CONTEXT, CONTENT, AND COMMUNITY IN ART EDUCATION

Beyond Postmodernism

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PART I

Shifting Views of Art Education in Educational Context

In recent decades meaning in art education is as socially produced and historically conditioned as is meaning in other contemporary inquiry. This assertion immediately reveals a bias that places art teaching and art education curriculum development into ideological and aesthetic contestation. Other educators would protest that meaning in art education is *given* rather than constructed through dialectical dynamics. Within the framework alluded to here, art teaching and curricular practices are situated in a postmodern framework of ideological context and contestation.

Postmodernism has contributed to a fundamental transformation in how a speaker or audience member relates to what is spoken, delivered, or created. The underlying structure and premise of messages, positions, and knowledge are deconstructed in the sense of seeking to uncover the meaning of particular messages. Educational beliefs are no longer accepted as given in text by experts, but are carefully examined in context, which may reveal a hidden message or meaning. In Part I, notions of art education and education are examined from postmodern perspectives to reveal how accepted educational context for art education has been generated and shaped.

In Chapter 1, against a review of major aesthetic orientations, Arthur Efland comprehensively examines models of art teaching. This sets the stage for an examination of aesthetic change and postmodernism, upon which Professor Efland carefully develops the several problems that art teachers face, in effect giving art teachers a thorough grasp of aesthetic and educational changes that shape art education.

In Chapter 2, "Art Education Changes and Continuities: Value Orientations of Modernity and Postmodernity," Karen Hamblen discusses views of change and continuity and then examines how two world views of change and tradition are played out in art education practices, how they influence art education, and how they yield different interpretations of the same event. She sees a continuing dialectic between

modernity and postmodernity, between change and continuity, as affecting the shape of art education.

In Chapter 3, "Teachers as Curriculum Developers," Wanda May takes exception to a traditional linear view of curriculum development by examining in 3 vignettes how teachers interact with curriculum. In one of these vignettes, Rachel, a third-year itinerant art specialist, teaches an art lesson. Represented in Rachel's lesson are important topics of her view of knowledge, art, teaching, and learning. As she seeks help in solving curricular and other problems, Rachel enters into curriculum development as collaboration with colleagues in deliberations on professional problems represented in the classroom texture of teaching. May's participatory accounts of teachers' classroom engagements represent and recognize art teachers as curriculum developers through thoughtful inquiry and collegial dialogue. May's view of curriculum development represents a shift to a more contextually situated view of art education than heretofore considered.

Kerry Freedman discusses "Educational Change Within Structures of History, Culture, and Discourse" in Chapter 4. Change is assumed to be an historical and cultural issue; the role of the individual and other change agencies are examined. The discussion of eighteenth-century Enlightenment illustrates how historical considerations are embedded in and still influence our views of society. Against this critique of change, history, and culture, the reader has a framework for understanding the differences that exist among major views of art education within social and cultural contexts.

A reading of the chapters in Part I reveals that the major transitions run through the shifting views of art education. Embedded in all chapters is the question of whose knowledge and culture provide the predominant focus and the major assumptions that underlie several forms of art education. The point to be made is that the major transitional concerns represent structures for considering and differentiating art education ideas and practices, a useful framework for making sense out of the complex and changing nature of contemporary art education.

CHAPTER 1

Change in the Conceptions of Art Teaching

Arthur D. Efland

Monroe Beardsley (1958) opened his book on aesthetics with the remark that "there would be no problems of aesthetics . . . if no one ever talked about works of art" (p. 1). Of course, talk about art has gone on for thousands of years, resulting in a long history of argument about its nature, its cognitive status, and its value in human affairs. Teachers of art deal with many of these problems on a daily basis. If their building principal regards art as a dispensable frill, they live with the consequences of its disputed status in a direct and painful way. What people believe about art and its value is likely to affect whether it is taught or not. Moreover, theories of art have changed over time, paralleling changes in art styles and the status of the arts in social affairs.

In this chapter I review the theories that have played a dominant role in art education throughout this century, giving examples of the types of curriculum and styles of teaching they have inspired. Second, I look at curriculum questions posed by the transition in aesthetic theory from modernism to postmodernism. Modernism itself increasingly is being described either as a period style whose time has ended or as a movement in decline. New thinking about art has appeared, which attempts to account for the art forms that have appeared in the 1970s and 1980s, and the question confronting curriculum designers is whether, and if so how, to modify art teaching to reflect this new situation.

MAJOR ORIENTATIONS IN AESTHETIC THEORY

I begin by assuming that theories and philosophies of art play a role in determining the character of art instruction. I offer four examples to help identify the character of this influence.

In 1872 Walter Smith taught children to draw by copying elementary geometric forms arranged in a progressive order of difficulty, leading eventually to the more complex forms in nature such as flowers and the human figure. His pedagogy was based on the idea that art is an imitation of nature, which depends for its "acquirement" on the "faculty of imitation" (p. 46). Smith did not teach just any kind of drawing. As he put it:

> The kind of drawing which the state of Massachusetts requires that its citizens shall have the opportunity of studying, is called "Industrial Drawing;" and wisely so called for in that lies the justification of its public action in the matter. (p. 42)

He justified the teaching of drawing at public expense because it enhanced the virtue of industriousness. The purpose of art teaching was not grounded in aesthetics at all, but in economics. Aesthetic theory identified the method of teaching, that is, the exercise of the faculty of imitation, a pedagogy that I will later argue is congruent with a *mimetic* theory of art, the belief that a work of art represents or reflects some aspect of nature.

In 1899 Arthur W. Dow introduced an art curriculum based on certain elements of beauty that he believed were found in all works of art: lines, shapes, tones, colors, and textures, and the underlying principles by which these are organized. His lessons consisted of simple landscape compositions based on such principles as "repetition," "variation," "opposition," or "transition." His practice was grounded in *formalism*, the belief that works of art are composed of elements and principles, and that sensitivity to this underlying structure enables one to understand, appreciate, and apprehend the beauty of form (Dow, 1899/1913).

Dow tried to maintain art in the schools in an era dominated by social Darwinism, by demands for scientific educational practices and social efficiency. His thinking was guided by a process akin to scientific reductionism in which a phenomenon is analyzed in terms of a more fundamental level of reality that can be found beneath its surface. In his case he reduced the extraordinary complexity of art to a set of universal, teachable principles.

Unlike Smith, Dow did not attempt to justify his method by reference to the social context. Indeed for many formalists the social context was quite irrelevant, for beauty needs no justification and demands to be perceived on its own terms. Formalism was well suited as a philosophy of art since in its pure form it advocated an art without representational content or social messages. Art replete with social criticism might well have been unwelcome in an era of dominance by business interests (Callahan, 1962).[1]

In 1928 the progressive educators Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker advanced their ideal of the *child-centered* school. They stressed a new art method

known as *creative self-expression*. They described art lessons where children were encouraged to experiment with various art media to produce original objects. Copying and imitation were discouraged. This practice is congruent with an expressive aesthetic that claims that works of art are the self-expression of artists, to be judged by their creativity or originality. Like many other teachers committed to this view, they also believed that growth in self-expression enabled the child to grow in an emotionally healthy way.

Rugg and Shumaker (1928) portrayed the field of education as divided into camps, a liberal left and a reactionary right. The right was dedicated to the "doctrine of discipline" (p. 34), to "logical thinking, power of sustained intellectual effort, the retention of classified knowledge" (p. 35). The left, like themselves, was dedicated "to the continuous growth of the child, . . . freedom, initiative, spontaneity, vivid self-expression" (p. 35). The conflict was between repressive tradition and personal liberation.

They believed the child-centered school was for children of all social classes. Yet Rugg was strongly influenced by his association with New York's Greenwich Village intelligencia, a well-educated, upper-middle-class elite, made up of artists and writers, responding to pressures of urbanization. Those pressures were restrained by "a Puritan attitude of mind" (Rugg & Shumaker, 1928, p. iv), as they put the matter, coupled with an aggressive materialism that put the needs of things before the needs of people. Creative self-expression in this context was more than an art method; it was also a vehicle for individual freedom. Ironically, most immigrant and working-class families refused to send their children to the kind of progressive schools these writers advocated in their book (Cremin, 1964).[2]

In 1935 Melvin Haggerty discussed art in a new way, as a way of life, a potent instrument for improving the life of the common man. Art in the home, in dress, and in community improvement projects served as art activities rather than the study of grand masterpieces with all their eliteness and remoteness. "Art in daily living" was the slogan for this new approach. These practices were grounded in *pragmatic* theory, where art is an instrument to be judged by its effectiveness in solving the practical, aesthetic problems affecting the life of the viewer. We can understand readily the appeal of this view of art in an era dominated by economic depression and war.

What is clear from these examples is that the impetus for change in educational practice came in large part from socially perceived needs. In some cases the need was clearly articulated, as with Smith in 1872. The social basis for Dow's pedagogy was not stated, but was part of the educational scene within which he worked. Equally clear is the fact that each of the aforementioned pedagogies was grounded in certain core beliefs concerning the nature of art. Each differed in its aesthetic orientation. Smith's view of art was grounded in the belief that all art is a representation of natural form. Dow believed that it

was the formal structure of the object that determined whether it was art or not. Rugg saw the originality of creative expression as the factor that determined the value of art, while Haggerty saw art in pragmatic terms, as an instrument for improving daily life.

To the question of the role played by aesthetic theories in art teaching, we can answer that it bears directly on the *method* of teaching and *content* of instruction in each case. Current practice is a blend of these orientations in aesthetics. Quite accurately, we can say that our past lives on in the present.

MODELS OF ART TEACHING

In what follows, several models of art teaching are introduced. Each is based on the aesthetic traditions already implied by the above examples. Coupled to these traditions are notions of how learning takes place, the nature of society, and a vision of education's role in society (Joyce & Weil, 1972).[3,4] The aesthetic theories fall into four major groupings based on the scheme used both by the *Encyclopedia Brittanica* (1974) and in classifications of aesthetic theories offered by Abrams in his book, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1958). Both describe mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and formalist theories.[5]

The models are more than theoretical possibilities; they were historical realities as well. Teachers actually implemented practices based on these beliefs about the nature of art. Moreover, differences in beliefs also served as bases for disputes among generations of art teachers.

Although practices in art teaching received their sanction in aesthetic theory, it is important to recognize that the purposes for art teaching were supplied by the social milieu. What might not be readily apparent, however, is the fact that every aesthetic theory also harbors certain social views as well.

A teacher embracing the notion of creative self-expression is likely to believe that the child's innate desire for expression is in danger of being thwarted by social pressures demanding conformity. The teaching task consists of ways to free the child from inhibitions that block this natural desire for expression. Ideas about liberation from social repression are deeply embedded in the matrix of expressive aesthetics. This may explain why expressionism as an art theory accompanied the rise of an avant garde movement that often stood in opposition to the status quo in society.

On the other hand, a teacher who sees art as imitation and copying is more likely to believe that art learning is acquired by imitating the behavior of others. To learn in this tradition is to come under the control of various stimuli provided by the teaching situation. The model implies that the behavior desired in the student has been determined by the teacher or the culture. Imitation and copying are the preferred methods of teaching and learning in

TABLE 1.1 Aesthetics, Learning Theories, and Their Implied Ideologies

Aesthetic Theory	*Learning Theory*	*Implied Ideology*
Mimetic Art is imitation	*Behaviorism* Learning is by imitation	Traditional morality: social control
Pragmatic Art is instrumental	Learning is instrumental	Social reconstruction
Expressive Art is self-expression	*Psychoanalytic* Learning is emotional growth	Personal liberation
Formalist Art is formal order	*Cognitive* Learning is concept attainment	Technocratic control by experts

traditional societies striving to sustain valued traditions. In contrast to the first example, this aesthetic is grounded in notions of control.

A teacher holding a pragmatic view of art would likely hold an instrumental view of learning. Knowledge, including art knowledge, is experience having instrumental value that enables individuals and social groups to adapt to a changing environment. The learning task involves intellectual reconstruction as new knowledge changes previous understandings of the world. Encountering new experiences, including new art, is transactional in nature, which may result in the reconstruction of social reality, and the ideology of social reconstruction is one that would accommodate to change.

Finally a teacher possessing a formalist view of art is likely to embrace a cognitive view of learning in which one forms cognitive structures using concepts, principles, criteria, and vocabularies—the language used to talk about art and the manipulation of the elements of form in making art. Objects would acquire their special status as art by the presence of distinctive structural attributes. Through acquisition of cognitive structures, learners come to possess the structure of art as a body of knowledge. To possess this enables one to conduct disciplined inquiry in art. In its deference to expertise, the model implies an elitist, or technocratic, view of society. Table 1.1 describes the relationships among various aesthetic theories, learning theories, and their implied social views.

Each of these models is now presented in more detail. Each aligns a theory of art with a compatible educational theory. Similarly, each is linked with compatible social views. Each will display differing contents, activities, approaches to instruction, and methods of evaluation. The following is the prototype used for each model.

Mimetic-Behavioral Model

This model is suggested by the union of mimetic aesthetics and behaviorally based conceptions of learning, the idea that learning is known by changes in behavior. Common to both is the notion of imitation, that is, art is imitation while learning is *by* imitation. The teaching process presents the student with models to imitate; student learning is discerned as new behaviors are noted in the learner's repertoire. Instruction utilizes specific stimuli placed in the learning environment by the teacher, who controls what is presented, the sequence, level of difficulty, frequency, and intensity. These stimuli can take the form of demonstrations of skills to be mastered. When the student acquires the designated skill, he or she is rewarded by the teacher. For example, academies of art since the seventeenth century have awarded prizes for good performance. Successful teaching places the student under the control of the stimulus situation.

In traditional mimetic theories the artistic process is the result of inspiration from outside forces, either natural or supernatural. Ancient Greeks talked about the muses inspiring the artist, or artists acting under the control of spiritual forces. The power of the artist is revealed in the convincingness of the subjects represented in his or her art. The power of teaching in behavioral theory is seen in the convincingness of demonstrations that bring the student under control. Traditional mimetic theory discusses pleasure as the likely response to works of art, while behavioral approaches to instruction discuss the process of reinforcement to secure learning. Positive reinforcement is experienced as pleasurable. Traditional mimetic theories do not place value in art as art. If art imitates goodness, it is good, but if it imitates evil, it then is evil. Similarly, behaviorists like Skinner talk about the value-neutrality of their instructional approach. Behavior modification can shape good or bad behavior.

To implement the model, each behavior to be acquired by the learner is described in a series of detailed objectives. These are not limited to skills but can include perceptual discriminations that can be made among stimuli. An example of a skill defined by an objective might be the following: "Using the medium of charcoal the student will prepare a nine-step gray scale including black and white." An example of perceptual discrimination might be an objective like, "The student will be able to distinguish Picasso's analytical cubism from synthetic cubism." Values and attitudes might be inferred by behavior changes, as, for example, increased museum attendance might be cited as evidence that art is more highly esteemed than was the case prior to instruction. Although behavioral psychology was formulated in the twentieth century, it aligns quite well with mimetic aesthetics, which is one of the oldest philosophies of art.

This model is not merely speculative but has been part of traditional practice from the days of the academy and in schooling practices common in the nineteenth century. To be sure, these early practitioners would have described their psychology of instruction as "exercising the faculty of imitation" rather than in current behavioral terms, but the early methods were not dissimilar from those used in current practice. Current practice, however, differs in its use of precise and systematic analysis of learning tasks and by the systematic use of reinforcement.

Pragmatic-Social Reconstruction Model

This model is suggested by themes connecting pragmatic aesthetics with the view that education is an instrument for social reconstruction. In both cases art and education have instrumental value. Learning is the process of constructing knowledge through one's encounters with the environment, and such knowledge has instrumental value. Learning about art is like learning anything else. That is, one constructs knowledge of art by encountering artistic problems through personal and social living. The learning task involves the intellectual reconstruction of knowledge as new experience alters or confirms previous views of the world.

A striking parallel exists between this view of knowledge and the ways artists work as described in Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) where the artist is characterized as being involved in the reconstruction of his or her experience in the process of making a work of art. Similarly, the viewer having "an experience" with a powerful work of art may alter his or her view of reality as a consequence of the encounter.

The above views of art and education are derived from Dewey's theory of intelligence in which successive experiences may cause the learner to revise or reconstruct his or her view of reality. A number of psychologists (Kilpatrick, 1961) referred to themselves as transactional psychologists because they described all learning in this way. They demonstrated how we may interpret experience wrongly on the basis of partial or limited encounters in our perception of phenomena, only to revise our understanding with further experience.

Teachers with these views would not impart formally organized knowledge but would organize learning around life-centered situations. The understandings we formed would be based on successive experiences where new knowledge may cause us to revise old understandings. Learning is thus a reality check. Truth is not absolute but emerges out of successive encounters, and its social utility is tested by whether it enables individuals and societies to adapt to changing circumstances. If our interpretation of reality is faulty, our response to change may not be successful, but if our responses are guided by assumptions that approximate the truth, we increase the probability of

successful adaptation. A pragmatically oriented teacher would organize instructional resources for problem solving, and the evaluation of the instruction would be in terms of success experienced by students and teachers alike.

Content in this model would be expressed in terms of problems to be solved where art knowledge becomes a potential instrument in problem solving. Activities would take the form of occupations such as gardening, interior decoration, setting up window displays of merchandise, poster and advertising design, and the like.

Like the previous model, this one is not merely speculation. It was widely espoused in the 1930s by those progressive educators who identified with social reconstructionism. Many used art in teaching the social studies, while the social studies themselves underwent reconstruction around problems society was then facing in the years of the Great Depression and World War II. The definitive example of art education as social reconstruction can be seen in Haggerty's *Art a Way of Life* (1935) and in accounts of the Owatonna Project.

Expressive-Psychoanalytic Model

This model is suggested by themes connecting expressive aesthetics where art is the product of the artist's imagination and person-centered education, where knowledge is a personal construct validated in the feeling life of the learner. Common to both is the view of mind as initiator of learning activities where new constructs, understandings, and insights are made possible by the work of the imagination. Emotions and feelings are felt to play the predominant role in mental life. When the emotions of the artist are given form by the artistic process, they are made accessible to others, and thus art can express ideas, feelings, and emotions in forms that can be publicly shared. It is this public sharing of these privately felt intuitive insights that makes cultural advance possible. Because such forms are products of mental life, they have status as intuitive or subjective knowledge. Art also has value for the individual creator because it enables personal growth to occur. For this reason the arts are therapeutic. Learning in this model is a process of personality integration.

Knowledge as such has no inherent meaning or value except as it is authenticated by the individual in his or her own feeling life. Thus in many ways the construction of one's personal world view is like the creation of a work of art—an act of originality. The validity of one's world view is evaluated not by objective appraisals of reality, but by becoming "tuned in" to reality. An adequate world view permits spontaneity of response. Subject matter competence for its own sake is relatively unimportant.

The value of art, like the value of one's personal world view, is ultimately found both in its originality and in the extent that it leads to personal fulfillment. The unique expression of artists and scientists revitalizes the culture,

and conversely the good society is one that promotes the expression of uniqueness.

Teaching in this model facilitates the self-realization of individuals. The wise teacher does not impose values but permits those of the child to unfold from within. Art is valued in education because artists exemplify in their work the use of personal expression to realize their potential.

Learning is a dynamic process of growth that unfolds from within. The outward expansion of the mind is felt subjectively as freedom, while teacher direction or formal instruction is experienced as coercion or repression. The wise teacher facilitates growth by providing nurturance or emotional support. Effective teachers are good listeners who can empathize with what the child may be feeling.

This model arose during the progressive era and continues to have many adherents. In the era after World War II its leading advocates were Viktor Lowenfeld (1947) and Herbert Read (1945). Advocates of self-expression varied in their teaching methods. Lowenfeld motivated children by having them recall memories and feelings. Other teachers, such as Marion Richardson (1946), used techniques that involved guided imagery to help students visualize their expression in their mind's eye before they began their work. Still others relied on the visual or tactile qualities of media to initiate the flow of ideas.

Formalist-Cognitive Model

This model is suggested by common themes connecting formalist aesthetics and the view of cognition that asserts that learning is the acquisition of cognitive structures. A formalist aesthetic asserts that art objects acquire their status as art by virtue of the structural aspects of the work as an organized entity, and thus it has in common with cognitive psychology the idea of structure as its defining attribute. Rudolph Arnheim (1954) linked formalist theory with gestalt psychology since both dealt with the structure of visual form. Gestalt psychology can be thought of as a theory of perception within cognitive psychology.

The cognitive structures of art knowledge are identified in concepts, vocabularies, and elements of design seen in works of art. Together these provide the wherewithal to make, perceive, interpret, judge, and, ultimately, understand art.

Value claims in formalist aesthetics are described as intrinsic satisfactions. Aesthetic experience has intrinsic value, and it is this quality of mind that distinguishes human cognition from that of other species. Ralph Smith (1986) describes aesthetic experience as "worthwhile experience" (p. 21) in need of no further justification. Most views of education that rely heavily on

a cognitive interpretation of learning would tend to argue that the value of knowledge is also intrinsic, that is, education is valued for its own sake, not for the economic or social advantages that may accrue to the learner. Smith argues that art teaching should provide cognitive concepts and understandings not for their sake alone, but because they enable one to have commerce with exemplary works of art known for the excellence of the aesthetic experience they provide, works inaccessible without this knowledge.

Teaching in this model should provide students with the requisite skills and conceptual content to make art and to understand the art of others, and it should also provide students with procedures that enable them to make disciplined inquiries into art.

Teaching methods should facilitate student inquiry by discovery and experiment. They should facilitate concept attainment by enabling students to form generalizations about their experience. They should provide situations that would enable students to speculate about unknowns and, by testing hypotheses, to know that these are ways to enlarge upon the understandings one forms about art.

Evaluation should be done in terms of concepts attained. This includes a knowledge of the forming processes used to make art. For example, a student might know the fact that warm colors advance and cool colors recede, but one should evaluate to see if the learner can apply this knowledge to interpret the meaning of a painting, or use this understanding to create a specific effect in a work of art, and so on.

This model came into prominence during the curriculum reform movement of the 1960s with the cognitive views of learning developed in the writings of Jerome Bruner. He was quick to see the parallel between what he termed "the structure of the disciplines" and the Piagetian explanation of learning as the acquisition of cognitive structures. Art educators based their curriculum proposals on various definitions of the disciplines (Efland, 1987; Smith, 1987). Since 1984, this model also has experienced renewed prominence in the current rise of interest in discipline-based art education (Greer, 1984).

AESTHETIC CHANGE AND POSTMODERNISM

The aesthetic theories heretofore discussed have played an important role throughout the era of modern art and are deeply embedded in today's practices of art teaching. Modernism began with the rejection of mimetic art and with the introduction of expressionism and formalism to justify the changes taking place in art. Starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, a number of art and literary critics concluded that these theories could no

longer elucidate the forms of art then beginning to appear. In 1985 Kim Levin described the art scene in the following way:

> Something did happen, something so momentous that it was ignored in disbelief: modernity had gone out of style. It even seemed as if style itself had been used up, but then style—the invention of sets of forms—was a preoccupation of modernism, as was originality. The tradition of the New, Harold Rosenberg called it. At the start of the '70s there were dire predictions of the death of art by modernist critics and artists. By now it is obvious that it was not art that was ending but an era. We are witnessing the fact that in the past ten years modern art has become a period style, an historical entity. The modernist period has drawn to a close and receded into the past before our astonished eyes. (p. 1)

From Suzi Gablik's (1984) point of view, more was at stake than a change of style; the art world was beginning to enter a period of confusion over the aims and purposes of art.

> The overwhelming spectacle of current art is at this point, confusing not only to the public, but even to professionals and students, for whom the lack of any clear or validating consensus, established on the basis of common practice, has ushered in an impenetrable pluralism of competing approaches. (p. 14)

For Gablik modernism was committed to the notion of a self-sufficient art, with aesthetic experience seen as an end in itself—that the only way to preserve its truth was by maintaining its distance from the social world, by staying pure. When artists could no longer find meaning in the social world, they sought it in themselves, and the attitude of "art for art's sake" was essentially a "forced response to a social reality that [they] could no longer affirm" (p. 21). The retreat into self-expression, and the resulting proliferation of novel forms that followed, worked against the possibility of a unified style.

Early modernism, in Gablik's view, was a search for new social and spiritual values in a world dominated by materialism, and modern artists were a part of an avant-garde dedicated to this quest. Late modernism, as reflected in the circle of artists who emerged around the critic Clement Greenberg, such as Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Jules Olitski, saw no transcendent, higher, social, or spiritual purpose to art. Art's meaning was reduced to an aesthetic one: "The real problem of modernity has proved to be the problem of belief—the loss of belief in any system of values beyond the self" (Gablik, 1984, pp. 29–30).

As modernism became "purer," its subject matter was reduced to mere preoccupation with form, and as a result the number of people to whom it would appeal decreased. From its inception with the first abstract art and the formalist doctrines of Clive Bell and Roger Fry, modernism tended toward

elitism — an art for the few who could derive aesthetic satisfaction from formal relationships alone.

Moreover, theories like expressionism and formalism existed in a special relationship to modern art, which was less true of previous art, for one could be moved by a Raphael seemingly without a theory to explain why. With the advent of modernism, theory became essential to inform the viewer how to look at this new art. Without theory a right reading of the work was not possible.

In postmodern thought, this reliance on theory has gone still farther and deeper, for now the work of art can exist *only* in and through its interpretations. Now the possibility of there being a right reading or interpretation has given way to the prospect that there may be multiple interpretations of the meaning of a work of art. Indeed, some recent critical theories, such as the deconstructionist view, assert that each viewer constructs his or her own set of meanings in a work. The more extreme deconstructionists would even question the belief that the work is created by the artist at all! For example, Stanley Fish (1980) argued that the work of art is a construction of each perceiver, who may create a set of quite different works whose meanings differ markedly from each other and from the meaning intended by the actual artist.

With differing interpretations possible, how does one decide which one is true? David Carrier (1985) suggested that the truth of a critic's argument depends on the persuasive power of his or her rhetoric, on his or her ability to persuade the reader, implying that truth has less to do with a correct reading of the intrinsic features of the work than with the argument supporting the work. This idea was brought home forcefully in his description of how art criticism functions in the world.

> The critic's rhetoric is a way of inducing beliefs in art-world people, and when critics succeed, most people come to believe their claims, which therefore are true. This account may seem outrageous to those who believe that critics merely draw attention to significant features of artworks. . . . What transforms the way the audience receives the work is how a critic talks about it. This change in the nature of artistic rhetoric is important. Michaelangelo could "with the terrible power of his art," Vasari says, "move the hearts not only of those who [had knowledge of painting] . . . but even those who had none." The Renaissance viewer was moved by seeing the work. (pp. 200–202).

Carrier's illustration of how critics influence the art world is supported by Arthur Danto's (1981) conclusion "that there cannot be an art world without an art theory" (p. 135).

> So it is essential . . . that we understand the nature of an art theory, which is so powerful a thing as to detach objects from the real world and make them part of a different world, an *art* world, a world of *interpreted things*. What these considerations show is that there is an internal connection between the status of an artwork and the language with which objects are identified as such, inasmuch as nothing is an artwork without an interpretation that constitutes it as such. (p. 135)

CONCLUSIONS

The art teacher who tries to deal with developments in the contemporary arts faces a number of problems. First, there is the problem of the sheer plurality of the new art forms, each more challenging than the modernist styles of the early part of the century.

Second, the newer criticism and theory attempting to explain this recent art are both complex and voluminous. Modernist art theory was grounded in expressionism and formalism; postmodern aesthetic theories, by contrast, are grounded in doctrines that stray into the sociology of art and the art world. Postmodernism, "is the somewhat weasel word now being used to describe the garbled situation of art in the '80s. It is a term nobody quite fully understands, because no clear-cut definition of it has yet been put forward" (Gablik, 1984, p. 73). Under the more recent label of neo-expressionism, the recycling and recombination of former styles suggest that the succession of styles that has been underway since the impressionists of the last century is now out of control. "Postmodernism is much more eclectic, able to assimilate, and even plunder, all forms of style and conflicting values" (Gablik, 1984, p. 73).

Third, in place of a definitive postmodern theory there is a general discomfort with many of the assumptions on which modernism and many premodernist styles were premised, especially the notion that artistic progress is a function of stylistic transformations, each of which nullifies past artistic endeavors — the incessant demand for newness, originality, and novelty. Gablik and Carrier raise questions about the art world as an institution, the ways it operates to promote and market new artists and their works. Others question the assumption that art should concern itself with formal organization for purely aesthetic purposes; finally, the notion that art is a precious commodity, to be venerated by people with education and taste, is called into question. The older notion that art is an autonomous, self-sufficient realm preoccupied with aesthetic issues and values totally separated from the social world, is being replaced by the idea that works of art and the philosophies used to explain them are related to each other and also to the culture and society that give rise to them.

Fourth, a postmodern curriculum would not necessarily discard or replace modernist or premodernist theory and practices. Mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and formalist aesthetics would have their place in the critical ap-

prehension of art for they do elucidate certain kinds of aesthetic values in certain kinds of art. However, one now needs to ask prior questions like the following: "In what social or cultural context does formalism or expressionism function as a true theory?"[6]

Just as postmodern art may quote from popular culture or from past art forms, so it would seem that the theories used to elucidate this art would continue to have a place in the learner's understanding, if for no other reason than to acquaint him or her with theory as it existed in the consciousness of past artists. Older theory can be recycled just as some of today's artists recycle imagery from older art or from popular culture. It would also be the case that no single theory from the past could be taken as true theory but could be viewed as provisional explanations regarding the nature of art and its value.

Fifth, when modernism appeared in the early decades of the century it was "full of dictates about what art could, or could not, be" (Gablik, 1984, p. 73). Art had to be a new and original expression; it had to move away from representational images in favor of abstraction, for example. It had to be self-expression if it was to be anything! Many of these assumptions found their way into the teaching of art and continue to dominate the teaching of art today. Generations of art teachers condemned copying and imitation as practices inimical to good art and learning, yet many contemporary artists such as Andy Warhol, used factory-like methods of production to ensure that multiples of the same image would be exact copies. Generations of art teachers worked to motivate children to be original in their production of art. These assumptions need to be looked at once again to see if they still have validity in the present context.

Sixth, this suggests that in the current state of affairs an eclectic approach to an art curriculum is mandated, in spite of the fact that it invites contradiction and inconsistency. A noneclectic curriculum is possible only when one model of art teaching is privileged as being true, a situation that cannot exist as long as the present pluralism is characteristic of the art world.

If the putting together of such rival conceptions were for the purpose of illustrating the idea that art has had varied meanings and values that are openly contested by groups of artists, critics, and their publics, then this becomes a valid purpose for representing these in instruction, for to understand art at this time is to understand that people hold radically different beliefs about art. The curriculum may well have contradictory contents but it is constrained by the requirement to present these views with deference to their development in history. History serves as a control on a random or naive eclecticism. Eclecticism is not a value in itself but is invoked to enable the learner to understand what it means to live and work with contending conceptions of aesthetic value.

Each of the aforementioned theories would lead the curriculum maker to

differing content and goals—content and goals that are part and parcel of the contradictory nature of art itself—and to the conclusion that this is a way of representing the diversity of art.

Seventh, it could be argued that an art curriculum reflecting the conflicting diversity in the nature of art, would not be eclectic at all; it would simply represent the state of art at the present time. Understanding this diversity and its historical and social bases is the challenge confronting the learner and the curriculum maker alike.

Finally, it is clear that a postmodern art curriculum—even one dedicated to serious studio practice—will require a fuller understanding of critical and historical studies than may have been true in the past, because they are inextricably interwoven into the practices of postmodern artists. Without aesthetic inquiry, history, and criticism, both modern and postmodern art will remain a closed book to future students.

NOTES

1. Callahan's *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* describes the period between the 1890s and World War I and shows how educational administrators increasingly adopted the model of corporate efficiency as the means for organizing and evaluating educational systems. It was not uncommon to liken the school to the factory.

2. Carolyn Ware's study of Greenwich Village during the 1920s noted that the progressive schools founded in lower Manhattan were intended for poor children, but most immigrant and working-class families preferred to send their children to public or parochial schools. Commenting on this finding, Cremin noted that they soon became the schools for the children of intellectuals, artists, and writers.

3. This section is based on two earlier papers (Efland, 1979a, 1979b). Although the argument is essentially the same, the reader will see differing pairings of aesthetic theories with views of learning. In this chapter I have made an attempt to identify the social views implied by these different aesthetic theories.

4. For conceptual assistance I found Joyce and Weil's *Models of Teaching* (1972) to be useful. Although they identified dozens of educational models, they divided them into four main groupings, behavior-modification, social-interaction, person-centered, and information-processing theories. In place of *information-processing* I used the more inclusive term *cognitive*. These groupings aligned with the four main groups of aesthetic theories: mimetic with behaviorism, pragmatic with social-interaction, expressive with person-centered, and formalist with the cognitive view. These became the basis for my pairings.

5. Abrams actually used the term *objective aesthetics* instead of *formalist aesthetics*. The *Brittanica* uses the term *formalist aesthetics* in place of *objective aesthetics*. Since most contemporary writers identify modernism with formalism, I felt that this term would be easier to identify in this chapter.

6. This idea was suggested by a conversation with Michael Parsons.