APPLICATION OF FEMINIST PRINCIPLES TO ART EDUCATION:
A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

A thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Andrew Lawrence Moffatt, B.F.A., B.A.E.

*****

The Ohio State University
1997

Master’s Examination Committee:
Dr. E. Louis Landford, Advisor
Dr. Patricia Stuhr

Approved by
E. Louis Landford
Adviser
Department of Art Education
ABSTRACT

A stereotypical view of feminism may be hindering educators from adopting feminist principles in research and practice. Feminism is often thought of as the promotion of women in society and an anti-male attitude. Actually, feminism addresses issues of equity and discrimination in realms other than gender. Feminism may be best defined as a philosophical stance that strives to identify, analyze and eliminate bias and inequity.

A large body of work from the feminist perspective has been published. Some themes carry through all of feminism, but a variety of attitudes and ideologies are represented by the many authors. Feminist theory has evolved and continues to be a dynamic philosophical exercise.

Feminist principles can be extracted and utilized in art education to move the field toward a more democratic and inclusive state. One principle that exists throughout all feminist theory is a rejection of hierarchical positioning. Assigning varying levels of status to works of art places a dominant status on some works, which in turn marginalizes other works. Feminist perspectives reject that a single person or group has the authority to decide what art is worthy of canonical status.
Through the study of feminist authors, teachers may begin to realize bias and discrimination in art and education that before went unnoticed. Hilary Davis describes this as a feminist filter which detects instances of bias. It may be possible for educators to use this filter as a tool to evaluate their practice.

The feminist filter, in conjunction with feminist principles, can be applied to the development, implementation and evaluation of art education curriculum. Questions that accompany this change in our educational paradigm can be answered through the work of feminist authors concerned with general education, aesthetics, art criticism and art education.
Dedicated to my Grandmother
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis represents a collection of thought from a variety of sources. I am primarily indebted to the authors whose work I have utilized. Their dedication and innovation made my research possible.

Collecting, organizing and analyzing the work of these authors was inspired and skillfully guided by the members of my thesis committee. I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. E. Louis Lankford, for his support and direction in this endeavor and in the other coursework he has taught. Dr. Patricia Stuhr also provided guidance for this thesis and taught several courses that prompted my interest in feminism. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such dedicated and talented educators.

I would like to acknowledge the patience and understanding of my wife, Lisa, during the physical and psychological absence caused by writing this thesis. Constant support and encouragement was also provided by my family and friends, especially my grandmother.
VITA

January 29, 1961........................................... Born - Columbus, Ohio

1988.......................................................... B.A.E., The Ohio State University

1983.......................................................... B.F.A., The Ohio State University

1988 - present.............................................. Visual Art Teacher

Worthington City Schools

Worthington, Ohio

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Art Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feminism and Art Education</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Outline of Feminist Philosophies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Feminist Philosophical Camps</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Differences in Feminist Education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Theory and Practice in Education</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Feminism, Art and the Canons of Art History</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Feminist Critique of Art History</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Feminist Critique of the Patriarchal Canon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Feminism and Art Education</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Collins</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Freedman</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Hicks</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Garber</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

There are many compelling issues in the realm of art education. I have been exposed in my graduate studies to a variety of interesting and meaningful concepts to consider in my practice of teaching art. It seemed as though each class presented a new issue or at least a new slant on an existing issue that could be worthy of lengthy research. Postmodern thought, multiculturalism and issues of aesthetic inquiry all offered rich research possibilities. Why, then, did I choose the issues surrounding feminist inquiry for this thesis? My naive view of feminism had been limited by my lack of exposure to feminist thought and the inaccuracy of what I thought I knew. The word feminism brought to mind images of radical, militant women professing hatred for men. The moment I began to read about feminist issues in art education I was overwhelmed at how much it differed from my stereotypical view of feminism. As I read farther in the literature of feminist education, art and criticism I knew I had virtually stumbled across a topic that not only held great relevance to my practice of teaching art, but also would become something about which I would feel strongly.
Background

My initial exposure to feminism was through the work of Elizabeth Garber, Laurie Hicks, Sally Hagaman and Georgia Collins who have all published important articles in art education from the feminist viewpoint. But, the article that really sparked an idea that began this research was in the realm of aesthetics. Hilary Davis (1993) wrote of the problematic nature of a “feminist deaesthetic” (p.99), describing the counterproductiveness of deconstruction versus a more positive “gynocentric” (p.102) aesthetic. Her article described the tendency of many feminists to spend time and energy breaking down established patriarchal structures instead of creating an aesthetic structure that has relevance to women. In introducing these concepts, Davis described two elements that weigh heavily on my new thinking.

First, she expresses her “ontological shock” (p.99) at the sudden realization of the misogynistic nature of the art she had been viewing, studying and enjoying for years. Davis had been dealing with surrealism on a personal and academic level without noticing the many examples of women portrayed as subordinates or even brutalized. Her shock was that her notion of right and wrong was influenced by a patriarchal society that she had trusted.

I now saw that many of the world’s representations and discourses were neither absolute nor universal. The idols of Western culture-art, literature, and philosophy—were revealed to be racist, classist, heterosexist, and misogynist. (p.99-100)

This brought into question all she had grown to accept as truth. Davis had to be
devastated by this realization. Everyone grows to trust certain universal truths in their life. When one notion comes into question it is natural to begin to question others. Imagine the feeling of mistrust she must have felt for the institution that not only allowed her to be deceived, but participated in the betrayal.

Later in her article, Davis discusses the second key element, how she now views the world through a feminist “filter” (p. 100). This is an intellectual filtering activity that she now applies to all her thought processes. If Davis could be misled by an academic institution that she trusted, how did she to think other, less scrupulous, groups were going to treat her. She developed the filter as a way to cut through the biased information she receives. The feminist filter she describes is most likely a series of questions she asks herself. The questions would serve to reveal any patriarchal bias that is hidden beneath the general acceptance and repetition of the messages she perceives, allowing her to base decisions on her own perceptions, not the propaganda perpetuated by the dominant culture.

The application of ontological shock and a feminist filter to art education are the premise for this thesis. Two aspects of her realization, misogyny and ontological shock, helped advance my interest in feminism. I find the existence of a word meaning specifically “woman hating” to be important. Why does such a word exist? Is there an equivalent word for hating men? In a larger sense, the concept of ontological shock is very important. What if everything we have been taught to be universally true is actually not? How would our lives be changed if we cannot rely
on what we have come to understand and we have to rethink all universal truths for ourselves? This question is especially important for educators because we are charged with helping others learn. If we view the world through the eyes of a feminist we will have to reach our own conclusions and help others reach their own conclusions.

Purpose of the Study

This thesis will attempt to extract operational principles from the research of feminist theorists that can be applied by teachers to identify, correct and counter bias and discrimination in the realm of art education. In addition, the concept of a "feminist filter" or set of filters that one can apply to screen for patriarchal bias will be examined and applied to the curriculum. The purpose of this study is to identify, interpret, synthesize and apply feminist principles and filters that may be used in the development, implementation and evaluation of art curriculum and instruction.

The questions I hope to answer are related to the teaching of art. How can we view what we are doing and objectively analyze it for patriarchal bias? How can we develop lessons that are free of patriarchal bias? Where can we find literature and resources to use in the development of our lessons that are not patriarchally slanted, and if we cannot, how do we write curriculum? What are biases in our implementation of lessons? How do we overcome the patriarchal nature of much of our teacher training?

I feel strongly that the persistent bias in our teaching is doing a great disservice
to our students. Only through critical analysis of our actions and the body of knowledge we draw from can we right these wrongs. We cannot be content to continue our present practice without this critique, for the ramifications will be widespread and long lasting. Ignoring bias is perpetuating bias. If we do not act, we will be guilty of prejudice by our inaction.

Methodology

I am attempting in this thesis to organize the variety of feminist thought into a workable set of ideas that art educators can utilize. Through philosophical analysis and synthesis I will derive operational principles for design, application and evaluation of art education lessons from a feminist perspective. The analysis and synthesis will be applied to the variety of reading I have found which address feminist issues. I will attempt to extract educational principles from not only work in the realm of feminist art, education and art education, but from general feminist thought, feminist criticism, aesthetics and other work in gender related issues. Feminist thought is wide and varied. One of its tenets is the absence of any absolutes or universalities. But, there are commonalities between feminist philosophies. I hope to clarify some of the philosophical stances of feminism in its relation to art and teaching. Through analysis I will identify concepts that will apply to the feminist filter and then develop applications for the filter in art education. Ultimately, I can only represent my interpretations of these stances. It is my goal to stay true to feminism throughout this seemingly patriarchally biased process.
Outline of Thesis

Chapter two of this thesis will begin with a description of the feminist notions of gender as applied to education. The camps that feminists have been divided into and the distinctions of each will be outlined. The third chapter will deal with how feminists view art and how the canons of art history have effected the state of art education. Feminist criticism could change how we look at all art, past and present. Chapter four will address the body of knowledge devoted to feminist thought in art education. I will further discuss the concept of feminist filters and their application in chapter five. My thesis will end with a chapter addressing implications and suggestions for the classroom with the goal of creating a democratic and gender-bias free environment for children to learn about art.
CHAPTER 2

FEMINISM AND EDUCATION

This chapter will describe feminist education theory historically and attempt to extract common tenets from the variety of feminist theories. It may seem contradictory to try to add structure and find commonalties to feminist thought, but for the purposes of understanding such wide ranging ideas it may be useful.

When we speak of feminism and education, we are immediately confronted with a contradiction. On one hand, education is seen as a necessary and important part of action directed towards social transformation. On the other hand, educational systems and school curriculum are structured power, hierarchically... education institutions are bastions of male supremacy ruling class power. (O'Brien 1983)

Historical Outline of Feminist Educational Philosophies

Lynda Stone (1994) outlined the historical development of feminist education. She found four stages of feminist thinking; universal, separatist, essential and particularist. These stages are chronologically ordered, however, each stage presently has proponents. Also, none of the stages are exclusive. The boundaries between stages are not rigid and some stages share the same ideas.

The first stage Stone describes is the universal feminist. A universalist would believe that women and men are biologically equal. Therefore, each have all the same opportunities and chances for success.
Gisele Marie Thibault, also discussing early feminists, states that

nineteenth century feminists recognized institutional discrimination and experienced conflict between their public and private roles, but most of their energies were channeled into refuting social science research which supported the notion of women’s inferiority. (1987, p. 6)

Thibault groups all feminists prior to 1960 together into what she identifies as stage one. These feminists, like Stone’s universalists, were simply seeking the same opportunities in higher education as their male counterparts.

For the ideal of universal feminism to work, would require the existence of a monoculture, one that accepts and values each member equally. Although this appears to be logical and a healthy way to view the world, critics of universal feminism pointed out that the monoculture that women must live in was created by and for men. Consequently, the goals and ideals of men are the primary focus of the monoculture. Feminists in the universal stage would ask women to find a way to fit into the monoculture. In a school setting, the universalist would claim that each student is given equal educational opportunities and that it is up to the individual to reach his or her highest potential. I think it is clear one cannot always succeed within the confines of a system to which they have little or no relevance.

According to Stone, the reaction to universal feminism was separatist feminism. Separatists argued that men and women were indeed equal, but that they were also different. They acknowledged that men and women had different sensibilities that reflected or were the outcome of their sex. The realm of men including matters that
are public, productive and cultural. This would include their roles in the workplace and prominence in society. Women’s realm would be more private, reproductive and domestic. This realm would include their roles as homemakers and mothers.

Madeleine Arnot (1982) describes these spheres.

This classification of male and female worlds was made equivalent to and imposed upon a further classification-- that of work and family (or put another way, the distinction between the public world of production and the private world of consumption).

She concludes that as a result,

the productive world becomes “masculine” even though so many women work within it, and the family world becomes “feminine” even though men partner women in building a home. (p. 99)

These differences in roles are believed to be the logical separation based on gendered differences between men and women. The issue, as these feminists see it, is not that the sexes are divided by these roles, but that society places too much value on the male roles at the expense of the female. These feminists believed that equality is reached when the realm of women is valued at the same level as that of men. The ideal of the separatist is a world that is bicultural. In education, separatist feminists would promote separate curriculum for male and female students, allowing them to thrive at that which comes most natural to them.

Essential feminism built on the ideas of the separatists. Besides acknowledging the differences in the genders, the essentialists explain these disparities as differences of gendered histories. This explanation of difference takes culturalization and
institutional disenfranchisement into consideration rather than relying on genetic factors. Each of us is born equal and similar, but the vast history of gender culturalization impacts us greatly. While not ignoring the disenfranchisement of women by society, these feminists do not seek to invade the male realm. Essentialism finds its equity in the solidarity of women. Equality can be achieved when both men and women acknowledge and value gender difference. Again, schools could promote separate curriculum and female students would find strength in their solidarity and revel in the differentness. Or, as Arnot warns her readers when describing the role of social class distinctions in women's educational experiences,

in neither the dominant nor the dominated gender codes do women escape from their inferior and subordinate position. There is nothing romantic about resisting school through a male-defined working class culture. It is at this point that women across social class boundaries have much in common. (p. 101)

The most recent development in feminist thought Stone describes is particularism. This feminism is a critique of the other three feminisms described earlier, but most strongly a reaction to essentialism. A tenet of particularism is that there are no essentials for all women or all men. Each person is a unique individual and the only universal is that we all are different. Equality from this viewpoint comes from the differences we all have rather than the qualities we share.

This philosophy has been, at least in rhetoric, used by schools for many years. The idea of teaching to the individual student and valuing individual differences is in the mission statement of schools all across the country. But, how many of these
schools have a curriculum that was developed from a viewpoint other than the patriarchal, dominant culture viewpoint that has been historically used? I see my own viewpoint as a combination of essential and particularist feminism. Educationally, I wish to honor each student’s individuality, but to understand and prevent bias I will need to explore the gendered histories that relate to my teaching. Those gendered histories may be my students’, the work of an artist, historian, critic or my own.

Three Feminist Philosophical Camps

Geraldine Perreault (1981) discusses three philosophical camps of feminism, identifying them as liberal, left, and radical. She researched contemporary feminist perspectives of women in higher education, but the philosophies she describes apply to the role of women in society and other levels of education, not just the university setting.

Perreault identified the liberal feminist, which is the equivalent to Stone’s universalist. The liberal feminist would seek equality and the right to participate in society, based on the assumption that men and women are biologically equal. The obstacles women have to overcome are sex discrimination and lack of equal opportunity that it creates, not any inadequacies inherent in being female. These obstacles would be addressed by raising the status of women to match the level men have achieved or created for themselves. Society would need to begin to value the attitudes and activities that women excel in because of their natural aptitude in these
female realms. This philosophy would again ignore the lack of women's participation in the culture and require women to fit into the existing patriarchal structure, including that of schools.

Perreault describes the next development in feminist philosophy as left feminist. The leftist would reject the ideals of the liberal feminist, just as Stone's separatist rejected the universalists. The leftist perspective is to liberate women from the institutions that are oppressive. This relates to Stone's description of a bicultural society. Women would need to create alternative institutions for themselves that would be free of patriarchal bias. This perspective would require separate learning institutions for each gender. I think the flaw of this approach is the lack of recognition that female institutions would receive. Although, women may thrive in these institutions, what will happen when they must rejoin a gender-integrated society?

The last philosophy Perreault identifies is the radical feminist. The radical would, like the leftist, not try to assimilate women into patriarchal institutions. The goal of radical feminism is to change the institution to better suit women, not only to eliminate bias in the institution, but to use the institution itself to counter patriarchal bias. Sally Miller Gearhart (1983, p. 7) describes the act of radical feminism as "reform within the system, revolutionary action against the system, work within organizations that are alternatives to the system". This stance is most similar to the approach of this thesis. I would like to identify feminist principles that can be
applied in the current institutions to identify, correct and counter bias and discrimination.

Perreault's work being somewhat dated compared to Stone's, did not address any equivalent to the particularism feminist.

**Gender Differences in Feminist Education**

Other feminist thought about education comes from Linda Nicholson (1980), who like Perreault, addresses the different spheres of men and women. In an article regarding institutional discrimination, she explains one aspect of gender difference. That difference being the public sphere of men in contrast to the private sphere of women. Or, the more social role of men and their work environment versus the less social private role of women at home. Historically, this difference has evolved from the time when mostly men left the home to work and women's roles were primarily domestic. The roles outside the home were associated with the public sphere, and inside the home with the private. This difference perhaps being a product of early educational goals that attempted to create a transition for young men moving from their family roles to the public roles of the workplace. Nicholson does not imply that either role should be afforded a higher status, but suggests that dominant culture places a higher status on the social realm and denigrates the private. She goes on to theorize that this historical separation has limited women's participation, acceptance and success in the public realm. Schools, being public institutions, tend to be arranged in a way that discriminates against women. Nicholson supports this
claim describing the role of schools as having been
to prepare young people for participation in the public sphere, this sphere as
primarily masculine has entailed a corresponding gender bias of both the
population and the norms of the schools. Moreover, not only have schools
mirrored the gender population and norms of the public world, they have also
been instrumental in separating it from the private. In doing so they have
helped constitute the separation of the spheres itself, a separation fundamental
to our modern sex-role system. (p. 82)

I would seek to identify instances, in the educational setting, of bias against the
private realm of women.

Feminist Theory and Practice in Education

Charlotte Bunch states her view of gender in education as a tenet of feminism:
“power is based on gender differences and that men’s illegitimate power over
women taints all aspects of society” (1983, p.250). Education is an institution that
often thrives on gender differences and consequently, is tainted with patriarchal bias.
In a paper addressing the need for an encompassing feminist theory, she calls for a
feminist analysis of society as a whole. Bunch saw a unifying theory as empowering
to feminists who may have felt as though their single contributions to the feminist
movement were too isolated to be making an impact. If feminists have a strong
theoretical base they could more easily see that their work was contributing to what
Bunch described as “victories in the future”(p. 248).

The theory Bunch developed is divided into four parts that are interrelated.
First, one must describe what exists. This description must be based on reality, not
preconceptions. Then, one analyzes why that reality exists. This analysis must
consider many factors, including biology, economics, psychology and sexuality. Bunch warns that the tendency is to focus on a single factor and she recommends looking at a spectrum of potential influences. This analysis should include identifying who most benefits from the oppression and who would likely want the situation to remain unchanged. Vision is the third part of the theory: imagining what the reality should be. This requires clear goals based on the values and principles of feminism. Bunch includes a warning about vision, to be clear about goals because “every action carries implicit assumptions, we must be conscious of them so we do not operate out of old theoretical frameworks by default” (p. 252).

The final part of her theory is strategy. In this stage one hypothesizes about how to implement the change that was conceived in the vision. At this time all the information gathered from the previous stages is considered and a plan of action is formulated. An injustice has been identified, described and analyzed. In this final step, a bridge is created to carry us from described situation to the ideal that has been imagined.

Bunch extends her theory into practice by applying her four step process to classroom teaching. She asks that teachers guide students through the four steps in an effort to help them understand issues being addressed in class. Bunch refers to regular education and teaches women’s studies at the college level but, this process can easily be applied in art classes as well. The first two steps, description and analysis, could be used to establish a context for the artist, artwork or issue being
studied. Although description and analysis are familiar processes for most art educators, they take on a very different meaning in this context. The two terms are usually used in the visual context and do not involve the complex and varied histories that may follow an artwork. The real feat will be to cut through the years of patriarchal bias to which we have all been exposed and see things for what they really are. We have all been conditioned to see things from a patriarchal viewpoint. The third and fourth steps, vision of the ideal situation and creating a strategy to move towards the ideal situation, may not fall directly in the realm of art education. These steps may be more related to political action. But, we can use aspects of the vision step in aesthetic discussion. It would certainly be an aesthetic consideration to imagine an ideal situation in the art world. Whether or not a teacher or student carries their study through to activism should depend on their personal beliefs and conviction. It would be unfair to require students to develop strategies for causes to which they are not committed. But, the four steps could be utilized for any philosophical stance.

Nancy Schniedewind (1983) has extracted values from the feminist philosophy that have particular relevance in the classroom. The focus of her paper is the methodology of feminism and how it may be as influential as the content being taught. She states,

Students, I believe, learn as much from the process of a course -- its hidden curriculum -- as from the explicit content. The more classroom interaction reflects feminist principles and the greater the congruence between process
and content, the *more* consistent and powerful students' learning can be.
(p. 261)

Schniedewind goes on to identify five educational processes that reflect feminist
values.

Creating a classroom atmosphere that promotes and practices trust, mutual
respect and community is the first educational process that Schniedewind identifies.
The value of this process, beyond the obvious, is that it reinforces feminist principles
such as community, communication and equality. Examples of teaching that reflects
this goal include small group activities that ask the participants to share personal
insights about a given topic. She also encourages honest discourse among students
about the teaching and learning. Questions about whether a someone dominated a
class discussion or did everyone get an opportunity to participate equally, are used
to survey the level of community reflected in the classroom.

Schniedewind's second process, shared leadership, reflects another feminist
value.

Feminist values support the replacing of hierarchical forms of authority with
participatory decision making. This does not imply structurelessness, but
structure that is democratic. In the classroom it is possible for a teacher to
share leadership with both students and other instructors. (p. 264)

The implication here is not for a totally egalitarian classroom. Schniedewind admits
that she, as teacher, takes more of a leadership role and has more control than any of
the students. The level of student involvement also depends on the experiences and
skills that the students possess. One activity that she uses to promote shared
leadership involves teacher and student communicating their expectations. At the beginning of the semester, she has small groups of students list what they expect from her and the course and she lists what she expects from them as students. The lists are compared and discussed with the goal of creating a list that can be agreed upon by both teacher and students. A similar activity is repeated during the semester to gauge the effectiveness of the course.

In interest of the feminist goal of interdependence, Schniedewind identifies using cooperative structures in the classroom as her third process. She defines cooperative structures as activities that cannot be successfully completed unless all participants in a group partake. Many school districts use a method of instruction called cooperative learning, that similarly requires students to work as a group rather than individually. One problem with cooperative structuring is evaluation, specifically assessing letter grades when required. Schniedewind recognizes the competitive nature of grades and alleviates this with a contract grading system. In this system a student’s work is not compared to another student’s, but to a set standard. The standard states what is required to achieve each letter grade, then the students determine what amount of work they wish to do or which grade they want to reach. Within this system is a general criteria for what is quality work. She has found that eliminating the competitive nature of grading has allowed students to do better work.

The fourth process addresses the importance of emotion and intellect to feminist
theory. Schniedewind identifies the integration of both cognitive and affective learning as a process that reflects feminist values. She discusses the struggle to "change the overly rational premises of male-dominated social relations and institutions, and to incorporate priorities appreciative of human needs and feelings" (p. 268). This can be accomplished by asking the students to participate in experiential activities and reflect on these activities in a journal. Schniedewind finds this enables students to relate on a personal level with the content being taught.

Action is the fifth and last process identified by Schniedewind. This action could be designing and implementing activities that would directly fight sexism or racism or participating in an existing program with a similar agenda. She describes thought without action as a great threat to feminism.

For the purposes of this thesis I can draw upon all five of these processes as important and applicable components of feminist education. A classroom that functions as a community, with mutual respect and trust is an admirable goal for any educational setting. Shared leadership allows students to be stakeholders in the educational process, making them more likely to value the process and the content of their lessons.

It was refreshing to see Schniedewind admit that her role as teacher takes more responsibility and yields more influence. It is more realistic to envision the situation she described, rather than a totally equal distribution of power. Even as facilitator, the teacher cannot ignore the skills and knowledge that he or she has gained through
education and experience. From the art education standpoint her stand on cooperative structures in the classroom may be too narrow. It would be unreasonable to ask that every art lesson be designed in a way that required group participation for its success. The Western notion of artist as independent, genius, working from outside society may be inaccurate, but taking all aspects of singularity out of art would be erroneous. The realm of art education is well suited to integrate cognitive and affective learning. As with music and literature, art can easily evoke emotional responses. Like Perreault’s description of the radical camp of feminism, the political nature of the last process, action, becomes problematic in an educational setting. Schniedewind discusses action required by students in her women’s studies classes, who have, at least for one semester, committed to feminist ideals. As with Bunch’s theory, I am not sure it would be fair to ask students in an art class to move towards a political action to which they may or may not feel an allegiance. But, from Schniedewind one can find excellent examples of how an educational philosophy and practice can reflect feminist values.

Summary

Stone and Perreault have provided us with a historical perspective and we may choose to commit ourselves to one or more of the feminist philosophies they have described. Nicholson illustrated the role of institutions in the perpetuation of patriarchal bias. Bunch and Schniedewind outlined processes that can be used to counteract the bias in our schools.
Two characteristics are common to these authors and their philosophies: fairness and change. These authors are asking that students get an education that is representative of their culture, be that the culture of gender, race or some other identifying attribute. Currently and historically, it seems that educational institutions favor the dominant white male culture. The system does not conform to the needs of its varied population. Rather, it functions like a rigid mold to which students may or may not fit. The students then fall into one of three categories. They are lucky enough to match the ideals of the institution, they learn to adapt to and accept the ideals of the institution or they never fit in. In the last two categories, even if the student chooses to try to adapt, they cannot deny that they are only feigning ownership to the education they are receiving. Feminism asks that our schools be fair. It would be fair for schools to represent the ideals and goals of the population being educated. It is unfair that schools function in a way that serves only a portion of the population.

Feminism, as described in this chapter, is a call for change. All of the discourse examined in this chapter contained an element of active participation. As evidenced by Bunch, even the simple act of description contains an element of change. In the first step of her process one must change her or his perception of a subject by looking past preconceptions to reveal reality. But, identification of a problem is not enough from the feminist standpoint. Change, however, is almost always difficult. Although fairness may dictate a need for change, it will likely be a long and
contested process. One must consider the length of time that the patriarchal agenda has been in place. Still, until radical change occurs, feminists will be directing their efforts towards a change for fairness in institutionalized education.
CHAPTER 3

FEMINISM, ART AND THE CANONS OF ART HISTORY

This chapter will explore feminist views and reactions to female under-representation in the art world and patriarchal bias in viewing, making and discussing art. This chapter will also address the canons in art history and how feminists approach the bias inherent in canons.

The Feminist Critique of Art History

An early, if not the first, feminist critique of art history is the oft cited "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" written by Linda Nochlin (1970). This article addresses two feminist issues, under-representation of women artists and what should we do about it. First, Nochlin points out the inequities faced by women in the art world. She states

But in actuality, as we all know, things as they are and as they have been, in the arts as in a hundred other areas, are stultifying, oppressive and discouraging to all those, women among them, who did not have the good fortune to be born white, preferably middle class and, above all, male. (p. 25)

True, there have been few great women artists from the patriarchal viewpoint and no amount of discovery or manipulation of past events can change that. She recounts how early feminist art historians ineffectively focused their attention either trying to rediscover lost women artists or redefining greatness from a female
perspective. The latter is problematic due to the lack of cohesiveness of female generated art, that it does not exhibit specific characteristics which would set it apart from art created by male. So, to find a unique greatness based on gender would be difficult. Nochlin felt that feminist historians’ time would have been better spent trying to create circumstances in which future women artists could flourish. She suggests this would include removing romantic notions of the artist as genius and art as “the direct personal expression of individual emotional experience” (p.24). Art, according to Nochlin, is more a culmination of environment and convention than an individual expression.

The blame for the lack of great women artists lies not at the hands of chauvinistic males or unmotivated women, but “rather on the very nature of our institutional structures themselves and the view of reality which they impose on the human beings that are a part of them “(p.25). She asserts that to include more women artists we must change our understanding of what we call art, fine art or high art and open the definition to include more non-traditional art. The fault lies in the self-serving interests of art history, that she describes as a “romantic, elitist, individual glorifying and monograph producing substructure” (p.26). Nochlin finds liability in the art world’s paradigm, not the individual participants. In her words

The fault... lies not in the stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education- education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs and signals. The miracle is, in fact, that given the overwhelming odds against women, or blacks, that so many of both have managed to achieve so much sheer excellence (pg. 25).
Nochlin recognized the role institutions play in the perpetuation of patriarchal bias twenty years before much of the feminist research underpinning this thesis was written. She discusses art in much the same way Lynda Stone describes the particularist feminist in chapter two of this thesis. Both ask for equality based on differences not similarities. Each artwork can be considered for its own unique qualities, not what qualities it shares with another work that others consider to be great. In the classroom, do we tend to use the exemplars that we were taught? Who decided which works were included in the slide set or reproductions we use? What were their motivations, criteria and biases? Nochlin discusses art history in much the same way Bunch theorized women's rights issues. Both call for description and analysis. Nochlin asks that we look at problems, such as lack of female representation in the art world, closely and question who benefits from the power structure that allows the problem to exist. These questions become important when we examine art history, canons and the influence of patriarchy.

Context is an important factor in feminist understanding of art. Laurie Hicks (1992) stated

If we are to think critically about issues having to do with gender in our society, then we need to think critically about the means by which the dominant interpretations of women and men are reproduced and perpetuated. (p. 23)

One must consider not only the context of the creation of the artwork, but of the power structures that existed prior to its creation that set the stage for the artist. In
other words, consider all of the political and sociological implications that directly or indirectly led up to the artwork being made. She suggests three goals common to most feminist criticism.

The primary goal is to analyze the "socio-cultural and historical contexts within which a work is created and subsequently viewed" (p.24). Gather information about values and beliefs in place at the time it was created and find other works of art that were created in this same context. Analysis of this information may not be as easy as it initially appears, because to understand the context of the artwork one must first understand the background that influences his or her own perceptions. So, another aspect of the first goal is self-analysis. This not only allows the consideration of the context of the artwork to the world, but also includes the viewer in the equation. One must engage in "critical reflection not only about a particular work, but also about one's own complicity in giving it meaning" (p. 24).

The second goal is to facilitate social change. As we have learned from chapter two, this is a goal common to most feminist philosophies, not only those in the domain of art. This change would be in our thinking about art, based on the knowledge gained from the contextual analysis we did in the first goal. Hicks states "from the standpoint of feminist criticism, it is important to further thinking about the options available to us for 'regendering' our expectations about what is possible for women and men" (p. 24). The outcome of this social change would be to create less narrow expectations of how art should look based on the gender of the artist.
Finally, feminist criticism seeks to broaden the acceptance of subjective understanding of art. Personal meaning is a major factor in how we interpret and value art. As a viewer, the “relationship we have with specific works of art cannot be entirely separated from our own life experience” (pg. 24). Feminists see the valuing of personal meaning as an empowering move for those who write about and discuss art.

We can utilize Hicks’ three goals in the classroom. Unless our goal is analysis that is strictly formal, it is essential to determine some context when examining a work of art in a classroom setting. Purely formal evaluation, from a feminist perspective, is invalid because it excludes context and affective concerns. However, it may rarely be the case that a thorough examination also includes the viewer’s own belief system and how it plays a role in understanding artwork. As discussed earlier, facilitating change in the classroom can be a predicament. But, change towards more accepting and inclusive understanding of what is art and who can create it would be worth any trouble or preparation required. Another application of particularist principles is the acceptance of subjective meaning in the interpretation and judgment of art. Each individual should feel his or her reaction to a work of art is valid and has value. The influence of personal experience to context in relation to a work cannot be disregarded or disrespected.

The Feminist Critique of the Patriarchal Canon

Another way of looking at art from the feminist perspective is to analyze the
canons of art history. Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews (1987) observed that by fixating on a few women artists some feminist art history has “come dangerously close to creating its own canon of white female artists (primarily painters), a canon that is as restrictive and exclusionary as its male counterpart” (p. 327). Gouma-Peterson and Mathews also echo Nochlin’s fear that a focus on rediscovery or promotion of past artists actually may be perpetuating the flawed structure of the art world that works to exclude women and others. Context comes into the equation again as a factor the feminists feel must be included in aesthetic judgment. The feminist critique calls for us to examine why we value the art we do and where we get these values. This metacriticism would be a step towards filtering out socially ingrained bias.

What will we find when we critically examine the paradigms and histories and contexts of the art world? That is what feminist inquiry urges us to do, to take nothing for granted. If we look objectively, we will undoubtedly find evidence of a dominant culture working mainly to advance and value the artwork that matches itself ideologically. Janet Wolff (1995) states that positive effect of looking at aesthetic classifications and categories from a sociological perspective “has been to show that those categories and classifications are the product of social relations, ideological battles and power inequities” (p. 129). She goes on to add

Finally, we can understand- and therefore challenge- the operation of art history itself as a selective (and patriarchal) process, which had more or less successfully obliterated most women artists from the record and from the canon. (p. 133)
Teachers can and should move beyond the bias, but should help the students discover and uncover the inequities of the past through an inquiry process. Much of the patriarchal bias in our curriculum is due to the influence of unbalanced power and conditions that have resulted and it is important for students to know and understand this.

Anita Silvers (1990) has also studied the relationship of the canon to feminist analysis of art history. She states

One revolutionary goal of feminism is to reform the artistic canon. This program is crucial to enhancing the status of women because too few objects created by women are included among the most highly esteemed and acclaimed artistic work. (p. 367)

Silvers addresses the issue of context and its relation to the canon by citing examples of historians disagreeing about the significance of an artist. The historians seemed to base their evaluations on characteristics that were external to the works of art created by this artist. Historians looked at how an artist might reflect the work of an earlier artist or has influenced an artist that followed him or her. Another way historians include information that is external to the artwork is to base evaluation on a romantic story that occurred during the works creation or some event in the artist’s life. She argues that by doing this these historians have confused “the stories of the works of art with those of their artists” (p. 367). In the process of forming or reforming canons, according to Silvers, the historical facts relating to the artist play a small role and should not serve as the main influence in evaluation.
to be canonical, a work must be appreciated as exemplary, and to do so it
must have a history which casts it so, but it is not for externalist deterministic
reasons that women fail to appear as hero(in)es in most of these histories.
(p. 367)

So, what is keeping women from reaching canonical status? Like Nochlin, Silvers
sees more validity in reforming the canon for future women artists, rather than
focusing on righting inequities of the past. She also feels that “with attention,
appreciation and support, cannot women be expected to enter the arts in much
larger numbers (p. 368)?” But, the historical lack of numbers are not the only thing
keeping women artists from reaching this status. Silvers has concluded that new
works of art are often not viewed as canonical because canons require a history and
successors who have used the work as a reference in their own work. If women’s
art is beginning to reach a valued state now, how long will it be before their works
are considered among the canons. Silvers’ description of the canonical model
implies that inclusion of women will be a lengthy process.

Finding another obstacle in the path of the female canon, Silvers cites that “being
esteemed as canonical depends on being thought to exert art historical influence” (p.
369). The artworld, while perhaps recognizing works by female artists, is less likely
to allow them to play this important of a role in the history of art. She sees this as a
more plausible explanation, rather than “unspecified gender-directed exclusionary
institutional practices” (p. 369). Although, I could argue that exclusion from the
canon is indeed a gender-directed institutional practice, I believe Silvers makes this
statement in reference to the lack of participation by women in the arts, not in
reference to the bias they encounter during and after their participation.

Silvers calls for reform of the canon in art criticism and other writing about art.
She points out that some feminists will dismiss reform of the canon because it works
within rather than against a patriarchal paradigm. But, her choice is to transform the
existing canon. Silvers states that there is "no need to belabor the question of what
patriarchal presumptions consist in, as these are readily identified in feminist theory"
(p. 371). Two of the presumptions identified as reflecting male ideals are;
universality of judgment and perceiving art as purely intrinsically valued.

First, feminism rejects notions of a universal truth that everyone can or should
adopt. Art cannot be one thing to all people. This is especially evident if one is
looking outside of his or her own culture. And, the current canon may reflect a fear
of works created by artists unlike the authors of the canon.

Secondly, to assume art has entirely intrinsic value and does not reflect the
context of its production and subsequent viewing emulates the Western aesthetic, a
product of the dominant male culture. Silvers concludes with a call to feminist
critics to "keep women at the center of their scholarship" (p. 377). If a canon
requires a history of an artwork, then the time is now to make sure essays and
histories written about art include women.

Art educators can learn from Silvers that the current scholarship in the area of art
history may be insufficient. From a feminist perspective all art history is suspect,
due to the patriarchal context in which it was most probably written. This would require art teachers to research, revise and supplement the art history curriculum they are currently using. Exemplars being used should be analyzed critically. Is the work being studied because of the fame of the artist? Does some romantic history about the artist preclude the work itself? Could the teacher and students begin to create a history by studying contemporary artists? Rather than following a well worn path that perhaps reflects the education in the arts that we received, it is time to start a new road with a less patriarchally motivated treatment of art history.

What does this thought and theory provide for teachers of art? First, by examining and analyzing the contexts as Nochlin, Hicks, Gouma and Peterson and Wolff would have us do, would help us to see the underlying systems and structures that have perpetuated bias or served to exclude certain artists. Silvers informed us of the canon and its relation to art history. I feel that by continually searching for context and critically examining current practices we will develop the feminist filters that will make patriarchal bias more apparent and easier to detect. By doing this we can teach our students to do the same and eventually patriarchal bias will become obvious to the point that it will be more easily eliminated.
CHAPTER 4

FEMINISM AND ART EDUCATION

Thus far this thesis has examined feminist perspectives on education and art. This chapter will review feminist work in the realm of art education. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, art education is rich in scholarship concerning feminist issues. I hope to illuminate some of the consistencies as well as some differences between feminist thought in the field of art education and the other fields mentioned in earlier chapters.

Georgia Collins

Georgia Collins (1981), in an article addressing the problematic nature of dealing with differences in student population, namely disenfranchised groups, has identified three feminist approaches to art education. These approaches to reform are integrationist, separatist and pluralist. Collins prefaces her description of these approaches with a discussion about the relationship between gender and art. At issue is the existence of a feminine sensibility that “is a capacity or predisposition of the feminine artist that is discernible in the personality of that artist and which, if evidencing itself in the artist’s work, gives to it feminine characteristics” (p. 84). She, and others, find fault in that concept because it is too restrictive and does not do justice to the vast variety of art created by women. First, she finds that the term
feminine is too often construed as derogatory, serving as a negative stereotype not truly reflecting most work by women. Secondly, a feminine sensibility assumes that all art by women has clear characteristics setting it apart from art made by men. This is clearly not true; one need only to look at the works of several different women artists to disprove this claim. Lastly, Collins finds that this concept does not reflect a true understanding of artistic activity. It would be hard to separate the role gender plays in the shaping of an artist, however Collins finds that art that has cultural value in the West has been more about art than about life. If, life and personality are never directly expressed in great art, gender related life experience would seem irrelevant. (p. 85)

Collins identifies two contradictions in the concept of a feminine sensibility. The concept states that the artist’s feminine personality is evidenced in the art work, yet rarely is the artist’s life ever directly apparent in his or her work. Also, great art, as defined by the Western canon, is supposed to be esoteric. By that definition art is valued purely for its intrinsic qualities, not qualities of the artist.

She states that despite these coherent arguments against its existence the “concept of a feminine sensibility persists as a powerful organizer of prejudice and perception” (p. 85). The concept of feminine sensibility is addressed differently in each of the three approaches to reform.

Integrationist approaches are characterized by the assumption that “basic art concepts, practices, and values in Western art are sex neutral” (p. 88). Teachers adopting this approach would strive to treat students equally and expect male and
female students to produce similar, gender-free products. Obviously, this approach rejects the notion of feminine sensibility and proponents would try to discourage any feminine qualities in favor of more neutral, gender-free artistic expressions. In her critique of this approach, Collins foresees female students being remediated to unlearn any feminine characteristics inherent in their art skills. She recognizes the problematic nature of this approach. Like the critics of universal feminism Stone described in chapter two, Collins realizes that creating equal situations in the art room does not erase other unfair social conditions or years of biased culturalization outside the classroom.

Separatists see the artworld as traditionally biased towards masculinity, rather than gender neutral. To counteract this bias, separatists seek to establish an art community “with practices, values, institutional structures, standards, and reward systems compatible with women’s experience and insuring(sic) women’s power and control in terms of self-definition and governance” (p. 89). If art was actually gender neutral, separatists argue, women would be and would always have been able to participate equally. Silvers, Nochlin and others have concluded that equal participation has not happened. Separatists see the concept of feminine sensibility as a positive trait. If this sensibility has historically had negative connotations, it is because it has been defined by the male-dominated art world. Davis states, “separatism sets about redefining art to be compatible with women’s experience and needs” (p. 89). An art teacher using this approach might actually segregate classes
by gender for the purpose of addressing the artistic differences in the gender of the students. Collins explains a curriculum for female students would need to address some specific issues. She describes these issues as "reclamation of women's heritage, including a reevaluation of the low status accorded to activities characterized as domestic crafts, decoration, and dilettantism" (p. 90). Separatists would also call for recognition and support for women trying to explore personal experience in relation to artistic expression. Collins offers no description of a curriculum for the males in this segregated situation.

The third approach, pluralism, borrows elements from the first two approaches. By doing this, the pluralist approach is somewhat confusing and at times appears to be contradictory. Pluralism agrees with separatism about the value of the feminine sensibility, but disagrees about the act of separation. Pluralism applauds the variety inherent in gender difference. However, because the feminine sensibility has only been used to describe the work of female artists, pluralism "deplores such exclusive and arbitrary assignment" (p. 91) that would segregate by artist's sex. Pluralists find value in the feminine sensibility even if it is not associated with a female artist. Males under this approach would be encouraged to develop a feminine sensibility because the concept is believed to embody a principle and set of interrelated values which are relevant not only to art, but to all human endeavor. Not only the character of art, but the character of individuals, male or female, could be enhanced by the inclusion of the feminine. (p. 91)

An androgynous model for art is considered by pluralists, but there is disagreement
among separatists as to whether this model should be for the art world as a whole or for each individual artist. Art teachers would need to discern which model they would adopt because they are contrasting. If societal androgyny were the teacher’s goal, he or she would strive for a variety of work represented by the variety of the class population. Students would be asked to work to their individual strengths with the goal of an androgynous class. If the teacher wanted to encourage personal androgyny within each student, the emphasis would be placed on each student developing a variety of different skills separately identified by gender. In this model each student strives to reach a state of androgyny by exhibiting both feminine and masculine traits.

Collins concludes by stating that she may have disappointed some readers with the lack of a single clear position representing feminism’s recommendations for art education. Instead, she advocates that educators analyze the three approaches and the questions posed by each. Collins asks teachers to let students participate in the reform movement by involving them in the “critique of values: those associated with art and those associated with women” (p. 92).

Despite its somewhat contradictory elements, I would align my personal stance most closely with the pluralist approach. The integrationist approach is flawed in its belief in gender-neutral art. I am persuaded by the feminist notion of gendered culturalization and that gendered histories play an important role in our values and, consequently, our actions. The lack of gender-neutral art discredits the rest of the
theory which states that if treated equally students will create gender-free products. Democratic treatment of students is valid and admirable, but does not address the bias in the rest of the art world. Students need to be prepared for the world outside of the classroom, regardless of the ideal conditions that classroom may demonstrate.

The separatist approach is impractical and unjust. The realities of a segregated classroom are not feasible for most teaching situations. Will there be a test to determine the level of masculinity or femininity evidenced in each student's artwork? Will these students then be labeled as such? What would the rest of the students do while the target group is being taught? How does one explain to a student that he or she is not allowed to learn certain subject matter because it is only for the other gender? Questions such as these make this approach very problematic.

The pluralist approach, though also problematic, seems to be the most rational and practicable. First, this approach recognizes a feminine sensibility. I agree that this indeed exists, but I acknowledge that it is illusive and difficult to define. I could most closely identify it as serving in part as a juxtaposition to the traditional Western patriarchal canon. Obviously, it is more than a counter to male ideals, but must include the opposite end of the spectrum. I would try to incorporate both models for androgyny and strive for a level of personal androgyny in each student as well as a somewhat androgynous overall classroom. Attempts at individual androgyny through a gender-free approach would produce rather boring, homogenous artworks. Even if all elements that exude gender could be taken out of instruction, I
am not sure how one could actually take the elements of gender out of each student’s work. A variety of stimuli act as inspiration for a child’s artwork and much of these come from outside the classroom. Students of any age should have the freedom to experiment with art forms not traditionally associated with their own gender. If one accepts the concept of a feminine sensibility, but does not limit its application to only female art makers, one has a greater variety of artists, art forms and a more broad concept of art to use in one’s teaching. I feel it would be more beneficial to encourage students to try art forms that are traditionally associated with another gender, rather than try to remove gender from instruction. Working with cross-gender art forms is not in itself pluralistic, but in conjunction with instruction that supports and values a variety of gender sensibilities could support pluralist goals.

Kerry Freedman

Kerry Freedman (1994) identifies issues in art education that relate to gender and offers recommendations for the classroom. Freedman begins by explaining her stance which is an interpretation of art education that involves the study of visual culture, including images not traditionally viewed as art. Her very broad definition of visual culture includes all “forms of human expression that manifest images” (p.158). Teachers need to address these images because “to deal effectively with the issue of gender in art education requires attention to the relationships that exist between student gender identity and visual culture” (p. 158).
The three issues that Freedman suggests we address are (a) females as subject matter in artwork and other forms of visual culture, (b) how females respond to visual culture, and (c) the gendered characteristics of student artistic production. She states that these issues concern the relationship between gender identity and curriculum.

To understand these aspects of identity requires attention to the gendered (male and female) character of imagery and response, the power of representation through imagery and the visual construction of stereotypes and other forms of gender definition that have reified in visual culture. (p. 158)

A faulty approach to addressing these issues has been to "simply supplement published and unpublished curriculums, largely built on the models of the disciplines of Western fine art, with female and multicutural content" (p. 165). Freedman describes that often curriculum that reflects this method of reform has been mandated or suggested by government and school administrations.

The use of such models and quota systems can become patronizing and result in inappropriate juxtapositions of culture which misinform students and further disenfranchise groups the curriculum is to support. (p. 166)

Freedman advocates five ways to address gender issues in art education. First, as stated earlier, she calls for visual culture to replace the more strictly defined art in art education. Her vision of art education would include analysis of a variety of images to "develop an understanding of the ways in which social groups and cultural issues are represented visually and how images work to reify ideas" (p. 166). Freedman envisions students using feminist critique methods to better understand
visual gender representations. Realizing that visual culture is interpreted differently by each individual viewer, Freedman relates her second recommendation to the first. She calls for teachers to help students value differences in individual interpretations. Teachers will need to ensure that students get to express ideas and opinions without fear of ridicule. A safe environment for this analysis to take place is essential. The third recommendation is to discuss issues in student artwork and visual culture that relate to gender. Freedman states that stereotypes often reduce complex issues to simple dichotomies. For example, male and female or black and white. When these relationships are reduced to these terms it often also implies a dominant and subordinate relationship. The suggested method of avoiding these stereotypical reductions is analysis by anthropological or sociological means. Techniques such as interviews would help students understand the depth of these issues and the individualistic nature of gendered response. Freedman’s fourth suggestion is to use relationships between examples of visual culture to enhance learning about gender issues. She states that “students are often interested in the interdisciplinary, symbolic, and metaphorical attributes of imagery” (p. 168). By relating instruction to these interests, teachers may help students understand that cultural context reflects and is reflected in each image. She bases this recommendation on the need for a contrasting supplement for formal analysis. Lastly, Freedman calls for educators to develop activities in which males and females may participate together and accommodate interests of both. Often, class activities favor the male
perspective and the strengths more often possessed by male students. She promotes a small group critique which can "focus discussion and be less threatening because it is more intimate" and "could effectively utilize a conversational style that is more comfortable to many girls" (p. 168). Freedman sees social reconstruction of art education as an important goal for teachers and teacher education programs. She feels that studying the images of popular culture and how these images impact gender identity are positive steps towards this reconstruction.

The feminist viewpoint of this thesis would support Freedman's claim and recommendations. It would be difficult not to support the study and analysis of visual culture and its impact on concepts of gender. The images that reinforce bias and subordination of women are perhaps more clear in mass media than in fine art. From a practical standpoint, students will see many times more popular images than they will fine art. It is fair to charge art educators with the task of empowering students with the skills necessary to deal intelligently with these images. I think Freedman assumes that teachers will include fine art and work inclusively with other visual culture. They can be used together to better understand how each forms and reflects gender in society.

Laurie Hicks

Laurie Hicks (1990) finds empowerment an important issue in feminist analysis of art education practice and theory. Hicks, who describes herself as a feminist critical theorist, feels that language plays a major part in the bias perpetuated by the
dominant culture. Feminist analysis requires one to “assess this language and make explicit both the ways in which it facilitates the domination of women and the ways in which it may be appropriated for liberatory purposes” (p. 36). It is important to define empowerment in the realm of art education so educators may communicate goals and to provide a benchmark for evaluating programs. Hicks personally defines empowerment as enabling students to reach their potential. She states that the goals of education are often political and educational theory must recognize and react to the political nature of these goals.

Prefacing her recommendations for empowerment, Hicks analyzes Elliot Eisner’s (1987) definition. For Eisner the goal of art education is to empower students with the multiple skills necessary to “give them access to cultural capital” (p. 9). Hicks takes issue with Eisner’s economics metaphor because it places a hierarchical value on art. “He uses the term ‘capital’ to signify the artifacts, ideas, and values sanctioned by institutions of the dominant culture” (p. 37). Eisner subscribes to the belief that by giving all students access to the same art, teachers are practicing democracy. But, the question again is who has decided which art is worthy of study. He implies that knowledge about art is narrowly defined as the ability to understand, respond to and create art that resembles the canons of the Western aesthetic. Hicks points out the flaw in this approach that “one might question how the homogeneity of these experiences could be empowering for students outside of the identified mainstream” (p. 38). As Freedman also recognized, one remedy for
this inequality has been to insert women and other disenfranchised groups into the curriculum. But, “the simple addition of women and other oppressed groups to the existing theory and practice of art education does not remedy its exclusionary nature” and “only serves to camouflage the mechanisms through which these groups are marginalized and oppressed” (p. 39).

Hicks’ definition of empowerment involves three interrelated concepts: freedom, power and community. Empowerment is defined as the act of increasing one’s freedom. She finds a positive and a negative notion of freedom. The positive and negative aspects are characterized in relation to internal and external influences. Positive freedom would be defined as the capability to act out one’s own goal. Empowering someone with this freedom would be “the process of enabling individuals to become independent subjects capable of evaluating options and achieving their goals” (p. 40). This freedom is internally based. Negative freedom would be lack of interference in the pursuit of a goal. Empowerment in this respect would be the removal of obstacles that would keep one from achieving their goals. These obstacles are external forces. The relation of power in the empowerment process is also a component of Hicks’ definition, in that empowerment also involves how a person relates to power structures.

It is the harmful effects of power that we seek to free students from, and it is power that sets limits and defines the context within which we seek to empower students to be free to think, create and act. I shall argue that the process of realignment is best understood by seeing how power belongs not to individuals, but to communities. (p. 41)
Community is a concept that has historically had conflicting definitions. Hicks notes that with Eisner’s model a community would ideally consist of a homogeneous group of persons, sharing the same ideals and creating similar work. Empowerment within this community would be freedom from difference and the freedom to assimilate with the group. Hicks promotes a model of community that “does not marginalize difference and give it unequal status” and in which empowerment would seek to “free students from dependence on mainstream values and commitments while freeing them to question, look, and create critically in any number of different traditions” (p.43).

Based on these three components of empowerment; freedom, power and community, Hicks states three goals for a feminist art education. Her first goal is that art education addresses diversity and difference. “By this I mean that art education should be geared to increasing students’ knowledge and awareness of their own cultural backgrounds as well as the multiplicity of diverse traditions which together constitute our society and our world” (p. 44). This is quite contrary to a curriculum that promotes sameness. Hicks is challenging the generality that traditional education has continually promoted. Her second goal is include context as a component in the critical aspect of art education. This would involve analysis of the context of an artwork and the interpretation of each viewer. This would result in students who are able to develop relationships between themselves and the visual world. “By enabling students to assess critically their own taken-for-granted
assumptions about reality, they should develop insights necessary to perform similar
critical analysis on the products of others” (p. 45). Finally, Hicks suggests an
education that considers the concept of a community of difference and strives to
empower students to become effective members of the community. Member in this
community would possess the “ideals and capabilities necessary to understand,
criticize, and oppose oppressive mainstream traditions in the name of a different
kind of social life” (p 45).

Hicks has pointed out a flaw in many art education curricula. In spite of any
progressive classroom programs, if the Western aesthetic of dominant culture is
emphasized then the art of other groups is being subordinated. If the goal of
art education and education in general is to empower students, not hinder them, then
exclusionary practices would not be permissible. Hicks’ three suggested goals are
positive steps towards curriculum reform. Education towards diversity would
provide students with a broad conception of art and hopefully the skills to
understand a variety of art without placing it in hierarchical terms. It makes sense to
promote diversity to any student population because undoubtedly all populations
represent some cultural variety, even in the least diverse situations. As a feminist
critic it comes as no surprise that Hicks calls for consideration of context. Context
is always a major component to feminist analysis because it aides in the
determination of reality, the reality of the artwork as well as the reality of the
viewer’s relationship to the artwork. Although I have difficulty drawing a
distinction between individuality and a community of difference, I agree that
diversity is preferable to sameness in terms of educational policy and practice.

Elizabeth Garber

Elizabeth Garber (1990) states that one method for restructuring art education is
to focus on the critical component. She calls for the use of feminist criticism.
Garber identifies two major changes in the feminist movement that were recognized
in the 1980’s. The first change was away from the notion of a universal woman
with which the movement could identify. Instead of a universal woman the
movement began to acknowledge strength in diversity and use differentness as a
unifying idea. The second change was to go beyond calling for equality and begin
examination of the underlying causes and motivations for injustice. This would
include “detailed analyses of the implications underlying social, institutional,
ideological, and psychological structurations of gender, race, class, and other
factors” (p.17). Garber’s description of feminist art criticism reflects these changes.

Feminist criticism poses not a single method, but draws on a variety of critical
approaches whose foci are understanding art in relationship to social values
and ideologies, to power struggles, and to economic, gender, ethnic, and
racial considerations. (p. 19)

Feminist criticism does not overemphasize gender, but weighs equally the various
conditions that influence response to art.

Garber has identified three bases that she defines as “shared purposes and goals
of mainstream American feminist critics” (p. 19). These bases are social analysis,
political activism and self-knowledge. Social analysis is directed to the underlying social structures that produce hierarchy and bias in the art world. Political activism attends to the political nature of feminism and the changes that result or should result from the efforts of the feminist movement. The base of self-knowledge supports the experiential element of response that values the subjective nature of personal interpretation. This base, Garber states, is important for the individual as well as women as a group. These bases are apparent in the work of feminist critics. The work of analytic feminist critics would serve to expose and challenge examples of patriarchal bias. Activist critics would highlight work of a political nature, especially that of feminist artists. Woman-centered critics, which is how Garber describes those using the base of self-knowledge, would engage personally with the artwork in question.

Garber concludes with a call for pluralism. She describes a classroom in which multiple interpretations of artwork are emphasized. A single work is interpreted by many differing sources and each is analyzed for ideological content. She advocates another step in which “the critical endpoints at which students arrive need to be dissected in terms of their sociopolitical ramifications. Students learn to identify and construct critical interpretations, cognizant of their ideological implications” (p. 24).

Garber’s description of feminist criticism requires one to progress past simple consideration of context, by taking the next step and analyzing the context for bias. The criticism she describes is politically motivated, perhaps too much so to be
applied directly to the classroom. Analysis for bias is beneficial to learning, but again it may be unfair to ask students to act on a political issue for which they may not have an interest. One must take Garber’s description of the celebrate of women through their artwork as the self-knowledge base asks us to do and expand it to a celebration of diversity. Students may learn to celebrate their art work in relation to differences it has with the work of others. I strongly agree with Garber’s call for pluralism in art education. From the feminist perspective, criticism needs to be pluralistic in nature in order to value the multitude of responses that our students bring to the classroom.

The thought concerning art education from feminist theorists is clear and intelligent. Collins identified the feminine sensibility and how it is considered from different feminist perspectives. As educators, we can align ourselves with the perspective that best represents our personal ideologies in respect to a feminine sensibility and other issues concerning gender and art.

Comparisons

One can draw comparisons between these authors discussing art education issues and the authors in previous chapters who were discussing feminism in a broader sense. Obviously the issues that effect art education from a feminist perspective are encompassed within the overall concerns feminism has for society. Stone states “one way to set out common tenets agreed to across multiple feminisms is to define feminism as both a practical and a theoretical endeavor” (p. 5).
Collins' feminist approaches to art education in some ways reflect the four stages of feminist thought that Stone described in chapter two. As stated previously, Collins identified integrationist, separatist and pluralist methods as three feminist ways to address differences in student population, such as gender differences. Stone identified four stages of feminist thought: universalist, separatist, essentialist and particularist. These stages are not chronologically organized or exclusive.

Collins' integrationists and Stone's universalists share the belief that men and women are biologically equal. Both theories rely on this equality to override the historical and present biases present in our culture. In practice, this would mean teaching in a way that provides equal opportunities for male and female students. By providing equal opportunities teacher would be allowing female students to reach to same level of achievement as their male counterparts. Those who criticize these approaches say that although men and women may be equal, society has created an atmosphere in which men have an unfair advantage and in which women cannot succeed. Because of this unfair environment, critics say gender differences need to be addressed rather than ignored.

The reaction to criticism of integrationist and universal approaches was a separatist approach. Both Collins and Stone use the term "separatist" to describe an approach that recognizes men and women as being equal. But because of the bias present in society, separatists strive to create institutions separate from those men have created. Proponents of this approach to education feel women need to
establish totally separate institutions in order to eliminate the patriarchal bias that
dominant culture has perpetuated in current institutions. In the classroom,
separatists would teach differently to the female students with the goal of remedying
the bias they encounter in society. This could become problematic in practice
because of the dichotomies created. A teacher may feel split between two
populations and two curriculums. Also, although the distinction between sexes is
clear, the delineation of gender is not. Students may feel more affiliation with a
gender role other than that associated with her or his sex, which would complicate
the process of segregating students for instruction.

The last approach Collins describes is pluralist which closely matches the
essentialist stance identified by Stone. Both approaches revel in the differences
gender creates, and consider these differences an asset. Instead of separating
because of difference, pluralists seek a model in which a variety of viewpoints are
accepted. Traditionally differences of gender have been points of conflict and
women have been discriminated against. Both pluralists and essentialists might
argue that this bias has been due to lack of value afforded by dominant culture to the
work of women, not any factor inherent in women themselves. Pluralist and
essentialists would strive to create situations in classrooms where a variety of
gendered expressions could be accepted as valuable and equally valid.

Stone describes a fourth category of feminist thought for which Collins has no
equivalent. Stone discusses a particularist stance that removes the essential and
separatist notion of gender. The latter stances involve a delineation by gender which either separates or unites participants by this delineation. Particularists claim that there are no essentials of gender and everyone has such unique characteristics that no clear categorization can be made. This stance seems to be pluralism taken to the extreme. A teacher using the particularist approach would truly value individual differences in students, ignoring any of the traits normally associated with cultural identity.

Freedman and Gouma-Peterson and Mathews have written about the role gender plays in the ways we understand and value art. Freedman explained a stance that included broadening the concept of art to include other forms of visual imagery. She feels that introducing these other images will serve to assist students in the understanding of interpretations of gender. Gouma-Peterson and Mathews suggest examining, with students, the canons of art history to determine why we value the art that has been identified as canonical. Two of the issues of gender Freedman has identified have direct application to Gouma-Peterson and Mathews' concerns. Freedman states that the way females are depicted in art and how females respond to art are two important feminist issues that art education needs to address. By analyzing these two issues, we will undoubtedly confirm Gouma-Peterson and Mathews' concern that dominant culture has created an art world that serves and perpetuates dominant culture. Freedman's five recommendations for practice answer Gouma-Peterson and Mathews' call for art classes that facilitate students in
the disclosure of patriarchal bias in the Western art canons.

Hicks has analyzed art education for its portrayal of empowerment. She identified the Western aesthetic as the canon commonly used in our curriculums and how non-Western examples are often token. Her recommendation for reform included a call for teachers to recognize a community of difference. Schniedewind, in chapter two, recommended that teachers develop a classroom that fosters trust, mutual respect and community. Both Hicks and Schniedewind share the belief that gender differences are best addressed within the structure of a community.

Community from these two authors' perspective is democratic classrooms that foster mutual respect and do not marginalize differences. Within the structure Hicks and Schniedewind describe students would feel free to express, investigate and celebrate cultural differences. These feminist authors describe reform towards this sense of community because traditional concepts of community foster homogeneity.

Garber's bases for feminist criticism relate closely to Bunch's theory from chapter two. Garber described these bases as social analysis, political activism and self-knowledge. Bunch's theory includes description, analysis, vision and strategy. The description and analysis of Bunch are encompassed in Garber's social analysis. Both authors are describing a process in which situations are analyzed for patriarchal bias. This process is necessary to combat the years of patriarchally dominant culturalization which has become second nature for many of us. The political activism Garber describes relates to Bunch's steps: vision and strategy.
Both authors suggest one move beyond theory and address the situations of which they are critical. Bunch states that she has come to understand “feminist theory not as academic, but as a process based on understanding and advancing the activist movement” (p.248).

When we can find agreement among authors across disciplines it serves to reinforce the message they are communicating. Feminists in general education, art education and art criticism address the same issues which are fairness and how it can be achieved. Historically, gender and other cultural characteristics have been viewed hierarchically. Feminists reject that notion and feminist theory and practice strive to create a more democratic educational process.
CHAPTER 5

A FEMINIST FILTER

This chapter will address the concept of a feminist filter, a conceptual process one could apply to situations to detect patriarchal bias. One reason that I feel it is necessary to apply feminist principles in the art education setting is that often patriarchal bias is deeply ingrained into our culture. We take for granted many of the ideas and hierarchies in our lives, simply because these situations have existed for many years. But, longevity is not a reason to accept something that is unjust. Feminism teaches us not to take things for granted and that all ideas can and should be questioned.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, an article by Hilary Davis (1993) was perhaps the greatest inspiration for this thesis. Her description of the ontological shock she experienced when she realized the misogynist nature of the artwork she admired for years, in turn shocked and inspired me. After this realization, Davis described how it was as if she were given a pair of glasses that now help her visualize reality. Davis described this as a “feminist filter which functions to illuminate the misogyny of all films, books, and visual art” (p. 100).

Through this filter, Davis identified problems with Western aesthetic thinking from a feminist perspective. She points out the problematic language used to
describe much of the art that has been canonized. The terms; sublime and epiphany, stress spiritual content over physical. Davis explains that this notion reflects a hierarchy which allows that men can rise above the physical constraints of these bodies to reach a spiritual state, while women are defined and limited by their bodies and the functions of their bodies. Beauty is also problematic from this perspective because of the historically oppressive examples that have exemplified this term.

The "beautiful" is another term of little use to feminist aesthetics since Western art has traditionally represented beautiful (and usually nude) women as sexual objects to be viewed by male spectators. Again the man/woman dichotomy is perpetuated-- men act while women appear. (p. 100)

This may not be an insight readily noticed by most viewers. It is quite common to see representations of nude females as subjects of artworks, but it is uncommon to question why women are presented in this manner and for whom the works were created. Davis recognizes that discovery of the feminist filter is a life changing event. After one has seen life through this filter, one cannot go back to their old way of perceiving.

The overall issue of Davis's paper is whether feminists should work within the existing aesthetic framework or create a "de-aesthetic" that "deconstructs the androcentric norms of masculine aesthetics" (p. 101). Some feminists reject so-called feminist aesthetics because there is much patriarchal tradition inherent in the field of aesthetics. These feminists feel that it would be counterproductive to try to apply the principles and methods of such a biased system. The notion of a
deaesthetic, rejection of all aesthetics, is also problematic for some feminists because it serves mostly as a reaction to patriarchy and does not advance the feminist movement. Davis opts for an approach that includes both views.

One possibility is for feminists to manipulate androcentric notions in order to re-view, re-define, and re-claim aesthetics for their own purposes. This is a task that some will argue perpetuates feminism's fixation on androcentrism, but androcentric discourse, practices, and materials are inevitably part of feminism's textual baggage. (p. 105)

Davis's statement is especially true for the school setting. How can one teach a student to use a feminist filter without the student understanding patriarchy and its implications? Although, the work we do should not focus only on past inequities, we must recognize and learn from instances of injustice. This learning should be done with the goal of creating situations free of bias in the future. So, we are not only illuminating the past but, working towards an ideal.

Again, I turn to the work of Elizabeth Garber (1992) for insight concerning feminism. She has identified two general concerns connected with feminist aesthetics. One is that gender plays a role in how one understands art and understands the world. Secondly, gender in these terms has been underemphasized in traditional philosophy, including aesthetics. Feminist aesthetic endeavors must include gender considerations at all levels on inquiry. Again, this is especially important as a complement to the long cultural traditions of patriarchy and the Western notions of universality and gender-free art. We are again asked to seriously reconsider values we have developed.
Garber has devoted part of her research to viewer response issues that apply to art education.

Viewer response theories are explanations for how and why a viewer responds the way she or he does. Because we live in a society in which gender, class, and race affect our cultural upbringing and hence our beliefs.

Much of the work in this area has centered around the “male gaze” a term used by John Berger (1972) in a book called *Ways of Seeing*. The male gaze describes the situation that persists where women are portrayed in works of art as submissive or passive and the male viewer is the active participant. The male gaze implies that works of art are created for the voyeuristic pleasure of male viewers. Garber states

Feminists respond that treating people as objects of aesthetic contemplation is dehumanizing and call for a revised aesthetic, attentive to and respectful of differences among gendered spectators.

In the classroom, one is obligated to consider the historical consequences of the male gaze and ways to eliminate it in the future. Garber questions whether we “continue to exalt the canonical examples of art that reflects a sexist culture because these are ‘high’ culture? If not, what are the alternatives?” (p. 221). I agree with Garber that these are not easy questions, but they are important questions that we must consider. Perhaps the use of a feminist filter will help us identify the questions and work towards positive solutions.
A Model for Viewer Response

A specific use for a feminist filter can be synthesized from the work of Vincent Lanier (1982). A chapter in his book *The Arts We See* is devoted to how art is viewed and factors that influence our understanding. The factors that influence understanding of a work of art or other object are illustrated by a series of screens which the viewer must conceptually look through to see the artwork. These screens represent different cognitive processes that influence our understanding, interpretation and judgment of that particular work. Although these screens influence all viewers, the screens exert different influence for each individual. Lanier uses this analogy to explain the existence of differences in individual interpretations and judgments of one work of art. According to Lanier, these screens are only one system of many possible systems for understanding response.

The diagram is labeled 'what we may think as we look at art’, on the left side is a circle representing the viewer and on the right is a rectangle representing the work of art. Between the viewer and the art work are nine rectangular screens. These screens are named:

A. What other people say about art and about the particular work.
B. The setting of the art work.
C. How we have learned to see.
D. How much we know about the elements and principles of design.
E. What we know about the particular symbols used.
F. What the art work reminds us of.

G. How much we know about the history of the work.

H. How we judge the work.

I. What relationship the work has to our life.

Lanier explains that some of these screens may carry more weight, depending on the work of art. Also, the order of the screens varies due to either the work or the particular emotional state of the viewer. “The advantage of using such a system is to help us to understand more clearly what we are thinking about and what may cause the feelings and ideas we have as we look at the arts we see” (p.71).

From the feminist point of view, what does this system of understanding indicate? Although Lanier is not working from a feminist viewpoint, parts of his system are compatible with feminist ideals. Other elements are incompatible or contradictory to a feminist position. Firstly, screens “A.” and “D.” may be rejected. What others feel may have no relevance from the feminist perspective. Individual response is entirely valid by itself, although what another says may incite a negative response if what is said or if the work is sexist or otherwise demeaning. Basing a response on design principles cannot be a valid element of a feminist system. Formal qualities rely on the Western aesthetic which has been found to be patriarchally biased.

Conversely, screens “C.”, “F.”, and “I.” have particular relevance from the feminist point of view. How we have learned to see is very much a gender-charged
learning process in our lives. If women accept and enjoy works of art that were intended for the male gaze, a situation which Garber recognized (p. 214), it must be because they have been taught to accept this type of work and adopt the male gaze, although in a passive form. Feminist principles embrace subjective response, so the screens that involve what the work reminds us of and what relation the work has to our life are significant. In fact, emphasis would be placed on any factors that stress the individual and what she or he brings to the art work. Despite the problems with Lanier's model, it has many useful elements and certainly serves as a base on which to build a better model.

**Additional Feminist Screens for Lanier's Model**

We can adapt Lanier's model or add additional screens to reflect feminist principles. Perhaps, as Davis states, the feminist filter is always present and cannot be discounted in those who have made that revelation. If that is the case, feminist ideals would be applied in each of the screens and every stage is synthesized to match. But, it is also possible to emphasize the elements of Lanier's model which were identified earlier and match feminist values. In this instance, the elements of the model would be used selectively. One could pick and choose which screens matched his or her ideology.

Another option would be to create five additional screens which would filter from a feminist point of view. These screens would be as follows:

J. How individuals or groups of people are represented in and by the work.
K. How cultural and social context may have influenced the work at the time of its creation.

L. How cultural and social context currently influences our interpretation of the work.

M. What is the canonical status of the work. Who may have canonized this work and why.

N. What we accept as art.

Screen “J.” would follow Davis’s experience and detect misogyny in what we are viewing. This screen would be most effective if used to detect patriarchal bias or oppression in the physical images of the work. Actual portrayal or representation of a culture, race or gender or some act or image that is offensive to or subordinates a culture could be identified with this screen.

The screen labeled “K.” would help us determine the cultural environment that may have influenced the work. The social context, although not always apparent, can give us clues as to the attitudes and ideology of the artist and viewers of the work at the time it was created. Hicks’ goal for feminist criticism to address context is met with this screen.

Just as important as the context of the work’s creation are the cultural and social attitudes we, as viewers, bring to the work today. Although we may recognize and understand the historical context of the work, our interpretation and judgment of the work in influenced by our current attitudes. Screen “L.” would serve to make us
aware of our relationship to the work.

Screen "M." points out the canonical status of the work. If the work is presented to us as an exemplar, that effects our reaction to the work. Although similar to screen "A." in Lanier's model it differs because the status of exemplar is usually pronounced by someone believed to be an authority or expert about art. We can be influenced in a positive or negative way by someone's opinion about a work, but the influence is greater and more likely to be positive if it is an expert opinion. From a feminist perspective it is important to understand the hierarchical placement of the work, how, why and for whom it has achieved its present status.

The screen "N." would detect our personal aesthetic and what criteria we require for an object to be called art. Many elements come together to form our personal ideology about art. But, the culmination is usually a clear distinction about what is and is not art. Since Lanier's model is primarily an educational tool, it can be assumed that it would mainly be applied to art in the classroom. If one rejects the object in question as even being art, it will greatly influence her or his interpretation and judgment of the work. Feminists feel a narrow definition of art has hindered the success and acknowledgment of the work of some women artists.

Lanier's model does not represent skills that are inherent in each student, they are viewing skills that need to be taught and developed. The same holds true for the feminist screens that have been added. The way in which works of art are presented to students is very important. It is essential that teachers do not express personal
judgments in a way that may restrict a student’s interpretation or judgment. It is impossible to completely hide personal preferences, but students need to feel the their own opinions have value and validity. These new screens or modifications to Lanier’s model will not be effective without direction and facilitation from art educators who share feminist ideals.

Applications

Lanier’s model gave us a starting point for inclusion of feminist filters and possible modifications to make the model less patriarchally biased. Feminist filters could be applied in the art classroom in multiple instances. At the introductory lesson when a work of art or artist is first presented to students, the filters could be added to the process used to facilitate examination. As students view the work and information about the artist is communicated, the teacher could facilitate a process in which bias inherent in the work is revealed. Asking questions that require the students to consider stereotypes and dominant relationships might serve as a feminist filter.

The feminist filters may also fit into the critique process. As works are evaluated, the context of gender and other cultural factors could be considered. Lanier’s model, with the additional screens, is an effective way to introduce metacriticism, or examination of the critical process itself. Students will better understand the judgments they make if they reflect on their own biases and personal ideology with the use of a feminist filter.
Freedman’s call for inclusion of the study of visual culture and examination of the gendered characteristics of student art suggests two uses for feminist filters. First, it would be especially appropriate to use them in the examination of mass media and advertising which seem to be bastions of prejudice and patriarchal bias. If these images are to be analyzed then feminist filters are a process that should certainly be considered. Secondly, Freedman asks that we think about student art work and the role gender plays in its creation. The biased media representations we have been exposed to over many years have undoubtedly influenced the art we produce. Students need to understand the relationship between the popular images they see and the products of their artistic endeavors. Along with the analysis of visual culture, feminist filters may be applied to the art work the students produce. Consciously or unconsciously, students may produce works that offend or demean others. Censorship is always problematic, even in the educational setting, but students should at least be aware of any misogyny or degradation in their work. Works of art that are intentionally misogynistic or insulting should not be tolerated.

Conclusion

The concept of a feminist filter can be useful for understanding our response and for developing a more sensitive response to art and other aspects of visual culture. Davis described what it has done for her and what a feminist filtering process can do for others is apparent.

This process recalls Bunch’s theory in which the first step is to describe reality.
"Describing what exists may sound simple, but the choices that we make about interpreting and naming reality provide the basis for the rest of the theory" (p.251). This reality may be buried beneath years worth of patriarchal bias which has been internalized by society. If one goes through the process of considering if the work of art depicts any people as marginalized or stereotyped, then bias may be more easily recognized. Feminist filters may be useful for identifying instances of bias and allowing us to see reality.

Garber also addresses the dominance of the patriarchal canon and how it effects response. She asks how we can work within a structure of the art world that places such high esteem on art that is sexist? A more practical question would be how can we first detect bias in works of art? That could be a utilization of feminist filters. Garber states “feminist critics assume conscious positions relative to feminist goals and perceptions of the current social context” (p.23). The use of these filters would be assuming a conscious position and examining social context. Students could be taught to see bias and over time works that offended might be judged as less exemplary and rejected as canons.

Freedman’s work in gender related issues is a possible point for insertion of feminist filters. Her concern for how females respond to images and how females are depicted is addressed by examining these images with students. This examination could include working through Lanier’s model with the addition of the feminist filters. Again, the value of these screens is in how they insist that one think
about issues of feminist context, a process that ordinarily may not be done.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis has drawn upon the work of feminist theorists and practitioners to extract principles for the teaching of art. I would like to reiterate that one emphasis of feminist thought is the absence of absolutes and universals. With that in mind, understand that the editorial elements of this thesis reflect only my individual opinion and cannot possibly represent all feminists.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this thesis is to extract operational principles from the work of feminist authors in hope of enabling teachers to identify, correct and counter patriarchal bias. These principles can be identified as: (a) rejection of hierarchy, (b) placing value on individual interpretation and (c) a continual attempt to achieve democracy.

Hierarchical relationships have no place in feminist theory. There is no need to differentiate status of men and women, different cultures or different art forms. The only purpose served by hierarchical assignment is to perpetuate the dominance of a certain group. Teachers may review their instructional materials, methods and content for these hierarchical relationships. People, cultures or works of art cannot be justly presented as having varying levels of significance. Historically,
relationships such as these have been presented in our educational systems as universal. For example, fine art has been favored over craft and Western art has been thought to be more valid than the so-called primitive from other parts of the world. Too often the viewpoint of patriarchy has determined the standard and those outside dominant culture and their beliefs are marginalized.

Individuality and acceptance of difference are fundamental elements of feminism. If one removes hierarchy from the thought process then the pluralist and particularist viewpoints are logical. Pluralism is the belief that the multitude of different perspectives and backgrounds of a population bring a balance and variety that is required for a democratic education.

Democracy is the state achieved when all participants in a system are equally represented. It cannot be achieved in a situation where cultural or other arbitrary distinctions are viewed hierarchically. The activist component in feminist theory requires those sympathetic to the cause to act on their convictions. Because of the relative newness of feminist thought, proponents have to act on many decades of patriarchal bias. Feminist theory incorporates action, consequently true feminism cannot be a purely theoretical endeavor.

The second purpose of this thesis was to examine the concept of a feminist filter and its possible uses. A feminist filter is a useful tool and can be a burden. The sensitivity to bias and discrimination that the feminist filter imparts on the teacher carries with it a responsibility. Teachers have the awesome responsibility to
empower students the best of their ability, if injustice is discovered then teachers
must act to eliminate, compensate for and prevent further instances of
discrimination. The filter is both a theoretical and practical device. As mentioned
earlier, those who are enlightened by the filter are forever changed. From the
theoretical standpoint, this new gestalt cannot be ignored and will change one’s
perceptions. It is dependent on each individual to decide if she or he chooses to act
on this enlightenment. For teachers it can be a useful for the detection of bias in
teacher education, resource materials, curriculum, instruction and evaluation.
Specific recommendations will be stated later in this chapter.

Questions for Practice

The overall purpose of this thesis is to investigate feminist principles and feminist
filters that could be used in the development, implementation and evaluation of art
education curriculum. The incorporation of feminist principles into art education
poses practical questions. Five of these questions were stated in chapter one and my
response to each is as follows.

How can teachers objectively analyze their practice for patriarchal bias? This
may be the most worthwhile utilization for the feminist filter that is described in
chapter five. It is likely we have all been desensitized to bias and discrimination
because of the widespread and extended nature of patriarchal culture’s domination.
Until the realization that comes from the acquisition of the feminist filter many
instances of bias may go unnoticed. This is also true of our own instructional
techniques and the content of our lessons. Until we apply the filter our lessons may contain bias of which we are unaware.

How can we develop lessons that are free of patriarchal bias? From chapter three, Gouma-Peterson and Mathews describe a feminist principle: rejection of hierarchy. These authors ask us to question why and for what purpose do we chose to value the art that do. They contend that dominant culture has programmed the art world to produce a paradigm in which patriarchy is perpetuated. From their recommendation we can learn to question the choices we make and to be especially critical of choices that are made for us. Ideally, educational situations will be created that will allow students to discover inequities.

Where can we find literature and resources to use in the development of our lessons that are not patriarchally biased, and if we cannot, how do we write curriculum? Totally unbiased materials may not exist. Each author and artist is creating work from his or her point of view, which results in inherent biases. That is why, as Hicks supports, context is important. One must understand the context of the creation of any work to truly understand that work and its implications. That means resources must be analyzed for social, political and historical contextual information. We can use biased materials if we recognize and attend to the bias. Students cannot be sheltered from all forms of discriminatory work, but need to address this type of work so they can learn from it. A pluralist approach to resource materials is recommended. Multiple sources, hopefully including firsthand, should
be used as preliminary research for lesson planning. It may be necessary to supplement our existing curricular materials with those that represent other points of view to obtain a more holistic overall perspective.

What are the biases in our implementation of lessons? Just as we may have been ignorant of bias in our curriculum, we very well be teaching in a patriarchal style. Freedman has made recommendations for addressing gender issues in the classroom. We can compare our practice to the standard of democracy and acceptance she has set. Hicks has given us a model for empowerment that is free of bias. We can look to her work for guidance in democratic instruction.

How do we overcome the patriarchal nature of much of our teacher training? We must look at our own education with the same critical eye that we have used for other components of the teaching process. Undoubtedly we have been influenced by the patriarchal nature of the institutions we have attended. Hopefully, exposure to and understanding of feminist ideals will inspire more teachers to attend to gender and discrimination issues. The work of feminist authors in the realm of education and art education is intelligent and meaningful. Obviously I have only represented a small portion of the body of knowledge that exists in this area. I appeal to all teachers to consider feminist ideals.

As curriculum is developed, adapted and implemented I would hope teachers would reflect on the concerns discussed in this thesis. Each of the feminist principles described, if applied, could advance the practice of art education.
Currently, most art education reflects society as a whole, which is to say, it reflects the dominant culture. Application of feminist theory can move education beyond the repetition of past practices to dramatic advancements towards a just and democratic process.

Because our past practice is patriarchally biased we must break new ground to achieve the feminist ideals. First, teachers must address the bias inherent in their own teacher training, instructional materials and their personal ideology. Feminism has taught us to question universal assumptions and analyze for context. This is how we should begin. It may be a uncomfortable awakening and we may suffer an ontological shock just as Hilary Davis. But, the end result will undoubtedly outweigh the discomfort that the realization might bring.

The next step would be to actively work to remedy the injustices and biases that have been revealed. Again, change can also be a difficult process and will require time and effort to develop new, more democratic, teaching strategies, adaptation of current curriculum and writing new curriculum. A commitment to feminist ideals requires active participation in the elimination of bias and injustice.

Recommendations

In conclusion, this thesis may serve best as a brief survey of feminist ideologies and a starting point for further research. Teachers and researchers may wish to apply and then evaluate the use of feminist principles in art education. If I were to continue this work, I would align myself with the particular and pluralist stances.
Then, I would adapt my teaching to match the key elements of these stances. Actually, whether or not I continue formal study of feminist theory, I am likely to incorporate feminist ideals into my professional and personal life.

A study is needed for the purpose of evaluating an art education program that uses the feminist model. I am confidant that feminist values will benefit the educational process. An exemplary art program that other teachers and the public can visit and learn from would be a great aid to our education system. Such a program would serve to correct the stereotypical view of feminism that I fear is held by many people.

Finally, I hope that my participation, as a male, in this research of feminism would help to dismiss some of the myths concerning feminism. As stated in the introduction, I was unaware of the true meaning of feminism and allowed stereotypes to shape my opinions and attitudes. I strongly encourage any and all persons, regardless of their sex, to investigate feminism. The democratic and inclusive nature of feminist thought can shape not only the practice of education, but may improve all aspects of our personal relationships.
LIST OF REFERENCES


