot be discerned in, or even thought from, the present. So conceived, the classroom becomes simultaneously a civic square and a room of one’s own.

Aoki concurred (2005b, p. 132):

Reflection, however is not only oriented toward making conscious the unconscious by discovering underlying assumptions and intentions, but it is also oriented toward the implications for action guided by the newly gained consciousness and critical knowing. It is interested in bringing about a reorientation through transformation of the assumptions and intentions on which thought and action rest. There may be preconceived norms, values, images of man and the world, assumptions about knowledge, root metaphors and perspectives. 

Competence as critical venturing together, then, with its interests in liberating
man from hidden assumptions and techniques, promotes a theory of man and society that is grounded in the moral attitude of liberation.

Additionally, Pinar (2004, p. 229) called for a reconsideration of teacher education practices that allow for movement away from emphasis on technical skills to “the interdisciplinary, theoretical, and autobiographical study of educational experience in which curriculum and teaching are understood as complicated conversations toward the construction of a democratic public sphere.”

*Narrative Inquiry*

Narrative inquiry has found a location within curriculum studies strongly based on the theory of experience proposed by Dewey in his 1938 work, *Experience and Education*. This theory of experience was written to address the problem of the dichotomous thinking that became such a frustration to Dewey as his theory of experience had been misapplied by many during the progressive era. He proposed:

> It is the business of an intelligent theory of education to ascertain the causes for the conflicts that exist and then, instead of taking one side or the other, to indicate a plan of operations proceeding from a level deeper and more inclusive than is represented by the practices and ideas of contending parties. (p. 5)

Out of this need to communicate across lines of difference, Dewey proposed a theory of experience through which traditional and progressive educators might work together to create educational opportunities for students.

Dewey’s theory of experience (1938) included two concepts: interaction and continuity. Interaction addressed situations in which the inner world of the student
encountered the eternal world in such a way as to provide a moment of learning. Educators, then, “should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile” (Dewey, 1938 p. 40). Implied also is the idea that educators must be aware of the internal conditions of their students so that interaction might thoughtfully be constructed. Continuity of experience considers the nature of experience as it moves from the past, to the present, and then on to the future such that “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). He asked the question, “How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?” (p. 23). And, he suggested that “the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (pp. 27-28).

The practice of narrative inquiry (Barone, 1990; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Czarniawaska, 2004, Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) emerged as a way to artfully link Dewey’s theory of experience with storied understandings, artfully created to engage the reader in the experiences of the inquirer. As with any quality work of fiction, storied experiences contain meaning. It is in the creation of meaning within storied experience that the phenomenological text reveals itself.

Narrative inquiry is expanded and deepened through Janet Miller’s (2004) caution about the lived experiences of teachers. In noting that (p. 27), “in all remembering there
is forgetting,” she called us to consider the stories that have not been told, the voices not heard. She implored those working in narrative and autobiographical inquiry to “explore
and theorize social or cultural contexts and influences, including historically specific
educational discourses” (p. 52). Like Miller, Nash (2004) has worked to deepen narrative
through the inclusion of the scholarly voices that support the particular inquiry.

Pinar (2004; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) deepened the work of narrative inquiry
through currere as it requires the analytical and synthetical moments in which these social
and cultural contexts come into play. He cautioned against the notion of finding a real or
definitive self, suggesting that it is “the autobiographical version of positivism” (Pinar,
2004, p. 54). Instead, through Maxine Greene’s notion of “I am not . . . yet” (Pinar,
1998), we are always in a state of becoming.

_Ambodied Knowing_

A particular phenomena important to this research study is the experience of
embodied knowing (Kesson & Oliver, 2002; Springgay, 2004; Springgay & Freedman,
2007). Roland Barthes (as cited in Doll & Gough, 2002, p. 183) declared the role of his
body: “I can do everything with my language but not with my body. What I hide by my
language, my body utters.” While our Western tradition of Cartesian binaries has caused
us to hegemonize mind over body, Springgay and Freedman (2007, p. xxvii) “refuse to
contain bodies or to impose frameworks that limit bodies; rather curriculum and the
cultural body problematizes what it means to live as and with a bodied subject.”

Kesson and Oliver (2002, p. 187) called for enactment, the “implicit knowing that
is remembered when our whole bodies and minds have been involved in creating and
recreating the fundamental stories of the human condition: birth, eating, dying, loving, and playing.” Noting that our desire to do otherwise, to control our world, to create certainty, has resulted in a state of disenchantment where magic, mystery, and the sacred have been removed. They posed the question (p. 188): “How can we get the mind back into a body that can reenact and remember in nerve and muscle, as well as in word, the coping requirements for human survival?” While arguing for a re-conceptualized theory of experience, they suggested the image of the throb of the heartbeat as a location of life-giving energy to an embodied curriculum. In addition to establishing strong connections in experience to the world of nature, Kesson and Oliver (2002) argued for the inclusion of the arts. “At the very least, a renewed sense of this connection would involve reconsidering the arts not as nonessentials of the curriculum but as the most basic aspects of learning” (p. 189).

Springgay and Freedman (2007) began their discussion of embodied learning with a review of the traveling exhibit *Bodyworlds* through which the viewer is able to encounter plasticized bodies with a view beneath the skin. Noting that the exhibit “established identity as natural and biologically determined,” they asserted that “at best it fails to recognize the imaginary body as a social product, which is culturally specific” (p. xviii). Their edited collection of essays explores the nature of “practices in education that silence, conceal, and limit bodies” (p. xiv).

Important to their argument are the idea of inter-embodiment and the role of touching within the context of these plural spaces. “Inter-embodiment poses that the construction of the body and the production of body knowledge is not created within a
single, autonomous subject (body), but rather that body knowledge and bodies are created in the intermingling and encounters between bodies” (p. xxi). In this space, embodiment “performs curriculum as difference” (p. xxi) in a space where interactions of embodied learners develop understanding from and through their bodies.

The Theological Subtext

The theological text offers another means of thinking about the way in which we make meaning of existence, our world, and our role among others in the world. Dewey noted our interest in this text when he stated:

Theologies and cosmogonies have laid hold of imagination because they have been attended with solemn processions, incense, embroidered robes, music, the radiance of colored lights, with stories that stir wonder and induce hypnotic admiration. That is, they have come to man through a direct appeal to sense and to sensuous imagination. (1934, p. 30)

This review of the theological text considers the idea of cosmology, or the philosophy surrounding the origin of the universe, and the contributions of hermeneutics, depth psychology, liberation theology, and eschatology.

New Cosmologies

Our views of the order and origins of the universe speak of our ontological notions and contribute meaning to the living of our lives. Two cosmological views have contributed to this study as a means of understanding our current milieu. Robert Tarnas’s (2006) work called Cosmos and Psyche proposed a view of conflicting visions of the order of the universe that speak to the current situation within the field of curriculum...
studies. Additionally, Robert Kegan (1998) suggested that the demands of modern life are currently beyond our cosmological conceptions and our psychological evolution. Both speak to the difficulties of the work of having “complicated conversation” (Pinar et al., 1995) within the field of curriculum studies as well as in larger social and cultural arenas.

Tarnas (2006, p. xiii), philosopher and cultural historian, described this historical moment: “Something is dying, and something is being born. The stakes are high, for the future of humanity and the future of the Earth.” Focusing on Western culture, he highlighted three particular markers of contemporary culture. First, like Green (1999), a “profound metaphysical disorientation and groundlessness that pervades contemporary human experience” (Tarnas, 2006, p. xiv). Second, he described the human experience as wrought with alienation from one another and from the Earth. Finally, he noted the “critical need on the part of both individuals and societies for a deeper insight into the unconscious forces and tendencies, creative and destructive, that play such a powerful role in shaping human lives, history, and the life of the planet” (p. xiv).

Noting our modern conditions, Tarnas (2006) saw the paradoxical nature of our existence. On the one hand, we are able to take advantage of our technological advances. On the other hand, we have suffered as a result of our progress.

We cannot fail to recognize the shadow of this great luminosity. The same cultural tradition and historical trajectory that brought forth such noble achievements has also caused immense suffering and loss, for many cultures and peoples, for many people within Western culture itself, and for many other forms of life on the Earth. (p. 11)
Tarnas (2006) described two paradigms of history from which we derive cosmological meaning. Then, he proposed a third possibility. Noting Niels Bohr’s observation of quantum physics (as cited in Tarnas, p. 14), “The opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth” and Oscar Wilde’s observation that “a truth in art is that whose contradictory is also true.” In this way, he called us to consider the nature of postmodern ambiguity (Slattery & Morris, 2001) leading eventually to the possibility of a new cosmology more generative for our time.

As he described the first of these two paradigms of history, Tarnas (2006) reminded us that this particular paradigm is familiar to us from our educational experiences. In this view, human evolution is painted as moving from “a primitive world of dark ignorance, suffering and limitation to a brighter modern world of ever-increasing knowledge, freedom, and well being” (p. 12). Conversely, the second paradigm “reveals a progressive impoverishment of human life and the human spirit, a fragmentation of original unities, a ruinous destruction of the sacred community of being” (p. 13).

Returning to the idea of postmodern ambiguity, Tarnas (2006) described a third paradigm, deconstructive postmodernism in which “no coherent pattern actually exists in human history or evolution, at least none that is independent of human interpretation” (p. 14). Rather than moving into despair, Tarnas viewed this as a necessary transitional step to another cosmological position: “The postmodern mind may eventually be seen as having constituted a necessary transitional stage between epochs, a period of dissolving and opening between larger sustained cultural paradigms” (p. 15).
In a way, Tarnas (2006) proposed the idea of a void (Badiou, 2005a) where a greater truth resides; however, he differed from Badiou in that he pointed to the natural world as providing some clues to the cosmological order of our existence. Noting that our postmodern condition has “been to gradually empty the external world of all intrinsic meaning and purpose” (p. 25) and “our deepest spiritual and psychological aspirations are fundamentally incoherent with the very nature of the cosmos as revealed by the modern mind” (p. 30), Tarnas proposed that we find ourselves “in search of a deeper order” (p. 37).

Understanding the power of myth to provide understanding, Tarnas (2006) then began to tell a good story, a parable of two suitors. In this parable, we are asked to consider ourselves as the universe approached by two different suitors. The first suitor (the modern mind) approaches us as though we are without intelligence, purpose, or interior dimension. The suitor sees us (the universe) as inferior and as an entity merely to be mastered and controlled. The second suitor sees the process of courting us very differently. Tarnas (2006, p. 39) explained:

This suitor seeks to know you not that he might better exploit you but rather to unite with you and thereby bring forth something new, a creative synthesis emerging from both of your depths. He desires to liberate that which has been hidden by the separation between knower and known. His ultimate goal of knowledge is not increased mastery, prediction, and control, but rather a more richly responsive and empowered participation in the co-creative unfolding of new realities. He seeks an intellectual fulfillment that is intimately linked with
imaginative vision, moral transformation, empathic understanding, aesthetic
delight. His act of knowledge is essentially an act of love and intelligence
combined, of wonder as well as discernment, of opening to a process of mutual
discovery.

Through such a vision of understanding the cosmos, Tarnas returned to a discussion of
particular cosmic clues found in the natural world that are visible to those who approach
the cosmos through the eyes of the second suitor. In particular, he noted that patterns of
the celestial bodies and their movement in the universe provide interesting information
about the order of events as we experience them.

Robert Kegan (1994) provided a perspective of human psychological evolution
linked to Tarnas’s (2006) cosmological perspective. Kegan described five orders of
consciousness through which human beings evolve. At any given time, all five orders
may be present within a culture while, at the same time, a culture may display the
predominance of one order over another. Of particular importance to this discussion are
the third, fourth, and fifth orders of consciousness.

The third order is characterized by a traditional mindset in which ideals and
values are transmitted from one generation to another. The maintenance of the dominant
values of the culture occurs through the third order knowing where the goal is to take
advantage of cultural norms to maintain family and community relationships. The
required psychological task is the ability to follow the ordered way of life prescribed by
the culture.
Fourth order consciousness requires the psychological positioning of the existential self. Kegan (1994) noted that existential self-authorship involves the processes of self-regulation, self-formation, identity, autonomy, and individuation. The fourth order consciousness has been a challenge to the traditional relationships created through the third order knowing. In terms of conflict, fourth order consciousness asserts its existential truth and decides to withdraw from the conflict allowing self and other to maintain separate identities and truths. Kegan’s contention is that this modernist paradigm of consciousness is beyond the grasp of the majority of people within our culture. In other words, as the title of his book indicates, modern life places many “in over their heads” in terms of their ability to cope with modern life.

Moving further, Kegan (1994) described a fifth order of consciousness which moves beyond the state of individuation to a place of interdependence with others. He described it this way (p. 319):

The postmodern view suggest quite a different conception, something more like this: “The protracted nature of our conflict suggests not just that the other side will not go away, but that it probably should not. The conflict is a likely consequence of one or both of us making prior, true, distinct, and whole our partial position. The conflict is potentially a reminder of our tendency to pretend to completeness when we are in fact incomplete. We may have this conflict because we need it to recover our truer complexity.”

Through his description of fifth order postmodern consciousness, Kegan challenged us to consider the possibility of cross-difference, multi-modal, collaborative inquiry that will
allow us to address the crisis of our times. Kegan noted that very few human beings have evolved to this level of complexity. He also asserted that the only manner in which human beings can move to a higher level of consciousness is to successfully move through the current level of consciousness. In other words, the level of complexity required to address our modern crisis is not accessible to most human beings within our culture.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics has long been associated within the study of theology, specifically directed toward the interpretation of scriptural text. Within the realm of philosophy, this understanding is broadened to include a variety of texts, including non-linguistic texts. It is an attempt to locate meaning. Slattery (2007, p. 127) argued “that we cannot rely simply on what the text communicates, and we cannot arbitrarily impose contemporary understandings on the text . . . all texts are complex and must be deconstructed on multiple levels.”

Slattery, Krasny, and O’Malley (2006) described six different approaches to hermeneutics. Traditional hermeneutics “is the empirical science of interpretation of canonical religious texts within their historical context by a magisterium intent on defining the meaning of the text” (p. 131). A second approach intends to understand the text in terms of the view of the author with the ability to arrive at an objective truth. Slattery et al. included educational reformer, E. D. Hirsch in this category of interpretation. A third approach considers the social and historical moment in which the text was written. A fourth approach is reflective hermeneutics. Slattery et al. noted the
influence of Paul Ricoeur and described this process as self-reflection in which “the first understandings of the sense of the text must be validated through some explanatory procedure to ensure the sense of the text” (p. 131). A fifth approach, post-structural hermeneutics is a deconstructive process with the text that “becomes an endless process of critique and deconstruction—a language game, some will say, in order to demonstrate that all interpretations are contingent, emerging, and relative” (p. 131). Finally, critical hermeneutics, developed by a critical theory tradition, seeks to deconstruct the power relationships inherent in any text.

Depth Psychology

Although depth psychology is viewed as a particular branch of modern psychology, it offers something beyond the modern paradigm of the epistemological distance of scientific research. Depth psychologists Carl Jung (1973) and James Hillman (1996) have worked with the idea of moving subconscious understanding to the level of consciousness. In particular images found in dreams are used to locate subconscious feelings. It is important to note that depth psychology provides for a radical subjectivity in which the human being who uncovers or creates images coming from the subconscious must be responsible for identifying the meaning of the images.

In a similar way, Joseph Campbell’s (1986/2002) work includes the study of depth psychology taken to the level of the collective unconscious. Archetypal images, images that are common to the experiences of human beings, are communicated through myth and serve as guiding stories for the human imagination.
Theorists and practitioners in other fields have utilized the theories of depth psychology to promote human growth. Art therapists (McNiff, 1992) work with created images to help clients explore their inner life. Within the field of curriculum studies, arts-based researchers (Sameshima, 2007; Slattery, 2001) have worked with images to explore their interiority.

*Liberation Theology*

Liberation theology has provided support for a critical, justice oriented perspective within the realm of theological understanding. Largely rooted within the Catholic Christian tradition, liberation theologians have applied scriptural text, in particular the words of Christ, to the lived situations of the oppressed. Rather than moving the oppressed to expect liberation in some distant future, liberation theologians move this future possibility into the present moment. Slattery (2006, p. 231) noted the role of liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez in the promotion of “hope for all people, especially the poor, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, or age.” Further, he noted that “liberation theologians reevaluate historical realities and advocate changes that are contrary to dominant social trends but that are nevertheless linked to a deep current of desire for liberation of the poor” (p. 213).

Like liberation theologians whose work has been concentrated in South and Central America, Paulo Freire (1968/1970, 1992) advocated for action on behalf of the oppressed. “Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism” (Freire, 1992, p. 9). A strong proponent of theory deeply connected to
action (praxis), Freire stated, “hope as an ontological need, demands an anchoring in practice” (p. 9).

**Eschatological Understandings**

Generally understood as the theology of ultimate human destiny, eschatology is most often understood in popular culture in our fascination with a coming apocalypse. Slattery (1989, 2007) connected eschatological thinking to the work of John Dewey, in particular his notion of continuity (1938) and an envisioned and realized future.

Slattery (1989, 2007) described three eschatological possibilities. The first is a realized eschatology in which “materialistic conceptions of hope seek resolution of conflict or gratification of the body, mind, and spirit in the present context” (p. 81). The second is a future eschatology in which all hope of satisfaction is deferred to a future time. Slattery (2006, p. 81) noted that “if hope is delayed until after death, as some believe, then we live in rear, resignation, or the paralysis of delayed expectations and constant anticipation.”

Another possibility of hope exists, that of a proleptic eschatology (Slattery, 1989, 2006). This idea builds on Dewey’s notion of continuity in which the past, the present, and the future are all accessible to us in the present moment. Adding a theological dimension, Slattery suggested that a proleptic hope is one in which we find this deep connection across time and move toward the future knowing that we have the ability to shape it. For Dewey (1938), this sense of time involved taking into account our end-in-view.
Proleptic eschatology offers a way to access the strength and determination to act for justice even in the midst of personal tragedies like disease, addiction, or suicide, or amid the global turmoil of terrorism, mass starvation, genocide, war, or the rampant sexual abuse of children. (Slattery, 2007, p. 84)

The Political Subtext

The political text within the field of curriculum studies has worked to disrupt the notion that school curriculum is, or could be, politically neutral (Pinar et al., 1995). Although commonly considered neutral within the literature of the curriculum field prior to the 1970s, “that the idea is largely discarded today represents one testimony to the influence of this body of curriculum scholarship” (p. 244). Working with the ideas of reproduction theory and resistance theory, Pinar et al. (1995) described the progress of the political text. Whereas reproduction theory focused on school curriculum’s role in maintaining, or reproducing hegemonic social structures, resistance theory focused on importance of resisting the curriculum of reproduction. Two aspects of resistance theory, critical theory (Apple, 2001; Giroux & McLaren, 1989) and feminism (Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1994; Miller, 2004) are important to this study. Finally, another framework for consideration, deep democracy (Green, 1999), allows for dialogic possibilities across lines of difference.

Critical Theory

Critical theory provides a framework from which we can examine the power relationships inherent in any situation. In particular, critical theory within the context of curriculum studies has focused on the nature of power relationships as they represent
economic difference and the resultant power relationships between those who have economic advantage and those who do not. While Kozol (1991, 2005) documented the lived experiences of students in urban centers, others have theorized about the social structures inherent in the economic disparity represented in our nation’s schools (Apple, 2001; Giroux & McLaren, 1989). Apple (2001) has linked issues of economic power as seen through a market driven economy and the politics of right-wing conservatives to the school curriculum designed to reproduce it. Pinar et al. (1995) noted the particular orientation toward Marxist and neo-Marxist views of these scholars. “While they tend to blame these problems on the economic system, i.e. capitalism, they do regard the schools as participating in the general system of injustice and suffering” (p. 244). Further they noted that “there is a visionary element among political theorists, as they tend to call for an empowered citizenry capable of altering their circumstances in favor of a more just society” (p. 244).

In addition to the curriculum scholars working within the United States, Paulo Freire (1968, 1970) worked through the framework of liberation theology in order to examine the economic and social oppressions that have impacted peoples of South and Central America.

[Freire], who viewed the problems of education as inseparable from political, social, and economic problems, engaged in education as emancipatory practice. He encouraged peasants to examine their life situations critically and to take the initiative to transform social structures that denied them meaningful civic participation. (Slattery, 2007, pp. 88-89)
Feminism

Feminist scholarship seeks to expose and deconstruct the social structures that create hegemonic relationships based on gender. Within the field of curriculum studies, feminist scholars (Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1994; Miller, 2004) have contributed a critical view of the nature of gendered experiences within the school curriculum, educational organizations, as well as the larger culture and, as a result, have acted to resist misogynous social structures.

Madeline Grumet (1988) explored the nature of the experience of the female teacher in which practiced is gendered male, forcing female teachers to create distance between themselves and their students where each become untouchable. Pinar et al. (1995) considered Grumet’s work, Bitter Milk, to have greatly influenced the feminist scholarship that followed.

Janet Miller (2004) spoke of the development of women’s voices as the “sound of silence breaking.” Her use of autobiographical inquiry is presented with a caution and a critique of work that fails to provide critical awareness of the social factors that shape our teacher narratives. “One difficulty arises when autobiographies, or narratives, or stories about education are told or written as unitary, and transparent, and are used as evidence of ‘progress’ or ‘success’ in school reform” (p. 51). Furthermore, she noted that “such ‘teacher stories’ often offer unproblematized recounts of what is taken to be the transparent, linear, and authoritative ‘reality’ of those teachers’ ‘experiences’” (p. 51).

Having identified closely with the ideas of Paulo Freire, bell hooks (1994) sought to extend his work to her own location of race and gender. From the location of critical
work, she promoted the notion of crossing boundaries as a way of deconstructing them through “transgressions.” The following year (hooks, 1995), she extended her critical work to an examination of the role of art making in the lives of those who experience marginalization. Additionally, she examined the manner in which art critics and art institutions have marginalized African Americans and women, particularly African American women. In an act of resistance, she provided a review of the work of many contemporary African American female artists.

_Deep Democracy_

Judith Green (1999) provided a significant contribution to the discussion of the application of democratic ideals to the lived experience of human beings within our culture. Her call for deep democracy is supported by her contention that “existentially, deep democracy would reconnect people in satisfying ways, thus healing our currently dangerous pathologies of existential nihilism and ontological rootlessness” (p. xiv). As a “realistically imaginative philosophical expansion of the implications of the democratic ideal into habits of the heart and a shared way of life” (p. xiv), Green called for the rebuilding of the public square.

While locating the hope of possibility in cross-difference coalitions, Green (1999) reminded us of the importance of prophetic, critical pragmatism directed toward the transformation of neo-capitalist culture. Beginning as local initiatives, these coalitions must connect with one another across geographical boundaries so that change might occur.
This must be a collaborative undertaking of many people in diverse locations, and across generations, within which no one has enough time, energy, and gifts to contribute focally to all parts at once, although the best work in each area is done with an awareness of ongoing work in the other areas. (p. 218)

Of importance to this study is her call for theorizing around the “construction of a general framework for deeply democratic cross-difference transformative collaboration, including general strategies, intellectual tools, and communicative techniques” (p. 219).

Finally, Green (1999) also noted the role the arts might play in her vision of the deeply democratic community. She noted the energy generated through the Harlem Renaissance, and building on the work of Alain Locke, she suggested that “the arts offer an effective radical middle path of self-creation and cultural liberation between imitative appeasement at one extreme and a separatist anti-aesthetic on the other” (p. 99). Furthermore, “the arts so conceived can help to transform conditions of cultural imperialism into respectful and mutually beneficial interracial relations” (p. 99). As Dewey (1934b, p. 81) noted, “Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life.”

The Organizational Subtext

Some scholars have focused on the nature of curriculum decision-making at the level of organizations. Citing Decker Walker, Pinar et al. (1995) noted three areas for discussion regarding curriculum: Curriculum policy, curriculum planning and design, and curriculum implementation. Within the political environment that created No Child Left
Behind (2001), very little is left to local control regarding policy and planning as states have developed standards for every grade level assessed by standardized tests and reported to the public. For this moment in time, the level of curriculum implementation remains a place for working out the nature of democratic living. For the purposes of this literature review, curriculum decision-making refers to the level of decision-making still within the control of teachers and administrators in local schools. This does not imply that work need not be done at the level of national, state, and local policy. It simply reflects the situation in which teachers, and in particular, teacher/artists experience their work. In particular, democratic decision-making processes contribute to this study’s possibility of cross-difference, multi-modal means of democratic engagement. Additionally, it is important to consider the leadership qualities that promote such work within the context of educational organizations.

Democratic Curriculum Decision Making

Within the field of curriculum studies, the work of Henderson and Kesson (1999, 2004), Henderson and Hawthorne (2000), and Henderson and Gornik (2007) has focused on building the capacity of teachers to make curriculum decisions consistent with the ideals of democratic living. Noting the importance of quality decisions, Henderson and Kesson (2004) proposed engagement with seven interrelated modes of inquiry. This work evolves further (Henderson & Gornik, 2007) to suggest means by which educational decision makers might create curriculum decisions that result in transformative experiences for students and their teachers.
The seven modes of inquiry described by Henderson and Kesson (2004) included techne, or skill “by which we carry out our craft” (pp. 48-49). This craft knowledge represents the majority of time in teacher preparation programs and is often the focus of in-service teachers. Poesis is a form of inquiry that takes into account spiritual, mythical sensibilities. Praxis, as a form of inquiry, considers the importance of the connection of theoretical engagement to action based on theory. Dialogos is a form of inquiry that foregrounds the value of multiple perspectives along with a willingness to engage in cross-difference dialogue. “Phronesis involves deliberative, collaborative inquiry into problem definitions and solutions” (p. 57). Polis requires an awareness of the larger political framework within which we work as well as an appreciation and regard for citizenship. Finally, theoria offers a deep regard for theory and its role in the decision-making process. As curriculum decision makers in classrooms and schools engage in reflection about their work, these modes of inquiry offer a way to analyze the quality of the decision-making process.

Henderson and Gornik (2007) moved this work forward by thinking about the nature of the inquiry processes required of students as they engage with the curriculum materials, activities, and situations that are the result of our curriculum decision making. They offered a framework of 3s understanding in which quality experiences, those that are transformative, involve an interaction (Dewey, 1938) among the self, the subject, and the social context in which the students live and work. As a result of transformative inquiry experiences, students, teachers, and other curriculum decision makers will be
better prepared to engage in cross-difference dialogue called for in our complicated
curriculum conversation.

*Artful Democratic Leadership*

Artful democratic leadership is, indeed, a very complex and difficult venture. The
body of work surrounding emotional intelligence offers wisdom to the discussion of
cross-textual, cross-difference understanding. Prophetic leadership, though difficult and
controversial, is needed to call others to matters of significance (McElfresh-Spehler &
Slattery, 1999). Then, specifically, democratic curriculum leadership will provide a
means by which we can approach the leadership task of curriculum decision making in
the context of schools.

Primal leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) moves emotional
intelligence literature into the realm of leadership. First, the authors emphasized the
importance of a leadership repertoire based on strong awareness of self and others along
with the ability to resonate with others. Resonant leadership is a style most able to move
others toward action with deep commitment of energy and resources. Essentially,
resonant leaders understand how to connect with deepest of human values and emotions
and they are able to encourage others to direct those energies toward the common good.

Prophetic leadership (McElfresh-Spehler & Slattery, 1999) brings the critical
dimension to the art of leadership. This difficult and often unpopular role requires the
leader to take significant risk in order to address issues or situations in which others are
marginalized. At times, artists provide this role within the culture, especially through
forms, such as film and photography that are more readily accessible to many.
Noting the need for leadership working towards democratic decision making, Henderson and Kesson (1999) noted five dimensions of leadership necessary for transformation within organizations. The first dimension is that of helping teachers to create deeply engaging learning experiences. Second, curriculum leaders create opportunities for teachers to develop and create professional development activities based upon their differentiated needs. Third, leaders help teachers to develop the ability to design educational programs that reflect authentic inquiry. Fourth, the ability to redesign the organizational structures that limit the quality of the work is essential to our ability to sustain this work. Finally, the curriculum leader is able to effectively engage community members in dialogue that develops this critical relationship and provides for all a sense of the democratic purpose of educational institutions.

Summary: Cross Textual Possibilities

If we are to have hope for our sustainability, and if we are to have hope for a way of living consistent with democratic ideas and with a deep regard for the human beings with whom we dwell in community, we must be able to engage in cross-difference conversation. In order to begin to create communities that have both a regard for human difference and the rights of others to pursue truth alongside of an ethical system that promotes the good of all, we must develop greater sophistication in our ability to understand and interpret a variety of ideas or texts.

The field of curriculum studies offers such an opportunity through the varied subtexts around which the field has gathered. However, although a variety of subtexts have developed depth and complexity of their own since the years of the
Reconceptualization, little progress has been made in our ability to engage one another across textual lines beyond the matter of debate. The reconceptualized notion of our work requires that we move forward, together, to address the issues that have framed the crisis of our time.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Dewey's work on experience is our imaginative touchstone for reminding us that in our work, the answer to the question, Why narrative? is, Because experience.

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50)

In his work, Experience and Education, Dewey (1938) sought to clarify the progressive education agenda because of the ways in which his theories had been misunderstood and misapplied. These misunderstandings and misapplications of Dewey’s ideas resulted in a reaction against the progressive movement so strong in its force that the theories supporting this reaction have remained the dominant ideas guiding public education into the 21st century (Marshall et al., 2000; Pinar et al., 1995).

Narrative inquiry (Barone, 1990; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Czarniawaska, 2004; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) locates itself firmly within Dewey’s theory of experience. The three dimensional inquiry space described by contemporary narrative researchers is an application of Dewey’s theory of experience to this research methodology. In a sense, there is no other methodology that better suits this study than narrative inquiry.

In order to determine the nature of the experiences of teacher/ artists who create art for the purpose of social change, we must explore their storied lives, lived in the context of classrooms, studios, and performance spaces. Through our stories, we are able
to explore the inner landscapes (Palmer, 1998) from which we teach and live, for better or for worse.

Methods

The Rationale for Qualitative Inquiry

Hatch (2002) proposed that one consider qualitative inquiry based upon the researcher’s “beliefs about how the world is ordered and how we can come to know things about it” (p. 2). Additionally, it important to consider the nature of the questions we wish to ask. In this study, I have asked questions about the nature of the Denise’s, Charles’, Sam’s and Theresa’s experiences. These questions do not lend themselves to quantification, but rather, to understanding the nuances, or qualities (Eisner, 1998a), of their storied lives.

Guba and Lincoln (1998) described competing paradigms in qualitative research. Through this lens, narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and phenomenological (van Manen, 1990) inquiry are located largely in a constructivist paradigm. However, the examination of issues of social justice, and the resultant expectation of social change place the inquiry also within a paradigm of critical theory. These paradigmatic constructions require the consideration of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions that characterize each. The responses to these questions place this study outside the realm of quantitative research.

The Rationale for Narrative and Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry

Two research approaches were most fitting for the research questions. Narrative inquiry and hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry have informed the process of gaining
understanding. Although these two approaches are very similar in their philosophical groundings, each offers subtle differences that inform the other. The discussion of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is informed by the work of Max van Manen (1990) and the discussion of narrative inquiry through Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000).

Both modes of inquiry answer ontological and epistemological questions in a similar manner. Regarding the ontological question, the notion of truth is regarded as situated rather than universal. In this study, the lived experiences of teacher/artists arise from an inner authority that speaks to this situated truth. Epistemological questions are answered through an understanding of the importance of developing relationships with participants in order to most fully understand their lived experience. Therefore, epistemological distance from participants is not desirable.

These two approaches can be viewed as belonging, for the most part, to a paradigm of constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) due to these ontological and epistemological positions. Both modes of inquiry seek to understand by constructing meaning along with participants. To some degree, however, both narrative inquiry and hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry seek change as a result of the inquiry process itself. In that way, both modes of inquiry might be thought of as approaching a critical theory perspective although neither seeks, as a primary goal, to identify the social structures inherent in situations that limit the opportunities of oppressed peoples.
Both modes of inquiry emphasize the importance of story as data is collected, analyzed, and reported. However, it is here that it becomes important to explore each type of inquiry in order to best understand the subtle differences and strengths each offers.

**Narrative Inquiry**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) began with the notion of experience as the means by which human beings construct meaning, and therefore, learn. Because experience is so critical to understand how human beings make meaning, stories of these experiences become an important way in which we can understand. Dewey (1938) described this framework for construction of meaning, and his work is the major influence upon the authors’ notion of narrative inquiry. Dewey also contributed the idea of “end in view,” in which we are able to not only experience the past and the present, but also the future, as we imagine what it might be and then create it as we have envisioned it to be.

Slattery (1995) added to this idea through his notion of proleptic hope. Prolepsis is a literary technique in which the reader is placed somewhere in time in the midst of a story. The reader is then taken backwards in time, to the past, in order for the reader to more fully understand the present moment. In the same sense, it is possible for the reader to be taken into the future. As human beings, we have the same sense of temporality as we live and experience our lives. Through our storied existence, we experience both the past and present in the present moment. Through his notion of proleptic hope, Slattery added to this idea by suggesting that we experience the past, present, and future all in the present moment because we are able, as Dewey (1938) suggested, to construct our future through the way we envision it today. Narrative, as a linguistic form, is able to embrace
these notions of temporality. In its richest form, narrative inquiry allows us to create this full sense of temporality as well as remember and retell the stories of the past, construct the narratives of the present, and imagine possible futures. Storied experiences always beg for their connections to the future.

As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, storied inquiry offers the opportunity for profound opportunity for change:

Following Dewey, our principal interest in experience is the growth and transformation in the life story that we as researchers and our participants author. Therefore, difficult as it may be to tell a story, the more difficult but important task is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change. We imagine, therefore, that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story, and reliving a life story. (p. 71)

Because the epistemological position of this research involved the development of strong relationships and a working through of the research process by both researcher and participants, narrative inquiry calls for this same living, telling, retelling, and reliving on my part. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, “One of the starting points for narrative inquiry is the researcher’s own narrative, the researcher’s autobiography” (p. 70).

A three dimensional inquiry space best frames narrative inquiry. The first dimension is inward and outward. Through narrative we are able to examine the experiences of human beings from their inward perspectives as well as their outward
experiences. The second dimension is temporal in nature and requires that a full spectrum of time be considered in the forms of the past, the present, and the future. Finally, the third dimension requires an examination of space, so that context is richly described and considered.

As field texts moved forward into research texts, I engaged in an analytic process that was narratively constructed. The coding of field text was done through examining the elements of the various stories that were presented. I was intimately involved with the text, through numerous readings, re-readings, and ponderings in order to perceive the interweaving of the various narratives. The final research text, although subjected to the rigors of text analysis, can be viewed as a narrative art form in which I created intersections of understandings among the various narratives.

_Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry_

Van Manen (1990) added the richness of two perspectives: hermeneutics and phenomenology. Hermeneutics is a classical inquiry process in which text materials are analyzed for meaning. Phenomenology foregrounds the notion of lived experience and can be considered a philosophy of the unique in which we seek to understand circumstances as nonreplicable situations. Van Manen stated, “We might say that hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the logos of other, the whole, the communal, or the social” (p. 7). Through this mode of inquiry, we are able to understand the specifics of a situated personal experience, but we are asked to
think of the experience in terms of broader, communal experience that we call phenomena, or essence.

Therefore, in the gathering of research data, we must look beyond the simple facts of an experience as it has been lived. We must pursue questions of meaning, as they were experienced at the time, and as they are experienced from a retrospective view of the events of the experience. Van Manen (1990) stated, “One might say that phenomenological questioning teaches the reader to wonder, to question deeply the very thing that is being questioned by the question” (p. 44). He described our human desire to make meaning that requires a deep attentiveness to life experiences. In doing so, and as we wonder about what to do with this kind of research, we should, instead, question what the research might do with us. Similar to narrative inquiry, we see the value placed on the change process for both the researcher and the participants.

Through conversational interviewing, I created storied field texts which were used for the purpose of data analysis. Themes, or structures of meaning, are understood as the universal categories of meaning that we have assigned to the lived experience. A theme is only a hint, and begs the reader to move into the rich, deep description that allows for a fuller understanding of the lived experience.

Van Manen (1990) offered three methods for analysis of themes. The first method is a holistic or sententious approach in which the text is viewed as a whole. The researcher asks what phrase might best capture the meaning of the text as a whole. He cautioned that this method is the most prone to a misreading of the text. Second, a selective or highlighting approach asks the researcher to move through the text
highlighting the statements that most reflect the phenomenon being studied. Finally, a line by line approach calls for the researcher to look line by line, or section by section, to ask what the text reveals about the phenomenon.

*The Intersection of Inquiry Approaches*

The desire to understand and make meaning of the experiences of the participants, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa, begs for an inquiry approach that creates a space for meaning to develop. Each of the inquiry approaches described above contributes a portion of this space. When intersected, and then joined, they offered a fullness of expression that allowed this desire to make meaning move forward most fully into the creation of a research text that, in itself, allowed for a space in which the participants and I moved most fully into meanings that offered opportunity for growth and change.

Metaphorically, we all were drawn to write the chapters of our own narratives that are temporally placed in the future. A story always begs for its ending(s).

This inquiry resulted from a deep curiosity about the experience of art making when it is done to influence social change. Narrative inquiry offered us the opportunity to understand human experience more deeply as these acts of art making are placed within a life context. We first sought to understand this experience as a combination of inward and outward experience. Then, we moved toward understanding the experience through time so that the life experiences of the past and present helped to shape the vision of the future. Finally, we sought to understand human experience through the context of the space in which it occurs. This three dimensional space allowed us to experience a much greater depth of understanding. Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry added to the richness of
narrative inquiry by deepening the narrative inquiry space through an examination of the particular lived experience in terms of essence or universal themes.

Research Questions

This study was designed to research the experiences of teacher/artists who have demonstrated fidelity (Badiou, 2001) to the work of social justice through their own and collaborative art making efforts. The questions listed below were designed to explore the Denise’s, Charles’, Sam’s and Theresa’s experiences as individuals and members of classroom/school communities.

1. How does art making engage the teacher/artist in personal transformation moving toward social justice?

2. Within the context of community, how does art making engage the teacher/artist in social transformation moving toward social justice?

The questions were designed to elicit storied understandings of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) consistent with Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience including an inward/outward interaction as well as the continuity of experience through past, present, and future frames.

Participants

The participants in this study were selected purposefully (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). They must have been practicing artists who also fulfilled the role of classroom teacher, P-12 or postsecondary levels. They each must have demonstrated a pattern, over a number of years, of working consistently around themes of social justice, both as individuals and as leaders of classroom communities. It was necessary for all participants
to have been located within the same geographical region due to the lack of funding for this study. This sample was, indeed, very difficult to locate. Through networks of artists, I located four artist/teachers within the same geographical region who met all the parameters for participation in this study.

The participants, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa engaged in the following activities:

- Read and discussed a journal article (McElfresh-Spehler & Slattery, 1999) related to conceptual base of study as well as quotations from Dewey’s (1938) work in which he proposed the notions of interaction and continuity. Each was provided a copy of the complete work from which the quotes were selected.
- Participated in at least two field visits in which I observed their work;
- Participated in conversations about their experiences of art making, based on social justice themes, through individual interviews (2) and a focus group session;
- Participated in a post-focus group dialogue via email.

**Procedures**

Due to the nature of the questions explored in this study, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were selected purposefully (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) to meet the following criteria: They were teachers in P-12 or post-secondary settings with at least 10 years of experience in the classroom. They were also practicing artists with a history of production in their area. They have demonstrated continued engagement with social
justice work over a period of time as well as a history of engaging others in this work to indicate their fidelity (Badiou, 2001) toward this work.

I began this research project with an initial meeting. The goals of this meeting were threefold. Most important, this meeting provided an opportunity for me to begin to build rapport with the participants in this research setting. Although I had established rapport with three of them in the past, individually, as co-creators, colleagues, and researchers, I had not worked with them as a group nor had they met one another. I asked each to share with the group the progression of their work and their interest in social justice work in particular. Second, I provided background information about the nature of the conceptual framework of the study as well as the details of the research timeline. Finally, I obtained their written consent to participate in the study.

Next, individual, 60-minute interviews were conducted with Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa to address the research questions regarding their own experiences of art making. These interviews were conducted in the work settings of the participants so that I could construct field notes involving the context in which they work. Each was asked to bring an important piece of work to the interview so that the questions might be addressed with reference to a specific work. Although discussion points were prepared in advance of the interviews, I was open to hear other ideas.

Next, a second 60-minute interview was conducted in order to address the research questions related to art making within the context of community. Again, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were asked to bring any artifacts, works of art, and so forth, related to significant experience of art making within community. Discussion points were
prepared in advance, but each was able to add information beyond the scope of the questions.

Following the interviews, data were coded narratively and narratives were constructed for Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa, taking into account the richness of the three-dimensional inquiry space. Each narrative was then analyzed as a source of phenomenological information by coding the narrative text for themes. The data were analyzed for common and differing themes which became the topics for the focus group discussion where the participants were able to confirm, clarify, and further explore their experiences. Two of the four participants were able to attend the focus group session. A third was hospitalized, and a fourth was unable to navigate through difficult winter weather. Therefore, email communication with the total group allowed me to include the missing group members so that they could contribute.

Member checking was utilized during each phase of research so that Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were assured that I was accurately representing their stories as they were told to me. As each new data set was analyzed, they received a storied version so that they might confirm, add to, or clarify the written document. Communication regarding member checking was conducted via email.

Finally, an external audit was conducted to promote further trustworthiness of the data analysis. An external auditor was located who had familiarity with narrative research as well as expertise in the area of art education or the role of the arts within curriculum studies.
This project developed according to the timeline as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Research Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>First meeting with participants to discuss:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timeline and activity information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptual base of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October and November 2007</td>
<td>Conducted individual interview #1 with participants—participants were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asked to bring a piece of art created around a social justice theme to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide the context for the interview questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field visit #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November and December 2007</td>
<td>Narrative coding of individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December and January 2007</td>
<td>Conducted individual interview #2 with participants concerning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experiences of collective art making created around themes of social justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field visit #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January and February 2007</td>
<td>Narrative coding of interview #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January and February 2007</td>
<td>Narrative coding of field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Construction of narratives and phenomenological analysis of narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Focus group session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Narrative construction of focus group session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phenomenological analysis of focus group session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2007-March 2008</td>
<td>Member checking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Peer review with dissertation committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>External audit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection and Analysis

Field Notes

Field notes were constructed during my visits to Denise’s, Charles’, Sam’s and Theresa’s work locations where both interviews were conducted. Three of the four participants were visited in gallery or performance spaces in addition to their regular work settings. These field notes allowed me to collect data regarding the settings in which each has located her/his work. Rich descriptions of these settings provided one of the dimensions necessary for this three dimensional inquiry approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Interviews

Two individual interviews were conducted with each participant. The first interview addressed research question 1 and the second interview addressed question 2. Table 2 lists the interview discussion points related to each research question.

Table 2

Interview Discussion Points Related to Each Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Discussion Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How does art making engage the teacher/artist in personal transformation moving toward social justice? | • Interaction between inward and outward forces  
• Continuity between the past, present, and the future  
• The presence of an “event”  
• The presence of fidelity in response to the “event”  
• Personal transformation toward social justice |
| 2. Within the context of community, how does art making engage the teacher/artist in social transformation moving toward social justice? | • Creation of community memory  
• Generation of collective hope  
• Creation of collective meaning making  
• Creation of social transformation  
• Movement toward social justice |
Focus Group

Participants experienced a focus group session designed to further explore, clarify, and make meaning of their individual and collective art making experiences. During this session, two participants responded to themes generated through the analysis of the narratives constructed from interview and observational data collected during field visits. Because two participants were unable to attend the focus group session, follow-up discussion regarding the emergent themes occurred through email communication among the group members.

Data Analysis

Data sources included field observations, individual interviews, a focus group session, and email communication following the focus group. Field notes provided a rich description of the setting in which Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa engage in their work. Audio tapes of interviews were transcribed to create field texts (see Appendix A), and field observation notes became field texts. Each field text was read many times in order to gain a sense of the storied experience presented by the participant. Field texts were then coded narratively—characters, setting, plot, theme, tensions—within each participant’s story as well as across all three stories and then a narrative was constructed for each participant. These narratives were then read numerous times to gain a sense of the phenomena represented by the stories of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. Phenomenological coding revealed emergent themes that became the discussion points for the focus group (See Appendix B). Email communication following the focus group provided additional support for the emergent themes.
An important consideration in narrative inquiry is the storied understanding of the researcher. During the course of this research project, I engaged regularly in my own art making process through drawing and painting so that I could experience the very thing I was asking of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. Through enrolling in college coursework in drawing and painting, I kept a disciplined practice throughout the study. As a participant observer, I was conscious of trying to remain aware of my own bias and reflect upon my ability to see another’s experience through her or his lens.

**Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed several factors to address the quality of the research project. Rather than measures of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, they proposed the notion of trustworthiness which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was first addressed through triangulation. Data was collected from individual interviews, from field observations, and through a focus group session with follow-up email communication. Field notes, taken in the settings in which the Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa conduct their work, provided rich description of the setting which added to the three dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Prolonged engagement supported credibility as I worked with Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa over a 6-month period in which we gathered data and engaged in the member checking process. This process also satisfies Eisner’s (1998) notion of structural corroboration.
Transferability parallels generalizability in traditional research paradigms. In other words, can the results of the study be generalized to non-participants? In this study, transferability was addressed by asking the external auditor to determine if he was able to experience the story of the teacher/artist participants through the written description contained in the data. Eisner’s (1998) notion of referential validity was addressed through this process.

Dependability parallels reliability and was addressed in this study through a review of the data with the external auditor and through peer review with my dissertation committee. In each case, these colleagues were asked to review the data analysis process to determine whether or not my conclusions were consistent with the data collected. Eisner (1998) referred to this process as consensual validation.

Confirmability was addressed during the research process through member checking. Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa examined the field and research texts to be sure that I have represented their thoughts as they were expressed in individual interviews and in the focus group.

Summary

Based on Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience, this narrative study was designed to explore the experiences of teacher/artists who create art for the purpose of social change. Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa have not only been involved in their own art production, but they have worked with students toward the same end. Narrative and phenomenological methodologies have allowed me to understand something about the nature of the art making experience (Dewey, 1934b) and its role in their lives and those
within their classroom communities. In particular, their stories have allowed me to explore the phenomenon of transformation and the ways in which art making provided a particular kind of space for this to occur.

In particular, field observations, individual interviews, and a focus group with follow-up email communication provided a three-dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) through which the storied experiences of the participants could be constructed in narrative form. A phenomenological approach to cross-narrative analysis provided rich understandings of Denise’s, Charles’, Sam’s and Theresa’s experiences and the meaning embedded within them.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

*I have experienced the flesh made word.* (Charles)

*We have supported each other and the community with truth telling—speaking truth to power.* (Denise)

*My ideas are allowed to be organic, to grow, to change, and to build.* (Theresa)

*Photography has affected the way I see the world.* (Sam)

In order to understand the nature of the experiences of teacher/artists engaged in social change, I conducted several field visits with each participant, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. Two individual interviews were conducted with each participant, with one interview dedicated to each research question. Field texts consisting of observational data and interview transcriptions were coded narratively to address the three-dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of the interaction between inward and outward forces, the continuity among the past, present, and future, as well as the settings in which these teacher/artists live and work. I then constructed a narrative for each participant, bearing in mind this three dimensional inquiry space in order to provide richness of dimension, to provide the possibility of examining personal, historical perspectives that would inform our understanding of the social forces shaping the narratives of each participant. A cross-narrative analysis of themes provided a picture of the phenomena experienced by the teacher/artists as they engaged in their work. The
categorical organization of these themes emerged from the data and was not anticipated in advance of this study.

Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were asked to attend a focus group session in which they provided feedback and engaged in dialogue about the themes that emerged from the cross-narrative analysis. As sometimes occurs in the research process, two participants were not able to attend. One was hospitalized due to a condition acquired through his work in a foreign country and another was unable to drive through the difficult winter weather conditions that occurred unexpectedly early that evening. The two remaining participants were eager to spend time together to discuss their work. They had both experienced a significant connection the evening of our organizational meeting and had not met in person since although they had engaged in email dialogue.

I decided to proceed with the focus group session and to include the other two participants as they were able by reporting to them the results of our dialogue, and by asking them to participate in further clarification through email in which all participants were included. To open the focus group, I asked each person to provide an update about his or her experiences of art making since the group met in person the first time. Two hours later, we were able to examine the data that emerged from the cross-narrative analysis. Emerging as a complete surprise to me, I was able to observe much of the phenomena described in the cross-narrative analysis. As I result, I felt compelled to include a narrative description of the events of the 2-hour time period.

The results reported in this chapter are organized according to the research process itself. In the first section, the constructed narratives for Denise, Charles, Sam, and
Theresa allow the reader to move fully into the text to encounter the real person represented by these words. Embedded in the text are links to the art produced by the participants during this process as well as art produced prior to the study that related to it. The second section details the results of the cross-narrative analysis including the emergent organization of phenomena described by Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. The final section includes emergent themes gleaned from the focus group session and the electronic dialogue that followed. Because the focus group session emerged as an unusual research event in itself, a narrative was constructed to provide a rich description of the events that occurred. Information gained from the electronic dialogue provided confirmation and elaboration of the emergent themes of the study.

Participant Narratives

Denise Penland

Shortly after the end of the civil war in El Salvador, Denise Penland arrived at the airport in San Salvador and prepared to move through security. Arriving on Christmas morning, she found the airport full of men with machine guns strapped to their backs. Frightened by what she saw around her, she thought about what her friends in El Salvador had told her to say as she passed through security. Security guards began to open and search through her many small white packages containing clay tiles for her work in El Salvador. Fortunately, the guards were pleased when she offered them some of her chocolate that she brought as a gift for the missionaries, and that seemed to ease her process through security.
As she arrived in the community where she was to work, Denise’s friend suggested that they go first to the wake of a young boy and his girlfriend whose lives had ended violently the day before. Denise was jarred by her experience there and found herself pondering the fragility of life. For many years, she had been considering the question. “What is sacred?” This event, however, pushed her further into her exploration of this life-long question. She was taken by the juxtaposition of the beauty of the land alongside of the ravages of war and the depth of poverty. She was also jarred by the notion of forgiveness as she witnessed this family grieve. You see, the young woman had been killed by her boyfriend. Because he had no family, the young woman’s mother also prepared his body for burial and provided the ritual space for grieving his death as well.

Denise was invited to El Salvador to help a community deal with its losses some 10 years earlier when three nuns and one lay church worker were brutally tortured, raped, and murdered before their bodies were thrown into a shallow grave. One of these nuns was a friend to Denise. The two had become acquainted through their relationship to the same order of nuns and they enjoyed visiting when Dorothy returned home for vacation.

Because Denise, a ceramic artist, had produced a body of work related to altars, this community believed she would be able to help create a chapel for the four church women murdered there. Her task was to construct the altar along with a master builder from the community. She remembers being completely unprepared for the manner in which construction of the altar took place. She had not imagined anything other than the modern conveniences of running water and electricity. Additionally, the master builder with whom she was working did not speak English and Denise did not speak Spanish.
Having never worked without running water and power tools, and having never worked collaboratively without the tool of common language, Denise experienced this event as a moment of awakening in which she began to deeply ponder the nature of sacredness within a third world county. She recalls that her collaborative work on the altar required her to take on the posture of listening. Practically, she found herself listening intently to the Spanish language in order to learn the language spoken by the people in El Salvador. She also found that she began listening intently to the earth as she worked so closely with it in her art making process. Because El Salvador is an earthquake zone, Denise and the master builder had to dig deeply into the earth. This became metaphoric for Denise as she found herself asking questions about the sacredness of the earth and about eco-justice.

Her experience in El Salvador also led Denise to consider more deeply the nature of community. Although already used to community life through her calling to the church, she found something different in El Salvador. The very nature of the way she had to work on the altar brought a certain perspective to her thoughts about community. Due to the language barrier, she and the master builder had communicated for months ahead of her visit through visual images faxed from one county to the other. Denise recalls that their conversation occurred through the designs. At the work site, they communicated by showing one another various techniques, all without language.

As the idea was conceived, the chapel was not to have been merely a memorial to the four church women. It was also to become a community gathering place. In fact, it is one of the only places in the community with a roof large enough for the people of the community to gather.
Denise notes that the story of the four church women has changed over time in that the story is no longer one of four Caucasian women who were slain, but the main characters of the story have become brown-eyed and brown-skinned. The story has become an archetypal mythology of standing up for one’s beliefs, of finding and speaking one’s voice. She notes that Oscar Romero once said, “If they kill me, I will rise up in the children of the next generation.” Denise believes that is exactly what has happened. The children are now carrying the story of their people, resistant to their oppression by those who wished to keep them in poverty. She said,

“I think of it also as a symbol, as metaphor. But if it comes from the metaphor and symbols of mythology, it transforms you into a new space. . . . it takes you into an inspirational point where you become motivated where you go beyond what you see.

This way of working with art has deep roots in Denise’s life. She remembers spending hours drawing at the family’s kitchen table. Her mother, she remembers, put her at the table with art materials in order to keep her out of trouble. “My earliest memory is at the kitchen table shoving paint around on the table and ever since then, I’ve been doing that.” Drawing has always been her love and has given her the ability to look at life in a different way.

Denise’s father would sometimes tell her that she was so bad that she was going to go to hell. Denise describes herself as the family member who took on the role of acting out the family’s problems. In fact, she believes that art became her savior, and that without it, she would have likely experienced detention homes or perhaps homelessness.
Due to her love of drawing, Denise felt that printmaking was the natural thing for her to pursue in her study of art, even though art was not her major initially. She produced a great deal of drawings, prints, and then batik. Soon, she submitted pieces to local competitions where she won awards two years in a row. As a result, she realized that her talent might be better explored if she changed majors from education to art. After completing this degree, Denise made final vows to her order and then moved on to graduate study in art at the local institute of art associated with one of the city’s private universities. She engrossed herself in the courses at the institute but was reluctant to pursue her academic work through the university. Quite by accident, Denise discovered a love for metal work. She initially took this course because it was offered in an air conditioned classroom. Her long habit during the summer months made her uncomfortable in most of the studio space.

Due to the requirements of her order, Denise had to move on to find a place to study where she could complete a master’s degree. She moved out of state long enough to complete a degree in silversmithing along with study in ceramics. She returned home to teach at the college where she studied as an undergraduate. Soon, however, Denise began to realize that she must have the terminal degree in order to stay in her position so she pursued possibilities for the MFA degree.

Denise selected a public university in her state because she believed a former professor from the art institute in her community would be teaching there. Although he informed her that he was leaving, he connected her with another professor who was finally willing to take her into the program. It was in this program that Denise first began
to construct ceramic altars. She remembers one project, a large altar about 4 feet tall. Her professors questioned her about the nature of the sacredness of the piece. They asked her to think about why this particular table was any different than any other table, perhaps a bar table. This led her to further ponder the nature of sacredness. Is it sacred because it is connected with the church? Is it sacred because of what happens when it is used? It was at this time that Denise discovered the importance of the conversation that developed as a result of the work she produced. Her own transformation, in fact, has been linked often to such conversations with others. These same questions about sacredness followed her to El Salvador where her sense of this idea expanded.

When Denise considers this path, she thinks that the directions taken were the result of trauma in her life. Most of these she believes were self-chosen, but some were not. The violence experienced by the church women in El Salvador was a significant event in Denise’s life. She remembers thinking of the need to allow herself to open up to what the Spirit was calling her to do so that she would have a way to move forward with positive energy rather than moving with negativity. She reflected, “My art is just an expression that keeps me moving, moving forward.”

Now, Denise is again teaching at the college where she studied as an undergraduate. Her teaching methods have developed as a result of her own experiences making art integrated with social justice work. She provides similar opportunities for her students. Originally, she approached this kind of integrated experience through a student club focused on art and social justice. However, she began to fully integrate justice issues into the syllabi of art courses when the state’s board of regents suggested that she do so.
Their strong suggestion was that she update all syllabi so that the integration of social justice would be a formal part of the program, fully expressing the unique nature of the college’s art program. Denise was delighted having avoided this formalization in the past out of fear that it would be unacceptable to accrediting agencies.

For several years now, Denise has taken her students to the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. Her work in El Salvador led her to understand more fully the political nature of the events in that country as well as other countries of South America. She was able to draw a connection between the activities of this school and the training of military forces using techniques of torture, including rape, in El Salvador. She felt compelled to participate annually in the protest of this activity outside the gates of the school. Her art students produced work around this topic prior to their trip to the school. The students fully participated in the activities of the two day event which included memorials to those who had died at the hands of the South and Central American soldiers trained by the United States. Each year, the name of her friend, one of the four church women, is read aloud in a list of all who have died. As each name is read, the response is presente, so noting the continued presence of the soul of the murdered person.

The gates of Fort Benning have become “like a wailing wall” during these annual days of protest. Denise and her students bring their art to the gates and create an art installation piece there. Others bring memorabilia such as military uniforms or pictures of deceased loved ones. The wall has become a place to collect the memories of the community. This year, she observed a group of women, Grandmothers for Peace, break into spontaneous weeping over their grief about our nation’s involvement in war.
Denise reports this to be a significant experience for many of her students. Some have created an entire body of work upon their return to the art studio. In this way, the trip has become an experience of transformation before, during, and after its occurrence each year. Denise recalls one particular student whose family came from South America. “I’m sure there was memory of her history that she doesn’t even realize. But it was there. I mean, she just ran with it. So, that artwork becomes the symbol of the memory of the world.” One group of students produced a video of their experience at the School of the Americas consisting of only pictures and music. The students have shared their production with many groups around the college community. Denise reports, “I think this work is educating people. That’s how systemic change occurs.” Additionally, she finds that the experience builds community among the students. One student reported to Denise that “it was like a religious experience.” Denise describes it as “a knowing” among others. Because many “know” in this way, students bond with one another and commit to taking action. “It builds an ability to be strong together in solidarity so that we can do things,” Denise said.

Denise also involves her students in arts integrated justice work on the local level. This year, her students are working with elementary students at a local, inner-city school to create a wall mural related to literacy. Rather than simply designing the mural, painting it and leaving, the college students have spent a great deal of time with the children, interviewing them, and involving them in decisions about the content of the mural. Denise reports that this art making experience has raised her students’ awareness about the children who are served in this inner-city school district. She also believes that her
students have not only become aware of the children’s needs, but more importantly, they have created a relationship with them.

This year, her students accompanied her to a local women’s outreach center to work with the women there to create art. Recently, the women at the center created tiles around the theme of gratitude. As Denise observed her students in this setting, she was taken by the manner in which they really joined in with the women. She reported that there was much laughter, significant laughter, around the table of sheltered women and college students. The tiles will be exhibited in a show this year and then will return to the shelter where the women wish to construct a table using these tiles.

Denise has worked with these women for some time now. She is amazed by the degree to which she is able to observe the women get lost, in a positive way, in their art making. She believes that the art making helps them to completely lose themselves, to move into a different space where their unconscious selves can come out. “All the good in them comes out,” Denise reported.

Their self-esteem is braced right up. They realize who they are, how good they are. They become more aware of the good stuff in themselves. They get in touch with their feelings. They get in touch with their bodies. As soon as they touch that clay, their feelings are right on the edge. They are right there . . . that edge, that clay, that touching. The earth touches them in another way that nothing else touches them. It takes them beyond themselves to the unconscious world of their spirit and their soul.
Denise believes that this response to art is a total mystery. She thinks that human beings tap into something cosmological, perhaps God.

I think we tap into something that is very primal. Earth cosmology is so primal.

We tap into something that is full of energy that is beyond our understanding. I think it is the very energy called ‘all life’ and so that kind of energy helps us move into that kind of realm. It’s a bigger thing than us and it’s a mystery.

She also has pondered the nature thwarted creativity.

Something inside of us becomes like poison when we don’t create. I think that if we can’t give back the energy gift that we have it goes inside of us and poisons us. The more we can give that gift, the better we become.

Denise is very aware of the significant gifts she has been given as a result of working with others who might appear to need her more than she needs them. She strongly disagrees with this appearance, understanding that she has been served through her service to others.

Denise has found herself working with clay in a very different way these days. Her past experience has involved carefully planning and executing her ideas. Recently, however, she experienced allowing the material, the clay, to have its way with her.

During the creation of one of her pieces about the shallow grave (see appendix E) of the four church women, Denise felt something trying to emerge from the clay as she worked with it. At a recent gallery talk, she described her way of working this time to the audience gathered. “The figure appeared on the top and I just started working with it. I let
the piece reveal itself to me.” She also shared with the group, “The only way I grow is when my heart gets broken and then I open. Hope comes from this.”

She also has noted the significance of her recent series of altars titled “Altar Memories.” This body of work grew out of her participation in this research study, as a direct result of conversation with other participants. She reports

After our conversations, it just blew out of me . . . all this stuff and emails back and forth. And so the community responding to each others’ gifts caused me to have more energy than I’ve ever had in my entire life.

Denise has long been aware of her need for life within community. “Something about relationships in a community causes me to be bigger, causes me to be a part of something bigger that allows me to have enough courage to do it. By myself, I’m too fragile.” Metaphorically, perhaps, her earth altars suggest a similar fragility of the earth itself and its need for connection to the community of the cosmos.

*Charles Stick*

Coffee house staff shouted customer orders of lattes, cappuccinos, and hot chocolate drinks to one another over the penetrating suction sounds of machines designed to heat milk products. As Charles Stick prepared the stage for the evening’s event, the lively chatter of teenage students filled the small coffee house located in the community where Charles lives and serves the students at the local high school. The stage area, at one end of the small room, holds the sound system, two drums, and two guitars. Two paintings, placed on easels, face the audience. Nine other paintings have been placed on
the walls around the room, some realistic, some abstract. One student shouted to Charles, “People are exchanging phone numbers!” “There’s a lot of love here,” Charles replied.

While he teaches them about French language and culture in his classroom, he also offers them experiences in which they might explore their callings and their gifts to the world through explorations with the arts. This particular evening, he has engaged four students for this event in which they will “come out” to the community regarding their art by performing music and exhibiting and talking about visual art.

As Charles grabbed the microphone to begin the evening’s event, six students crowded into the stage area and placed sleeping bags on the floor to stake out their turf at this “standing room only” event. “We’re going to celebrate four creators tonight,” Charles began as he introduced the first student. Charles read a poem written to describe the student’s creativity and then presented it to him, framed. Each student received the same gift, one at a time, and followed with the sharing of her or his art. In each case, Charles “named” the particular quality of each student’s creativity and presented this idea to the community gathered that evening. Each student, in turn, spoke of their gratitude for Charles’ influence in her or his creative process. One shouted to the others, “Take French!!”

Following the students’ performances, Charles took the stage and began to share his own work. He began by telling the audience that his goal is to “bring medicine to the culture.” To engage the audience, he taught them an African song, complete with drumming. He wove several songs with conversation expressing our collective need to wake up in the world among others who might help us: “The bread is warm, the drink is
poured. Together, ain’t that what this world is for?” This night in the coffee shop, Charles hopes to honor and recognize the emerging souls of his students so that he might encourage them to discover and share their gifts with the world.

Then, moving into the topic of his teaching for the evening, Charles spoke of his experience as a young college student in which he encountered for the first time the idea of “end-times mentality.” Found in a variety of cultures over time, this mentality promotes the idea of the immanent destruction of the earth as part of a pre-ordained plan of a divine power. Due to this experience, having spent nearly two years of his life within a religious group focused on this mentality, Charles spoke to the students about the impact of this mentality on our current world situation. His goal is to help them understand, and thus dismantle this mentality so that they might be able to step aside from the making of war in our day. In addition, he hopes to offer them a new cosmology rich with vocabulary, images, and knowledge of the experiences of other cultures through which they might construct meaning.

For Charles, images are richly woven throughout his life and are sources of nourishment and guidance. He relies on the images he experiences in dreams to provide a view of his inner world. His image work is archetypal in nature, in that it seeks to illuminate the images common to human beings across cultures and time. Mythologies are important providers of such images, and Charles relies on them for his own inner work as well as his work with others, both students and adults. He often finds that images found in dreams find their way into his daily experiences in some way. These
synchronicities, as Charles refers to them, are points of guidance and confirmation concerning the direction and nature of his work.

For example, Charles described one experience in which he was pursuing a master’s degree in counseling. He was discontented and disconnected from his experiences in this program and began to sense that he was not growing in the manner he had anticipated. A dream rich with images provided the insight he needed to make a decision. In this dream, a Frenchman was building an addition onto his house. In order to continue with his plans, he had to chop down a tree that was home to a bird. Two days later, Charles happened upon Joseph Campbell’s *Power of Myth* and found a story about a young boy who caught a beautiful bird and placed it in his father’s care. The father placed the bird in a tree. While initially caring for the bird, he began to forget about the bird in time. As he forgot to care for the bird, the bird died. The next day, the father died. The archetypal idea is that neglecting one’s own soul causes a death of a certain kind. Charles interpreted the close proximity of the dream and the similar message of the story he encountered to be a “synchronistic clue” to his journey. He chose to leave his graduate program believing that he had been neglecting his soul’s work which was to pursue an integrated approach to wholeness; one where he could work with depth psychology and his music to help others move toward wholeness. He began to search for such a place to study. Eventually, Charles met two professors who were open to his way of working.

Ever since, he has worked on this same campus each summer providing opportunities for talented high school students enrolled in a summer institute to explore the nature of their own creativity within this framework of depth psychology. Charles
hopes that students will discover their own ways of caring for and nurturing their own souls. In the same way that he worked with his students in the coffee house, Charles helps these students to discover the ways in which creative energies, expressed through the arts, may help them uncover their own soul’s path. He provides for them a similar kind of naming ceremony within the classroom community so that they can recognize and celebrate their gifts.

Charles finds his work with images to be transformative in his own life and the songs he writes are indicative of his personal learning. These songs represent a synthesis of meaning gained from dream images, archetypal images and mythologies and the outward appearance of these ideas (synchronicities) that occur in his daily life. For him, the songs begin, in a way, as a conversation he is having with himself. It is his hope that the songs will also encourage conversation among others.

One archetypal image Charles finds important is the journey of the orphan, one who is unaware of the stories, images, and mythologies of sustenance, and must awaken to find his or her way, encountering others along the same journey. Charles describes this journey through his song, “The Orphan Soul.” (Reynolds, 1999; see appendix E)

When you meet the orphan soul
May you talk all night because the time is full
May you know the growing edge of you
The secret questions, what your dreams told you
Where did you wake up?
In this world, these are the meanings and the signs I explored
Feel the words grow thick, the synchronistic clues
Feel the golden chills for the beautiful and true
Minds from all time visit our time

When you meet the orphan soul
Talk of erotic love, the southern and the northern poles
As philosophers hold out their mirror
Again you know yourself, together the mind gets clearer
Once in painted caves, cathedral rooms, in Alexandria
The temple and the sweat lodge too
Know each other by laughter and heart
By the passion for your work and your art
Minds from all time visit our time

When you meet the orphan soul
Talk of your loved ones—from the young to the Invisibles
Share this ritual: Bless the human kind
With an immortal part
That is in love with time
Minds from all time visit our time

For Charles, the journey of the orphan soul represents his struggle of isolation in his pursuit of this work. He recalls realizing that those with whom he shared the closest relationships were those who least understood his work, his choices in life. At some
point, he recognized his tendency to hide this part of himself from others and then made a
decision to be more authentic regardless of his company. This has represented a challenge
recently and has caused Charles to take risks he has not taken before. One such risk was
to share his experiences within a fundamentalist Christian group during his college days
so that he could more fully reveal his understanding about the nature of what he calls the
Christianity of war.

Aware of his connection to his Catholic upbringing, Charles began to study the
nature of the Crusades in which violence was juxtaposed with a gospel of salvation. He
wondered how a Christianity of peace had become a Christianity of war. He wondered
about the nature of these events and how this mentality might have contributed to our
ways of making war today. He struggled to understand how crusaders experienced “signs
and wonders,” similar to his experience of synchronicities, at the same time they were
committing widespread murder.

Through this study of the Crusades, Charles concluded that the outward acting out
in war was due to the lack of a way to deal with inner conflicts. Sometimes, he believes,
we need to “kill” something in a figurative way in order for healing to occur. Our culture
offers little, as did the culture at the time of the Crusades, to those who need to
experience a way to externalize what is happening in the interior spaces of our beings. He
stated, “Regarding spiritual experience, I had no metaphoric vocabulary, no symbolic
comprehension, no knowledge of the varieties of spiritual experience of other cultures.”
Images, through story and song, have provided a way for this to happen as they
“empower, educate, and celebrate inner authority.”
For example, Charles has found a particular ritual from the Native American culture, the sweat lodge, to be helpful. The goal of the sweat lodge is to provide an outward example of an inward process known as the mythic journey, or the heroes’ journey. This archetypal image describes the process by which a soul moves through stages in order to reach a place of wholeness having discovered the soul’s purpose in this life. At the end of the journey, the soul is able to become integrated with the community offering generously the gifts discovered along the journey.

The ritual of the sweat lodge involves the image of movement through the four directions, West, North, East, and then South. Each direction represents a particular part of the mythic journey. The first stage of the sweat lodge is the direction of the West. In this stage, the goal is to experience, through ritual, the act of letting go, of removing from one’s life that which prohibits wholeness. In the North, the ritual involves a view of the inward self, “moving toward and through what afflicts you, yet also what holds you with love, allowing oneself to be dismembered.”

Here there is a connection made from one’s own inner afflictions to the afflictions of the whole culture. Charles describes this as a zero point, the place from which all culture comes. In order to arrive here, one cannot move fully on one’s own. Grace is needed. In other words, this requires surrender to one’s unconscious, or one’s inwardness. This place of surrender is the death part of the journey. Following this place of surrender, or death, the soul moves to the East, the place of illumination where the goal is simply to receive and to heal. Here one gains knowledge of one’s gift to the culture. Finally, the return to the south represents the possession of transformative generosity in which one
returns to the community ready to contribute to the well being of others. For Charles, this ritual represents a way to experience what it means to live well upon the earth. Part of his work is to provide the opportunity of this ritual for others who express the wish to participate.

Charles has worked to integrate this work within the context of his school district, and in particular, the high school where he works each day. First of all, he works within the context of his own classroom. He finds it important to remain awake to his own path of growth because it makes him more perceptive to the awakenings within his students. He has noticed his increased ability to observe students’ outward actions through a lens of their inner processes and, significantly, through a lens of their future possibilities. When he converses with students in this way, he finds he is able to assist their awakening to their own possibilities.

On the walls of his classroom are numerous examples of Charles’ notion of “art answering art.” Students have responded to ideas discussed in class or to ideas prompted by art, music, drama, or dance with their own form of artistic response. Charles believes that the conversation that occurs through the language of the arts is generative and powerful in its ability to transform.

Recently, Charles had the opportunity to expand this way of working with students to the level of the school. He has been able to find several colleagues within the school who wish to join him in this work in the school setting. In the fall of this year, the school invited a shamanic healer from Zimbabwe to speak to the students. He spoke to the students about the significance of their dreams. At the end of the session, students
were offered the opportunity to share aloud some of the recent dreams. At this point in
the program, the administrative staff objected to this forum and the staff quickly
regrouped and allowed individual students to speak to the healer according to personal
preference. The administration later expressed concern that the students would attack one
another verbally or that the forum would not be a safe psychological space for students to
do this inner work. Also, as students went home that evening and shared the experience
with their parents, some fundamentalist parents were angered that this opportunity was
provided to students in school. Because an evening program was also planned for the
same day, administrators and staff members were concerned that these same parents
might participate in the program in a disruptive way. Charles noted that he was able to
notice a difference in these particular parents as the evening progressed and that they
seemed calmed by the singing and drumming that occurred at the beginning of the
program.

Following this event, Charles and his colleagues determined that their next event
might be more successful if it could be framed through the context of artists visiting the
schools. This group located individual artists within the region and beyond, who were
willing to work with students using the arts as a means of exploring the inner landscape.
The called the day “Art for the Heart” and proceeded to plan the event with the full
support and participation of the school’s administration. Students were able to select from
a variety of options for sessions that ran throughout the morning. Students expressed to
Charles that they would like school to be more like “Art for the Heart” day more often.
Charles finds it significant that this event involved the community. These community-
based artists and healers had expressed a desire in the past to gain access to the school community but had not yet been successful in that effort. When asked why the theme of the arts was selected for this event, Charles stated that the arts make the content more accessible to encourage a holistic view of living well on the earth.

To move his work into a more globally accessible format, Charles developed a web site in which he is able to provide a place of networking for others working in a similar way. In this format, he places these ideas within a lens referred to as Unrealism, an art movement responding to and deepening the ideas of Surrealism of the previous century.

Unrealism is deepening of Surrealism born of the violence of 9/11. I am waging creativity in response to a rising destructive urge around the globe. Unrealism is a conversation done with any creative form in a spirit of mutual respect.

For Charles, the making of music is a way of living. He grew up in a family of musicians where his father and his uncle formed a duo playing in Illinois, St. Louis, and Chicago. In like manner, Charles formed his first band in his hometown and continued writing original music and performing during college. He formed another band in the area where he lives now, performing with this group until 1992. Although he has worked with a number of back-up musicians, Charles continues to write music and perform solo events. He has released eight CDs. When asked about his life of music making, Charles stated that he cannot imagine life without his music. “I wouldn’t want to live that life. I would be . . . I would have to be heavily medicated or drunk all the time, a heroin user or something.”
As Charles looks to the future, he hopes to have greater opportunity to move beyond the boundaries of his own local area. He would like to begin to travel, to sing, and to teach as he moves about, in order to bring healing medicine to others. And he is very much aware of the transformation in his own life, his own mythic journey. He remembers his experiences with religious teachings of end-times mentality through his family and through his experiences in college. He remembers his roots in Catholicism and the role played by the church during the time of the Crusades. Most of all, he remembers having “embarrassingly few ideas with which to think . . . no metaphoric vocabulary, no symbolic comprehension, no knowledge of the varieties of spiritual experiences of other cultures.” He hopes to fill that void for others.

*Theresa Stone*

Photography teacher, Theresa Stone, paused from her lesson as a cell phone rang in the classroom. She extended her hand to the owner of the phone and quickly answered the call. Instead of chastising the student for interrupting her lesson, she pleaded with the caller, an absent student, to return to school on Monday. “We need you here,” she said. “It’s not the same without you. Can you come back Monday?”

The caller was unable to attend school that Friday due to his family’s need for his assistance at home. This student, like others in this classroom, was a member of a gang whose members all had incarcerated fathers. Their goal, as they established this gang, was to encourage members to remain clean, to stay out of prison. As gang members began to wear similar apparel and as they began to take on other gang behaviors, teachers and administrators began to fear this group of students, not fully understanding the
purpose of their formation. Theresa Stone, however, maintained a strong and effective relationship with these gang members. Even now, as many have been incarcerated following high school, she believes that none would do her harm.

Theresa describes these students’ interest in photography as influenced by aspects of the camera itself. “It’s metal, and you shoot with it,” she said. Surrounded by violence in their neighborhoods, these students express little hope for their future. Many family members and friends do not live much beyond their teen years due to such violence in this major American city whose rate of poverty is one of the highest in the nation. Perhaps the camera offers a different possibility, and at the same time, draws reference to an instrument of violence.

The opportunity to work with these students came in a most unusual way. While working for the city’s natural history museum, Theresa was responsible for providing photography for the museum. She lamented, “It was very quiet and everything I photographed was dead.” She began to feel a familiar feeling of dissatisfaction about this work. Where could she find truth and beauty? (see appendix E)

Having heard that a secondary school of the arts in the very same neighborhood offered photography classes to students, she set off on foot one day to find this special school. She knew she had located the building by the noise she could hear from the street. Upon entering the building, she offered her services to the principal and then began to volunteer at the school. Twenty-one years later, as an employee rather than a volunteer, she is still teaching photography at this inner city school.
Theresa’s interest in working with these particular students has roots deep into her own past. As a student, she began to experience failure in school during the early elementary years and felt deeply the sting of being socially promoted each and every year. Life at home was also difficult. She describes her family as troubled by all manner of abuses and thus did not develop an early understanding of the nature of trust or the idea of healthy boundaries. These were just not present nor taught in her home. On the surface, however, she describes her parents as representing the ideals of truth and beauty. Her own search for these ideals has framed much of her life.

Theresa remembers two significant events that helped to move her through what she describes as a crisis of identity. First, as a young child in the elementary grades, she remembers being outside, on the playground, during very frigid winter weather. She had no gloves. A nun, recognizing her need, offered Theresa her own gloves. She remembers being much attached to the feeling created by this event and began to search for it throughout her life. Theresa’s commitment to serving the underserved, and her commitment to teaching students about service are linked to this event.

As a young adolescent, Theresa was given a camera by an uncle. In this way, she believes that she did not seek the path of photography. It found her instead. She discovered a strong interest, strong skills, as well as a commitment to learn that she had not experienced before. In fact, she contends that this early experience with art that led to her artistic search for truth and beauty saved her life.

Theresa describes her marriage to her high school sweetheart as lasting “just about a minute.” She had moved with her new husband to a farm where she describes
becoming a cowgirl. At the time she decided to leave this marriage, she experienced a discontent similar to the feeling that led her to leave her museum work to pursue the service of students. She thought, “There just must be something more.”

Following her love of photography, Theresa decided to attend college. She describes this as an unsuccessful experience that led to a decision to attend a vocational photography program. Here, she found success and moved on to commercial photography work in which she felt she had become quite technically proficient creating catalogues and photographing cars. She remembers clearly a project involving a typewriter cartridge catalogue. It was during the production of this piece that the nagging sense returned to her and she asked herself, “Isn’t there something more?”

As a result of this moment of insight, she returned to school. This time, she selected an art institute located in her own community. Here, away from the heavy focus on academic work of the university, and away from the technical production emphasis of commercial photography, she found a place to flourish where she could, for the first time, really celebrate feeling good about herself and her work. Her work with students is profoundly influenced by her deep understanding of the role the arts played in her own life at this time. When asked how her life might have progressed without her art, she said,

Oh, I wouldn’t have a life. I probably wouldn’t be here. I really was in a place where I just didn’t exist. So it really helped me to survive. It was a tool for my survival. I am very passionate about it because it literally saved my life.

And now, she is driven by a desire to make a difference in the lives of her students. In fact, she believes that if she made a difference in only one life, it would be
enough. She said, “As long as I have two rubber bands and a chipmunk, I will make this work.” Her faithfulness to this calling has been demonstrated through 21 years of work with these students whose needs represent the most significant needs of urban American children.

Early on in her role as photo teacher at this school of the arts, Theresa decided to alter her approach to curriculum. Rather than moving through a curriculum with goals and objectives as a starting point, she decided to incorporate the teaching of skills through deeply engaging projects designed to do far more than teach basic photography skills. Her goal has always been to help students live a better life rather than to merely teach them to use a camera. It is her desire that, through the lens of the camera, students might be able to find a safe place to explore life’s difficulties, or perhaps change their own perceptions or the perceptions of others.

One of Theresa’s early projects involved the study of photographer Gordon Parks who used his work as a way to address issues of social justice. The students studied his book, *A Choice of Weapons* (Parks, 1965), and explored the notion that art making has played a significant role in the history of African American people in the United States. As a school-wide project, students produced a performance piece which portrayed African American history through the artistic expressions of African American singers, songwriters, playwrights, novelists, poets, dancers, photographers, and other visual artists. This event was well received by students, parents, staff, and administration and the production, although varied in its content, was repeated for several years.
This project, along with another one emphasizing ecological sustainability, caused Theresa to re-think the idea of school wide projects. Very simply, the human resources were not adequate to sustain this effort over a long period of time. She needed help and did not have it. In order to continue her work, and at the same time sustain her own energy, she moved to the creation of projects within her own photography classroom. It was not long, however, before the scope of these projects reached beyond the walls of the school.

Through the years, Theresa’s own sensibility about the value of service to others led her to emphasize this idea with her students. Her projects now entail the idea that all of us, regardless of our resources or opportunities, have the obligation to serve those who are underserved. Although she finds students at first resistant to this idea, she continues to be faithful to this aspect of her program and finds that students come along in time.

The first project of this nature was called STAMP (Students Teaching and Mentoring Photography). In collaboration with a local university professor, Theresa’s students mentored adjudicated students in a special program held in a self-contained area of the university. The curriculum for this project involved the study of philosophy as a means of understanding and making choices about one’s life. Then, Theresa’s students mentored the adjudicated students in the creation of photographs that related to these ideas.

This project is an ongoing one. The first group of Theresa’s students to participate was the young men of the gang, themselves at great risk for adjudication. Theresa notes that over the course of a few years, the students in this project have become school
leaders. In particular, this year, Theresa’s students in STAMP are also school wide mediators.

This year, motivated by a shooting in a nearby high school in the same community, Theresa and her students created a new project called *On My Block* in which they are exploring the anatomy of violence. The tangible product of this inquiry will be a film shared at a major art event that will explore the nature of the experiences of the people of this city. The term “block” refers to a neighborhood rather than an area bordered by a street on every side and has become a metaphor for the urban child’s whole world.

The inquiry process for this project is rich and deep. The research questions begin with the students themselves. As the students explored the nature of violence, they began by exploring their own neighborhoods. Through classroom discussions, they learned that their inner-city neighborhoods have several common elements. First, the corner store is a place to secure items necessary for daily living out of reach to those who cannot transport themselves to supermarkets in the outer regions of the city. The corner store is not only a place to purchase daily living supplies, but it also serves as a social center of the community. Children are often sent to the corner store by a parent to obtain needed items. Also on every block is a trap house, named for the effect of entry into this environment. The trap house is the center for drug trafficking. Dope boys are the agents of this exchange and their goal is to intercept the young as they make their way to the corner store. Dope boys model the economic advantages of generating income through drug trafficking and their goal is to not only sell, but to recruit others on their block. The
students were surprised by this discussion to learn that what they had found to be a source of fear and of shame about their neighborhoods was shared by each student in the classroom. Theresa describes this as a most powerful moment for her students.

Significant to this particular group of students is the role that their school (grades 6-12) has played in helping them. The students were able to avoid the dope boys and the trap houses by remaining in their homes. Their own art making engaged them at home and kept them inside and away from the dangers on the block. At school, the students received validation for their efforts which caused them to engage further with the art making.

Following their exploration of their own blocks, the students created a plan for gathering information from others in their community. They are conducting interviews with dope boys, with persons who reside in trap house, parole officers, the lieutenant governor, and leaders of arts organizations. As the students progressed more deeply into the investigation, they realized that a major factor is the human need for some measure of control and they, in particular, have found such a grounding in their art making.

Theresa describes the impact of this inquiry through a story about the students’ visit to the office of the lieutenant governor. She knows that the students felt the depth of their risk-taking but felt encouraged by the empowerment imbedded in conducting this interview and in creating art for his office.

She also seeks to move the students beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods and their school by involving them in local, state, and national competitions. By doing this, she feels she is able to expose them to a level playing field where they must compete
with students from positions of advantage. Theresa finds that her students thrive on recognition, which holds them accountable to deadlines and teaches real life skills of collaboration and responsibility. She is thrilled that her students compete very well in these settings. Last year, she accompanied two students to receive national awards in Washington D.C. and New York City. She hopes to provide opportunities for global competition in the future.

This work is not without struggle for Theresa. It is very apparent that this school is an urban building showing evidence of the lack of resources for its maintenance and modernization. Even though this building, like many others in the district, had already benefited from the massive city school renovation project completed a few years ago, much is left to be done to put this building on par with buildings that suburban students enjoy. Replacement windows and thermostats have been installed but the lack of regulation in heating still causes many teachers to fully open their windows in mid-winter or to suggest that the children wear their coats. In the photography classroom, paint is peeling from the ceiling and from the walls. The floors in the halls are cement and uneven. Classroom floors are hardwood but show wear and it appears that resources for housekeeping are minimal.

In stark contrast, one of the nation’s leading universities in the areas of mathematics and science is just across the street. The city’s cultural center, home to many museums as well as the performance hall for a world-renowned orchestra, is just blocks away. The institutes of art and music, associated with the university, are also in the same area. These are all privately funded institutions. On the one hand, students at this publicly
funded high school might find it helpful to be so close to some of the nation’s most renowned cultural resources. On the other hand, the significance of the contrast is glaring. At times, visitors to the school have commented about the lack of resources and photographs of the students in their academic setting have prompted similar comments. Theresa notes that these comments surprise her, not because she is not aware of the reality of the circumstances. She says that she only sees the children in the photographs as significant and lovely human beings. When she views these photographs, she no longer tunes in to the disparity of resources. She only sees the students she has come to love and respect.

Theresa reports that conditions were much worse when she arrived at the school many years ago. There was a big hole in the floor and only one of the three enlargers worked. She has built the photography program from the ground floor through collaboration with numerous foundations that have funded her efforts. Currently, the retired CEO of one of the city’s largest charitable foundations is working in her classroom as a volunteer. He engages readily with the students, and seems to enjoy the time he spends in the photography classroom. Years ago, while touring the building, he offered to provide whatever Theresa thought she needed to develop the photography program.

A recent development has been the establishment of a fund raising organization associated with the school itself. They have office space on the top floor of the building, the organization is represented on the school’s web page, and they are listed as the sponsor of many of the school’s events. On the one hand, this might seem to be an
effective way to provide resources so desperately needed in this school and, without this
group, Theresa would be even more significantly lacking in resources. On the other hand,
it is sometimes problematic when differing visions cause disagreement over the
allocation of resources.

Theresa finds that the projects she creates for students are becoming more bold,
“more bombastic” than in previous years. She clarified this statement by saying that the
agenda for these projects has become more political. For example, the current project that
examines the anatomy of violence explores ideas of class and racial difference and allows
students to connect emotionally to the reality of their own lives. Some, she contends,
would rather experience student projects that make them feel good, that cause them to
respond with applause rather than complexity of thought. She states, “It’s not ballet.” In
some ways, Theresa’s life long search for truth and beauty is reflected here. These
sometimes opposing ideas must remain linked.

Conflict seems to center around the issue of resources. Recently, Theresa was
expecting a new digital laboratory so that her students could move more fully into digital
media experiences. When the equipment arrived, only a small portion of the computers
were given to the photography classroom. Although the students have been working with
digital cameras recently, the classroom had no printer for the students to produce their
work in a form for exhibition. This piece of equipment was to have been part of the
digital laboratory. Theresa had to find another foundation to provide this resource.

Because of the continual need to secure her own resources, Theresa finds that she
is increasingly weary from the struggle. She is not weary of working with students, only
from the increasing political nature of the effort to provide resources for her classroom. She wishes for enough equipment and supplies so that students could more fully take artistic and personal risks without fear of wasting materials. Her belief that risk-taking and mistake-making are such an important part of artistic development is not able to be realized due to the lack of materials in her classroom. Her students need to be able to take cameras away from the school so that they can explore their own neighborhoods, their “blocks,” their city. She has found the students to be very respectful of their equipment but there is not enough for students to have access to the camera equipment as often as would promote their development. “I really think that cameras are a real transformative tool. Cameras can be a transformative tool because they create a world that other people can see,” she said.

Theresa also thinks about the future beyond this classroom. She imagines wanting to continue to nurture things, even plant life. Her thoughts reflect her exhaustion and her struggle with the political forces affecting the resources in her classroom. And because the fund raising arm of the school is housed in the same building, the struggle is even more present within her work space.

However, she expresses her faithfulness to this work.

I figure out how to make it work with the kids . . . make it work and come back.

It’s really what fuels me because I have to. I’m always trying to make a way to make it work.

Apparently, she has inspired others to do the same. Theresa’s classroom is always full of people. Students, of course, attend photography class in this room, but they can be found
there far after the time that school has been dismissed for the day. Former students, often those most at risk, return to her classroom following graduation to help other students. Artists-in-residence, researchers, and a former foundation CEO find Theresa’s work with her students compelling and important. More important, Theresa has found a place where she can truly serve the underserved and provide for them what she did not find in her own schooling. Her search for truth and beauty led her here.

*Sam Carter*

In his university photography classroom, Sam Carter was most satisfied with his work. “There’s a connection between teaching and photography,” he said.

My photography is, to a certain extent, to a certain measure, about getting people to look at the world. And so is teaching. Photographers start looking more. I don’t think you become a photographer because you look. You look because you’re a photographer.

Recently, in a discussion with students, Sam asked the group to consider the nature of a particular photograph. Although the students were not clear about the intent of the photographer, one student suggested that perhaps the photographer was after having others notice the subject of the photograph and to recognize its beauty. In a certain way, perhaps, the taking of photographs, and the viewing of them, requires attention, or more specifically, presence.

Sam has noticed that his photography has allowed him to engage with others or situations in a different way, creating a relationship between him and the object of his photography. He remembers an occasion when his job was to photograph at a concert. As
a person who had attended many concerts in the past, he became aware of the different level of engagement he had with the event as a result of his active role of art making.

On one occasion, a student noticed that Sam’s photographs seemed to display a respect for the people he photographed. The student wished to understand how to accomplish such a complicated endeavor. Naturally, the student asked Sam what technique he might learn to produce the same effect in his own photographs. Since the first student posed this question, Sam waits for it, ready to respond. “If you want to take pictures that respect your subjects, you have to respect your subjects. If you want to take pictures that show you love them, you have to love them.” It is clear to Sam that his photography work has caused him to create relationships with the people he has photographed.

During the past five years, Sam has made seven trips to work in the South American country of Colombia photographing and documenting the struggle of the people there (see appendix E). The village of El Chocó is located in the northwestern area of Colombia. The people there are poor and their existence is very much connected to the land on which they live. Although they are very poor, in the past they have been able to survive well on the food they grow and gather. They have suffered much recently due to the civil war fought among three warring factions: left-wing guerillas, right wing paramilitaries, and the government military. In addition to causing significant loss of life, these groups have controlled the rivers once used for trade and inter-community communication and interaction, displaced thousands of people, and have caused disruption of economic and social life. Sam states, “It is clear that the war was brought to
El Chocó in order to drive out the people to make room for economic, agricultural, and infrastructure megaprojects.” This growth is, in turn, placing at risk the vast resource of the tropical rain forest.

Sam recently placed a collection of photographs of the people of El Chocó in a local park system visitor’s center. These photographs document the activities of daily life such as the gathering and production of food, the schooling of the children as well as the religious festivals of the community. As the political situation in Columbia continues to be difficult, Sam is documenting a way of life threatened by forces beyond the community. Also, Sam was able to document various gatherings designed to teach the people how to resist the political influences that would seek to destroy their way of life. For the people of El Chocó, these photographs serve as a location of memory as well as support for their shared values, their solidarity. It is Sam’s wish that these photographs will cause the people of his state to want to learn more about the people of El Chocó. You could say he hopes that the people of his state will begin to see the people of El Chocó.

This work, like much of Sam’s work, relies on the funding of charitable organizations. For most of his life, Sam has also worked as an employee or as a volunteer in organizations designed to promote social change. He describes these organizations as promoting issues supported by the political left which is most comfortable for him. Throughout his life, Sam has worked in a variety of positions, but his goal has been much the same in each: to contribute in some way to leftist movements that support the liberation of people across the globe. He has worked directly with foundations and organizations as a community organizer. He has worked in the role of instructor of
photography, history, and English. He has also worked independently as a photographer. This variance of employment has been very frustrating to him throughout his life and he feels as though he is “neither fish nor foul,” not a part of professional art organizations nor a part of educational organizations. Opportunities for college teaching have begun to close for him as his graduate degree is not in photography, but history. Whereas he was once able to gain full time employment as a university instructor, he must now settle for adjunct work. He recalls that this disappointment has been a significant factor in his life in the past decade. He made a purposeful decision to pursue his independent photography work focused on justice issues so that he would not grow older with bitterness. It is very important to Sam to have a sense of contributing his gifts and talents to a purpose greater than himself.

Of all these career opportunities, Sam valued teaching the most. In this role, he was able to integrate the teaching of photography techniques within the framework of serving the greater good of humanity. He found it significant that he was able to develop relationships with students over a long period of time. He noticed that students began to trust him as they became aware of his own work and its focus on promoting justice. He modeled his classroom practice from others, particularly a radical group from Chicago who sought to provide instruction for students grounded in the possibility of their own liberation through the study of topics generated by the needs of their own community.

Sam’s interest in photography developed when he was in high school. A family member approached his father about the possibility of buying a camera for Sam’s cousin in celebration of his Bar Mitzvah. His father agreed but insisted on buying one for his
own family as well. Sam became interested in using this new equipment and soon found that his interest was met by a developing talent. During these years, Sam’s photography became a place where he could experience an emerging identity. He remembers wanting to find something in which he could excel that would distinguish him from others. The need for this identity formation is common to developing adolescents. However, Sam believes that this need was significant for him because he had not made a decision to compete amongst his peers in math and science, the focus of his high school. He remembers hearing from his mother, in particular, that he was a very smart boy. Now, he considers this regular input to have affected his motivation to compete academically.

Although he excelled in his college level work, Sam always felt connected to politics and continued to advance the issues of the left during his college days. During this time, he still enjoyed his photography and began to develop a sense of what he might do with it. “I began to see that I could take pictures that perhaps would illustrate issues or would be about things that I was interested in. Or, it would be a contribution to activities that I was interested in.”

Over time, Sam has carried with him the idea that his art, his photography must be justified in terms of its political impact. In fact, on his website, he discusses this idea and suggests that works of art must not only be judged for their own quality, but they must be judged by the impact they have on the greater good of the community. He traces the roots of his belief to his parents. Sam grew up in largely working class, Jewish neighborhoods. His parents were communist atheists who modeled for him the value of political engagement. However, he credits them for not insisting on any particular “political
catechism,” but instead modeled for him the idea of faithfulness to the working of one’s cause.

Because of Sam’s willingness to connect his politics to his photography, he has experienced some difficulty. Once, a reporter called to question him about the political nature of his work because his current project was funded by a public entity. He also suspects that his employment with universities was at times affected by his political activities. He has decided to remain faithful to this work, however, in spite of the consequences he has experienced over time.

Since he is self-employed now with occasional adjunct faculty teaching assignments, much of Sam’s production work is done by himself. His studio is in his home and although his work and living spaces are essentially in different rooms, evidence of Sam’s work surrounds him in every room. Photographs and artifacts of his South American work are present on the walls and placed on shelves and tables. A large collection of books is shelved in his studio as well as the living room. In this way, perhaps, he surrounds himself with the memories of those he has come to know in his work.

Because of his personality and his love of people, Sam finds that his time spent alone is too much for him and he longs for a sense of community of social change workers within his own geographical community. In many ways, he finds his current home location to be a very difficult factor to negotiate due to the lack of community he perceives to be the nature of the region. His preference for teaching, in some ways, is related to the community available within that work environment.
Sam remembers a time, however, within this same community when he found support among a group of artists and cultural workers. They gathered regularly to expose themselves to the ideas of others, to experience art exhibits, plays, and films, and to engage in discussions with one another about social and political issues. Sam remembers very large numbers of participants, and that the energy amongst the group was strong and supportive. Due to this experience, Sam began to view the role of art in social change as significant in terms of the encouragement it provided to those working to create change. Sam grieves the loss of this support system as it is no longer present in the community. This lack of support contributes significantly to his sense of isolation and loneliness.

Now, however, when he is working within a community to photograph and document its work for social change, Sam finds readily the experience of community he desires. He finds himself contributing to social change and he knows that the role he plays makes a difference in the lives of others. This is critical to his sense of satisfaction in his work.

Sam finds that art making for the purpose of social change provides for the well being of the community. First of all, he is very much aware of the way in which his photography provides information and instruction so that others, without awareness, can become informed and perhaps involved in assisting in the struggle of others. It is Sam’s wish that his exhibit about the people of El Chocó will have this effect on others. The content of his photographs exposes problems with the idea that others will respond to these problems. “One of my tasks is to make invisible people visible,” Sam said.
Next, he believes that his photography has the ability to reaffirm our identity. Certainly, the experience of identity formation was something of value that Sam experienced as an individual, but he also notes the positive regard generated by the attention he gives to others through photography. For example, he remembers an exhibit he created of union workers in the United States. Although it would have been typical to focus the exhibit on a few concepts, Sam felt that it was important for all who were photographed to find their pictures in the exhibit. He is also concerned about this issue when he thinks about his work in Columbia and so he is working on finding funding for a traveling exhibit so that the people will have more access to the photographs of their communities. Sam remembers the comment of a nun in the community who finds value in his visits to the community because of the impact of his presence among the people, not necessarily because of his work, but because he cared enough to come to them.

Sam also believes that this way of making art for social change promotes shared values, or solidarity. The presence of images becomes outward indicators of shared inner values and helps community members to find connection with one another. He has observed this in his work in Columbia but he also remembers times of rapid social change within our own culture when the arts provided this sense of solidarity. Music, he remembers, was not just an “add-on” to political events. It was an integral part of the anti-war movement of the 1960s. He is particularly convinced these art forms serve as encouragement and nourishment for the cultural workers who are laboring for social change.
Finally, Sam believes that art can serve a utopian purpose by asking us to consider what we would like our communities to be like with a sense of anticipation of a better future. Sometimes, this means highlighting something that already exists to promote expansion and growth. For example, Sam has worked to create a brochure highlighting the work of women in Columbia who create needlecrafts. As he worked with them over a period of time, the vision of their work, and their vision of how they might portray themselves expanded such that the brochure was given the title, “Embroidering Our Lives.” The vision expanded from one of exhibiting work to one of validating their lives.

To some extent, Sam’s photography of workers is an attempt to validate the honor of work and to suggest a utopian vision in which all might find their work honorable within the community.

Sam expresses these thoughts about the value of art making for social change with conviction and confidence. However, he has been very clear that this work has been difficult. Irregular work opportunities typical for self-employed artists create financial strain. The solitary nature of the production work is not a fit for his personality. He longs for community that he has not found within his geographical region. He wishes to have more opportunities to teach. And yet Sam presses on to continue this work that he values in spite of the difficulties inherent in the work. Deeply embedded within him is the need to contribute beyond himself to the greater good of the culture.

Cross-Narrative Analysis

Following the construction and member checking of each narrative, I read them many times in order to develop a strong familiarity with Denise’s, Charles’, Sam’s and
Theresa’s stories as they reported them to me. Each narrative was then viewed through a phenomenological lens and was coded according to the themes that emerged from the stories. The experiences of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were then grouped according to the research question they addressed. Categories emerged through which the various experiences could be grouped and discussed. It is important to note that the categorization of the experiences as mind, body, and spirit seemed helpful for discussion at first, but it became apparent to the focus group participants that in many ways, it is difficult to think about our experiences in this way because, as we live them, as we experience them, we do not experience them in separate and distinct categories of mind, body, and spirit. Instead, we experience phenomena in an integrated manner with all of our modalities available, whether or not they are addressed in any particular situation.

The experiences of Denise, Charles, Sam and Theresa, per research question, are listed below.

Research Question #1

*How does art making engage the teacher/artist in personal transformation moving toward social justice?*

- Mind
  - We have experienced increased self-esteem due to the encouragement we have received
  - We experience a disciplined way of “seeing” or “knowing”
  - We experience a way to understand ideas
  - We experience a way to hold our memories
o We experience access to our subconscious mind

• Body
  o We have experienced a stronger connection to our bodies
  o We have come to trust bodily ways of knowing
  o We have been kept out of “trouble”

• Spirit
  o We are able to more fully experience presence
  o We have found our voices and have begun to trust our inner authority
  o We are encouraged to continue along our own journey of truth
  o We can make contributions beyond ourselves (we can help others)
  o We develop guiding mythologies

Research Question #2

Within the context of community, how does art making engage the teacher/artist in social transformation moving toward social justice?

Our art making allows us to move toward wholeness as a community.

• Mind
  o We provide encouragement to cultural workers to nurture change movements
  o We create awareness of issues
  o We create a place to hold community memories
  o We expose our collective unconsciousness

• Body
We create relationships with others through presence

We create visibility to those who are not “seen”

We create solidarity

We communicate

- Spirit
  - We create new mythologies to shape the future
  - We encourage others along their truth journeys
  - We help others find their own voices

In the analysis that follows in the next section, discussion points are supported by specific data points from all sources of data. In some cases, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa merely acknowledged the presence of the phenomena in their lives without indicating specific examples to support their acknowledgment. Therefore, I have only included the examples they provided. If any did not find the presence of a particular phenomenon, that has been so noted in the text of the analysis.

**Personal Transformation of Body, Mind, and Spirit**

*Increased Self-Concept*

For Theresa, photography “found her” during her teen years, following many years of failure in school. Her success with photography became a tool for survival—a way to find visibility in her world that had largely ignored her. As an adult, she discovered that helping her students find positive self-regard continues to support her own self-esteem needs. Lately, she has noticed that her commitment to social justice
work, her particular journey of fidelity, has caused her to feel empowered as a human being.

Sam found that his photography skills provided a place for him to express his uniqueness among his mathematics and science oriented peers at his high school. He believes that photography has the power to reaffirm our identity. He is very aware that his contributions to social movements of the left have encouraged him.

While attending college as an education major, Denise began to realize that she was “good at art.” This realization encouraged her to major in art so that she could continue to develop her talent. During the email discussion that followed the focus group, Denise noted that her art making led her to understand that she is loved just as she is.

*Found a Disciplined Way of Seeing and Knowing*

Denise has found that her art making, particularly drawing, has given her the ability to see life in a different way. Drawing instruction largely trains the artist to see the forms present without giving them linguistic meaning. In other words, while drawing from observation, an artist might take in the image of a still life by noticing the shapes present and their relationships to one another in space. While drawing, she relies on what her eyes see, not on the meaning her mind gives to them. Now, she believes that her mind and her body are beginning to trust her inner vision as she produces art and as she lives in the world.

Sam understands that seeing others through the lens of a camera requires from him a posture of respect for those he will photograph. He also believes that photography has affected the way he sees the world by making him more visually responsive and
sensitive. He notes that art is not the only way he imagines developing this sensitivity. Bird watching has done the same thing for him. Sam also knows that disciplined development of skills has allowed him to increase his capacity to communicate ideas through his photography.

Theresa has discovered that the discipline of photography has caused her to push herself to understand and communicate truth through photo and film. As she has developed greater skill over time, her ability to influence through these media has increased. Her passion for communicating truth keeps her disciplined practice of art making strong.

Charles has noticed that his recent song writing experiences have verified more deeply the role of his body in the acquisition of understanding. His experiences with allowing himself to see ideas as shapes or locations within the body have developed this mode of knowing and have increased his confidence in this source of information. *Found a Way to Understand Ideas*

Theresa has found that the projects she designs for and with students allow for the emergent understanding of ideas. She appreciates that art making allows for her ideas to be organic, to grow, and to change along the way. Recently, her work with students on the film, *On My Block*, allowed her to experience this way of working. She and the students began to understand the nature of the very difficult issue of neighborhood violence as they worked to produce the film.

Charles finds that the creation of images through metaphor in his lyrics provides a way to understand complex ideas such as the making of war. As he develops linguistic
images for his lyrics, he is aware of how they might better communicate meaning to those who hear them. Recently, he has been exploring a new cosmology, a way to make sense of the expanse of the universe as well as his place within it. A new friend suggested to him that his way of thinking might be explained by the metaphor of the universe as a living thing in which each galaxy is a seed growing in the spaces of the universe. This metaphorical image brought to Charles a richer, but clearer sense of his own thinking.

Denise has found that as she has allowed herself to work emergently, she sometimes understands ideas after the creation process is complete. Through conversation with others about her work, she sometimes gains insight into the deeper meaning of ideas. In particular, she noticed that her art making helped her understand more about the nature of sacredness, a most complex idea. She also finds that her art making helps to stimulate new ideas.

*Found a Place to Hold Memories*

Sam believes that all photographs are repositories and stimulators of memory. Within his own home environment, the location of his studio, he has surrounded himself with a variety of photographs. In addition to the common photographs of family members including a beloved new grandchild, Sam has many photographs of the people of South America. For him, these photographs bring back to his mind a time and a place where his work made a significant contribution to others.

Denise traveled to El Salvador to help members of the community build a chapel which became a location of memory. For her personally, this work helped her to have a space of memory for her friend, Dorothy, who experienced torture and death at the hands
of the soldiers. Her work with Earth altars stems from her conviction that the Earth holds memory, and so she has connected with her own memories of her love of the Earth. Denise also holds memory for the women of her local community who have been violently murdered. Her art making around this issue of violence toward women allows her to remember them and to, therefore, work on their behalf.

Theresa has noticed that we not only connect to our memories through our art making, but that we can also relive them. Through reliving them, we also have the opportunity to perfect, or reconstruct them.

Some of Charles’ songs tell stories of his past. His memories of family music making, memories of his home town and his sorrow over its condition, as well as memories surrounding the loss of a dear friend have found their way into the lyrics of his songs. In this way, his songs have become a location for these memories.

**Found Access to Subconscious**

Finding access to the subconscious mind is a regular experience for both Charles and Denise. Charles works extensively with his own dream images which he records with regularity. He finds that these images often intersect with the daily events of his life such that they take on significant meaning. These synchronicities provide guidance for his life. His work with material coming from the field of Depth Psychology supports his work with his dream images. These images are often those around which he creates lyrics for his songs.

Denise has recently explored emergent art making with clay in which she begins to work without a set plan for creation. In a sense, she allows the clay to reveal itself to
her as she works. She finds that this process often reveals to her what she is harboring underneath her conscious mind. For example, her recent creations in which she portrayed the death of the women in El Salvador spoke to her of the wound that still exists so strongly within her. Denise sees this way of working as a letting go of superimposing her own will on the material or concept and rather, to be guided by her spiritual self.

*Developed Stronger Body Connection*

Charles has recently developed a very strong connection to his body through his art making. He has been able to feel sensations in his body when he senses a connection to truth. He sometimes feels that ideas take on shapes within his body and he is able to identify them. He has learned this way of working from a friend through networking at a holistic educator’s conference. This way of listening to his body has given Charles a new way of writing and composing. During the focus group session, Charles responded to the art of others through his emerging body knowledge.

Denise has noted that the experience of working with clay has a strong ability to produce physical, bodily connections to the material. She has noticed this in others as well, especially among the women at the local women’s outreach center where she works with women to create in clay as a way to bring healing to them. She has noticed that the women immediately respond to the clay with calmness and centeredness. Denise has also begun to experience bodily sensations as she worked to create her most recent pieces. During the focus group, she noted that her body always feels quite shaky when she speaks of the women who died in El Salvador.
Theresa reported having an increased ability to focus when she is engaged in art making. In fact, her focus is so intense that she sometimes loses a sense of her body during these times.  

*Trusted Bodily Ways of Knowing*

Charles has noticed a significant shift in his trust of the information provided by his body. During this research process, he noticed that his work with body knowledge was more deeply verified. During the focus group session, he was able to share this way of working with others by responding to the art of the others through a reporting of his body sensations. He has so come to trust this way of knowing that he has given it a name: “The flesh made word.”

Theresa described feeling a bodily sense of elation, almost like a high from an addiction when she completes projects. She has come to trust this sensation as a means to motivate her to continue her work. She has come to rely on this sensation like an instinct.

Denise has come to trust the sensation of adrenaline pumping into her body that produces an urgency to make art. This provides her with unexplainable energy to produce and she has come to trust its presence in her way of working.

*Kept Out of Trouble*

Theresa believes that her work with photography helped her to survive the abuses present in her home. Since her photography was the only means by which she felt successful as a young adult, she believes that her art kept her from seeking other avenues for affirmation. She knows that her students have reported a similar occurrence in their
own lives and that, in particular, art making has kept them away from the dealing of drugs and the violence within their own neighborhoods.

Charles believes that his art making has kept him from substance abuse and perhaps emotional illness. By providing a way to make meaning of the absurdity of life at times, he has found a way to direct his angst toward his good.

Denise reported that her mother kept her at the kitchen table by giving her art materials to engage her. In this way, she believes, her mother kept her out of trouble, which seemed to be her tendency as a young child. She believes that her art making has kept her from serious trouble that might have resulted in adjudication or even homelessness. She credits art making for being able to move her into a creative space where she can get lost in time.

More Fully Experienced Presence

Sam noted that his work with photography allows him to more fully experience the people he photographs. In this way, he is totally connected with the images that are right before him and must give his attention there. In a way, he finds that this is a way in which he shows deep respect for the people he photographs.

Theresa has noticed that she is able to experience presence with her students. She has noticed that when visitors come into her classroom, they often comment about the condition of the building, the lack of resources for the students, or the condition of the equipment or instruments that the students use. She reported that she does not see the surroundings, she just sees the students—the human beings before her. This, for her, is a sense of presence.
Denise knows that her new way of working emergently allows her to more fully step into a sense of presence with the clay. Not focused on a plan, she is able to experience the medium and her responses to it without judgment or a directive voice. She has learned to give the time necessary for this process to have its way, being quiet and aware through reflection and openness. She sees the same thing happening with the women at the outreach center who also work with clay. They are all able to lose their sense of time, and to allow themselves to be guided by something beyond them. Denise also believes that thwarted creativity becomes poisonous turning itself inward in a destructive way, prohibiting presence.

Charles describes presence as a process of becoming awake. His song, *Orphan Soul*, asks the question, “Where did you wake up?” He believes that it is critical to remain awake to his own path and that to do so he must live within this sense of presence.

*Found Voices and Trust of Inner Authority*

Sam knows that his photography allows him to do his cultural work promoting social movements of the left. By doing this work, he feels that his political energy is given a voice.

Charles has found that his recent experience of speaking out about his fundamentalist roots has encouraged him to continue to develop his voice. The same is true for his recent “outing” of his bodily experiences. Images and songs empower him and help him to celebrate his inner authority.

Through her own art making, and through her experience creating projects with and for students, Theresa has come to trust her inner authority regarding the needs of the
students. In spite of the feedback sometimes given to her, she is pushing forward to provide for them according to their needs through her emergent design of the curriculum. She finds that exercising her voice has provided for her some sense of control within the midst of chaos. She reports that her students experience the same as they develop their own voices.

*Encouraged to Continue Truth Journey*

Denise reported that her art allows her to move forward in a positive way in response to human tragedy such as the event that occurred to the church women in El Salvador. She has learned about multiple realities, conflicting views, and hardships through her work. She has noticed that transformation often comes to her through brokenness and that hope emerges as a result of her growth. This encourages her to press forward.

Charles spoke of the Native American way of the sweat lodge as the metaphor for his truth journey. It provides for him a way of thinking about the archetypal journey of the hero who must be tried along the way in order to return to bring healing to his people. These archetypal images are common in Charles’ lyrics. Once, his dream about a dying bird led him to understand that he needed to redirect his career path in order to move more consistently with his inner truth journey.

Theresa expressed her conviction that her work creating art with her students keeps her going and creates even more commitment on her part to continue the work. She said, “As long as I have two rubber bands and a chipmunk, I will make this work.” Her life long search for truth and beauty as reflected in her short film clip describes the force
of this energy in her life. “I figure out how to make it work with the kids. It’s what fuels me—because I have to.”

Sam finds that working as a photographer helps him continue to support the work of the social movements of the left. His discouragement over the lack of a full time teaching appointment has been difficult, but his art making allows him to continue to support the social change he values. He knows that his work makes a difference to those who are encouraged to continue their own work as a result of his art.

**Contributed to Others**

This aspect of her work is significant for Theresa. She remembers those who helped her find a way to succeed and she wants, most of all, to do the same for her students. Her commitment to “serving the underserved” extends to her practice of teaching her students to embrace this idea as their own. She has provided them with opportunities to work with adjudicated students so that her students might find a passion for serving others.

Sam has also found this aspect of his experience to be significant. Due to the role modeling provided by his parents who were engaged in their own political movement, Sam began early in his life to find his own ways to contribute to the social movements of the left. He experienced this most significantly through his work in Columbia where he has been most aware of the benefits of his work for the people. According to Sam, his work is about making connections between people, between subjects and audiences.

Denise offered a unique perspective to the discussion of contributing to others. She has found that when she offers her services to others who appear to need her
assistance, she is the one who is really served in the end. This realization has allowed her to approach her relationships with those she serves from a very different position.

Charles has concluded that his own inner work is critical to his ability to serve others. He knows that he is most in tune with helping his students emerge when he has been diligent about his own growth. He finds that he is able to understand students’ behavior from a perspective of looking at what they might be trying to accomplish inwardly and he has found that he is better able to help them redirect their energies in a productive way.

**Developed Guiding Mythologies**

For Charles, the development of guiding mythologies is a significant aspect of his experience of art making. His songs are largely comprised of metaphoric images. His work in depth psychology supports his understanding of archetypal images and he has found them to be very powerful in their ability to communicate ideas. His song, “The Orphan Soul,” is reflective of the archetypal image of awakening to the soul’s journey. Recently, he has been working with the image of a void or space necessary for the movement of spirit within. Through his work with this research group, he has re-conceptualized the notion of social change from social justice to social mercy. While working with ancient Hebrew wisdom texts that incorporate mercy and justice as two aspects of the Holy, he found meaning in thinking about our work together as enactment of mercy rather than justice.

Denise has also found her work focused on the development of guiding mythologies. She believes that her work taps into something beyond herself—the
mystery, God, Earth cosmology. Particularly, she has experienced a new way of working with clay that has itself become a guiding mythology for her life. Her allowance for emergent creation in which she experienced the art revealing itself while it was being created caused her to think of clay as coming alive with its own spirit. She felt there was a dialogue taking place with the clay. Denise has also been working with the idea of holes or spaces of void in her work. This occurred apart from any conversation about this with any of the other research participants who were working with the same idea. As she examined the *Shallow Grave* piece after the firing process, she noticed many cracks and holes in the bodies of the women represented in clay. She was astounded to notice that the holes were in the very location of the actual wounds on the women’s bodies. She connected this to her thinking about the role of wounding in her own life. Regarding her Earth altar collection, Denise noted that all of these pieces contain holes. She remembered that Native Americans often included holes in their burial pots so that free movement of spirit might be enabled within the grave.

*Community Transformation of Body, Mind, and Spirit*

*Encouragement for Cultural Workers to Nurture Change*

Sam remembers a time when cultural workers in his community gathered together regularly to encourage one another in their work. Included within this group were a number of artists and musicians whose work provided nurturance for the group to continue its work. He also remembers how music was such a significant part of the movements of the 1960s. He remembers the music as integral to the experiences of the workers rather than an “add-on” for entertainment purposes. He longs for this type of
community of workers within his geographical community because he finds the lack of it difficult. Sam reported that this role of encouraging the workers in change movements is a significant one for him in that it connects directly with the mission of his work.

Denise also hopes that her work will provide encouragement for those who are working in El Salvador to continue their work on behalf of the people there. She also knows that the art created around her work to close the School of the Americas has provided encouragement to those who attend the annual protest march. She found that the governing council of her order of nuns found her Earth altars encouraging since they had just recently developed a vision for their work that reflected the ideas contained within Denise’s work. She found that her students are encouraged in their efforts to engage in social justice work as a result of the art making experiences they have had with the women at the local outreach center. Finally, Denise also reported that her experience with this research group was another example in which cultural workers were encouraged by the making of art. “We have supported each other and the community with truth telling—speaking truth to power.” Through her experience in the focus group session, Denise received encouragement through a longed for apology related to the death of her sisters in El Salvador. She reported that this experience provided her with further encouragement to continue her work to close the School of the Americas. “I have experienced a new excitement, motivation, inspiration, and new possibilities because of the artists in this group.”

Theresa reported that her students experienced significant encouragement from one another as a result of their inquiry into neighborhood violence. As a result, their
inquiry process became more powerful and the students were encouraged to take risks within the community to pursue conversations with community leaders. She also observed that the projects she creates with students have become sources of encouragement for the members of her school community and beyond. Because she is so dependent upon funding from outside sources, Theresa’s need to share her students’ work with community members is more pronounced and results in greater dissemination of her work within the community. The encouragement others feel from this work results in additional funding for the work to continue.

Charles has found his work at the summer creativity institute to be a place where he is able to nurture and encourage the work of young people as they seek their own ways to engage in cultural work. He knows that the images he creates in his songs provide encouragement to others to continue their own work. He considers his coffee house events to be locations of increased awareness within the community rather than opportunities for entertainment. He is currently exploring the idea of moving his work beyond the local area so that he can provide this kind of encouragement to others on a broader scale. As a result of participating in this research group, Charles reported feeling encouraged to be articulate and truthful about his growing awareness of knowledge contained within his body. He also has been encouraged by the opportunity to be a part of transforming certain aspects of doctoral level research and reporting.

*Created Awareness of Social Issues*

Again, for Sam, the function of creating awareness of social issues is a significant aspect of his work. His current exhibit at a local park visitor’s center contains an artist
statement that expresses his hope that the photographs will bring awareness to the people of Ohio about the life of the people of El Chocó, Columbia. The artist statement also includes information about the political climate of the country as well as the suggestion that global corporate interests are responsible for much of the difficulty there. His photography of workers has been about Sam’s desire to communicate to others about the conditions under which people work as well as to create a portrait of the honorability of common work. Some of Sam’s photographs are currently on display in a show exposing issues of women throughout the world.

This aspect of her work is also an important factor for Theresa. She hopes that the art she produces with the students will help to expose the situations in which the underserved must live and work. She has engaged the topics of African American history, community violence, adjudicated youth, and ecological sustainability. She knows that her students help to change the perceptions of others through these projects and that she and the students have been able to gain the attention of community leaders. Particular to the medium of photography, she believes that cameras create a world that other people can see.

Recently, Charles has been able to use his art to expose the mythologies that move human beings into war. He has created alternative images to counteract those of war making and has been focusing his energies on communicating these ideas through his coffee house events. Additionally, his work with his school based colleagues to encourage arts-based ways of knowing brought about a school-wide event in which all students were able to participate in activities with artists who integrate art making with
holistic living practices. For many students, this was their first exposure to these possibilities.

Through her art making around the issues of El Salvador, the School of the Americas, the violent deaths of women in her local community, as well as the issues facing women of poverty in her community, Denise has helped to create awareness of these issues among members of her spiritual community, her students, and members of this research group. Within the context of the research group, Denise also remarked about the experience of working with others who help to make us aware of ourselves through recognition of our work not yet fully realized. In other words, the research group allowed her to see herself in her own work by reflecting to her what she had created. She said, “Others have told us of our own story, and we are amazed.”

*Created a Place to Hold Community Memories*

Denise’s work in El Salvador is particularly illustrative of this concept of holding community memories. When she arrived in El Salvador, she was asked to help create an altar to be housed in a memorial chapel designed to honor the four church women killed there. She noticed during her time there that the particular stories of the women had changed over time, as White women workers became dark skinned and dark eyed. However, the memory of the women became a mythological structure for understanding what it means to stand up for truth. This story continues to nurture the people of El Salvador. Her *Shallow Grave* pieces hold the memory of the grave in which the women were placed as well as the memory of the wounds on their bodies. *Shallow Grave II: Into the Light* records the memory of these deaths, while constructing a new one in which the
women’s memory is held by the Earth. Her Earth altars also reveal her sense of the Earth holding memories. Also, her work with the School of the America’s protest is a significant memorial event in which all of those who have died at the hands of soldiers trained at the school are memorialized. She reported that her students’ art work became an installation piece outside the gates of the school. Denise holds a strong sense of the role of memory in her work. “We have learned that there are many layers of knowing and healing like the layers of the Earth. We continually reach down into these layers when we tell our stories, naming them, teaching them, sharing them (through our art).”

Sam is convinced that all photographs are repositories and stimulators of memory. His work with the people of El Chocó was done in the hope that it will create awareness of their particular situation, but also that it would hold the memory of their way of life, so connected to the land on which they live.

Through her project called, Art is My Weapon, Theresa hoped that students would be able to connect with the idea of art making for the purpose of social change as her students became acquainted with various African American artists who engaged in this work in the past. By connecting to this body of historical cultural memory, the students became connected to their own heritage in a way that serves to influence their lives. These historical figures became role models for contemporary youth.

Charles’ lyrics become locations of memory as others connect to the archetypal images created there. Because the images he uses are archetypal in nature, they connect to common themes of life. Those who take in his lyrics are then able to locate their own memories within them.


*Exposed Our Collective Unconscious*

Through his work in El Chocó, Sam identified the larger political forces at work within the political upheaval as serving the interests of corporate agribusiness. In fact, his artist statement indicates that the unrest and violence occurring among the three military factions within the country serves the purpose of dismantling structures that connect the people to their land paving the way for corporate takeover. In this way, he is exposing the unconscious greed motivating the disruption of people in this particular place. As a viewer of his exhibit, I thought about my own connection to the lust to consume. Although Sam does not think that his work often approaches this idea of exposing our unconscious behavior, he is aware of experiencing this phenomenon when he experiences the art of other socially conscious artists.

Theresa believes that we have the ability to change the perceptions of self and others through the lens of the camera. “Students are encouraged and nurtured as they explore the connections between human beliefs and human behavior.”

Denise’s work with the Earth altars is the result of her sense of our unconsciousness about our relationship to the Earth. Her community recognized this theme in her altar series as they have been creating a vision for their work in the future around this same idea. They expressed to her that her work was the very visual representation of their thinking. Her experience with this research group has led her to appreciate the value of community in this work of exposing the unconscious. She explained, “We are going places and being with people who are stretching us and nurturing us in this knowing.”
Charles’ work is closely connected lately to the idea of exposing collective unconsciousness. His project exposing the mentality of war was developed to expose the meaning behind our need to make war as well as our lack of reflection about the act of war itself. He has concluded that our images of the masculine have been misappropriated and that other images must be created to heal this wound of the masculine. During the focus group session, he connected to this idea through Denise’s rendering of the grave of the women killed in El Salvador. He spoke of “the healing of the real” as a way of conceptualizing our connection to our collective unconscious.

*Created Relationships Through Presence*

“This is critically important to me,” explained Sam. “I believe it is happening and success should be measured by whether we accomplish this goal.” Sam believes that he creates relationships with those he photographs. He knows that photography requires presence in order for the photographs to generate respect and love for the people he photographs. In a sense, the very act of framing a photograph within the lens of a camera requires attention to the subject. However, when Sam works, he is deeply aware of the humanness of those he photographs. He rejects the notion of seeing his work only in terms of the technicality of the camera’s work. He remembers with fondness the wisdom of a nun in Columbia who spoke to him of the importance of his presence with the people of El Chocó. He also remembers the strong relationships he was able to create with his university students. He describes the process as an integrated experience of art making and relationship building in which the students were able to address real world issues of concern as they developed skill in photography.
Denise remembers the experience she had with her students who worked with her at the women’s shelter one day to assist the women in creating with clay. She became aware of the students’ willingness to “pull up to the table” and to join the women in their own space. She found the students’ presence with the women a surprising event and she commented on the nature of the work with clay to promote such an experience. For Denise, clay has a strong capacity to connect human beings to the Earth and to give them a sense of presence. She also remembers her relationship with the construction worker in El Salvador with whom she had to communicate without the use of language. The lack of language caused her to be present with him in different ways. As a result, they developed a strong relationship as they worked together. When speaking about the relationships created through this research group, she explained, “

We have created an awareness of restorative justice—right relationships with each other and the Earth. Through art making and through sharing we feel this relationship even in our bodies. As we center ourselves we feel this great connection of rooted energy with the Earth—feeling this energy throughout the body. We are learning what indigenous peoples have always known.

As a result, Denise reported a sense of deep regard and bonding with the Charles, Theresa, and Sam. She also reported having a deeper sense of the presence of the women who were killed in El Salvador as a result of her work with the *Shallow Grave* pieces.

Charles’ ritual of “naming” students as he calls forth their creativity in the public setting of the coffee house is the result of his willingness to be present to his students and their creative processes. He noted that his relationships with the students have improved
as he has given attention and energy to the idea of presence—his own presence with himself as well as his presence with them. Several of his songs speak of this idea of creating relationships through presence. “Know each other by laughter and heart and by the passion for your work and your art.” “The bread is warm, the drink is poured. Together—ain’t that what this world is for?” During the focus group process, Charles allowed himself a high degree of presence to Denise’s wound over the deaths of her sisters in El Salvador. Shedding tears, he indicated the depth of his willingness to take in her feelings.

Theresa noted the relationships her photography students created with the adjudicated students they mentored as photographers. Initially, the students were fearful and reluctant, but became deeply engaged in their role as mentors.

*Created Visibility for Those Not Seen*

Sam finds it important in his work to help make invisible people visible. When he created an exhibit of photographs of laborers from his community, he was critiqued for having too many photographs thereby detracting from the message of the exhibit. For Sam, it was important to include each of the workers he photographed so that when they came to see the exhibit, each person would be able to find himself or herself there. For the same reason, he hopes to have his El Chocó exhibit travel throughout Columbia. Sam believes that this is a critical aspect of his work and that his work should be judged based on whether or not he accomplishes this goal.

The projects that Theresa and her students create are disseminated in various ways throughout the community so that issues important to the students might become visible.
She believes that cameras are particularly important because they create visibility. Through this research project, Theresa noticed that she experienced a sense of visibility as she felt affirmed and valued for her work by the research group.

Charles has created a sense of visibility for his students through his coffee house nights in which he invites students to “come out” to the community with the creative work. The same is true with his work with the summer creativity institute. His web site also contains many links to the work of other artists who are working in similar ways.

Denise has desired to create visibility for the people who have suffered at the hands of soldiers trained at the School of the Americas. She accomplishes the same goal with her work at the women’s outreach center. The women’s work is currently exhibited in a show she has produced at her college gallery. Through this research study, she believes that the she, Charles, Theresa, and Sam have become more visible to one another. “Through our salty tears we became vulnerable.”

*Created Solidarity*

Again, this aspect of his work is critical for Sam. He believes that the presence of images become outward indicators of shared values and helps community members make connections with one another, developing collective identity. His work with the people of El Chocó was designed to assist them with the development of solidarity so that they might resist the outward forces that threaten their way of life together.

Theresa found that her students developed a sense of solidarity through the *On My Block* project when they realized the common nature of their neighborhood experiences. Theresa believes that the collaborative nature of their project work causes the students to
develop a sense of solidarity as they work together for a cause greater than themselves. Indicative of this developing sense among the students is that students who graduate from the school return to help her in the classroom. This solidarity, Theresa described, is the result of the development of their collective voice.

Denise’s work with the School of the Americas as well as her students’ participation in her work there allows them to develop a sense of solidarity around this issue and they return to the college ready to continue their work together. Denise has found that by herself, she is too fragile to take on this difficult work. Her own sense of solidarity with others is critical. She has found that this research group has provided support for new ideas, and she has experienced others who are on the same passionate journey. “It’s as if we’re thinking along the same path.” As a result, she feels renewed courage related to a decision about upcoming advocacy opportunities.

Charles’s web site is a location for those who wish to locate a place of solidarity as they do their work. The same is true for the coffee house events that he creates. Regarding the research group, Charles noted that the research process has “connected me to a larger wave of caring.”

Communicated

Charles has found a unique style of communicating through art. He calls this process “art answering art” and claims this as a foundational idea of the Urrealist art movement he has created. In this process, conversation occurs, not through our usual linguistic patterns, but through art forms, one answering the other. His web site provides a location for this communication. As a song writer, he believes that songs are a way of
having a conversation with himself and that these songs will result in others having conversations with one another as well.

Denise has experienced communication through her art as she worked with the construction worker in El Salvador. The two communicated visually for months ahead of her visit due to the language barrier between them. She also spoke of the way in which the body communicates to her when truth is told. Within the research group, she spoke of the manner in which group members communicated visually which resulted in conversation about the meaning of the work.

In Theresa’s classroom, projects are opportunities for students to communicate about their experiences as they work together to produce their art. The products of their efforts are means by which they communicate ideas to others, such as the school community or their larger community in which they live. In their case, photography and particularly film are readily accessible to others who wish to understand their ideas.

Sam also noted the critical role of communicating through his photography. Again, he stated that the success of his work should be measured by his ability to communicate through it.

*Created New Mythologies to Shape the Future*

This aspect of his work is particularly important to Charles. He wrote,

The Copernican shift of our times is symbolized by the realization of the place of our sun in the galaxy and the universe. What was once the single carrier of truth is only a tiny, but precious spark guided by a greater empty center. There is no horizon now, no edge of the universe that we can reach. Heaven is not above and
Earth is not below. There is no separation. Earth is in the heavens and so, heaven must be spread before us if we have eyes to perceive it. This way of creating meaning from images, real or imagined has led him to take on a role of pointing out such mythologies to the culture. He is also working on creating new images of the grandfather and grandmother that are consistent with the indigenous peoples of our land that will look toward a new way of nurturing our youth. His work with the sweat lodge tradition moves toward this goal as well. His wish is “to bring medicine to the culture.

Denise remembers the new mythology that emerged as she worked in El Salvador to create the altar for the memorial chapel. The story of the four women became the story of the people of El Salvador as the characters of the four women took on the skin color of the native people. She noted that “we create to transform the future.” Through the research process, she described a way of working that itself became a new mythology for her, one of holistic knowing and thinking regarding the making of art for social justice. She experienced an integration of body, mind, and spirit in this research process.

Theresa’s short film clip describes her desire to search for truth and beauty. In this search, she found that service to others through her art making was the location of truth and beauty in her life. She worked to help students understand this guiding mythology in her life so that they might take it on as their own.

Sam reported that one of the goals of his photography is to help create the utopian vision of the dignity of work for all. He said, “Art asks us to consider what we would like our communities to be like.”
Encouraged Others to Continue Their Truth Journeys

Charles finds that his own awakening and continual nurturance of his inner life has helped him to take on the role of encouragement toward others to engage in the same process of exploring inward truth. He provided many opportunities for students to do the same through his summer institute work and through the opportunities he provides in the classroom and in community settings for students to explore their inner life. His classroom is full of material from the field of depth psychology as well as the creative responses of students to the ideas they encounter. Through this research process, Charles reported that he has felt a stronger nudge to widen his circle of influence—to travel, to sing, and to teach more often.

Denise’s work with students includes a strong commitment to social justice work. As a unique aspect of her college’s art program, the development of a social justice agenda is included in course syllabi. As a result, her students are encouraged to seek their own inner connections to this kind of work. As a participant in this research group, Denise found a location of collective encouragement for continuing her own truth journey and she has seen her role in encouraging others. “We have shared energy and support to create, act, and walk more humbly.”

Theresa desires to create a safe place for her students where they can try new things, take risks, and make mistakes. She creates projects with them and for them so that they can explore issues to which they can connect on a very deep level.

As a result of his participation in this research process, Sam has found renewed energy to continue working. He has been reminded, through this research group, that his
work is potentially good and helpful in its impact on others. In other words, he has been encouraged to continue to pursue his sense of truth and the work that requires of him. He knows that his work has provided a similar energy to others who are pursuing their own perceptions of truth through their cultural work.

Helped Others to Find Their Voices

Denise is confident that her students develop their voices as they progress through the art program at her college. The social justice work required of them helps them to gain a sense of empowerment as they learn how to use their voices to help others. She sees a similar development with the women at the outreach center as they produce art. As one who helps others develop voice, she sees herself as a wounded healer and within community, particularly this research community, we embrace each other in weakness.

Sam discovered his influence on the development of voice in others through a project in Columbia in which he helped a group of women create a brochure to describe and detail their needlework. Through the production of the brochure, the women found a place to express their vision of their work to others within the community.

Charles helps his students to find their voices through their creative expression. At the summer creativity institute, he helps them identify and name their particular gifts and ways of working. The same is true for the students in his classroom. The provision of a public space for the students to share their creative gifts encourages them to speak within the context of their creative work.

Theresa has found that the camera has a way of helping students develop their voice. The projects she provides for them require individual expression in response to
issues of justice. She finds that as students place their work in local, state, and national competitions, and as they do well in these competitions, they are encouraged to further develop their voices. She noticed with the most recent project that students were willing to speak out in public venues of significance such as the office of a state government official. They had developed enough confidence in their project that they requested further contact with him, which he granted.

Focus Group Dialogue

A Narrative View

A few days ahead of our scheduled focus group meeting, I learned that Sam would likely not be able to join us as he had been hospitalized for an illness acquired while on his trip to Columbia in the fall. I thought a lot about how his absence would affect the others, about how eager they had been to meet him, and about my worry for his well being. For weeks, he, and the other three group members had been on my mind daily as I placed myself in the midst of their stories. I have told them, “You are all in my office with me as I write.”

On the day of our meeting, I watched the weather forecast in the morning, my usual habit. Possibility of heavy snow was indicated but the snow showers were not predicted to arrive until long after our meeting. However, by the time of the meeting, travel was very difficult with many inches of heavy, wet, late winter snow already on the ground. I remembered our first meeting together earlier in the fall. That night, we traveled to Theresa’s home in a very heavy downpour that lasted all evening.
The curator of the gallery had prepared our meeting space in the midst of the current exhibit honoring the experiences of women across the world. He had adorned our tables with a bright cloth, colorful napkins, and electric candles for warmth on this cold night. The lighting was low, provided by the spot lights directed at the paintings, photographs, drawings, and sculptures placed carefully around the room. As we sat down to dinner, we noticed the regular beat of falling water droplets into a bucket. Apparently, the heavy snow had created a hole in the roof. We all noticed the significance of the presence of large amounts of water that evening and wondered about the metaphorical meaning of its presence once again.

Charles opened the conversation with a description of his current work with Native American images of the Grandfather and the Grandmother wounds of our culture. In this work, he is seeking to open up a mythology in which the elders of a community become aware of the purpose for which the children are born into the community. As a result, he hopes that they will be perceived and received differently, thus impacting the manner in which the children are nurtured within the community. He has also been working with a Canadian physician whom he met recently at a holistic education conference. He has been learning from Larry the value of listening to one’s own body and he has been practicing an inner asking in which he directs questions to his body and waits for a response.

As a result, Charles has been experiencing his song writing in a very different way recently. He describes beginning with his guitar by playing a few chords while waiting for his body to respond with clues. He finds that ideas take shapes within his
body or he will feel sensations in particular parts of his body such as his arm. In the song writing process, this culminates as he asks his body what the lyrics are to be. Sometimes, he finds this process to be awe inspiring and other times the words seem truthful but cliché. When this happens, he continues to work with the lyrics until they become more original.

Denise responded with enthusiasm, “The same thing has happened to me . . . almost exactly, Charles. I mean, I can’t believe you’re saying this.” She described a new way of working in which images seem to emerge from the clay. One particular time, Denise remembers asking, “What is this?” What emerged was not at all what she had planned. Because of some of the conversations that had occurred at the opening meeting of this research group, she decided to allow the piece to reveal itself to her and to trust this newly emerging inner authority. As the piece emerged, she realized that it was a body, the body of one of the four nuns killed in El Salvador.

I described my recent art making, allowing an emergent idea to have its way in my work. For some time, I have been drawn to seeds, knowing that the image contained far more than just its physical form. But recently, as this research project has progressed, I have been drawn to the spaces necessary for the nurturing of seeds. While volunteering at Charles’ high school this spring, I created a clay sculpture while leading a group of students to meditate with clay. We all worked silently and with eyes closed that morning in order to allow ourselves to be more fully present with the clay, the earth. As I worked, a figure emerged, one containing various rounded out spaces and indentations. When I opened my eyes, I felt the “hum” of truth from within and knew that this creation
emerged from my inner explorations of human transformation. For me, the idea of a void, a space necessary for movement of spirit became more real as I had the awareness of an inner authority confirming my cognitive processes. Charles remembered seeing me that day, immersed in the process of making. He said, “I stopped by, but you were really into what you were doing.” He also remembers a recent conversation about one of Larry’s peace circles in which a participant spoke from within. “Imagine the universe as a living thing, and each galaxy as a seed that’s growing in the space of the universe. Imagine that.” Charles’ cosmology finds a connection here from my working with the images of seeds and the voids that nurture them to the universe and its ways of creation.

Denise moved from the table to bring her clay sculpture, *Shallow Grave*, into the room. She said, “These are the four women who died in El Salvador. And this is the person I knew,” pointing to one of the figures placed within a shallow bowl-like structure. She proceeded to pull each one out of the “grave” so that she could name it and provide more details of the story. “I think this is Jean, yes. She was the one who was tortured the most. This is Eta. She was tiny.” All four women were raped, murdered, and then placed in a shallow grave by soldiers who had been trained at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. Denise continued,

> When they found them, they found them in this shallow grave in this really rural area. And the area was like right where the ox cart goes. And it was right by the side of the road and the children knew what was happening. The parents were pretty afraid to go out so the children went out and found the grave.
Denise began to describe a second piece that she began shortly after the completion of *Shallow Grave*. As she began to work with the clay, she had already planned to make the piece about the earth, but the same emergence of bodies occurred this time as well. But this time, the grave was constructed on a large piece of clay (earth) providing a strong image of the earth’s support of the women in contrast to the thin crust of earth in the first piece. As Denise worked, she decided to call this piece, *Shallow Grave II: Into the Light*. The piece contains numerous holes, places for light to enter. Additionally, she realized the importance of the women’s deaths in terms of the horror brought to light as a result. Denise, as well as her sisters in the same order who have taken a strong stand against the involvement of the United States in the training of these soldiers, would not have known about the events in El Salvador, as well as other South American countries, had these deaths not occurred.

Particularly significant to Denise is the occurrence of unusual events in the making process of *Shallow Grave*. She reports this to be one of her worst pieces in terms of construction and the resultant effects from the firing process. “I have never so ill crafted anything in my life. You can tell the pieces are cracked. The vitrification isn’t true. Maybe that’s what it’s all about.” As I listened, I felt the sensation of intense energy move throughout my body. But as she continued, my hand moved to cover my mouth in awe.

This body, Eta’s body, completely opened up. So I had to patch it up. And this [pointing to the area around her heart that contained a large crack] is where she was totally bruised. I realized that the cracks were where they were hurt.
As she finished, she expressed the need to sit down. “My knees are a little shaky right now. Whenever I talk about it, I feel shaky and I feel like I’m going to cry.”

Charles, having listened intently to her story, told Denise that he felt his body respond to the truth of her words. Having spent months now studying the nature of the masculine role in the making of war, he suggested that the masculine needed to be brought into her story. “What do you mean?” Denise asked. He replied, “All this that we’re talking about is perpetrated by the masculine that doesn’t know itself, masculinity misunderstood.”

Charles stood up from his chair and moved to the head of the table where the *Shallow Grave* rested on the edge of the table. He began to speak.

I’m going to bring the masculine to this right now. And part of this is these tears [as he began to weep]. There is a sacred heart of the masculine and the sacred masculine’s heart is broken by this brutality. On behalf of the ignorance that is in the world, this is not how it’s supposed to be and we are so sorry. We are so sorry for these events [he continues to weep]. And because your work brings these tears, you need to know that your work has done well. You’ve done it in a good way because it reaches the heart of the masculine. And so I’m here to remind you of that and to be a witness for that.

Denise jumped in,

When my friends get together and we talk about this we say nobody has ever said “sorry.” Nobody. You’re the first person who has ever said “sorry.” If only, if only people would say, “we made a mistake, this was really a wrong thing. We’re
so sorry this happened to your family and friends.” Nobody has ever said that.

The United States government called them “gun running nuns” and said that it was their own fault.

As Denise recalled her history and her place in this story she said, “I don’t think I’ll ever get over this, but I think I’m not supposed to.” Charles offered comfort through his sense of mythology.

Well, the wound will clear so the burden of the sorrow will clear but the hole where the spirit will enter the world to heal the world will not go away. The hole, the hole will not go away in you, like that’s a gift. And in the traditional, you carry the message of the bear. You suffer the wound, you find the healing, and then you’ll walk among the people and your presence does something. You are earth.

Denise believes that her newest body of work, a group of small altars representing the consciousness of the earth, has had that effect on others. After seeing one of these altars, the governing body of her community decided to purchase this piece because it was a visual image of the very vision they had developed for themselves. Denise went on to describe this body of work.

So what I tried to do in these [earth] memories is just to let go and not think too hard. So I made all the tops first [representing] the parts that I loved. The moon.

The energy. Mother Earth. Breath.

She also felt compelled to include the idea of negative space. “There’s always a hole in it somewhere. Always a hole. So there’s the spirit of a hole in there someplace.” She
continued, “That hole might be in me, but also the Membre Indians created with holes in
their pieces too. They would bury the dead with a vessel over their heads so that the spirit
could go back and forth.”

Charles felt moved to share his recent creation, a new song about holes:

(Reynolds, 2008; see appendix E)

Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it
It’s got a hole inside.
Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it
So its spirit won’t die
It’s got a hole in it so its spirit won’t die

Build up stone walls around you
For giant gates and bars
Lock and load behind your weapons
Still all your love slips through your arms.
Still all your love slips through your arms.

Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it.
It’s got a hole inside
Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it.
So its spirit won’t die.

Close your eyes to what hurt you
Pull the blinds down over your heart
Turn the sound so loud you hear nothing
Find the crack in your mind tears your house apart
Find the crack in your mind tears your house apart

Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it
Got a hole inside
Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it
So its spirit won’t die
It’s got a hole in it so its spirit won’t die

This is the secret of breathing
This is the message of seasons and time
The voice and the ear are made for each other
Empty place at our table for the guest who arrives
There’s an empty place at our table for the guest who arrives

So be wise with these words
Be as clever as serpents in this world
Secure your soul to its heavenly homeland
Find the heartbeat of peace, it’s in the storm
The heartbeat of peace, it’s in the storm
The heartbeat of peace, it’s in the storm

Cause everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it.
It’s got a hole inside

Everything in this world, it’s got a hole in it

So its spirit won’t die

It’s got a hole in it so its spirit won’t die

As the song concluded, Denise expressed her awareness of the connectedness of our ideas. “It’s as if we’re thinking along the same path. But you put it into music [to Charles]. We put it into art. We’ve caught the ‘hum’ of the holy.

For the first time during the evening, I glanced at my watched and realized that nearly two hours had passed. As we talked about the details of the themes that emerged from the data collection process, our expected task for the evening, I strongly sensed that the events of the previous two hours had been the lived experience of the phenomena we were to have discussed. Again, the sense of intense energy filled my body as we prepared to part that evening. I felt a deep love and respect for these two who have dared to be present with their art and with one another. We spoke about continuing to work together beyond the scope of this research project and planned to meet again for dinner. As I moved outside, I was once again taken aback by the presence of so much water. As I unlocked my car, I was aware of water covering the top of my shoes and moving quickly inside of them. I smiled as I thought of the tradition of the washing of the feet of the traveler. More so, I thought of the washing of the spirit of human presence.

**Emergent Phenomena**

During the focus group process and the email conversation that followed, several themes emerged. Denise, Charles, Theresa, and Sam spoke about a variety of personal
costs they have experienced as a result of their work. They also spoke about doing their work emergently, without compulsion to work according to plan or to standards. Through the analysis of the data, I observed that Denise and Charles seemed to work largely from one way of understanding their work, whereas Theresa and Sam seemed to work from another framework. This observation was confirmed by the focus group participants. Finally, the focus group participants spoke of working with the idea of presence/absence.

**Personal Costs**

Denise, Charles, Theresa, and Sam spoke of economic concerns, isolation, and loneliness as well as various repercussions, or “blow back” as a result of their work. Since salaries for teachers remain low compared to other professions, all have experienced some financial loss due to the nature of the work they have chosen. Sam now works full time as an artist without the benefit of regular teaching salary. Charles chose part time teaching so that he would have the time necessary to develop his art. Although these two participants have more time now to work directly with their art form, they have less or no regular salary. For Theresa, the continual search for funding for her projects with students is stressful. She knows that without her work to find funding, she would not be able to provide for her students. Denise spoke of the fear of economic loss due to the possible consequences of civil disobedience.

Isolation and loneliness seem to be regular companions of all. Denise said, “When we have to speak from the edges of community, relationships suffer.” Theresa feels outside of the mainstream of her school and is aware of the resentment that others feel towards her due to the manner in which she extends herself to her students. Additionally,
the fact that she does not have tested standards to address in her classroom seems to be a source of contention. Charles stated, “The general tone is being a stranger in a strange land or living in the wrong time period.” This participant has a strong sense of being estranged from a social support system due to his choice to follow the call to do his work. Sam literally works in isolation most of the time. For him, this is not a good match for his personality. He enjoys regular contact with others and he longs for a community of artists with whom he can relate.

Other consequences are apparent. Sam contracted an illness due to his work in another country. Charles described difficulty with feeling “love that hurts” as a result of his openness to his inner work and that of others. Denise reported that this research process took her outside of her comfort zone. Theresa spoke of the difficulty of feeling deep sadness and loss when human rights abuses are exposed as a result of her work. She is aware that this sadness and loss has had an impact on her community.

*Emergent Design*

All four spoke of the importance of working with emergent design when planning for the experiences of students in the classroom. Theresa has always worked this way by creating projects for students that emerge from their needs and the current milieu of the school, the community, as well as national and world affairs. It is important to her to work this way because she understands the need for the students to connect to the projects in ways that will create meaning and purpose for them. Because she has no state standards that are tested in her area of study, she is free to work in this way.
Denise found emergent working to be a new experience for her. Her formal art training taught her to plan, sketch, and complete projects according to the cognitive processes that precede her work with clay. However, as a result of this research study, she has discovered the value of moving into her work with far fewer preconceived notions about the outcome of the work. As a result, she was able to create something that came from deep within her. She found this way of working has brought new energy and life to her work.

Charles is also not hindered by the impact of state tested curriculum standards. Although district courses of study are written to guide the delivery of curriculum, the lack of an outcomes-based assessment allows him a bit more freedom to work emergently in the classroom. Additionally, however, Charles’ way of working through his own inquiry process is highly focused on the synchronistic arrival of images and messages that he receives through his dreams, by listening to the responses within his body, and by noticing the interactions he has with his outer world. As all of these events converge into his experience, he makes meaning of them, for himself and for his students. Critical to Charles’ way of working is his growing sense of being able to trust his inner authority and his willingness to step forward with action that follows from his inner work.

Similar to Theresa, Sam worked in his college classroom by helping students learn basic photography skills through interactions with their environment. He relied on current issues and events within his community to create opportunities for students to engage in their own inquiries through photography. In this way, he was able to integrate
his love of photography with his passion for social justice by relying on the environment to provide the basis of inquiry for his students.

**Modes of Understanding Work**

Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa presented an interesting variety of ways of approaching their work and of understanding the way in which it occurs. As they expressed their ways of knowing, they seemed similar in some ways and different in others.

Denise and Charles found similarity in their ways of approaching their work through spiritual understandings. Each was very comfortable with discussion of realities beyond the physical and both work with images related to spiritual ideas. They both remarked that the events of the focus group would likely have been less dramatic had they not been fully free to express themselves without regard for others who might be wary of the way of working. They found their interactions with one another to be very powerful due to the commonality of their ways of working. They differed in an interesting way, however. Charles’ sense of his work has to do with creating images, mythologies that help to move the culture forward toward a path of healing and wholeness. Although Denise fully recognizes and appreciates the need to work in this way, she has focused her work on the idea of healing and wholeness through providing a location for memory. In a sense, one looks to the past while the other looks to the future. As they worked together, both aspects of their work were strongly present in their dialogue.
Sam’s and Theresa’s work in photography stems from a more critical perspective that looks at the structures of the power relationships among people in the culture. Their documentation of conditions of workers, poverty, violence, as well as the political impact of global capitalism exposes these issues to the viewers of their work. Sam carries his own socialist perspective into his work and believes that the documentation of the circumstances of marginalized peoples may serve to make others aware while also serving to encourage those who are working directly in socialist movements. Theresa brings to her work commitment to serve those who have not been given opportunities due to the conditions of their births. Out of her own past, she remembers the impact of school failure, and she is determined to make a difference in the lives of her students. Rather than evoking memories of the past, or of creating new ways of thinking about the future, Sam and Theresa are documenting the present in order to work towards justice.

Presence/Absence

An interesting dialectic emerged from the conversation within the focus group session as each described his / her ways of working. Although the ideas of presence and absence seem to contradict one another, when juxtaposed, present a way of working described by the participants as transformative.

The idea of presence in the art making process was common to Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. In one way or another, they all experienced an increased ability to attend to the current situation in which they worked. Some described a sense of getting lost in their work such that all sensory systems were focused there rather than on other physical entities or thoughts. They described being able to fully focus on the process of
their art making. Denise described this as a transcendent experience. Sam described his ability to focus fully on other human beings during the process of photographing them. He noticed that this fully attended focus creates an atmosphere of respect that moves into the photograph itself in such a way that others commented on the respect that is reflected within the photographs.

On the other hand, three of the participants found the idea of absence particularly significant. Denise often utilized holes within her ceramic pieces as a way of expressing this idea. She is also very aware of the emptiness from which she has approached her art making lately. By allowing the clay to reveal itself to her, she must first empty herself of expectations. Along this same line of thinking, Charles recently composed a song that describes the need for “holes” in our lives to support the movement of the spirit. Theresa described her awareness of the need for absence through a discussion of the curriculum in her classroom. Absence creates a space for her to work, for her emergent curriculum to have a space to grow.

Summary

This chapter described the storied experiences of four teacher/artists engaged in art making with social change as the end-in-view. Their narratives were created from interviews and field observations. A cross narrative analysis revealed common and differing experiences among Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. These themes were carried forward to a focus group discussion where additional themes emerged. This chapter reveals something of the way in which these artists work towards social justice as well as their growing understanding of their work as a result of this research process.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Wayward world, I weep for thee, spinning ‘round the sun

Wellspring of diversity, your roads all lead to one road

What man has loosed upon the sea cannot be undone

Oh what fools we mortals be, each and every one.

(Gilkison, 2003)

Live fully, love wastefully, and help to create a world
where everyone has the opportunity to do the same.

(Spong, 2001)

An overarching theme of this research study has been Badiou’s (2005b) notion of ethical fidelity through which he proposes the idea that human beings have little choice regarding the circumstances that occur in their lives. However, some circumstances, called events, offer the choice of pursuing a journey of truth finding or a choice to return to living at a level of mere circumstances in which life is lived without much pursuit of deeper meaning. Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa were selected for this study because they displayed evidence of a desire to live within this framework of ethical fidelity. In other words, each has demonstrated over a long period of time, work that reflects a search for deep meaning alongside of service to others for the greater good. Their storied
experiences strongly support the presence of the ethical fidelity for which they were selected for the study.

Additionally, this study has been positioned ontologically such that a plurality of truths is not only a possibility, but is a desired situation. As Badiou (2002) considered the nature of evil, the lack of such a plurality seemed to be a primary condition for evil to emerge. In any research process, the epistemological position of the researcher is a significant consideration. Here, I have become one of several constructors of meaning.

As a result of this overarching finding of ethical fidelity within the lived experiences of the research participants, alongside Badiou’s (2002) notion of the plurality of truth as a means to lessen the possibility of evil, this chapter has taken into consideration not only the plurality of truth as represented by Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa, but I have found it necessary to question the role of my own lived experience in this investigation as we all became co-researchers in this investigation. During the focus group session, I became aware of a growing interaction between me and the others through which we co-constructed meaning. This presents a certain research dilemma in which I had to consider the nature of my own experiences as a teacher/artist. Therefore I have constructed this chapter so that it begins with a scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004), an artful way of writing and rendering self in the spaces between lived experience and scholarship. Nash noted: “I have found that personal narrative writing helps us all to understand our histories, shape our destinies, develop our moral imaginations, and give us something truly worth living and dying for” (p. 2). Moving beyond a narcissistic
telling of one’s story, scholarly personal narrative recognizes “our particular genetics, psychologies, histories, sociologies, and tribes of influence” (p. 39).

In a sense, this is also an autobiographical portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) designed to explore the interior spaces with depth and complexity in order to “combine systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression” (p. 3). Significant to the art of portraiture is the idea of artful reconstruction or intervention “leading toward new understandings and insights, as well as instigating change” (p. 5). Similar to scholarly personal narrative, portraiture seeks to move from the specific to the general and back again so that personal experiences are connected to larger, even cosmological questions.

A Scholarly Personal Narrative

This chapter begins with the juxtaposition of two voices. Singer, songwriter Eliza Gilkison offers a lament for the earth, for the threat we face to our sustainability whereas John Shelby Spong offers a vision of response. One is a scholar, whereas one artfully creates images with words and sounds. It is in the space between that I seek to live and to work. Through a/r/tographic (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Sameshima, 2007; Springgay et al., 2008) rendering, this study has explored lived experience within these in-between spaces of artist/researcher/teacher that form and re-form, direct and re-direct the path of the artful inquirer through currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976).

I begin my story in the present moment (Dewey, 1938; Slattery, 1995). Just a few days ago, Bill Moyers interviewed the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, now well know as the pastor of presidential hopeful, Senator Barack Obama. For many weeks now, I watched a
film clip containing a small portion of Rev. Wright’s sermon following September 11, 2001. I also noted with interest the reports of the relationship between curriculum studies scholar and former Weather Underground member, Bill Ayers, and Barack Obama. It was just a year ago when I first met Bill Ayers at a curriculum conference at a local state university when we were assigned to the same small group for discussion. Shortly thereafter, I remember a brief but pleasant exchange between Bill Ayers and myself on Michigan Avenue in Chicago where we were both attending the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. During this brief conversation, I was able to share with him the positive reactions of my master’s level curriculum students who attended the conference with me earlier in the year. They had particularly appreciated Bill’s sense of the work of teachers.

Just prior to the news report of the connection between Bill Ayers and Barack Obama, I had decided to select one of Ayers’ books for the sophomore level course I will be teaching in the fall at my local university where I have been newly hired, starting in the fall with a freshly minted Ph.D. I remember discovering Ayers’ connection to the Weather Underground last year and working through my own position regarding the nature of violence in the midst of cultural turmoil. Before the revelation of his relationship with Senator Obama, my students likely would have missed this part of his history. As I think about the fall semester to come, I wonder how they will react to his writing. I wonder about the degree to which they will be able to engage in hermeneutical ways of understanding this work alongside of the life of the author. I wonder how they will be able to develop a relationship of trust with me as their instructor having selected
the writing of someone who is now so controversial. What will I be able to do to develop their sophistication in thinking through a very complicated situation? Will I be able to lead them through this complicated conversation? How do I make sense of his unwillingness to disavow the violent acts of his past? How will I help my students to do the same? How will we deal with this plurality of truth alongside a framework for understanding the nature of evil?

More than that, I am deeply moved by the dialogue about race that has emerged in some places over the last few weeks. Sharing the same denominational background as Rev. Wright and Senator Obama, I remember my father’s work on racial justice issues and I sense a strong connection among the past, the present, and the future (Dewey, 1938; Slattery, 2007). And, I am deeply concerned about much of the very public national dialogue as I observe it in the news media. I see much inability to engage in cross difference dialogue with anything more than entrenchment in traditional paradigms of knowing. Hermeneutical sophistication is missing as very public reactions to Rev. Wright’s sermons lack an understanding of the context of Black liberation theology.

Within the context of this last chapter of my inquiry, I think about this situation and wonder: What can this moment teach me about the work that I seek to do? How might this inquiry inform the situation? How might experiences with the arts move us to cross-difference conversation, to ways of knowing that might move us beyond this current milieu? Within the context of this particular situation, how might we live fully, love wastefully, and how might we create a world where all have the same opportunity? (Spong, 2001). I return now to the past.
My journey began in these very spaces of arts-based epistemology, traditional scholarship, and spiritual searching. Raised by an artist/teacher and a musician/clergyman, I found that early and frequent experiences with the arts developed within me a way of knowing very deeply connected with visual images and sound. One parent or another pursued formal university study during my entire childhood, and I grew familiar with the presence of books scattered about the house, with underlined sentences and comments leaving a trace of the reader’s experience juxtaposed with the author’s scholarly renderings. Scholarly discussions occurred in my home on a regular basis, sometimes late into the night as my father’s academic cohorts gathered around our dining room table. I remember my father’s struggle to learn Greek and Hebrew as well as his love of philosophy. As a child, I learned to listen to the thoughts of existentialist theologians not only at home, but in the weekly sermon given at church.

An early photograph of my family reveals my father, dressed in regalia, with a baby in each arm. This was the only family graduation I missed as I had not yet arrived, but many more were to follow. During the process of completing this study, I have remembered, reconstructed the awareness, that my father and I achieved this goal of doctoral study at exactly the same age. This connection came to me with bodily recognition (Kesson & Oliver, 2002; Springgay, 2004; Springgay & Freedman, 2007) that some larger, cosmic process (Tarnas, 2006) might be at play. Or, at the very least, I have recognized once again the synchronicities of the unfolding of my life.

Not only was formal educational pursuit a constant thread of experience, a hunger for knowing, a deep curiosity about the nature of life seemed to guide my father’s daily
life. I remember that as a retired person in his 70s, he decided to informally study mathematics after making the acquaintance of a former mathematics teacher. This deep curiosity also seemed to come with an openness to explore new possibilities (Badiou, 2001), even those he might have once considered beyond his moral limits. As a result of my friendship with a number of gay and lesbian persons, he began to read and listen to the stories of these “others” and he began to change his mind. As a result, during the last few years of his life, he took on the project of advocating for the rights of gay and lesbian persons within the context of his beloved church denomination. When we cleaned out his study following his death, we found much evidence of his desire to understand and to locate the experiences of others within his own frame of reference.

My mother, on the other hand, functioned largely as an artist rather than an academic. I have very little memory of her reading books, although she graduated from college with a degree in elementary education. Instead of books strewn throughout the house, her trail of activity was represented by bits of mosaic tile, paint, ink, and fabric. She used power tools to construct furniture and repair our home. Her way of experiencing the aesthetic world seemed to come through her hands (Dewey, 1934b). Her chosen minor area of study in college was art, and she took me with her on a number of occasions to her studio classes on the campus of the Ohio State University. I remember sitting on the floor beside her potter’s wheel as she learned to shape vessels with her hands. She handed me some clay as well, and I remember feeling pleasure as I moved the cool, brown material through my fingers.
One summer, she enrolled me and my siblings in the laboratory school on the campus. Later, I learned that her love of the application of the ideas of John Dewey had prompted her to provide this experience for us within the context of a college of education that had embraced his progressive ideals. On the shelf of my study is a clay disk containing my handprint, my name, and the date on which I created this piece during my time at the laboratory school. During the course of my doctoral study, I have found two things interesting about this piece of art created at age four. First, I recognize my intellectual roots in the work of John Dewey through my mother’s love of his ideas as they were applied in classrooms. Second, I noticed that this piece was never fired. As such, it is fragile and it is also able to be reconstituted through the addition of water so that it can be reformed and remade according to my needs. In many ways, this serves as a metaphor of the manner in which I have lived my life, open to the emergence of new knowledge along with the willingness to reshape what I know as truth (Badiou, 2001).

My father’s love of music led him to complete a bachelor’s degree in piano performance. He continued his work with music throughout his life, even after pursuing full time work as a clergyman. He taught piano lessons to students of a variety of ages, taught music theory at a local college, and contributed to the musical culture of his congregations. At home, his grand piano filled a large part of our living room as it does mine today. Classical music often came from the phonograph or the radio in the living room, and as a young child, I was not permitted to listen to popular music, only classical. My sister and I found it necessary to hide our transistor radios under our pillows at night in order to keep current with the popular music of our peers. Our father’s rigidity over his
conception of “serious music” and his impatience with my developing skill on the piano finally resulted in my choice of singing and the formal study of voice over piano. I needed to find my own path away from the harsh critique that kept me from learning.

For me, music became a vehicle through which I came to take within myself the notion of awakening (Greene, 1995). During the civil rights movements of the 1960s and the 1970s, I found a strong connection to the music of those promoting social change. Too young to participate beyond a few activities at school, I found a place to express my own, young outrage at our way of making war and of limiting the rights of those whose knowledge we had marginalized (Freire, 1968/1970) within our culture. In high school, I also found a place of strong self-regard through my participation in select choral groups and through the solo work offered to me by my choral director. Throughout my life, music has provided a place of comfort, experiences of transcendence, a way to participate in acts of resistance, as well as a place of meaning making in which images provided through sound and through lyrics provided a way to understand new ideas and to try them on for a time.

I had a very different experience, however, with visual art. As a pre-school child, I was profoundly drawn to the materials of art making. My grandmother provided for me a gift of paint and paper that remains a significant memory. I was given a space in the basement where I was free to use these materials at my will (Piirto, 2004). I was able to sneak away, free from the tension created by two strong-willed adults often in open conflict, to the basement where I could enjoy the sensuality of paint as it flowed across paper, the vividness of primary colors, and the feel of the texture of the brush on the large
sheets of manila paper. It was a “room of my own.” Sometimes, I would sprawl out on
the living room floor on Sunday afternoons to develop my drawing skills by copying the
characters in the Sunday cartoons. I was aware, even at this young age, of a combination
of a love for the materials and the experience of making art as well as an ability to use
them. I do not remember, however, receiving any guidance or encouragement from my
mother regarding my art making other than the provision of materials and a space to
work. Her modeling, however, provided an example of a woman engaged passionately in
her art making. I was aware that, at times, she appeared to be lost in her work (Piirto,
2004).

My elementary school years were simply and completely lacking in opportunities
for visual arts experiences. Music, physical education, and art were taught by classroom
teachers trained in elementary education. Essentially, we received no instruction except
for an occasional game of modified volleyball in the school gym. Following Sputnik, my
elementary curricular experiences centered on reading and mathematics without regard
for aesthetic ways of knowing (Pinar et al., 1995; Slattery, 1995, 2007). At home, my
father often offered me the opportunity to select new art supplies by allowing me to walk
to the nearby college bookstore where I could charge supplies to his account.

After moving to a new community just before the start of my sixth grade year, I
was pleased to find a time set aside each week for art instruction (Eisner, 1998a).
Although the instructor was one of the sixth grade teachers, she seemed to love her time
with us focused on art. She spoke to us of junior high school and our opportunity to
continue to study art. I was excited as I thought about the possibility. I had also become
aware that year, that although I was not as skilled as one particular member of my class, I had developed skills and was receiving praise for them from my teacher. More important, however, I remember being enthralled with the process of making.

We moved again at the end of that year and I entered the junior high school within a small conservative community within a rural county. I was thrilled to know that I would finally have a “real” art class that would meet several times a week. When I entered the room, I was amazed by its large size as well as the large windows all along one wall. Tables were placed throughout the room instead of individual desks. Large cabinets and counter tops held supplies and equipment. I was excited to begin.

Soon, however, I became aware of something I hadn’t experienced in school before this time. My teacher, young and lovely according to my perception of her, began to criticize us openly and with sarcasm, and her classroom became a place of fear for me where I found myself retreating from her presence. I remember distinctly our unit on the study of perspective. She seemed to appear behind me and my classmates, unexpectedly removing the pencil from our hands. With comments of sarcasm, she drew over my markings, hiding mine beneath her marks that had been placed on the paper with strength and percussive assurance. It was as though my pencil, taken from my own hand, had been used to wound me. I grew to dislike her very quickly and simply waited until the end of the school year when I could be free from her influence. I missed many days of school that year, the ultimate retreat from her presence.

The following year, I was delighted to find a new instructor who encouraged my art making and allowed me to be in her room during my available free time. Daily, she
wrote a pass for me to be released from study hall, and she allowed me to be in the studio during lunch. That year, I began to paint and found myself delighted with oil paint and its very giving nature. I painted at school. I painted at home. At the end of that year, high school guidance counselors visited our junior high to schedule our classes for high school. Eager to continue my study of art, I clutched my proposed schedule in hand as I waited in line. And then, I learned. I learned how to withdraw once again from that which I loved. I learned that my seventh grade teacher had moved to the high school and that my only opportunity to study was with her once again. I declined and retreated away from my art making where I remained in retreat for another 25 years.

Following my marriage to and divorce from a visual artist, I found a way once again to return to a way of experiencing and expressing myself through visual form. Initially, my experiences were therapeutic in nature (McNiff, 1992) as I sought visual images for the wounding I had experienced in divorce. I wanted to see an image of the wound thinking that somehow I could manage something that I could see. My first painting in many years appeared through a spontaneous desire to experience the paint on canvass and to work through my need to see my wounding. What emerged was an elliptical structure with a core, a middle area, an outer edge fully containing the inside. Red tones dominated the composition, some very pure, some muted. My work with this image over many months caused it to shift, to change form, and to evolve from a raw and defined structure to something similar to a seed, to a broken seed pod, to a sprout, to a green plant extending in many directions. Although I initially viewed this work as a set of images describing my healing from a broken marriage, its meaning shifted over time
through living inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) as I later understood these images as descriptive of the wounding of my artist self. As I had retreated from my art making due to abusive pedagogy, I had retreated from my art through my marriage to an artist, and now, I had the opportunity to take back what was mine from the beginning. I began to study privately, not willing to enter the institutional framework complicit with the abuse I experienced as a young student.

Alongside of these intellectual and aesthetic ways of knowing, I also grew up within a framework of social/political advocacy generated from my father’s application of his theology to social structures. In a sense, even though it came from outside of his particular theological orientation, his work was much like the liberation theologians (Slattery, 2007) from the Catholic Church of South America. It was a mixing of theological positioning of divine regard for humanity with Marxist orientations of justice. In other words, his theological understandings led him to work toward issues of social justice such as civil rights and the relief of poverty.

As a young child, I was taught to be aware of the given conditions of my birth and their impact upon my well-being. As the child of middle class professionals and the grandchild of middle class, high school-educated workers, I have never known hunger or homelessness. I never worried about our material well-being although I was very aware that others who surrounded me in the classrooms and neighborhoods in which we lived had far more material wealth than my family. As a teacher and a minister, my parents received the lowest of professional wages. However, we had enough.
I did seem to have some awareness of the impact of my skin color on my status in my mid-western community. Because I grew up hearing my father’s stories of civil rights abuses in our country and because I watched as he engaged in advocacy, I was aware that others did not have the same advantages as I had experienced. I remember a recurrent dream in which I discovered the darkening of my skin. It was a fearful dream in which I seemed to empathize somewhat with injustice towards persons of color. I felt the unfairness of my dreamed experiences. However, I was able to wake from the dream.

These early influences have been the personal historical through lines from which I work today. My own intellectual curiosity, my love of visual image and art making, along with my love of music, have intersected with my love of teaching and research and my desire for justice in our world.

During my doctoral studies, I began to experiment with integrating these ways of knowing in my professional roles of public school principal, adjunct professor, in my doctoral student role of the novice researcher, and in my artistic pursuits as well. Working emergently and intuitively, I worked with others to explore the way in which the arts might bring meaning to our shared professional lives.

As a building principal, I worked with staff members to develop a vision for the school we wished to become. This particular elementary school held an annual art fair in which each student displayed her or his art. Given the lack of art specialists within the elementary program, each teacher provided art instruction, along with material and developmental support from the district’s art coordinator, to the best of her or his ability. Although the level of expertise with art instruction was not at all the same as would be
provided by an art specialist, the situation seemed to create a certain familiarity with art history and studio art that might not have been present had an art specialist provided the art instruction. When the time came for us to formally conceptualize our vision for the school, the arts became central in this vision, and the school developed a partnership with the Cleveland Orchestra.

In another community in which I served as a building principal, art opportunities were well developed through an outstanding art specialist who filled our hallways and rooms with student art, and she changed these displays on a regular basis. I worked with the staff and with the parent organization to create an annual artist-in-residence program to enrich the arts program within the building. Resources were plentiful, compared to my previous assignment, and I used a backlog of building budget monies to provide updated instruments for the music program and additional supplies and equipment for the visual art program.

In this building, however, staff members found themselves working through significant grief as the result of the death of their former principal and the diagnosis of terminal cancer for two teachers. Needless to say, this was a most difficult time for the staff. Although the district had been diligent to provide information and support from a variety of sources, I intuitively felt the need to offer something more. I invited staff members to join me in an art making experience in which we created a collage regarding the loss we had experienced. It was my sense that the art making provided a way for us to express feelings and to communicate with others and that both moved us toward healing these significant wounds.
As a doctoral student in the advisory phase, I found myself on several occasions in deep thought about theoretical understandings found in reading material and discussed in class. On one occasion, I decided to experiment with the idea of moving into a synthetical moment (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) through interaction with clay. Consciously, I decided to work emergently and to allow my inner self to speak through the formation of the clay. In a certain sense, though not concretely, I asked the clay to reveal to me the synthesis of the ideas that lived within me in separate pockets of understanding. I watched as the slab roller squeezed my lump of clay into a flat form from which I would work. As it emerged from the roller, I was immediately taken by the shape the clay had taken. Very distinctly, I perceived the shape of an eye. Because I had committed to work emergently, I took hold of this form and moved on in the construction process. Each step of making emerged in a similar way. My body reacted with a surge of energy in response to the synchronicity of the experience. I “knew” I was discovering something about the way the making of art intersected with my inner spiritual sensibilities and my cognitive, academic processes as well.

This was indeed a beginning experience for me that provided a certain confidence about a new way of working that allowed my mind, my body, and my spirit to intersect in the act of creation. Although I had previously worked with a strong connection between my spirit and my body, my intellectual self was left somewhat behind. This was indeed a moment of wide-awakeness (Greene, 1995) that supported my deepest intuition about this work and encouraged me to continue to pursue its mystery (Kesson & Oliver, 2002).
Therefore, as I approached the dissertation phase of my program, I deeply felt the need to integrate my own familial, historical, lines of thought, the context in which I experienced my life, and my passion for the arts with the questions that perplexed me the most. Now, moving forward in this scholarly personal narrative, this story, my story has intertwined with the familial, historical, contextual thoughts and experiences of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa. Now, “our story” follows.

Discussion of the Findings

Bringing much surprise to me as I worked with the data, the categories of analysis arrived emergently in the data analysis process. Each of the two research questions addressed the issue of transformation and the role the arts play in that process. One addressed personal transformation and the other addressed transformation within the context of communities. During the focus group session and the email dialogue that ensued, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa noted the difficulty of categorization and they spoke of the integration of body, mind, and spirit that occurs in lived experience. Although we might categorize our experiences as emanating from body, mind, and spirit, these aspects of our beings are difficult to separate as we experience them. For example, we might experience body sensations that provide clues to our spiritual questioning processes.

Therefore, as the findings are discussed, it is with this awareness of the integrated human beings whose stories have been told here. Additionally, I have compressed individual and community transformation so that we can more readily think about the movement between the two and the simplicity in which these two aspects of living
interact as well. Parker Palmer (1998) noted that “teaching, like any truly human activity emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or for worse” (p. 2). And, “the entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life” (p. 2).

Body

Embodied Knowing

Our storied understanding of the embodied experience of art making was an emergent finding in this research study. I did not anticipate this possibility, nor did I anticipate the degree to which these experiences of embodiment influenced art making experiences. However, most striking to me was the experience of the focus group itself where I joined with the others, face-to-face, and as we shared a meal, we fed one another in a much more significant way. In a sense, the meal we shared became the metaphor for the experience of sharing, not only our work, but the depth of soulful experience from which the work emerged. And so, as embodied human beings, we shared food for our bodies while we provided sustenance for our spirits.

As individuals, we have experienced ways in which our bodies provided information, at times clues, to the inner processes of cognitive or spiritual knowing. In particular, Charles found this research study to be a location of significant growth in which he was able to take the risk to share with others his increasing awareness of the messages he had been receiving from his body as he engaged in the song writing process so familiar to him for years. He described his new way of working as “the flesh made word.” In particular, Charles began to experiment with directly requesting this
information from his body, whereas Theresa, Denise, and I described our sense of bodily confirmation of our emerging understandings through sensations of increased energy or a generalized euphoric sensation felt not only at the level of emotion, but felt within the body as well.

Within the context of the focus group session, I experienced a heightened awareness of my own body as I watched the events of the evening unfold and I was encouraged inwardly to further pursue my own embodiment. It was, for me, as though a new mode of knowing had opened. Of course, I had experienced physical sensations of energy movement within my body that I liken to the description of electricity moving up my spine. And, I have experienced the sensation of air moving across my skin when I sense important truth is spoken. I have never, however, trusted my body enough to ask it for information. In fact, I have learned over the years that the body is not to be trusted. In addition to having very little athletic ability, I am physically clumsy and have difficulty at times navigating my body in space. In this way, I am just like my father, my mother, and my sister. Finally, I have watched, in close proximity, the prolonged death struggle of both my father and my sister. In particular, my sister’s death caused me to further disengage from my own body as I watched hers react against itself in an extreme autoimmune reaction to severe infection which caused her limbs to be cut off, by her own body, from its needed blood supply. One by one, she began to lose her limbs, beginning with her dominant hand. She passed away just before her third limb was to be removed. As a musician, and a music teacher, her life would have been very different had she lived.
Metaphorically, I think about my sister’s experience as informative as we consider the way in which we disembodied one another in school environments. More important, I have begun to think about how we might re-embodi, re-member one another through our experiences with art making. And, I remember the manner in which Denise and I were encouraged to work through our bodies as we watched Charles take new risks to understand himself more fully in this way.

*Physical Presence*

A particular way in which we experience embodiment is the act of maintaining physical presence. This presence requires a willingness to allow the body’s sensing systems to have priority over the wanderings of one’s mind. In other words, in the process of art making, maintaining physical presence requires us to be constantly observant of what we see, what we hear, what we smell, and what we feel with our skin.

When I work with clay, I feel the cool temperature of the clay along with the smooth and flexible texture as it moves through my hands. I smell the earth and I am called to something beyond myself. It is the act of allowing my senses to be fully present that I most fully experience my art. I closely connected with Denise’s sensation of being connected strongly to the Earth as she worked to construct the altar in El Salvador. Her description of the women at the outreach center and their reaction to clay is similar. With our bodies, and with our senses fully attuned, we find a way of noticing the world around us with heightened awareness to nuances of information provided through the senses (Eisner, 1998a).
All noted the role the arts had played in their lives regarding the development of their identity. Each was able to locate a place of accomplishment that provided individuation and uniqueness among others. In one case, the making of art provided the only success in school. Three felt that art making kept them from deviant behaviors that might have resulted in mental illness, homelessness, or addiction. My experience was mixed. Through music making, I found this place of identity and am very aware that my social success at school was the result of my ability to sing. However, my early experiences with art instruction had the opposite and presented a life long struggle to return to a way of knowing I experienced as a very young child.

In the context of their social justice work, Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa found significant purpose in assisting others to find their own voices through the creation of art. In particular, Sam’s work provided visibility for people whose struggle is largely unknown to many in the world. Additionally, he found that his photography students found a place to locate their own emerging voices to speak on behalf of justice issues. The others have found that working with students or women in the city’s outreach center has provided a similar location of identity formation as students discover their abilities with art making. Charles’ students have found their newly emerging art making ability honored within a public community setting. Denise and Theresa’s students have found voice through their art making focused on particular projects of social justice such as the
role of the School of the Americas in Central America or teen violence in our urban centers.

**Location of Memory and Awareness**

Denise’s work surrounding the death of women through violent means has focused largely on the location of memory. Through the construction of a memorial chapel, citizens of El Salvador are able to have a specific location memorializing the death of the four American church women and the significance of this event within the local community. Her recent works *Shallow Grave* and *Shallow Grave II: Into the Light* have caused her to move her thinking forward about the location of memory in art products. Because of her experience making these pieces, she began to think more about the location of memory within the Earth itself. Since the very material of her art making, clay, is itself the Earth, Denise found a synthetical moment (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) when she realized that her fired clay pieces revealed the location of the wounds of the four church women. Her memory, then, moved across time from past to present to future possibility as this realization came to her (Dewey, 1938; Slattery, 2007) in the midst of her art making experience.

Additionally, Denise’s work with students has moved the memory holding function of her art toward a function of creating awareness among others. She is aware that the death of the four church women resulted in the awareness of the United States’ role in the use of torture by militaries across Central and South America. Her students find this awareness through their work in Denise’s classroom.
Sam’s exhibit at a local park visitor’s center was created to increase the awareness of Central American issues among the people of his greater urban area. The photographs of the people of El Chocó lead the viewer to an awareness of the situation in which these people are struggling to continue their way of life amidst corporate and political intrusion.

As Theresa’s students completed their film project this year, their desire was to provide an opportunity for community members to gain greater awareness of the nature of central urban living and the influence of the drug culture within their neighborhoods as well as the violence that is very much a part of the experience of daily life. As her students worked with one another, they gained awareness of the commonality of their own experiences and determined to create film that would serve to inform others.

*Cross Textual Dialogue and the Beloved Community*

This research study provided an opportunity to discover something about the nature of an artful dialogic space. In particular, the focus group discussion allowed me an opportunity to watch, as well as to participate in, such a dialogue. Ideas were discussed as they emerged from works of art and song.

In particular, Charles offered his way of working with others in which communication occurs through the art itself. Calling his way of working “art answering art,” the process requires response from those who view, hear, or experience the art. Significant, however, is the kind of response that is offered. Rather than comments about technical production or personal taste, an “answering” involves a description of the manner in which the art intersects with the journey of truth making of the viewer.
Within the focus group session, this process of dialogue resulted in the discovery of new ways of thinking and experiencing ideas. Most significant, this mythopoetic (Kesson, 1999) way of working provided significant healing for one group member who has struggled for years with the loss she has experienced through violence. Though new to her as a means of working through ideas, this participant was open to its possibilities.

The group, as a whole, seemed to represent a variety of ways of working and when brought together, allowed for a greater wholeness of perspective. Like the beloved community (Green, 1999), diversity, when embraced, created new possibilities as well as hope for cross difference dialogue. Denise’s focus on holding memory found a connection with Charles’ focus on creating new mythologies for future possibilities. And, Sam’s and Theresa’s work with photographic images provided a way of documenting the present and creating awareness among others of current situations needing our collective attention and care.

**Spirit**

*Presence Emergent Working*

An interesting aspect of this study was the notion of spiritual presence at the time of art making. Closely linked was the idea of emergent working. In other words, as Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa approached their art making, they were very open to what might emerge in the process, and they were open and welcoming of new ideas shaping the outcome of the work.

As Tolle (2005, p. 4) suggested,
Once there is a certain degree of Presence, of still and alert attention in human being’s perceptions, they can sense the divine life essence, the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with their own essence and so love it as themselves.

This alert, inner-attention described here is much like the experience the artists described. When applied to art making experiences, the way of being present to the work allows for a space of emergent understanding.

In particular, this way of working became a new insight for Denise during the course of this study. Her disciplined approach to art making included cognitive planning complete with sketches and very deliberative processes of construction. Although her skill as an artist and her experience over the years has allowed her to understand the nature of the art making process, she has allowed herself to move a bit differently lately. As Denise has allowed the art materials and her presence to them, as well as to her inner self, she has discovered a very powerful experience.

Theresa has found this way of working to be essential to providing for the students’ needs. The generation of ideas and the particular ways of working through them come from the issues that concern the students in their daily living. Because Theresa is focused on her role as a transformational agent in the lives of these students, she has not concerned herself primarily with academic standards in visual arts. And, because there are no tested standards in the visual arts at this time, she is able to work in this way.

Sam described his teaching in much the same way. He allowed the current political conditions and the issues presented through these conditions to direct the topics
of investigation for his photography students. Students learned technical skills in order to communicate ideas that mattered to them. Because he worked this way, emergent design of the curriculum was absolutely essential.

Charles’ new way of communicating with his own body has increased his sense of presence during his process of song writing. He is learning to trust the information provided which means that he follows the lead of the information he receives from within. Emergent working, then, is essential to this process.

*Guidance, the Location of Purpose, and the Pursuit of Truth*

Building on the idea of presence and emergent working, the Denise and Charles have described the processes by which they continue to pursue their notions of truth. They have located a significant source of ontological understanding within themselves and have allowed their art making experiences to be a vehicle for accessing this inner truth.

Building on his growing understanding of embodied knowledge, Charles engages in a regular practice of seeking new understanding by devoting regular time with a trusted other in a meditative listening practice in which they listen to the divine within. Images and understandings derived from these sessions have become rich material for his songs. Conversely, the song writing process has generated questions for his search for truth.

Denise has allowed herself to experiment with receiving guidance from her work. Her experience with the *Shallow Grave* pieces has become a model of working in which she has trusted her inner self and its workings as she engages in the art making process.
Currently she is considering taking a significant step in her advocacy work and is seeking information about the wisdom of her thinking.

*Sustenance and Nurture*

Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa have found sustenance and nurturance as a result of their art making. More significant, however, is the encouragement they received as a result of the research process itself. Sam and Theresa found affirmation through the visibility provided in the research process. They expressed feeling affirmed because I longed to understand their work in the world and because I understand its importance.

Charles and Denise found encouragement in their interactions with one another as they experienced moment after moment of recognition of their own experiences within the life of the other. They have both expressed the desire to continue working to support one another’s work in the days ahead. Even at this writing, they continue to email one another. Denise will be contributing her work to an exhibit promoting holistic birth practice. Charles has been an integral part of this planning and invited her to participate.

*Pain and Loss*

Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa described pain and loss as companions in their way of working. Materially, working within the arts, as well as teaching, does not provide top levels of income. In Sam’s case, as a free-lance photographer, financial concerns are significant because he has chosen social justice related photography over commercially based photography. Charles moved from full time teaching to part time teaching in order to provide more time for his songwriting. Of course, this resulted in financial loss that is not made up through his music.
More interesting, however, was the pain experienced by all as a result of their work. Charles described feeling love so intensely that it was painful as the result of his openness and presence with others. Denise’s pain is the result of her willingness to expose herself to the pain of others through her work with homeless women and death row inmates. Theresa’s work with at-risk students has caused her to experience the pain of their difficulties. Sam has experience physical pain and loss due to a severe illness contracted in South America. His desire to live amongst the people as he works places him at greater risk for such disease.

Implications of the Research

The implications of this research study are discussed with a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2007) in mind. In the context of this scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004), the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher are mine as I have lived the personal and professional aspects of my life. This discussion of the implication of the research moves this narrative into the future and expresses the fullness of continuity (Dewey, 1938) as well as proleptic hope (Slattery, 2007).

Within the context of the field of curriculum studies, I have described the contemporary milieu. From the time noted as the beginning stages of the field in the early 1800s until the period of Reconceptualization in the 1970s, the field was largely dominated by a modernist paradigm of learning emphasizing learning objectives and outcomes. Although the field experienced the Reconceptualization, and although many curriculum scholars work within this reconceptualized notion of the field, the reality of school experience for students and teachers is very much lived within a standardized
management paradigm consistent with the Tylerian rationale of 1940s (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Pinar et al., 1995).

Through this inquiry, I have positioned myself within the reconceptualized field of curriculum studies where I can inquire about the nature of an aesthetically informed journey as it informs the work of social justice. Although the ontological and epistemological foundations of the Reconceptualization allow for such an exploration, the reconceptualized field has yet to find a way to converse effectively across its various sub-texts such that it remains difficult to bring about much change within our own field, much less the culture.

Ontological questions addressed through the scholarship of Alain Badiou (2001, 2005a, 2005b) allow for a different possibility for cross-difference conversation, especially as the conversation moves to a discussion of ethics. Badiou offered the idea of living with fidelity, a life lived in pursuit of truth, with an ethical framework that includes the well being of all. John Shelby Spong (2001) said it this way: “Live fully, love wastefully, and help create a world where all have the opportunity to do the same.”

Because of Badiou’s notion of ethical fidelity, I can move toward a more radical subjectivity in which my search for truth might include the kind of mythopoetic inner working this study represents. However, the nature of this truth journey requires that I consider the ethical nature of my actions such that my work positions the greater good of all at the center. Given the possibility of working in this way with a radical subjectivity, yet always aware of the ethical implications of my choices, I am able to embrace the dialectic of freedom (Greene, 1988) so that my work might make a difference in the lives
of others. Therefore, I can move to the discussion of the specific implications of this study within the context of three roles that inform my lived experience. These implications are written as future possibilities in the spirit of Dewey’s notion of continuity (1938) and in the spirit of the proleptic hope (Slattery, 2007) that has guided me from my youth.

**Artist**

As an artist, I am . . . not yet (Pinar, 1998). Today, I write with the possibility of becoming. Having known most of my life that art making provided a way of knowing and experiencing the world, I am working to recover what I lost as a result of very negative schooling experiences. Intuitively, I worked to regain my footing in front of my easel. And I returned to it in an immense moment of pain in my life. I knew something about the transformative power of art making, but I had no theory to explain it. I moved forward in experience regardless, and have in doctoral study found a place of anchoring in theory for the hope that I have held (Freire, 1992).

As this study concludes, I find several findings important for future work. Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa described a space of creativity in which presence and absence have their way, at will, in the process of making. What follows from this is the necessity of emergent working that allows spontaneity and intuitive knowing to have a place in the art making process. Finally, the study has offered a way to think about the epistemological position of the artist who inquires through her making process. As I think about becoming, I think about these things.
In a sense, this research process has been an artistic endeavor. The construction of narrative is an artistic rendering of the lived experiences of Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa, as well as me (Barone, 1990; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Czarniawaska, 2004, Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Throughout the research process, I have consistently worked on my own visual art making processes as well. And, I have crossed boundaries by seeking to understand my research in visual form.

In both forms of working, visual and narrative, I have also experienced what the others described as absence and presence. In some circumstances, I felt completely absorbed by my art making, totally present to the process without regard for outcome, appreciating the richness of a phrase, or the texture of the paint, or the movement of the clay within my hands. At other times, I am strikingly aware of the absence when it comes along. In these times, it seems not possible to create. It is an emptiness that must have its way. While I delight in presence, I am still frightened by absence because it causes me to feel out of control or inadequate for the task. I have come to understand through this research process that the absence has a role and it must be honored. In a way, I view the sense of absence as Badiou’s void (2005a, 2005b) or Charles’ “Everything’s Got a Hole in It.”

And so, when I think forward to the future, I wonder how I might provide for and nourish the presence and the absence. Presence seems simpler to me now. It has been a matter of quietly shifting my awareness (Tolle, 2005) rather than an act of will. It is a
matter of letting go. However, I know I will want to explore further experiences of embodiment as my familial experiences have not encouraged such knowing. Perhaps comfort with absence will come with more experience as well. I must learn to welcome the emptiness from which life emerges.

_Emergent Working_

During the course of this research study, I enrolled in college level art courses in order to provide regular and discipline art making experiences. In the fall semester, I took drawing and grew to love the experience very quickly even though I feared finding another unforgiving instructor. However, I was pleased to find someone who allowed for his own and others’ experiences of emergent understanding. I recognized the emergent design of his instructional practices and felt the freedom to allow myself to work that way as well. As a result, in a discipline where I had once felt great pain as a student, I felt a strong connection from my inward workings to the content of the instruction as well as the experiences provided in class. I understood more deeply the nature of interaction (Dewey, 1938) and its role in my own learning experiences. During the second semester, I encountered a very different situation. With very traditional instruction and projects, I empowered myself to alter assignments so that I could provide for this interaction.

Looking to the future then, I must find this location of emergent working within my experience of art making. Because I plan to continue to study art at the university level, I know I will again encounter the dilemma of needing to work emergently within the structure of a discipline. As an artist concerned with social justice issues, I am aware of the impact of others on an emergent practice. This research study provided the
opportunity to view the manner in which the interactions with others working in a similar way provided rich material for emergent design.

**Epistemological Notions**

A significant implication for my own art making is the affirmation of the epistemological implications of this work. I am more confident in my ability to explore my inner landscape and to approach it through study, through interactions with others and through my art making. I was especially taken by Charles’ sense of his emerging inner authority as experienced through his body. As he began to gain confidence in his ability to read this ever present and available text, I was encouraged to do the same. For much of my life, I have encountered skepticism regarding intuitive knowing and have been reluctant to enter into an academic dialogue about my intuitive sensibilities. As I look to the future, I know that I know.

**Researcher**

As a researcher, I am . . . not yet (Pinar, 1998). Today, I write with the possibility of becoming. As a researcher in the academy, I am a novice, a beginner. I have learned through this process that research serves to generate more questions. While doctoral level research courses positioned in positivist or post-positivist research paradigms foregrounds our ability to find empirical evidence of hypothesized truth (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), I have found something quite different. Although this study has provided much insight into the lived experiences of artists who create art for social change, and although it provides direction for ways of living and ways of making art and of teaching, it has also generated more questions. In this section, I describe what I believe to be the
contribution this study can make to the scholarship of the field of curriculum studies, and in particular, the epistemological, ontological implications of this work as well as a possibility for moving the work forward to a place of greater influence.

Contribution to Scholarship in Curriculum Studies

As noted in the introduction to this section on the implications of this research study, I have traced a path of a multi-layered, multi-modal, diverse, and complicated conversation that is the contemporary field of curriculum studies. The findings of this research study speak to a particular problem of cross difference dialogue within the field. Operating much like academic disciplines within university settings, curriculum scholars have succeeded in communicating the nature of their own texts and have contributed their understanding to the larger body of reconceptualized curriculum scholarship. However, very little dialogue has occurred across these texts. Rather, it is typical for these scholars to assume epistemological independence. While I also support a sense of radical subjectivity, I assert that we must also be able to dialogue across difference in order to move forward to create a sustainable and just world. It is my hope, then, that this study will offer something different in terms of the epistemological and ontological possibilities for a deepening of currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) as well as a means by which we might engage in a complicated conversation across difference. Finally, the findings of the study have implications for the way we think about the integration of theory and practice. In particular, the findings address this particular question as it has been explored within the conversation currently occurring among reconceptualist curriculum scholars.
Epistemological notions. As described above, this study offers a radical subjectivity with regard to epistemological questions. The process of art making has provided a way in which Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa have come to know their inner landscapes as well as a way in which they have been able to experience "synthetical moments" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) of deep understanding as a result of currere. This work, then, affirms the process of currere through aesthetic and critical inquiry, and yet deepens it by allowing for a more radical subjectivity.

Ontological notions. As the epistemological work of this study is deepened through the theorizing of Badiou (2001, 2005a, 2005b), new possibilities emerge for ontological exploration. As Badiou advocated, living on the edge of the void where access to something of the void is available to me, I know that I bring a portion of understanding as an offering to my community. I also know that others, living at a different place along the void, will do the same. This possibility allows, for me, a deeper regard for the truth making possibilities of others. Once again, the possibilities of currere are deepened as the awareness of multiple positions along the void creates a dimension in which one journey intersects another, an emergent location of cross difference dialogue.

Alongside this possibility, however, must be a way to think through ethical issues. Badiou offered this for me in his description of the journey of fidelity with the perspective of the greater good of all. Through his framework for ethical positioning, I have found within his theorizing a location of hope where difference might open to difference, while still attending to ethical questions. Once again, currere is deepened through the expansion of ontological possibility.
A means for complicated conversation. Building on the epistemological and ontological possibilities offered by Badiou (2001, 2005a, 2005b) the process of art making might be explored as one means by which this complicated conversation might occur within the field of curriculum studies. Exploration of the aesthetic text through engagement with the arts can provide an opening for the understanding of difference. During the focus group session, we explored such a possibility as we worked together that evening. Additionally, we spoke of further work together in which Charles’ notion of “art answering art” might be explored to a greater depth. In this setting, communication occurs through the creation of art in one form or another. Because verbal communication is sometimes rapid and lacking in reflective moments, the act of creation provides a way of working in which the artist may engage in a cycle of making and reflecting, deepening the possibility for both meaning making and communication.

Within the field of curriculum studies, some working predominantly in the aesthetic sub-text have become a part of the curriculum conversation within the Curriculum and Pedagogy group (www.curriculumandpedagogy.org) whose annual meetings began in 1999. This setting offers one possible location for the exploration of this means of communication.

Deepening of currere. Engagement with art making deepens the possibilities for exploration of the inner landscape. When, through art making, epistemological and ontological possibilities include a radical subjectivity placed alongside ethical consideration of the well being of all, Pinar’s (2004) notion of the four phases of currere is expanded to include mythopoetic and cosmological possibilities. Additionally, the idea
of embodied knowing through art making, the search for meaning within the text of one’s own body as art making is in process, allows for further deepening of one’s regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical phases of currere.

Integration of theory and practice. Denise, Sam, Charles, and Theresa experience the integration of theory and practice in the art making process. They described a constant flow between thinking and making such that thinking influences making, but making influences thinking. Their strong grounding in emergent working reveals this theory/practice connection. Without this connectedness, both theorizing and making are limited by the lack of the other. In the field of curriculum studies, the connection of theory and practice remains a site of contention. This study supports the mission of integrating theory and practice while it calls for still greater expansion of this work.

Contribution to Scholarship in Teaching Studies

This study contributes to the field of teaching studies through the notion of the artistry of teaching. As a nuanced process of reading the text of one’s classroom, and following that read with a response that changes the shape, form, or texture of the situation, teaching is much like Denise’s process of reading her clay for the form that calls to her from within itself. As daily decision makers in the classroom, teachers may choose to move within a framework of artistry, or they may, instead, rely on craft knowledge (Henderson & Gornik, 2007), thereby limiting their possibilities as well as those of their students.

Implications for pre-service, as well as in-service, teacher development are important. The arts provide a way to think of, and experience, emerging teacher artistry
that moves beyond the application of skills-based responses to acts of perceiving the qualities of a situation and responding by creating the shape, form, and texture of educational experiences as those qualities are perceived and decisions are made accordingly. Using the metaphor of jazz, this is a continuous improvisational act based on a wide range of well developed and practiced abilities to perceive and to perform.

*Implications for Further Research*

Further research must be done to explore these possibilities to a greater extent. At this time, I see three important possibilities.

*Art making as a dialogic experience.* As described above, art making as a dialogical experience was one finding of this study. However, the experience of the focus group was limited, occurring one time. Additionally, research questions were not specifically addressed towards this idea. A similarly framed study could further explore this particular finding by engaging research participants in regular dialogue over a period of time. As more is understood about the nature of such an aesthetic dialogic experience, cross difference dialogue through this same process would contribute even further understanding of its possibilities for transformation.

*Arts-based education research protocol.* Donal O Donoghue (2008) has argued for arts-based research protocol more consistent with the practice of artists. Through collaboration with those whose expertise is greater than mine, I might approach another study with a very different means of gathering and analyzing data more consistent with arts-based ways of knowing. Outside of the parameters of the process of doctoral research, I would be very willing to take on this research “risk” to carve a new space of
understanding arts-based research. Within the Arts Based Educational Research special interest group of the American Educational Research Association, educational researchers have worked to promote arts-based ways of knowing. Collaboration with those whose full time role is the making of art would provide additional insight.

The development of teacher artistry. Further research may lead to deepened understanding of the nature of developing teacher artistry as a result of experiences with the arts. While some have theorized about teacher artistry, further research is needed to more fully understand the way in which experiences with the arts might support a more rapid, or a more thorough development of such artistry.

Teacher

As a teacher, I am . . . not yet (Pinar, 1998). Today, I write with the possibility of becoming. While I do not anticipate working again in P-12 educational settings, I do anticipate spending the remaining years of my educational career teaching at the college level. My experiences as a teacher of elementary age children, as a teacher of high ability children, and as a building and district level administrator have provided significant understanding of the organizational text to which I have referred in the review of literature. However, although I have taught and will teach within the context of organizations, I am very aware that the most significant contribution I have made is through the act of teaching, in the relationships created with students. As Palmer (1998) indicated, our inwardness is critical to our teaching. And so, as I look ahead to my work with students, I anticipate the manner in which this research will influence my role as teacher.
The Role of the Arts in P-12 School Curriculum

The implications of this study for the role of the arts within P-12 classrooms supports current thinking (Arnheim, 1969; Dewey, 1934b; Efland, 2002; Eisner, 1998b, 2002; Greene, 1995) about the value of strong arts education, but the study also supports the need to think beyond these ideas to new possibilities. Although a good teacher is able to help students understand mathematics, language, science, and social studies through embodied experiences, visual art, music, dance, and drama provide strong opportunity for students to make significant connections with their bodies.

Sadly, as arts programs are eliminated or reduced due to the demands of standardized testing requirements and budgetary constraints, opportunities in the arts are more and more limited. The findings of this study support the urgency of the need to reinstate or increase these opportunities for students. As one of the only areas that remains unaffected by standardized testing, the arts provide new possibilities for teachers to explore embodied (Kesson & Oliver, 2002; Springgay, 2004; Springgay & Freedman, 2007), emergent, interactive (Dewey, 1934b, 1938) learning without risk of failure as measured by tests. As a result, it might offer a significant place for professional development outside of the standard management paradigm (Henderson & Gornik, 2007).

The findings of this study also support the notion that not all students find connection to their inner landscapes through traditional academic disciplines. Denise, Charles, Sam, and Theresa described their own stories and those of some of their students who found grounding and possibility in their art making. In particular, Theresa’s students often have no other opportunity.
The Role of the Arts in Teacher Education

As I prepare to return to the university classroom this fall, my thoughts turn to the nature of the experiences I will provide and create with my students. Also, as I prepare to work within the summer leadership academy, I think about how this research project will influence my work with these students. I am more certain than before that experiences with the arts embedded in the daily experiences of our shared lived experience of the classroom are essential to the creation of lives lived with passion and fidelity.

As assignments are created for students, the allowance for emergent forms of working is foremost in my mind. How will my students be able to connect their inner landscapes to the experiences of the classroom and how will their inner landscapes demand emergent experiences? How can I provide experiences of art making that will be accessible to those who find this fearful? In the years ahead, I hope to develop a stronger repertoire of arts experiences that meet this need.

Today, I am certain that my role in my own classroom is to awaken these possibilities within my students and I have witnessed the transformation that is possible in classroom environments supporting awakening, radical subjectivities, and risk.

Conclusion

To encounter the depths and rich complexity of the cosmos, we require ways of knowing that fully integrate the imagination, the aesthetic sensibility, moral and spiritual intuition, revelatory experience, symbolic perception, somatic and sensuous modes of understanding, empathic knowing. Above all, we must awaken to and overcome the great hidden anthropocentric projection that has virtually
defined the modern mind: the pervasive projection of soullessness onto the cosmos by the modern self’s own will to power. (Tarnas, 2006, p. 41)

Above, Tarnas described the purpose for which this research project was created and conducted. It is clear that the crisis of our contemporary milieu requires of us more than we are able at this time to contribute (Kegan, 1998). It is during such a time that the artist might play the role of prophet (McElfresh-Spehler & Slattery, 1999) to call others towards new ways of imagining our lived experiences.

Through this arts-based inquiry, I have described the nature of the lived experiences of artists who create art for the purpose of social change. I have learned much about the role of art making in human transformation and am hopeful that this particular way of knowing might be just what Tarnas has imagined. The hidden anthropocentric projection defining the modern mind he has described might be replaced by a respect for a plurality of truth (Badiou, 2001).

Finally, I hope that this study will contribute knowledge to this under theorized area of study in which teacher/artists engage themselves and their students in art making as a way of promoting positive social change. As a contribution to the complicated conversation within the field of curriculum studies, I hope that we might be able to think wisely about the nature of the experiences that we provide for students and the experiences we provide for the entire community of learners with regard to the nature of experiences with the arts. Dewey’s notions of educative experience, and art as experience have allowed me to consider the nature of transformation as it happens to teacher / artists and their students through experiences with the arts. These particular individuals have
developed these ways of knowing apart from Dewey’s vision of educational artistry. This study provides insight into a way to bring these ideas into concrete (perhaps visual or auditory) form so that we might further develop our educational artistry.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS
Excerpts from Interviews with Denise Penland

Interview #1 Denise Penland 12/03/07

Becky: This is interview #1 with Denise Penland and I will open up by reminding us that this interview is really about your transformation rather than the transformation that you see in your students or women in the shelter or whatever. The guiding question, then, is “How have you experienced art as a means by which transformation occurs in your own life?”

Denise: OK. I was working on that question because you had asked me that on Friday and I was glad you had set me on a focus on Thursday, I mean and I the three things that I was thinking about there's always been three things or questions that I’ve asked myself while I'm making art during the past 20 years. The three questions, and I think three these questions have led me into a transformation. The three questions didn't happen because I have these three questions just like immediately (snap, snap), it was the questions that came up because of what was happening in my life or what was going on. The very first one, and I say three, because those are the three questions that eventually got me to be transformed. So the three questions are, “what is sacred art?” In doing that in trying to come up with that, it was liturgical art that I found was very important to me because I am a nun so of course this was not a big deal and also because symbol was so important to me as a and in asking that question, what is sacred. While I was doing my thesis for my MFA I started making altars and while I was making those altars. It wasn't so much the process of making those altars that was so important for me as a transformative thing but it was the questions that people began asking me about those altars that cause me to be more transformed by the making of those altars. So the first people that ask me those questions were people that didn't know me and weren't religious and didn't even believe in God. So that really helped. It helped me set myself moving forward into a type of transformation thinking about well, how do other people see things as sacred? And that's what caused me to look at the Earth, and therein lies where my transformation started to come. I started to look at how the early art works were considered to be sacred by the people that were not Catholic or not spiritual. And why did they think that stuff was so spiritual? And then how was my work looking in comparison or contrasting with that? Particularly, a person by the name of Klaus Slueter of the northern resident renaissance I was very attracted to. He was a sculptor making art. He didn't live very long, the early 15th 16th centuries, and in that time. Everything exuded art and spirituality, so I wanted to look at him and then in doing that it was a wonderful experience. And I finished my MFA on the work around the Earth instead of around of the altars, even though I showed six altars. The questions from the people who reviewed us said, how was this table or this altar the same as or could it be a bar table? And I was thinking oh my gosh how could this be a bar table? I mean, it was just wonderful. It was one of those things, that was like an enlightenment. A jarring. Jarring me out of my own routine. Bringing me into a new thought provoking stimulation so that it advanced into a higher level of understanding.
what the sacred was because of that jarring. So, when I got home because I made so many altars the community in El Salvador wanted me to make these altars because they were creating a chapel on the spot where (please eat so you’re food doesn’t get cold). So, the women had just been dead for over 10 years and this is Dorothy Kazel and a the churchwomen and on the anniversary they decided they wanted to create a chapel on the spot where the women were found. They knew, one of my friends was in El Salvador at the time, that I was involved in making these altars, so they said let’s bring Denise over let her make the altars and the ambo and the chair. And I didn't think a second thing of it is. And I thought, oh, sure, I'd be glad to do that. You know, there’ll be tools there, there will be water. There will be all this stuff there. Well it was the whole idea of asking what is sacred in a different way. And that's where the real transformation came when I was building that altar it was another jarring. First of all, of not having water, of not having power tools I was so used to having power tools to build something. And that kind of thing is what caused me to think of what is sacred in a third world country. On the day that I got there in El Salvador. I traveled on Christmas. Christmas Eve and got there Christmas morning the day that I got there it was right at the time of the peace accords so they were still doing them in the airport was completely, completely filled with men with guns machine guns strapped to their backs. Nobody around, nobody was flying in and out, because it was right after the Civil War. I was scared to death and I brought all these titles, these titles that I brought from Cleveland, but I thought we could use them and they were all wrapped up in paper. I couldn't speak Spanish, and so they gave me my friends in the missionary people gave me the words to say as I was coming through, because they weren't allowed to be in the airport. They could only see me through the doors of the airport. So they started undoing all these little white packages that I did, because they thought they were other substances and there were hundreds of them. And that's all I really had that and chocolate for the missionaries. But I ended up giving them some chocolate and they let me go through a little bit easier and that was really good, but when I got there, a 15 year old young kid who had just been out of the Army and the Civil War and he had just killed his girlfriend on Christmas Eve. And they were waking the bodies. He was an orphan. The mother was waking not only her daughter’s body but also her boyfriend's body because he was an orphan. The boy who had killed her daughter. It was on the porch and Sheila a friend who picked me up said let's stop there. So the first thing that I felt when I got in there was the sacredness of life, the fragility of life and the forgiveness of these people, and immediately from that moment from the jarring of seeing the poverty on this porch and she was pretty rich compared to others because she had a porch and all these flowers because they weren’t embalmed and the porch became the altar. It just made me, every moment that I was there I began to think about the sacredness of life in a whole different way. The beauty of the country, but it’s ravaged by war. The violence and the ritualization of death and life, almost immediately following death, because there is no embalming. Everything about it just caused me to re-think what was sacred. So when I thought about the sacred it was a whole new experience. The depravity really of not having stuff was another jarring and seeing all this stuff was another Enlightenment that I had while I was building the altar. So I think that was like a big thing. Then the second thing happened with eco-Justice all
these three questions that I asked myself when I’m making, the three questions that I’m still asking myself. The second one was about what is eco-justice and what being a part of this team and putting together an altar and a chair and an ambo in El Salvador caused me to rethink what eco-justice is too. Because the way they do it is so simple. They don’t have power tools, I thought I would go to Forest City, while I was there or some kind of Home Depot there were no power tools at all, no water except from the river and I kept thinking it’s such a light footprint while we were making. Not necessarily while we’re living but while we’re making. And then I guess what happened to me, the second thing about eco-justice while I was there two things started happening to me. Now it goes to different levels. It’s kind of like marriage and commitments to community. You go for one thing you think you know what you’re doing and then the next year you’re making the recommitment because it’s something different, or you’re finding a different level of it. So that’s what was happening to me all throughout these last 20 years is that each level that I go to is another commitment to whatever it is. But then, the thing that I was doing that I hadn’t been doing up to this particular point. I was in the conversation doing all the conversation myself. When I was making I couldn’t speak Spanish. So I was doing a lot of listening and as I was listening, not only to the Spanish I didn’t understand, I was listening to the earth as well, what was happening to the earth there, what was happening to the bodies there, what to the environment there, and I began to get a kinship there more than I even had a kinship here. So that when I got home. The kinship of the earth became even more huge. I think when you get out of the routine of doing stuff you don’t listen quite as well but when you’re thrown into something totally new, you’re listening in a whole different way. So it caused me another jarring, cause me to listen and to have a relationship with the earth that I didn’t have before

Becky: It’s interesting the impact of the removal of language, especially for an artist. It’s interesting.

Denise: At one particular point, I was working with a man by the name of Adoberto Ramos and he was kind of like the master builder there. He calls himself the master builder. We never spoke a word to each other. Here in the states, we would send each other and fax each other on the computer the designs that went back and forth and we talked through our designs. We talked through our adjustments to our designs because brick here is a different brick. Brick there is made in a soft kiln, a pit firing kind of kiln. It’s very soft so we had to chisel our way around the brick to make them fit, and it was so easy to do that. It was just primitive tools to make the brick fit. They were so soft. So we just talked with the tools. He made tools to work with that I have never seen before. And so it was, he would show me and I would show him. He would ask me what I thought. We had to build down into the earth. That was another thing because it was an earthquake zone. So it was a whole other way of listening.
Denise: so I was thinking about five different things that I was thinking about when you talked about these within the context of community and how we build and make as artists/teachers, and how we involve community when were doing the art and I'm just going to close this door. Hi Rosaria. So the first one was, I think, I thought back to the first time I thought of when I felt engaged by the community when I felt like I had no clue what I was engaged in when I was building that alter. And I think building that alter on the spot where the church women were found was a totally transformative. It totally changed my life. I was not the same after I left El Salvador. But now that you've given me cause to reflect on it in a different way around community. Besides just the individual, which I was reflecting on about myself. What that space did for the people in El Salvador. They never wanted it to be memorial. They never wanted the altar in chapel on the spot where they were killed to be a memorial. And they were so clear about that. The priest that was there was Franciscan and instead they wanted a meeting place for all people that were in that area. And so they wanted a place which was now that I think of it. That would be a place not only for people that were hurt by the killings but even for the families members of the soldiers that killed them. They wanted them to meet there too. Talk about restorative justice. Because every group who falls apart, the people that are victimized. The people that are doing the victimization are all in need of doing grieving, they're all in need of healing. So, how wonderful that was. So now it is a place where people gather as a community gathering place. Not just a worship place but a gathering place. Because it's one of the only places where there is that big of a roof over the top of something. So I think what it did for the community was several things. I have four points here. It didn't let the memory of the church women be forgotten. It helps the grieving process and it had a place for the community to gather and that it also became an inspiration and motivation for life of people. And I mean not just the life of the church women, but the life of that community right there. And we still go back there, we still go back on that spot we traveled there almost is a pilgrimage. And there is really nothing written down about that this is the spot as far as the memorial. It's just a gathering place, and so you know the oral tradition. You know this is the spot where we go for the anniversaries

Becky: and so it's not written? Are you relying on the oral tradition? Are you thinking and hoping that the oral tradition would not die in some way?

Denise: I think the tradition has died, and it's become something more and that was the foresight of this Franciscan priest that was there. The women have become in culture rated their no longer a blue-eyed blondes.

Becky: I read that in this particular set was so interesting.
Denise: and now they're dark-haired, dark eyes. It's changed. It's become there story and it keeps adding on. It's becoming like a myth almost the myth of the living and the dying and so it's their community. It's part of their community. It's not the gringos that came their so yeah, it will probably be all different when I come back. It'll be different again. No, there's nothing. We're really basing everything on oral tradition.

Becky: By choice? I'm gathering.

Denise: by the choice of the people in El Salvador. We have a history in our community, we know what happened. We've written it down, we have the pictures of the magazines, and I have that all because of what happened with my last pieces. The last piece was around this whole idea of the shallow grave. This is the spot where the altar was built (showing picture of body recovery) so we'll never forget that . . . the pulling up of the people from the shallow grave. and these children are now the ones that were older now and they're telling the story and they were sitting next to me on the bench on the 20th anniversary telling me the story and it's been enhanced. It's been changed. But it's also added to their story. It's their history, we have the other stuff written down, so it's evolving. It's not, it's not something that is written down right there on this spot.

Becky: You just said that its mythology in a way. So when we think of mythology is guiding stories for our lives . . .

Denise: I think of it also as a symbol, as metaphor. But if it comes from the metaphor and symbols of mythology transforms you into a new space so it takes you here, and that's why I put down inspiration and motivation for life because the mythology takes you to a point and then it's kind of like brings you beyond the real. It takes you into an inspirational point where you become motivated where you have um you go beyond what you see. So if all we saw was this bear this is horrible and were still grieving this but what the people have done is to make it a kind of mythical thing that happened

Becky: So how have they carried that foreword? What meanings have they carried forward with it?

Denise: um, standing up for what you believe in having a good life no matter what happens. Not being hypocritical. Oscar Romero said, “If they kill me I will rise up in the children of the next generation.” That's what's happened to these children. They've risen up into the next generation and their passing that information on about being a good person. You know that people had to just stand up and lose their lives for just standing up for who they were. By reading the Gospels and the whole thing the whole reason why they stood up was that they were poor. And they wanted their land and they didn't have land. They didn't have basic needs to make a living, and that's what they tried to do and that will not be forgotten to stand up for what you believe you have a right to have a life. That's basically what Dorothy and the women taught. And in doing that, they are doing, and that place is so much more developed, and people are really they do have self-
esteem. At least the group that I saw really started having self-esteem. I think it's a mess. It's a shambles still as far as government, and a lot of crime is around there from people who are in the military still. So I don't know how that's being transformed
Becky: I’m wondering if we could go backwards in time a little bit and um . . . You started talking a little bit about your current context in the classroom. Can we go back to maybe the first stories of when you started making your art and talk about that as a transformational time for you. Talk about what happened. Just tell the story. I know in Orphan Soul you talk about the time of the orphan. Is that a particular time in your life that you can talk about?

Charles: Yes, I was at a point where I was studying taking classes to be a counselor and then was pretty far along and then one day I was in class and I was thinking this is, this is not getting where I want to go and I had a dream of a . . . in the dream there was this Frenchman was adding on to his house. In order to do this he had to chop down a tree that had a bird in it and so it was an unusual dream but it wasn’t powerful and then two days later Joseph Campbell was on TV with *Power of Myth* and it said will there’s an old African story where this young boy catches a beautiful bird and gives it to his father and says “Dad take care this bird.” So the father put it in a tree. And in the first day he took care of it and then he started to forget and over time he forgot about the bird and then the bird and the next day the father died because the father had neglected his own soul. So that was a big time to change course when . . . pause it? (classroom phone started ringing). A student from a long time ago who is a teacher now . . . (coming to visit Charles)

Becky: OK you had just said . . . the father had neglected his own soul.

Charles: Yes, the bird died and so it struck me how it was synchronistic--connected to that dream and my feeling of the direction I was going was neglecting something more important than what I wanted to leave behind so I just quit the program and up to that point had always read Jungian materials and always been a musician and then there was school and never did the books I was reading ever come into the classroom of the counseling teachers I was with (yeah, come on in) and so I decided I would needed to find a way that I could not be split. I’ve always worked. It’s not like I’m lazy. I wanted to have a program where I could do everything I wanted and so I just began. I decided I wanted to do myth to do music and I wanted to do teaching the initiation and I would just start calling schools until somebody said they’ll take me. So I started calling and no, no, no and then finally met this guy who said we need to talk to Jane Piirto. So I talked to Jane Piirto and she’s like “Oh my God” and we could figure out something and then a month after that I met Patrick Slattery and then it just all unfolded. Well in the meantime I had neglected my songwriting. I went back to the songwriting in the transformation of my life is that there have been a number of splits that were healed but this is a really important educational split that where my passion was needed to be brought in and the
orphan soul is about realizing that nobody is interested in this stuff where I am but still I'll go for it and then I started meeting people once in awhile so there’s Jane there’s Patrick, then we met. It just all falls together. So the song mysterious suitcase is right around the same time where I have a dream that the things I used to love comes back to me and I have to go back and do some emotional work as to why it got left behind. What about all that time I lost? What am I gonna do now? And then in the classroom I'm sure the difference is that instead of being depressed I have an energy about what I'm doing It’s an early example of choosing a path that includes art by necessity. I have to. I can't be split away from my art. It’s a really important process of trying to understand the bigger picture of what I'm doing cause sometimes I don't know what it is for sure that I'm dealing with and it just starts to fit together and making the art helps me make connections that I wouldn't have made otherwise. The symbolism in a song, symbolism in the poem or a dream makes connections to things that if I hadn't done that I would have totally missed it so it ramps up your skills. Its whole, it's sweet

Becky: So where does it begin?

Charles: For me it begins in um what hurts. Brother what ails thee? Where are you hurting and where's the pain? And go there. Some people say it begins with awe but I think for teacher in the classroom you’ve gotta start where, where is the pain.

Interview #2 Charles Stick 01/15/08

Becky: Okay to get at this from another angle.. last time we talked about what we're trying to do is to shape the culture and the culture holds the stories. It holds the memory. It holds the vision. Sometimes it holds it in a positive way. We were thinking about how sometimes it holds it back holding a negative way. So I was really interested, from the last time, in what you talked about in terms of the lodge and the need for a culture to have its images and symbols to work things through. So related to the tenants of war you talked about . . . the brother of the east being the lazy gluttonous one but that eventually you have to come down to the south where it bears a way to resolve sort of what was going on in the east, and there's other directions as well. And you also said that you have found the lodge to be kind of a symbolic way to manage those opposing energies, I guess I would call them, in your life. So, do you see any correlation between that experience at the lodge contributing to the culture's way of doing things and the art making? So what I'm trying to get at is do we find a way to have our mindfulness our collective mindfulness or our shared memories in works of art, be they music dance, whatever I'm using that term broadly. How is the art being the keeper of the lodge?

Charles: the goal of going through a lodge is to end in integrated generosity and presents them to be revitalized. And then to live in the world with fat, and so, how that affects, how that affects the culture is that if you use that as a way to identify . . . like if you use that way of moving around the directions in the lodge as a way of identifying where
somebody is in their art. It's helpful, because you can talk to the person and like give them a sense of where to go or especially if somebody has gone through a whole cycle, is at this point of giveaway in generosity, you can know it makes it easier for them to see because you kind of know what you're looking for. You're looking for someone who's gone through the darkness has healed and has come back and has liked their hands full.

Becky: The mythic journey?

Charles: The mythic journey. And there's lots of students that have that and the lodge says that's the most important thing we have. So when you're looking at students in a school or their art.. the art you're looking for is ultimately the art has every aspect of the journey in it. Our schools don't have that kind of art. Our whole culture hardly has that kind of art. We're artless. There's a need for it.

Becky . . . um so can we go back and talk about the kids and the coffee house the other night? Since that time, what are you aware of in terms of their experience of community that emerged from that event?

Charles: What I noticed is their . . . I actually have a response . . . so he’s . . . this is Dan the first guitar player, and he wrote an answering song back from that night. And so he really got. And like Rachel, she went to Italy over break. She sends photos out to the group of people. She gets it. And like the other two guys still are like wavering a bit, thinking about it. I think the other two guys, they were, it was good for them to be in that particular circle because its one thing to talk the talk and walk the walk, but its another thing when you actually do it and I think they realized they were actually taking a lot about themselves and not actually doing what they’re supposed to do. So I still honored, I mean, I know what they are capable of and I like targeted that. But I think they’re . . . the one guy, I think he’s thinking about how he presents himself and what he wants to be. But this is . . .

Becky: So you’ve been doing that kind of ritual for how long?

Charles: I started with big people and then I started doing kids. There’s forms of that I’ve been doing in school for like eight years. Then the last two, I’ve been doing them in public like that.

Becky: And what do you think the ritual does?

Charles: I think it’s that, this is like somebody who has been around the wheel and is like in the south now. You can recognize the person as someone who has generosity, who has a gift to give. And then, instead of riding around getting shot at, it brings the person right into the middle of the village. And so it honors what is greatest in the person. Feels good when it happens to you.
Becky: For some reason, I keep needing to come back to the idea of the lodge. For you, it’s become a way for you to see that journey again and again and again. Correct?

Charles: Yes, also it’s grounded in scholarship. It’s preparing for you. You don’t need this whole book but just the beginning. This is Tarnis. And here . . . he says there’s this one, there’s this paradigm that shows an overcoming of nature by an ever more powerful and heroic human struggle. That’s the one paradigm. And there’s this other paradigm of continual alienation and destruction of the earth that’s going on at the same time as this. And so, he does a nice job of with, instead of choosing one or the other and instead of fighting over which one is true, he uses this quote: “Both are true in what they affirm. Both are wrong in what they deny.” And then he suggests that somehow you have to hold these two together when you consider our work now.

Becky: And that’s what the lodge does.

Charles: That’s what the lodge does. It holds it together. And then, I know, I know that uh with confidence that when we’re living well, the whole universe is alive and talking to us. Like I’m overcoming that modern condition and if there’s something I owe to postmodernism, its to like totally dismantle everything that modernism said was OK, like encourage me to pay attention to what’s been left out.
Excerpts from Interviews with Sam Carter

Interview #1  Sam Carter  2/14/08

Becky: So can we start by just some background information about you. I’ve seen your vitae, but just tell me as if you are telling a story what your path has been to get to the work that you’re doing right now.

Sam: Well, it’s a little bit, more than a little bit complex, it’s um. It really wasn’t a kind of career root here. It was just back and forth and very convoluted. I started taking pictures, um, sort of as a hobby when I was a teenager early teenager, but it was never really a very serious activity until I was in my early 20s. I think that that’s a piece of me that’s important. And then another piece of me that’s important is that I have always been very engaged in social, what today we call social justice issues, social change. I actually prefer social change and um, and I’ve always seen myself as part of the left. And today it’s a little hard. The categories are a little difficult right now, but I consider myself to be a socialist. A radical. I mean. I still do, I think. I’ve always been very, since I was in high school at least, I’ve been, I’ve always been engaged in some way in the organizational work of building the left. Uh today that’s a little more diffuse and a little bit more remote, but I always have been um and that’s always been very central to me so that even when, for instance, I was going to school, like university education, I tried to figure out how that relates to my politics, you know, how does this relate to my politics, how does this connect to my politics? And, um, what happened was, ultimately, I mean I was in school and in graduate school in the mid sixties so it was very hard to focus on studies with the war. First the civil rights and then the war. Very difficult, and so um, I ended up dropping out of graduate school, (laughter) dropping out of graduate school, um when I was at Indiana University, and then they, my department, which was the history department, liked me and was kind enough to offer me a master’s degree if I would come and take an oral exam. I had a long oral exam and they gave me a master’s degree in history and so I have an MA in history which, as my father used to say, with that and, in those days 15 cents, you could get on the subway. A very useful degree. And then, I just had a long period of time in which I had a difficult time, like many people, finding jobs and I toyed with going back to school. I actually enrolled in school to get a PhD in history but I was just never able to keep that, I was just never able to commit myself to school, um, and I didn’t like it that much. I have friends who are serious scholars. I have a very close friend from back in high school who is a very serious history scholar and has done some very wonderful work. And, he loves it. I mean he likes doing research and um I don’t really like it much and I realized that I like teaching and I like university level teaching so it’s a very difficult issue that . . . it hasn’t really been a career path to university teaching and that’s what I really want to do. It’s very difficult. And so, I continued to do a lot of volunteer work for organizations, some photography work and around the time my second daughter was born, so around 1972, uh, I sort of made a decision that I was going to try and have a commercial photography studio. I spent a few
years trying to convince myself that I could make a living as a commercial photographer. And it was just stupidity. I have a very close friend who, when I finally gave it up and closed the studio, he said to me, “You know what, you know what your problem is?” “No, what’s my problem?” He said, “You can’t succeed in business because you don’t have the skills and you don’t value the skills so you can’t learn them.” And that was true. Um, so, nonetheless I was somewhat committed to try to make a living, not make a living but create a life as a socially engaged, political photographer. Just in my own sort of personal craziness made it very difficult for me to make that commitment completely so I always have done organizational work as well and um I think I’ve suffered a great deal for, I’m paying a high price right now for not having made that commitment.

Sam: But the teaching, that was wonderful until the end when I was turned down and I was fighting to keep my job. And that wasn’t very wonderful. But in general, because teaching photography at that level had uh was a terrific outlet. Everything came together. Um, I was uh . . . I had . . . I had the most terrific experience which sometimes happens to university people and programs which is, but I had a group of students that took all my courses. For about 4 or 5 years out of 8 years, I had this group that was just . . . going through with me and it was great. And I had real influence on those people. And um

Becky: And you knew it?

Sam: And I knew it. And I knew, I knew that I was having, if you want to talk about transformation, I knew that I was having a transformational effect on those people. And that they were people whose eyes I opened up. And they told me. And they told me how. And I saw the difference. And the good thing about teaching and especially teaching people at that time is that all of the political principles and all of the philosophical principles about the medium, about art, about the world that I wanted to impart to these students, I didn’t have to lecture about them, I mean they were just part of everything I did over a long period of time. They were very diffuse as well as, eventually, they were very specific. They were diffuse throughout what I was doing and that was great. I really loved the teaching, and I think there’s a connection between loving teaching and doing photography. There’s a connection between teaching and photography. So, uh, this situation of being back and forth has been going on my whole adult life basically. And in some ways, I’m neither fish nor foul, you know? It has exacted its price. And then, now I’m in my 60’s and I made a decision when I was just about 60 that I was becoming a bitter old man and I didn’t want that to happen so I made a decision that I have to really try very hard to do good work throughout my 60’s doing political photography work. To do my work so that when I’m in my 70’s, I won’t look back to my 60’s and say I squandered this period, this opportunity. And so that’s what I’ve been doing. I’ve been focused, somewhat focused than I had been previously. And so there’s financial problems. I have to make a living.
Sam: Well I’ve thought about it lot before we ever met, before I ever heard of you, but I want to take a step back to answer this. If you could do what you want as an artist or a cultural worker, you would produce beautiful, wonderful, artistically forward looking, artistically progressive work that had a tremendous social impact. That’s what I’d do. But I don’t sort of . . . you don’t do an analysis and sort of pick your medium as a result. So what medium would you pick? You’d be a filmmaker. I mean, obviously, film making and video are the most important art forms of the 20th century. There is nothing that comes close. And the 2nd is probably sound, audio, whether it is radio work or music, song writing. Um, and then probably after that is actually something very traditional . . . literature, story writing, story writing and poetry. Maybe not poetry but story writing, novel writing and theater. And kind of way down on the list is what we call plastic arts. So why? Here’s what I think, in general, art has to offer and then . . . first of all, it has to offer content, literal content. Exposing problems, showing that this is something that we have to respond to, this is something that exists. This is something that is being proposed. Just letting people know things . . . giving information. It overlaps journalism in that respect. And with teaching. And then art has the function, political art has the function of promoting values, promoting values. We like to see people in solidarity with each other. We like to see people stand up for each other. We like to recognize the needs of other people. Whatever. We believe in organizing. We believe in peace. We’re against discrimination. These are values, right? And then art plays a function, which I talked a bit about last time, of reaffirming our own identity. That’s connected to the values but it’s not exactly the same as the values. This is who I am. I’m the person who believes this. I’m the person who does this.

Becky: And the same is true of a community’s identity.

Sam: That’s right. And then, finally . . . I don’t know if this is finally . . . but this is what I’m thinking about . . . art has a utopian function. Art says, “Things can be better. Things will be better.” Right? Sometimes it’s done, it’s carried out by actually constructing utopias, imaginary futures, and sometimes it’s done by saying we want this. It’s visionary in the sense that . . . like the artist that you wrote about in that article. It’s not even so much the content, but that there’s this sense of vision, sense of inspiration, sense of looking toward the future. OK. So where does my work fit in all of that when thinking about community? Um, on the most literal level, I think, that there are communities that are defined in different ways . . . that are invisible to most everybody else. So just taking pictures of them does that in that first function, that informative function. And it’s amazing how important that is. My wife used to tell a story, I haven’t heard her tell this in many years, of being in her office working at CSU and an engineer and a janitor came in because they were going to, I don’t know, some repairs, some renovations. And they just walked in and started working as if she weren’t there. So she was invisible even though she was in the room at the time, you know? Because she is a woman, clearly. So, um, I think that’s right. I’m sure her perception was right. And I did a project here . . . I worked
on a project off and on for a number of years called Working Ohio . . . I’ve never gotten anyone to really sponsor it or really promote it, unfortunately . . . in which I tried to take pictures of just working people. But, part of what I’m doing is just that educational piece. So, if you look at all this work, you would see what goes on in what I call a chicken factory. You know? And what goes on in various places. And so I, in connection with this exhibit of iron workers which is part of that big exhibit at Cleveland State University, I was invited to speak. And I spoke about one of my tasks is to make invisible people visible. And actually, a friend who is on the faculty there said, “Why don’t you do that here at Cleveland State. Why don’t you do a project on janitors and lab technicians and secretaries and um all these people who work here who no one notices even when they’re in the same room with them. Of course, my response was, “That’s a great idea. Maybe Cleveland State would like to hire me, to commission me to do that.” Right? I think it’s a great idea. So, um, so I do that. That’s one of the functions. Um, and then, I do that function a lot for the movement, that nourishing. I show these pictures and people are reminded that I do all of this stuff because I feel connected to these people. That’s my motive. I’m trying to make a better world and these are among the people that . . . So, people are encouraged simply because I did this. See . . . not people in that community but people in the community of activists and so forth.

Becky: Nourished, you said last time.

Sam: Yeah, and I think that’s true. But then there’s something else that happens and I know this happens. And I know this happens because people tell me. I know it because people tell me. And, and, I’ll be like a teacher now and instead of saying what it is, I’ll ask the questions that get to it. Why is it that when I go to some Indian village in this area of Columbia where I’m working, and I spend 4 or 5 days, or 3 days or whatever it is taking pictures there. And when I leave, I thank people. You know, thank you for receiving me and thank you for letting me take pictures. And why do they say, in the most heartfelt way, “Thanks for coming. Thank you for coming. Thank you for being here.” Why? Why does it matter to them?

Becky: Do you want me to answer?

Sam: You can if you want, but I’ll answer. But to me, the issue is raised by that question. I think people feel very isolated in their communities. I think people feel isolated and they feel unappreciated. I mean, it’s different in different places. I think these iron workers here, they know that they are great. They know that they’re crazy. They know that they’re great. They know they do great things. They know that the whole economy depends on them. Um, they know that they’re better than other people. They know things that aren’t true but they know things that are true, right? But, when I go there to take pictures of them, they think, here’s someone who actually cares about what we do and who we are and by extension, there are other people who are going to see these pictures that will also know about who we are and what we do. And I think the same thing is true of these other communities. So, I think the single most important thing I do for the
communities that I take pictures of is um, how do I want to say this? . . . is to provide a kind of living solidarity. That people feel that I am helping them make a connection to the rest of the world. And that I am evidence that the world is interested in them. And that’s something that photographers can do better than writers, not better than film makers because film makers do the same thing, but better than writers, better than musicians, better than a lot of people because by the very nature of our work, we have to be there really. We have to relate to the people to do it. We can’t take the pictures without being there. You can’t make the film, you can’t make the video without being there . . . all the lens media. So, I think that’s a pretty real function. I don’t know how far it actually gets anybody, you know. I don’t know what it does but I think it’s a pretty real function in terms of what I do directly for the community. Not indirectly. Indirectly, I think I do a lot of other things. I provide materials for people who are running programs, raising money. I try to change policies, I run program. But that’s indirect. But what I do directly for the community has to do with moral, it has to do with self image and all that which is wrapped up in the word solidarity.

Sam: So here’s some interesting things that . . . some interesting little tidbits. I don’t know exactly how they fit but they do fit. Most of the people, when I go to Columbia, most of the people never see the pictures. This is really a serious problem for me. This is a serious problem. Although as I say, the fact of going, the fact of going there is important. The fact of being with them is important. The fact of taking pictures in the way I do it is important. The way I do it is what you said. I mean, I talk. I don’t take pictures from a distance. I’m there. I talk to the people and it’s very important. Um, so, a couple of years ago there was a women’s peace march that was in the town that is the center of my activities there. And I was there for that. I was there to document the march but I was also there to participate in some activities, some artistic activities around it. And we had some pictures. Four photographers exhibited in the cathedral in the town. And at that time, a couple of people took the pictures . . . stole the pictures. We would say, stole the pictures. And I didn’t know entirely what was up but it came out later with other shows that somebody says, particularly with indigenous people, “Oh, go down to the school, or the church, or whatever it is, and see your picture.” In Spanish this is exactly the same semantic ambivalence that it is in English. Go see your picture.

Someone would say, “It’s my picture.” And they took it. It’s mine. Not because it’s a whole mysterious thing. No, you said it’s my picture. Right? So, um, that’s happened and that’s sort of interesting, right? And so this last . . . on my last trip to Columbia . . . you got in touch with me when I was in Columbia, I told people, the people I work with more than the subjects of the pictures, the people I actually . . . the people in the organizations, the diocese . . . I want to do my talk for you. I do a talk. I do the talk that I do so that you can see what it is, how I represent you to the rest of the world, right? So this one guy, this very important guy, said, “Would you do it in Spanish?” It will be the same talk but it will be in Spanish. So I did this talk and I think people were blown away. People were so happy to be there and to see this. And they came up to talk to me about how wonderful it was and somebody asked me, “Well, what’s the goal?” And this is important getting back
to your question on community. And I said, “There are 2 real goals in my work here. One is to provide materials to the communities and to the communities’ organizations so that it can be used in communications, publications, press releases and posters, however, but it’s providing visual material for the struggle. That’s one of my goals. And my other goal is to be able to carry your story to the rest of the world, which turned out to be the rest of Columbia too because they don’t know what’s going on either. And this one woman, a nun, gets up and says, “You’ve left out one.” So here’s what happens when I’m the center of attention. I don’t take notes when people ask me questions. Which is too bad. I should and I don’t have a tape recording of this, so I don’t know how she said it exactly, but what she said in effect was, “You left out the third one which is very important which is the very important effect it has for the communities when you come is that you come to the communities. You always spoke in terms of what was projected outward, but there’s this stuff that goes on inwardly here because you’re here. And that’s another reason why we make it possible for you to do your work here.” So, so I think that the notion that the community benefits in that way . . . and that’s true with these steel workers and it’s true of the chicken factory workers and it’s true of the health care workers whose pictures I’ve taken here. And especially when you go into a lab. I took pictures in the main Kaiser lab, you know where people do blood work. Whoever sees it? Whoever hears of it? You know? So these people know that for the first time someone is coming here . . . or maybe it’s the 10th time, but nonetheless, someone’s coming here and looking at us in a sympathetic way.
Interview #1  Theresa Stone  

Theresa: All right. Um, okay. Well uh very young in life I started failing school. I started failing in the third grade, and I failed every year in school until I was a senior and they sort of ceremoniously graduated me from school and I never, I just couldn't do it, wasn't interested in academics . . . just didn't help me at all. But I did really well in art and art history. And I married my high school sweetheart and moved to a farm and became a cowgirl for about a minute and decided that there must be something more and eventually ended up doing photography, which I had always done because my uncle had brought me a camera when I was 14. So photography found me. It just found me he just gave me this camera and I've always used it and really loved it and was really willing to put the work in to it. And I was always searching. I had this one feeling when I was really little. And I was on the playground it was very, very cold and I had no gloves, and I had uh, there was a nun and she gave me her gloves, and it was like this transformative moment in my life like I couldn't believe that she gave me her gloves. And I hooked onto that feeling. I kept looking for that feeling. Not like really actively or anything but that was a sort of feeling that I knew was right. And I didn't know how to get it again. And I didn't really have any path to get there. I go back to college when I'm 22 and it doesn't really work out. And I eventually go to a school again, a Vo Ed school for photography. I start doing commercial photography and I become very technically proficient, and I'm pretty good. I did catalogs and models and cars but I thought there must be something more. I mean, it was like the last thing I did was a typewriter cartridge catalog, and I decided that this was not what I was looking for in my life. So I left and I went to art school, and then in art school I had the opportunity to really flourish and I found a place where I could celebrate who I was and feel good about who I was. I never had that before in my life. I never felt particularly satisfied and, after art school, I got a job at the Natural History Museum and I was a photographer, scientific photographer. I enjoyed it but it was very quiet, and things in had been dead for a very long time. Then I had heard about this school in the circle, where they taught photography to kids. And I set out on foot looking for it one day, and I found it just by the noise. I walked in and it was completely chaotic. There were kids jumping from tables and throwing food. And I thought oh my God, this is so fantastic I want to be here. So I went to the principal and told him that I would volunteer. I really wanted this to be a part of my life, and it really transformed my life, because I found that feeling again of being able to make someone feel good about themselves.

Becky: You're referring back to the story about the gloves?

Tony: Yes. It was here as soon as I walked in I knew it was here. This is what I had been searching for this idea that this was really important art work. I had done artwork for my whole life and have been very successful at working, had work in museums. Not a lot, but a couple pieces. I could have really pursued that path, but when I came here, I thought
this was really where truth was, this is truth and that this is where truth and beauty really exist, because it was, it went right back to that same feeling. Now I can give those gloves every day, and I work very hard, because I never want any child to feel like I felt when I was in school, because I know how horrible that feels to go.. to just.. because I was never a troublemaker or anything like that. I was just invisible. I had become invisible over a period of years, and so, I like the feeling of letting a child bathe in the light of success. It makes me feel good.

Becky: So now you’re here and you’ve been here for how many years?

Theresa: 21 years. I came to do a six-week project and stayed a long time.

Theresa: Well, I think that where I am today is really about service that children need to teach other children that that's really, really important that it's not about, it has to be about surveying the underserved at some level. That we have a responsibility to serve others and that will elevate us to feel better about ourselves. But to teach that to kids, especially teenagers who are just like right in their shoes that is a starts there and goes straight up. And that's why their shoes are so expensive. It like grounds them to the entire universe that concept for me has been really important. The further I get along this line that service is probably the most important thing I can help children to understand. And they really don't like it. They really don't. I don't think it's something that comes naturally for most people, I think it's something that you have to experience and then you begin to appreciate or not, but I think it's something that I have a responsibility to expose kids to, you know, when I can. When I can.

Theresa: I figure out how to make it work with the kids. Make it work and come back. It's really what fuels me because I have to. I'm always trying to make a way to make it work.

Theresa: I really think that cameras are a real transformative tool. Cameras can be really transformative tool because they create a world that other people can see. I’d be sure that the kids had good cameras. They could take them home. Most of these kids can’t take the cameras home. We don’t have enough cameras. I would just have an environment that was rich with materials and supplies. That’s what I’d try to do, I’d try to have an environment that was rich with materials and supplies so that mistakes were welcome. Making a mistake is OK and they don’t have to worry about it. So kids get really comfortable with making mistakes. Every day they make so many mistakes.

Becky: Because making mistakes is important?
Theresa: Its huge. I want them to make so many mistakes that they’re comfortable with mistakes and then they’ll be comfortable taking risks. Once they begin to risk, that’s where the work is. So to get them to that point, where they are so comfortable making mistakes that they’re willing to risk, that then we get the work I’m looking for.

Becky: One more brief question although the answer may not be brief. What would you imagine your life would be like if you had not had this vehicle for knowing or understanding called photography?

Theresa: Oh, I wouldn’t have a life. I probably wouldn’t be here. I really was in a place where I had gotten to a place where I just didn’t exist. So it really helped me to survive. It was a tool for my survival. It was pretty important to me. I am very passionate about the power of it because it literally saved me life. And even if, some people say this program doesn’t serve enough kids. And I say, well what if it just saved one kid, would one kid be enough, if you saved one life? Would that be enough? Instead of doing something mediocre with 700 kids, what if we did something really valuable with 25 kids and one of them, it literally saved their life, would that be enough?

Becky: From what you described to me the last time in the first study that I did, you talked about a special population of students here who are attracted to this program.

Theresa: Those are the kids you see come back. Those are also the kids that went on to college. First kids in their family to go to college. First to graduate from high school in their family . . . moved thirty times before the sixth grade. The other one fenced drugs as a kid. They put the drugs on him since he was so cute and so little. He could walk anywhere. And did. He did it willingly since that was what he was told to do. So I know that this is really important work. This isn’t really the arts like the people want it to be. And we can do that. We can make beautiful work. But I also think there’s this undercurrent of um survival and its really an important touchstone for kids. I think that’s why they keep coming back and I think that makes people really uncomfortable. It’s not ballet, you know. It’s like (applause) aren’t they talented? They have a beautiful gift for making me feel good. There’s something else that happens in this room. And that makes people very uncomfortable. Its not like that was my intention. Its nothing bad. Its not like there’s anything subversive or anything. It’s just a safe place where people like to talk about ideas, create, work. It’s a good thing. Want to see a piece that I did?

Interview #2 Theresa Stone 01/17/08

Becky: So today, this is interview number two in the research question for today tasks within the context of community and that means your classroom, your students, how does art making engage you in social transformation moving towards social justice? So how do you see transformation occurring here in this learning community? So I know you have lots of stories.
Theresa: I became a project-based teacher after about five years and the classroom. I kept repeating myself, because that's what teachers do. They keep repeating the same material. And it wasn't working for me, so I wanted to try something that may be more interesting for myself. And so I began to create these projects. And the newest project is a project called “On My Block” in response to Success Tech. And it will involve a movie that's been created to begin to have kids try to untangle the knots of violence in urban areas. So, we decided that we would, I'm just going to get my cheat sheet here.

Becky: OK

Theresa: So this is what we did. We knew that we were going to make a video. We knew that it was going to be about Success Tech. Initially, we thought, let's find out why are kids so angry and off we decided to focus on Cleveland kids since that's who we are. And we decided to focus on the idea of the block because that is a metaphor for a child's whole world is the block. Urban children don't tend to go to camp in the summer, they don't go to the mall as much. They really live on this block. And what we found out about the block was that there were three or four things that existed on everybody's block. One was the corner store where all the activity takes place. There are dope boys on the block. What is called a trap house on every block. A trap house is where there is a congregation of people who use and sell drugs and then there are families on the block. So, through this discussion of kids talking about the fact that all their blocks were exactly the same and they didn't know that. They suspected it, but they didn't know it. I felt when they were discussing it that it helped them not to feel shame. They felt more of a community amongst themselves. And so what they found out was, and they all said repeatedly, when they're very little. You have to go to the corner store. But to get to the store, you have to go by the dope boys and the trap house. So the dope boys, usually many of them look pretty good. They have nice shoes, a nice coat and they call you out, especially the boys. So they either bully you, they’re bullies by nature, or seduce you into coming over their side to sell for them or to use and then you become part of the dope boys. And so what we realized as a group was that they all experienced the exact same thing every block had the exact same thing. Many of which have lots of corner stores there was this bond that happen between the kids and I had no idea what it meant to be on the block so that was interesting for me, but it was healing for them to realize they were all experiencing the same thing, and none of them had gone over to the dark side. They had all stayed on the straight and narrow. They were all still in high school and none of them were using.

Becky: Could they tell you why that was true?

Theresa: They all believed that it had something to do with coming to this school. That it had something to do with art that somehow their meaning here gave them something to focus on many of them in order to avoid the street would stay in their house and practice their art. So they become very good at drawing very young, or they become very good at their instrument. And so to avoid going out they had something constructive to do at home that help them to feel like they had control over their lives. So they were able to
instill control into this world of chaos where they were born. So were working on this film together, and that helps us to begin to understand this anatomy of violence and how this is generated. We still don't know. We'll never know. We're doing interviews with people were creating this film. Everybody has a role in this film. There's the director, the production person, somebody who get statistics. There is a list of people. Everybody has a job and all those jobs come together to create this film.

Becky: And who are you interviewing?

Theresa: We're interviewing everybody from the lieutenant governor, who is granting us an interview. The kids put up a show in his office. He was so blown away by their work that he granted them an interview. We're interviewing parole officers. We're interviewing people who run the arts organizations. We're interviewing some of the dope boys. We're interviewing some of the people who live in the trap houses. So, we're trying to interview the entire spectrum of people who understand this concept of what's going on in the city. So, at first we wanted to include the arts because this is the School of the Arts but the deeper we get into the investigation, the more we realize it's about control and what we can't control. The kids have the opportunity to control their art and to be a part of this community. But we're very busy. We have shows that we're putting up. We have movies that we're making. So there's always something that you have to be producing. You have to be producing. You have to be competing. And they are fierce competitors. These children love to compete. And, in this forum they're taking all the right risks. You know we're teaching them risk-taking. They are rising to the occasion. So far it's working.
APPENDIX B

EXCERPTS FROM FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT
Excerpts from Focus Group Session

3/19/08

Becky: OK, here we go. Um, I was kind of hoping that we could start by talking about what we’ve been doing, the work we’ve been doing since we met last time because I think that’s a significant thing, knowing what I know, um, to just update. Maybe in a bit, would we be able to take a walk to see your altar?

Denise: I brought them here.

Becky: You did? Wonderful. OK. Let’s just do that updating in terms of your creative work and its extensions into social change work you’re doing too. Jump in.

Denise: I just finished talking for about 5 minutes so it’s your turn, Charles.

Charles: In the healing and the earth where I’ve gotten a lot of clarity over the winter on healing of the grandmother and grandfather wound of our culture. And by that I mean the layer of our culture that understands that the children born into a city or born into a family come there by choice and they’re bringing a particular gift. And recovering that aspect of the family and the community where we know who the children is before they get there and then they can be held, so that they would be held by loving and watchful eyes as they go through life. They’re born into a place where the people know who they are. And so in my sweat lodge, the last one, there was a woman who’s being trained to become an elder and she’s part like Irish and part Ojibwa, this blended person who’s being trained by the elders there and she came down and every once in a while, she’s right at this threshold where in the woman’s path as you cross into the elder part of your life, I guess you get these huge influxes of spirit energy that ends up causing a bleeding. And when that happens that has a very high significance. And usually in a sweat lodge, blood, women’s blood is, like it’s considered dangerous to the male because of its spiritual power. And so we talked about it and we decided that should that happen in the lodge . . . because the work we’ve been doing through that lodge has been so much about grandmothering and grandfathering, that should a grandmother be born right in the lodge that would be exactly the right thing. So, it didn’t come up but the direction of the north is the direction of the grandmothers and the grandfathers and so this was just a great season and the most recent song I wrote was a culmination of that kind of knowledge. With my friend Larry, who has been doing the peace circles, he’s been doing it with a technique where you ask inwardly, you tap into inner wisdom. And so, I’ve been helping him a lot and he and talk to each other each week and share notes from the road and just support each other. And in this particular style, he is Israeli himself, part of his family’s from Israel so he’s really close to the work. In his peace circles, he’s been told, so people are there just asking inwardly and just getting messages for the group and there was this question about who is Israel. The people are Israel. And Larry is Israel. The idea that there’s no peace in the homeland Israel until there’s peace in Israel. And the flack that he
had run into was that this kind of space where peace happens in the people is being nudged by people who want to sit down and like talk about strategies and talk about what to do, plan some stuff. The whole style of like “we’re going to do something.” The biggest battle was really helping him maintain that space where something new, something holy can be birthed. It’s a way to work on peace by being peace and the style of healing that came in when they were doing it last week was that one of the persons is a homeopathic healer and in that medicine style, the most powerful medicines have the weakest amount. So let’s say I have my active agent and I have water. Like 50%. Like 50/50 that’s a workable thing. But like when the medicine gets really strong, you like have a whole gallon of water and just like just 1/300,000 of what the medicine is. That’s the most powerful, actually the most tiniest little bit and so someone in the circle said, “We’re doing this kind of medicine.” Applying this very surprising, very powerful, what the normal person would think this and this is a very diluted way of working is not at all. It’s extremely powerful. And so the third part is that I had a breakthrough in my own writing where we’ve been talking a lot, but I have a lot to say. Is that OK?

Becky: Yes!

Charles: And so, uh, usually, I’ll have a chord progression or something. When I’m writing this way, I’ll just play a chord progression and see what mood it gets me in and then I’ll work from there but recently with Larry we’ve been using our bodies more and more and we can it . . . when someone’s talking, there will be a shape that happens in your body or I’ll feel things in my arm. So I just laid there and played and let the song take its shape and then I asked my body, so tell me what the lyrics are and so it would come out. And all of it was very strong and sometimes it just came out ringing and awesome and other times it was true but the poetry was very cliché. So I would just work it and work it to find a way to say the same thing that was said but in a way that was more, for me, original. And so I just had this shift in my song writing style, at least for now where I’m asking inwardly. I’m asking the body.

Denise: Same thing happened to me. Almost exactly Charles, I mean I can't believe you're saying this but for the first time in my life. Maybe it's because of my mothers passing has allowed me to move more freely without having to constantly take care of her all the time. So in her passing, I've had free time. Which I've never had before, quite the same. And the same thing happened to me in my studio. The image started coming out I had no clue what it was because I had planned something totally different and had organized it totally different. But when this figure showed up on the top of this piece, which I’ll show you in a little while, I thought, “what is this?” And I just started letting it reveal itself to me. And I don't usually do that, because I don't have time to. You know in order to do what you just said, you have to have some time to have a reflective space and usually I don't have time for reflective space. But actually what you said to me at the last meeting, in your e-mails to me and what Tony said to me and what you said to me allowed me to be a little freer and I just let it reveal itself to me. And this piece, which is
significant to me, but I never thought it would be significant to anybody else, got into a
national show and other people thought it was significant. For me it was the same thing
that I had been working on in fact. It's called The Shallow Grave. I don't know if I
showed you, I sent the pictures.

Charles: We saw some.

Denise: So anyway, so I can understand what you're saying. This face that comes up
letting it reveal itself without you putting what you think you're imposing. Your mind is
imposing on it. Instead of . . . it's the spirit that is revealing itself. -- has come from . . .
the last year. Probably a lot of things have happened. Probably because we're talking,
because of your e-mails, because of what Tony has said, because of my mother's death
and her spirit moving. And because I've just had time to let it reveal itself.

Charles: Yes.

Denise: You lose yourself totally.

Becky: Yes, absolutely.

Charles: we've been calling that “the flesh made word.”

Denise: I've been calling it the hum. The hum of the holy. The hum of the earth.
Because I think the energy of the earth is in all of us. The main cosmological movement
is within all of us. We have that same power of the movement of the earth.

Denise: These are the four church women who died in El Salvador. And this is the person
that I knew. She was a member of my community. And this happened in 1980 and I went
down there in 1992 during the peace accords. They just finished the peace accords and
they said that she died, they died this violent death at the hands of five soldiers who were
the national guard. Three of them were trained at the School of the Americas which is on
our soil right now in Georgia. And when they were found, they were found in this
shallow grave. And this is . . . I think this is Jean, yes this is Jean. She was the one who
was tortured the most. Eta was tiny. Jean was big. And they found her with two broken
arms and her body was completely a mess. They were all raped. And she was the worst.
And when they found them, they found them in this shallow grave in this really rural
area. And the area was like right where an ox cart goes. And it was right by the side of
the road. And the children knew that this was happening. The parents were pretty afraid
to go out so the children went out and they found the grave. And then the parents called
the Franciscan priest who was living there at the time in the area was his parish. He
wasn’t living on the property but that was his parish. And that’s how they ended up
finding the bodies and they never would have found them otherwise.
Becky: The children went to find them.

Denise: Uh huh. So this is how shallow the grave was. Really, they were piled up on top of each other. But when they were pulled out, her arms were up over the top of her head. And I have a picture of it in my studio. And when I started to do these two, I hadn’t a clue still. I really wasn’t sure what I was doing. I went to get the picture that was in the news magazine and I realized that was what I was doing was out of Newsweek magazine and I pulled the picture out and I said, “Oh my god, this is what I am doing.” I’m still doing this stuff. And I thought of your words when you said, “Oh, you’re still thinking of the church women. You’re still thinking of the earth. You’re still thinking of the people who had been buried in the earth. And this is what this is about. And then the second one, because this one went in the show, I made another one. And it’s a white, a big white piece. And I put people . . . I thought I was doing an earth piece and it ended up becoming another figure on top. You that one. And I thought what is this all about? And I thought maybe it was my mother. And then I found another piece on top. And here it was how they were in the shallow grave on top of the earth. But it’s still the shallow grave, brought into the light because . . . more for the fact that they died there, particularly Dorothy. If it weren’t for the fact that they died there we never would have known what was going on in El Salvador. We never would have taken a stand. We never would have taken the stance that we need to close the School of the Americas because this is where we taught torture, indeed where they’re killing people and disappearing people, even to this day, they’re still doing it. Because I built it so quickly, it started cracking. Because I didn’t know what I was doing. So I really didn’t pay any attention to the cracks. So this whole . . . this body, Eta’s body completely opened up. So I had to patch it up. And this is the part around her heart and she was totally bruised around her ribs and I realized that this is the stuff . . . . . . this is where they were hurt.
APPENDIX C

EXTERNAL AUDITOR’S REPORT
June 20, 2008

Dr. James G. Henderson
404 White Hall
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio

Dear Dr. Henderson,

I have read and reviewed the dissertation of Rebecca McElfresh titled “Imaginations of Democracy: The Lived Experience of Artists Engaged in Social Change.” I served as the external auditor, reviewing the data analysis process including the construction of narratives and the phenomenological cross narrative analysis. This manuscript reflects attention to all of the dimensions of traditional phenomenological and narrative analysis. Additionally, this dissertation manuscript advances the traditional constructs of narrative analysis to include autobiographical and aesthetic analysis. While Sara Lawrence Lightfoot has provided a solid foundation for portraiture as a research methodology, this dissertation builds on Lightfoot’s scholarly foundation by offering unique aesthetic renderings of lived experience.

As the external reviewer, I certify that this dissertation by Rebecca McElfresh not only meets the standards of quality for phenomenological and narrative research, it also advances the field in its aesthetic and autobiographical dimensions. It was a pleasure to serve as the external auditor for this outstanding dissertation.

Sincerely,

G. Patrick Slattery, Jr.
Professor and Regents Scholar
Texas A&M University
APPENDIX D

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO USE HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Name: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
Phone: [Redacted]

Institutional Review Board:

Approval Date: 2/7/2017

By: [Redacted]
APPENDIX E

SAMPLES OF PARTICIPANTS’ ART

http://www.stevecagan.com/Portfolios/muestraitinerante/Muestraitinerante-09.html
Please see supplementary audio file for an audio recording of “Everything’s Got a Hole.”

See supplemental video file for a video clip titled “Truth and Beauty.”

REFERENCES


