**For Democracy:**

**Lessons from Black Mountain College**

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Modern life means democracy, democracy means freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness–the emancipation of the mind as an individual organ to do its own work. We naturally associate democracy, to be sure, with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is chaos. If external authority in action is given up, it must be because internal authority of truth, discovered and known to reason, is substituted.[[i]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#i)

**The Thought of Democracy**

Education at Black Mountain College was not democratic but for democracy; a means to democracy rather than a democratic end in itself. The curriculum of the college was primarily focused on ethical development, therefore its rational coherence was at the mercy of these ethical demands. Academic, pedagogical and personal freedom being *de rigour* meant that there was no over-arching rationality for the college but rather an underpinning thought: democracy. This paper will attempt to outline how the *thought* of democracy at Black Mountain College was both a powerful director of ethical education as well as an impossibly demanding taskmaster for the rationality of an educational institution (particularly one without “enough love”[[ii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#ii)as John Andrew Rice, founder and rector of Black Mountain College, put it).

Rectors at Black Mountain College were focused on democracy (Rice, 1933-1940), ethics (Albers, 1941-1949), and learning method as opposed to facts (Olson, 1951-1957). The College’s intention was to teach how to be ethically responsive rather than rationally assertive; wherein lay its impossibly demanding democratic imperative. As the extremely diverse and unconventional art produced at Black Mountain College would suggest, there can be no argument that a dominant creative rationality was ever in place, but the same cannot be said for a dominant ethical ideal. The theory and practice of the educators–and particularly the rectors–at the college presents a convincing case for an approach to liberality and democracy wherein both concepts are perceived as ethical rather than rational ideals. This essay will proceed from the notion that this difference is not merely prosaic but crucial in understanding the principal values and aspirations of the founders and faculty at Black Mountain College. Part of my analysis will include exploring how it has been possible for purportedly liberal and democratic contemporary theories, policies, and practices of education to take an opposite approach to that practiced at Black Mountain.

At Black Mountain College the ethical *thought* of democracy preceded, influenced, and disrupted the complementary and competing ratiocinations of the faculty and student body. However, Black Mountain in practice was not what could be called politically democratic – particularly in comparison to a learning environment like A.S. Neill’s Summerhill School in England, where all major decisions are made by a vote including both students and teachers. As Martin Duberman writes of Black Mountain College:

Though students from the start had a larger formal voice in decision-making than was (or is) true at most colleges, they did not have an equal voice with the faculty. All that Rice ever claimed was that in at least one sense Black Mountain came as near to a democracy as possible: individual economic status had nothing to do with one’s standing in the community. [[iii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#iii)

Because a politically democratic community was not the explicit aim of the college, the thought of democracy or of a democratic education must be considered in terms other than that of the community’s political organization. However, the removal of financial inequality and, furthermore, financial motives from the college is significant in differentiating its rationality and ethicality from that of other educational establishments. Rice writes that, ‘other colleges, we knew, existed as ends in themselves. (They are, says the law, “nonprofit” organizations, but that law is a liar. They are as much run for profit, to their runners, as General Electric).’[[iv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#iv) This was not the approach that Black Mountain College, which was owned by the faculty, aimed to take; instead, it would be a means to educating the ‘democratic man’. The thought of democracy would underpin its institutional organization and educational practice, but not to the extent where the college would be either a democratic or private economic end in itself. In this sense, structural distinctions are drawn between the futurity of democracy and the immanence of education, as well as more broadly between perceiving education as an inherent social good as opposed to a commodity to be sold as any other for private gain. However, this suspension of the democratic end from educational practice does not imply its removal. Neither does the reticence to consciously put the institution on the marketplace betray liberal or democratic ideals. In both cases the teleological suspension of democracy occurs as a safeguard against the rational taking over from the ethical. The educational means are thus enabled by the thought of democracy and yet do not have to justify themselves as ‘inherently’ democratic but rather as being *for*democracy.

As such, the institutional proliferation of democracy becomes secondary to what John Dewey defines as *The Ethics of Democracy* in his 1888 treatise of that title, which was part of a philosophy that so influenced John Andrew Rice. Dewey, who visited the college several times and sat on its Advisory Council, was defined by Rice as “the only man I have ever known who was completely fit and fitted to live in a democracy” and, alongside John Webb, “the only men I have known who never questioned the individual’s right to be alive. They took that for granted and began from there.”[[v]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#v) This exceptional respect for Dewey as a democratic man precipitated education in “moral and spiritual association” becoming the vocation of the teachers at Black Mountain College, under the general understanding that democracy as an “ethical conception” precedes and legitimates its “significance as governmental.”[[vi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#vi)

**Ethics, Aesthetics and the Democratic Man**

In his autobiography of 1942, *I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century*(an affectionate reference to the charming backwardness of his native South Carolina), Rice explains the reasons for the central curricular design of Black Mountain College’s founders:

The center of the curriculum, we said, would be art. The democratic man, we said, must be an artist. The integrity, we said, of the democratic man was the integrity of the artist, an integrity of relationship…the artist, we said was not a competitor. He competed only with himself. His struggle was inside, not against his fellows, but against his own ignorance and clumsiness…Also just as the artist would not paint his picture with muddy colors, so this artist must see clear colors in humanity; and must himself be clear color, for he too was his fellow artist’s color, sound, form, the material of his art. But, different from pigment, bow, granite, not used up in the use; rather, made more of what he would be, a note within the symphony, the clearer for having been written; giving up, and asked to give up, nothing of himself. That was the integrity of the artist as artist. That should be the integrity of man as man.[[vii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#vii)

The relationship among ethics, aesthetics, and democracy was to become a mainstay of philosophically educational thinking at the college. This development of non-competitive relationships marks this democratic ethic, a conception of education devoid of the competitive pursuit of private economic interest. To educate the democratic man was not to provide him with the means to be able assert his own democratically endowed self-interest, nor was it to teach advocacy of one political system over another. Instead, it was the teaching of a democratic method of ethics which could not be “used up in the use.” Rice engages with art in this outlining of the curriculum: Firstly as an educational tool for the democratic citizen; secondly as a painterly metaphor for the democratic citizen’s subjective engagement with the world; thirdly as a metaphor indicative of the democratic citizen’s responsibility to society. Through an art education citizens would come to realize the part they play in the world, a part they also play for others. The ethical and aesthetic roles democratic human beings play are not concerned with the fixing of identities but the development of responsiveness. Such a method of responsiveness is not an end in itself but the means to a suspended democratic end.

Unsurprisingly (because of the likely part Josef Albers played in its constitution), this outline of the foundational Black Mountain College curriculum foreshadows Albers’ comments in an interview from 1960:

*I think art parallels life. Color, in my opinion, behaves like a man–in two distinct ways: first in self-realization and then in the realization of relationships with others. In my paintings I have tried to make two polarities meet–independence and interdependence, as, for instance, in Pompeian art. There’s a certain red the Pompeians used that speaks in both these ways, first in its relation to other colors around it, and then as it appears alone, keeping its own face. In other words, one must combine both being an individual and being a member of society. That’s the parallel. I’ve handled color as a man should behave. With trained and sensitive eyes, you can recognize this double behavior of color. And from all this, you may conclude that I consider ethics and aesthetics as one.*[*[viii]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#viii)

Here again ethics and aesthetics entwine, not only through metaphor but through ethically informed democratic practice. The relationship of polarities between independence and interdependence is precisely that of democratic ethics. To be educated in following with this would be to realize one’s individual color ‘clearly’, as Dewey puts it, and also to see the ‘clear colors of humanity’ that one, as a democratic man, is inextricably related to. This clarity of ethical vision is significant in terms of aesthetics in a way other than metaphor or analogy because the democratic man, as Rice puts it, “must be an artist.” That is not to say that they should be “professional” artists, but that the ethics and integrity generally conceived as (at least in Rice’s conjecture) being those of the artist should be those of every democratic man. This convergence of Rice and Albers’ ethical and aesthetic ideals is, however, not indicative of their perception of one another as “democratic men.”

**The Paradox of Democratic Communitas**

In his autobiography Rice argues, perhaps with a somewhat veiled reference to Albers (amongst others), that most artists are not in love with art but “in love with themselves(,)” and he therefore finds it easy to understand how some psychologists call art a neurosis.”[[ix]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#ix) This recasting of the potential for the artist to be a negative role model rather than a shining example of the democratic man is particularly dangerous in the kind of intimately connected educational community that he describes Black Mountain College as being. He states that while the college was new in many senses it was in fact to be of “the oldest kind, a *communitas”*[[x]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#x) and that while:

*In other places education was part of the day and part of the man; in Black Mountain it was round the clock and all of the man. There was no escape. Three meals together, passing in the hall, meeting in classes, meeting everywhere, a man taught by the way he walked, by the sound of his voice, by every movement. That was what it was intended to be, the fulfillment of an old idea, the education of the whole man: by a whole man.*[*[xi]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xi)

As such the pressure on the artist and educator to be the whole and ideal democratic human person in the context of Black Mountain College was increased dramatically. The demand on the democratic ethicality of the faculty was also tested by a kind of extra-institutional “pure democracy” which meant that a general deferral to individual ethical application of intelligence over law could frequently cause problems. Rice writes, “I learned for one thing, the need of law, an abstract, intellectual, bridle to hold passion when intelligence fails. Black Mountain was a pure democracy.”[[xii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xii) However, in following with the necessary suspension of democracy, there can be no such thing as a “here and now” of democracy; it inspires the means, but it is not the means. To preserve the primacy and social demands implied by democratic ethics, it becomes necessary to accept that any “means” can only ever fall short of being democratic. The “pure democracy” that Rice refers to might therefore be an impossible attempt to free democratic thought and make it immanent rather than keep it as what might be determined “quasi-transcendental.” That is to say, “idealizing” the present to the extent where it becomes difficult to determine whether the college could any longer consider itself as a means to democracy and not an end in and of itself.

The tensions brought about by this confusion of purpose, which in another academic environment might have born fruit for a longer period of time, burned out and forced first Rice then Albers to leave the college. The unwillingness or inability to more clearly differentiate between the means and ends of the college was perhaps largely due to the college and the community being one and the same. This was particularly problematic because of the underlying implication that the college should live up to its ideals in the community. While this may seem an entirely rational as well as ethical approach to take, it fell foul to the paradox formed by the need to legitimate an ethical primacy which transcends legitimation. Rice’s formulation of this paradox is no more helpful in suggesting a straightforward solution:

*Black Mountain, we said, would be a means; the end was the individual. That sounded well, but I was not satisfied. I knew that the life span of an idea in a college was at most ten years; that at the end of that time, or earlier, the institution sank back into mere existence. I asked John Dewey about that. He reassured me; said, “As long as you keep your eye on the individual, that won’t happen.” I went away asking myself, “But who is to see to it that the college keep its eye on the individual?”*[*[xiii]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xiii)

And that:

*Black Mountain was to be an education for democracy. The college was not, we said, an end; it was a means. Such a dichotomy of life is moral irresponsibility; some of us knew that, some did not. Here was another division. If it was to be education for democracy, if that was its end, that must also be its means; it must be education in democracy.*[*[xiv]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xiv)

However, while a dichotomy of means and ends may be a moral irresponsibility in terms of democracy for the college’s community, it may well have been helpful in terms of institutional integrity. Furthermore, Rice’s conjecture that “its end…must also be its means” may also be incorrect and the conception itself may have been one of the major causes of the conflict and uncertainties that plagued the college throughout its existence. Despite this, the traversal of this morally irresponsible dichotomy obfuscates the difference between the individual and college and becomes its very dynamic. However paradoxical and idealistic it may have been to attempt to make the college a place where both the means and ends of democracy could meet, this was not far from the attempted reality. The difficulties faced by this idealism can be made apparent through two basic observations, first of Rice and then of the College. Rice was, especially at the time of his forced resignation, considered a man of ideas who could not live up to them in reality. Also, while the ideas of Black Mountain College are still going strong, the college itself was almost always on the verge of bankruptcy and was forced to close for that very reason in 1957. Rice’s recounting of this idealistic position of the Black Mountain College founders, a position Albers seems to have shared in his later years. Unlike Rice, who stopped teaching after he left the college in 1940, Albers did not grow cynical. Indeed, he continued to teach aesthetics as ethics late into his life. This reveals that while philosophy has the potential to withstand almost anything it is very difficult to hold an institution up with philosophy alone.

**Method as Means**

If Mary Emma Harris’s interpretation of events in *The Arts at Black Mountain* *College* is to be followed, then respect for Rice at the college decreased to the point where he was forced to resign. Harris notes that “Albers was able to see only the worst in Rice.”[[xv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xv) However, despite Albers’ intense dislike for Rice, pedagogically and philosophically they shared a great deal. Perhaps ironically, many of Rice’s reasons for disliking artists seem to have also been shared by Albers. Rice’s attack on artists and their neuroses is intriguingly similar to comments made by Albers in an interview from 1968, where he explains:

*I do not consider self-expression as important. It’s not important as a method of teaching. And it’s not important as an aim of any art branch. When we are honest–that’s my saying–if we are honest then we will reveal ourselves. But we do not have to make an effort to be individualistic, different from others. You see that is the nonsense of the last 15, 20 years, the two decades, the great famous American decades. What is wrong there is that everyone wants to be different from the already different ones. And then they ended up all alike. And we are tired of that. And the youngsters feel that now.*[*[xvi]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xvi)

Albers also states,”youth today is tired of so-called self-expression. They want finally now again to know why one does this and not this, and just not only get drunk.”[[xvii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xvii) This focus on the “why” question is more rational than ethical. However, it is precisely as a philosopher of ethics that Albers approached his aesthetic teaching.[[xviii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xviii) He stated, “I have not taught art. Instead of art I have taught philosophy.” For Albers the purpose of teaching was “to open eyes.”[[xix]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xix) In a text of that title, *To Open Eyes*, Frederick Horowitz conveys that (,) “Albers often would inform new students that they needed to unlearn the lessons and ‘prejudices’ that they’d brought with them.”[[xx]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xx) Focusing on one’s experience in relation to other things rather than on self-expression was a mode of democratic education. Experiencing things “openly” without prejudice rather than doing what you wanted to do without restriction exemplifies the democratic thought at Black Mountain College. For Albers, perhaps as well as for Rice and Dewey, what is important is not only we who see but rather *how* we see. To open one’s eyes is to become both the method and means for democracy.

In his essay, “Concerning Art Instruction,” from the second Black Mountain College Bulletin in 1934 Albers presents an approach to learning color systems which does not follow a rational epistemological path but an immediate ethical and aesthetic relation. He writes:

We study the most important color systems, not for the sake of science or to find the harmony of colors in a mechanical way, but to learn to see and feel color. To prepare for a disciplined use of color and to prevent accident, brush, or paint-box from taking authorship.[[xxi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxi)

This short passage highlights the undesirability of letting one’s context determine theself. For Albers, to see and feel color is to bring into play an aesthetic and ethical democracy of singularities (which includes one’s own singularity). These philosophical conditions of experience are shared by Dewey, who writes that, “when we do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination.”[[xxii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxii) And it is in this focus on ethical responsiveness, rather than the mechanical, where Albers and Rice both seem to meet.

In his autobiography Rice provides a long list of unsavory “artistic” or intellectual visitors to the college, stating that they rejected it in time because “they had come looking for experiment and found experience.”[[xxiii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxiii) This view seems directly in contrast to the suggestion of the college as laboratory presented in the fourth Black Mountain College Bulletin from 1947, after Rice had left, under the heading “Education in the Modern World”:

*To educate today, then, must mean to broaden outlook and to provide a setting where theory can be confronted with evidence, a laboratory where thought can be tested by action. Black Mountain College as a community is such a laboratory.*[*[xxiv]*](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxiv)

However, Horowitz’s cursory glance at Albers’ teaching techniques views the kind of laboratory that is being posited as one of experimenting *within*structured experience(is, is).[[xxv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxv) A practical as well as theoretical focus on experience rather than self-expression and on developing an ethical philosophy as opposed to producing art as an end in itself seems, despite its various incarnations, to have been a mainstay of Black Mountain College. While the actions and art forms of the various faculty differed greatly and were frequently in opposition, the underlying philosophy, which was itself the development of an aesthetically informed democratic ethicality in the students, is surprisingly coherent under the directorships of both Rice and Albers.

The prospectus produced under Charles Olson’s auspices in 1952, once both Rice and Albers had left, refers to the influence of Rice and conveys that:

*Our central consistent effort is to teach method, not content; to emphasize process, to invite the student to the realization that the way of handling facts and himself amid the facts is more important than facts themselves. For facts change, while the method of handling facts–provided it is life’s own free, dynamic method–remains the same. The law of a teacher at Black Mountain is to function as a working “artist” in the teaching world, to be no passive recipient or hander-out of mere information, but to be and increasingly to become, productive, creative, using* *everything that comes within his orbit, including especially people.*

Teachers in a place like this, where education is taken seriously, should always bear in mind that they are the central problem**.**[**[xxvi]**](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxvi)

This passage recalls Rice, but with one notable omission. There is no mention of democracy here but rather of “liberal education”–and it is not sufficient to suggest that “liberal” is a byword for democracy. This omission is indicative of the college’s educational intentions as a prospectus, quite possibly because of Charles Olson’s slightly more sober (not to say cynical) take on democracy.[[xxvii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#xxvii) Even so, the prospectus posits the primary goal of the college to still be the development of a method, a philosophy–not of ends, but of means. In this way it might be possible to presume that Olson rid himself of immanent political considerations of democracy so as to be able to provide a better education *for*democracy. Even if this was not the case, which is likely, Olson’s outline is certainly closer to a superficial reading of Rice’s more Deweyian glosses on democratic ethics–as well as Albers’ focus on teaching aesthetics as ethics–than Rice’s more confused notion of combining an education *in* democracy with one *for*democracy. However, it may also be worth tending to the possibility that Olson’s “liberal education” (as well as much of what we consider to be education today) may have lost something that the conscious effort of educating the human person preserved, despite its contradictions. No matter what, the future of an education for democracy will always depend on thinking it.

[[i]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref)Dewey, John, Garforth, F.W.(ed.), ‘Democracy in Education’ in Selected Educational Writings, (London: Heineman, 1966), pg. 182.

[[ii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Rice, John Andrew, *I came out of the Eighteenth Century,*(London: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pg. 333

[[iii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Duberman, Martin, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community*, (London: Wildwood House, 1974), pg. 37.

[[iv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Rice, John Andrew, *I came out of the Eighteenth Century,*(London: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pg. 324

[[v]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) ibid., pg. 331.

[[vi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) ‘To say that democracy is *only* a form of government is like saying that home is a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar; that the church is a building with pews, pulpit and spire. It is true; they certainly are so much. But it is false; they are so infinitely more. Democracy, like any other polity, has been finely termed the memory of an historic past, the consciousness of a living present, the ideal of the coming future. Democracy, in a word, is a social, that is to say, an ethical conception, and upon its ethical significance is based its significance as governmental. Democracy is a form of government only because it is a form of moral and spiritual association.’ in Dewey, John, *The Early Works, 1882-1898* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), pg. 240

[[vii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Rice, John Andrew, *I came out of the Eighteenth Century,*(London: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pg. 328-329.

[[viii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Josef Albers in an interview with Katherine Kuh (1960), cited in Horowitz, Frederick A. and Danilowitz, Brenda, *Josef Albers: To Open Eyes*, (London: Phaidon, 2006), pg. 80.

[[ix]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Rice, C.A., (1942), pg. 326.

[[x]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Ibid. pg. 320.

[[xi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Ibid., pg. 323.

[[xii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Ibid., pg. 324.

[[xiii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Ibid., pg. 324-325.

[[xiv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Ibid., pg. 327.

[[xv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Harris, Mary Emma, *The Arts and Black Mountain College*, (London: MIT Press, 2002), pg. 57.

[[xvi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) *Oral history interview with Josef Albers, 1968 June 22-July 5, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.*

[[xvii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) *Ibid.*

[[xviii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) This position is similarly expressed through a teaching anecdote by Ben Shahn in Shahn, B. *The Shape of Content*, (Cambridge: Harvard, 1974), pg. 113-114. (See also pg. 123): ‘In the midst of our discussion one of the students walked up to me and said, “Mr. Shahn, I didn’t come here to learn philosophy. I just want to learn *how* to paint.” I asked him which one of the one hundred and forty styles he wanted to learn, and we began to establish, roughly, a sort of understanding.

I could teach him the mixing of colors, certainly, or how to manipulate oils or tempera or water color. But I certainly could not teach him any style of painting—at least I wasn’t going to. Style today is the shape of one’s specific meanings. It is developed wit an aesthetic view and a set of intentions. It is not the how of painting but the why. To imitate or to teach style alone would be a little like teaching a tone of voice of a personality.’

[[xix]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) *Oral history interview with Josef Albers, 1968.*

[[xx]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Horowitz, F. and Danilowitz, B., (2006), pg. 74.

[[xxi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Black Mountain College Bulletin, Vol. 6, No.2, (1934).

[[xxii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Dewey, J., (2007)*,*Pg. 107.

[[xxiii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Rice, C.A., (1942), pg. 333.

[[xxiv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Black Mountain College Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 3., (1942).

[[xxv]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) ‘Albers’s lessons introduced his students to an unnoticed visual reality. Through a battery of simple freehand line exercises, students discovered that lines and shapes formed relationships, established rhythms and tensions, pushed and pulled. By drawing their names in reverse, by imitating newspaper text, or by drawing block letters or numbers they had seen all their lives, they began to recognized that these were forms having distinct character. Writing their names in reverse or upside down, drawing letterforms, or carefully recording the shapes they saw between the rungs of chairs, they became aware of so-called “negative” or “unfilled” shapes. Painting the spaces between milk bottles, oranges, or the leaves of plants reinforced the lesson that the space is never merely “empty.” By constructing with simple materials, such as paper or wire, students learned that the hollows and voids were as important as the solids. Juxtaposing colors, or combining disparate materials in assemblages, they learned to recognize the influence of one element upon another. The laboratory-like simplicity of the exercises made it possible to observe the smallest, subtlest events in the visual field—the precise shade of a color, the exact nature of a curve, or the character of a paper’s torn edge.’ in Horowitz, F. and Danilowitz, B., (2006), pg. 75.

[[xxvi]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Black Mountain College Prospectus, (1952), pg. 13. (emphasis in original)

[[xxvii]](http://www.blackmountainstudiesjournal.org/wp/?page_id=891#_ednref) Von Hallberg, Robert, Charles Olson: The Scholar’s Art, (Harvard: Harvard University Press: 1978), pg. 13-14.