1999

Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Divine Madness and Intellectual Life: Exercises in Appreciation

Salisbury State University

Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University

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Summer 1999

Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Divine Madness and Intellectual Life: Exercises in Appreciation

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Proceedings of the
Center for Catholic Studies

DIVINE MADNESS AND THE
INTELLECTUAL LIFE:
EXERCISES IN APPRECIATION

Summer Seminar 1999

Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUMMER SEMINAR 1999

Jerome Miller  
Professor of Philosophy, Salisbury State University

I am honored to have been invited to facilitate your May Faculty Development Seminar, and want to thank you for your willingness to venture into this little exercise in "divine madness."

I've been asked to suggest some readings that would be relevant to our conversations, and I'm hoping those listed will be helpful. The pieces are accessible and reflective/meditative in approach. I apologize for subjecting you to some of my own essays; I do so because they address so directly some of the issues I'm intending to explore, and hence might serve as good catalysts for dialogue.

Finally, I should perhaps mention that my intention, as I approach these sessions, will be to be as prepared as I can be – and willing to leave the prepared entirely behind. So the topics listed, especially the later ones, are possible campsites for an excursion that might lead elsewhere. Similarly, with regard to format: after each day's presentation, we can decide, as the spirit moves, whether to free-for-all together or in small groups.

If anyone has thoughts or suggestions on any of this and would like to contact me, please do not hesitate to do so.
for

Monsignor Richard M. Liddy
Director of the Center for Catholic Studies
University Professor of Catholic Thought and Culture

IL MIGLIORE FABBRO
PREFACE

Mark Rocha
Provost, Seton Hall University

Much Madness is divinest Sense -
To a discerning Eye -
Much Sense - the starkest Madness -
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail -
Assent - and you are sane -
Demur - you're straightaway dangerous -
And handles with a Chain -

Emily Dickinson

I am happy to present these proceedings of the 1999 Summer Seminar sponsored by the Center for Catholic Studies. The title of the seminar, Divine Madness: Exercises in Appreciation, suggests a theme from Plato: the extraordinary, yet fascinating, character of our human "wonder" when we allow it full rein. As the poem above from Emily Dickinson further suggests, giving full rein to wonder is often considered the act of the nonconformist. It is the purpose of these summer seminars - and indeed of everything we try to do in Academic Affairs - to allow full scope to such wonder within our community of scholars. Let us all be nonconformists as the participants have been in doing this wonderful work together.

The Center for Catholic Studies is dedicated to interdisciplinary dialogue within which deeply human and religious questions can be raised. Such dialogue springs from our very identity as human beings. We have to speak with one another if we are to find out who we are. Even the individual disciplines grow and develop in wisdom as they move beyond technical specialization to broader humanistic concerns.
Such dialogue also coheres with our identity as a religiously based university. It envisions our university not only as Catholic with a capital “C” and rooted in the Catholic tradition, but also as catholic with a small “c,” open to goodness and value wherever they can be found. It is for this reason that we are more and more coming to conceive of Seton Hall as “a home for the faiths,” as open to people of all faiths as well as to those searching for and struggling with the meaning of faith. We see ourselves as a home for genuine humanistic discourse.

We are grateful to the Center for Catholic Studies for spearheading this dialogue among our faculty. I would like in particular to thank the facilitator of this year’s seminar, Professor Jerome Miller of Salisbury State University in Maryland. He did an outstanding job of stimulating inquiry among our colleagues. I would also like to thank our own Professor King Mott, now Dean of Freshman Studies, for his fine work in coordinating this seminar. Above all, I express my profound appreciation to Monsignor Richard Liddy, Director of the Center for Catholic Studies, for his dedicated stewardship of the Center and this project.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants in the seminar and commend their contributions to your careful consideration. I have taken the opportunity to read all of these contributions. Together they constitute a gift to all of us at Seton Hall of many happy hours thinking about questions of value and meaning in our lives.
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COVER:
Divine Madness by Susan K. Leshnoff

Unless otherwise indicated all participants are from Seton Hall University.
INTRODUCTION
W. King Mott, Jr., Dean of Freshman Studies

The Center for Catholic Studies convened the annual faculty seminar following the 1999 May Commencement. The idea that we were to discuss “Divine Madness and the Intellectual Life: Exercises In Appreciation” appealed to each of us for different reasons. I had the distinction of being the only participant from last year’s seminar, as I was to edit these proceedings. Upon gathering together there was the usual bantering about that is common in academic circles. Our small talk was particularly informed by the recently concluded semester, the grandeur of commencement exercises, sabbaticals, the still fresh tragedy in Colorado, and fatigue. As always, the frantic pace of our lives, the demands of our professional and personal commitment were inserted here and there. If it were possible to unite in some collective sigh of exasperation, I feel sure that we would have happily yielded to that possibility.

Leading us in this seminar was Professor Jerry Miller, a philosophy professor at Salisbury State University. From the start, his willingness to participate in our discussion went far beyond the safety provided by academic decorum. He modeled personal risk—he told his story and therein gave us permission to tell ours. In retrospect we should have seen this coming, after all he wrote to us early in the semester about his plans:

“As a child I lived inside a repressive ‘ghetto’ of fifties Catholicism, where religious questioning was not encouraged...But in my own personal and intellectual life, I have found that the radical questioning precipitated by upsetting experiences is both religiously and intellectually liberating."

Yes, each of us read this and we still came to the seminar. Considering that he promised to encourage a little “madness” to happen in each of us, I am convinced that most of us attended confident of our power to influence conversations and critique all ideas. In short, we all prepared to nod our heads, breeze through Heidegger’s essay “What is Metaphysics?” pass “Go” and collect our stipend. What divine madness indeed!

Earlier I referred to the collective sigh of exasperation that permeated our initial meeting. Soon we were to sigh in earnest, again and again in fact, but neither exhaustion nor consternation would cause this deep breath. Here it was the breath of grace and hope that found need of expression. Our place became a sacred place, full of laughter and tears. We were bound together in the mutual revelation of our respective colleague’s life experiences. Colleagues, respected for their professional contributions, grew dearer within the context of each story. We had in some way connected with something larger than our respective academic disciplines, larger even than the sophisticated vocabulary with which all academics are armed. This reality, if I dare call it that, ripened with each passing day, so much so that the “exercises in appreciation” became simultaneously subtle and brutal. How can any reflection upon personal experience and God’s Intention in the universe be otherwise? Some of the effect of this amazing time together follows.

Jerome Miller leads in the proceedings as he did in our seminar. He writes of the “vocation of the Catholic university” speaking “cor ad cor with academic colleagues about religion and religious experience.” He concludes that in this sort of university control is a problematic idea and that courage is required to recognize that fact. It is, according to Professor Miller, mystery that must lead us here at Seton Hall.

Dr. Raquel Benbunan-Fich believes that the mission of higher education is precisely that, namely to awaken the students’ search for meaning. She then discusses the role of the professor in this process enhanced by his or her use of information technology, concluding that technology “could restore some of the original mission of the universities and shift the focus back to the search for meaning and intellectual exploration.”

Professor Wendy Budin of the School of Nursing discusses a link between suffering and wisdom using her experience as a nurse working in labor and delivery. Professor Budin acknowledges the wonder of birth as a profound integration of the divine and the human. One striking observation made in this essay is one that reverberated within the discussions of the seminar: pain is often the precursor to revelation. Here it is the pain of labor. In our lives this pain is often not as dramatic and yet every bit as important.

Dr. Agnes Hooper Gottlieb certainly gets to the everyday and does so in a way that all academics can
who began his academic career with a doctorate in English and is currently working as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Yale studying the contemporary relevance of Islamic financial ethics from the 7th to the 14th centuries. Dr. Murtuza describes the tentative nature of accounting statements as “fiction.” His intention is to illustrate how fictions give a pattern to the flow of time and, simultaneously, permit the creative and imaginative work of the human mind.

Professor Thomas Rondinella similarly writes about the creative energy of the human mind that is evident in the creation of a feature film. The making of Charming Billy, which played at the Independent Feature Film Market in New York this September provides Professor Rondinella with clear insight into the role of risk in the creative process. The interesting conclusion here suggests that the risk to create be confirmed in trusting the divine.

Another member of the faculty of the School of Nursing, Professor Carolyn Rummel, insists that much of nursing theory recognizes disease as being part of the implicate or hidden order made explicit. As a nurse, Professor Rummel has witnessed the transformative effect of pain and disease upon both individuals and families. Instead of succumbing to defeat, she writes about how ordinary men and women might become extraordinary.

Dr. Rosemary Skeele speaks to the struggle involved in the integration of technology into the pedagogy of higher education. Concurrent with the creation of a book on a similar topic, Dr. Skeele speaks of the “pain and rebirth” associated with ways of doing things, in this instance teaching.

Ably representing the Office of the Provost, Dr. Jennifer White’s personalized essay addresses the “divine madness” of her personal passion for cooking with her job as an administrator. The analogy is both interesting and compelling, largely because of her stated objective, which is to “build something cohesive out of disparate ingredients.”

Professor Deirdre Yates follows with a similar personal essay. She writes of the “Theatricality of Wonderment,” taking her experiences of wonder found in the play and the effect of these “human” moments, when done well, upon consciousness. These “discoveries can be amusing as well as insightful and the exercise enables the actor to stop the traditional thinking process and to simply experience.” As I read her, Professor Yates is clearly speaking of “divine madness.”
Before concluding it is important that the people who made this possible are properly recognized. First, I want to thank the participants. What a marvelous thing it is to witness the commitment of my colleagues and to share just a bit in what they give so freely to their students, family and friends. Second, to Monsignor Robert Sheeran, President of Seton Hall University, and Dr. Mark Rocha, Provost, thank you for your leadership and support of Catholic Studies and these faculty seminars. This time that we spent together is a reminder of what is good, beautiful and true. In addition, these seminars would be impossible without the direction of Monsignor Richard Liddy. Monsignor Liddy’s tireless pursuit of Catholic meaning in the context of higher education is a great inspiration for us all. Finally, what is admirable about this publication is directly related to the extraordinary work and professionalism of Laurie Pine and Linda Malanga of Public Relations and Marketing and the editorial committee, Dick Liddy and Jennifer White; all of the shortcomings are appropriately mine.

References

1. Josef Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture
   (South Bend, IN.: St. Augustine’s Press, 1998).

2. Jerome Miller, In the Three of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in a Postmodern World
THEMES AND READINGS FOR SUMMER SEMINAR 1999

DAY 1
From Problems to Mystery; From Pragmatism to Appreciation

Miller's "The Way of Suffering"
Martin Heidegger's essay: "What is Metaphysic?"

DAY 2
In the Throes of Wonder: Passion and the Intellectual Life

John Logan's poem "Picnic"
Miller's essay "In the Throes of Wonder"
Josef Pieper's "Leisure, The Basis of Culture" pp 19-64
Ancillary reading: Miller's essay "The Exorbitance of Childhood"

DAY 3
Wonder as an Openness to Being: A Metaphysics of Mystery

Excerpt from Bernard Lonergan's "Insight"

DAY 4
Revolutionizing Appreciation
Exploring socio-political implications of the foregoing
or
Paradoxes of Life and Death
Exploring more deeply the more personal implications of the foregoing

Robert Frost's poem "Love and a Question"
Martin Luther King, Jr. essays or Miller's essay "Joy and Gravity"
THE UNIVERSITY AS AN OPEN SPACE FOR GRACE: REFLECTIONS ON AN EXPERIENCE AT SETON HALL
by Jerome Miller

Let me begin with a confession. I accepted Monsignor Liddy's invitation to facilitate a Seton Hall Faculty Development Seminar with some trepidation, a good deal of uncertainty, and more fear of inadequacy than I am accustomed to feel now that I have settled into the complacent competencies of middle-age. The reason for my anxiety was quite specific and easy to identify: I realized, from Monsignor Liddy's description of it, that this seminar would most likely entail speaking cor ad cor with academic colleagues about religion and religious experience. This was, for me, an unprecedented, hence intimidating opportunity, for which neither my experiences at academic conferences nor my nearly 30 years of teaching philosophy at a secular institution prepared me. As a result, I found myself feeling like an oxymoron - a middle-age neophyte unsure of how to proceed and wary of taking a false step. This is, perhaps, the unconscious reason why I kept driving to the wrong Orange and deferring my arrival on campus.

I wanted to begin with this admission of my anxiety in the face of the unfamiliar because exploring its import will allow me to share with my fellow participants in the seminar some thoughts about what it meant to me and, in the process, give those who were not present some intimation of what we experienced and the issues we addressed. It will also lead me to offer a few, I hope not presumptuous, thoughts about what might be called the vocation of the Catholic university.

Although dread in the face of the unprecedented future is commonplace and all too familiar to us, it has, I think, far greater impact on how we live our lives than we ordinarily care to acknowledge. For it is, I think, the desire to repress or at least diminish this dread that leads us to try to control the future by setting goals and devising plans for achieving them. In our culture it is assumed that life must be and ought to be goal-oriented. And it follows from this assumption that living consists in our effort to make life conform to the plans we have for it. This very attempt to control the future allays the dread that would otherwise be evoked in us by its unprecedented character. We know, of course, that the unexpected, the unpredictable, cannot be entirely avoided. But we equip ourselves with "coping mechanisms" that we hope will enable us to "handle," "manage" and "deal with" Interruptions so as to insure that they do not have a devastating effect on us, and do not prevent us from progressing toward our goals.

This obsession with control is, it seems to me, pervasive in our culture. Evidence that it pervades life in the academy, just as it pervades all other social institutions, is not difficult to find: think, for example, of the emphasis academic departments, in addition to academic bureaucracies, now place on goal-setting, strategic planning and "outcomes assessment." I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that if we members of the university community were asked to speak about our purposes without employing the language of goal-seeking and strategic planning, many of us would be rendered literally speechless. Students, whose thinking is much more likely to be governed by the presuppositions of the culture in which they are "raised," are equally fixated on planning their lives and achieving control over the future: most of them are with us to prepare for their careers and their prospective careers provide the structure in terms of which they conceive of the future as a whole. That students who have failed to identify career goals, and whose "major" is hence unknown, are often paralyzed by anxiety and excruciating feelings of personal inadequacy is understandable; they know, from all the counsel we have given them, that without a plan for their lives they cannot possibly be in control of them.

Now it seems to me to be one of the great ironies of human existence that this very desire to gain control over our lives is precisely what cuts us off from the very experiences that have the potential to make them meaningful. For it is only the unprecedented future, only the unknown as unknown, that can fill us with awe or wonder and awaken in us the realization that we are participants in an unfathomable mystery. There are, even for us and for our students, experiences that at least temporarily evoke in us a sense of this mystery: when we become enthralled by a musical performance, or are struck by an unexpected question, or drawn into the interior space of a work of art, we do not know what is unfolding; we are caught, as it were, in the thrice of the unknown. This uncanny experience of wonder, this
breakthrough to the unknown as unknown, is, according to Plato and Aristotle, the primal catalyst for the intellectual life since it moves us to question and explore, to inquire and imagine. But the experience of falling in love - of being overwhelmed by the mysterious alterity of an Other - suggests something far more radical: that the willingness to plunge into the throe of mystery is the precondition for entering fully into life itself. And if this is the case, then we are not only betraying this mystery but cutting ourselves off from life when we try to make the future conform to our plans for it instead of opening ourselves to the meaning immanent within its mysterious unfolding.

Perhaps, then, we should live our lives instead of planning them. But this is easier said than done, and not even easy to say in a way that allows the difficulty of it to resonate. Love, we might say, is all that matters. But the rub is that love really is terrible. For the mystery that awakens in us the sense of the sublime is the same mystery that provokes in us the sense of overwhelming dread. And this dread is no symptom of neurosis; it is provoked by an intimation of the awful that must at some point inevitably befall us. It does not pain us to see the Valentine image of love - the heart with the arrow through it - but only because it has become a cliché the mortal point of which no longer pierces us: in one way or another, love means the death of us. Even though both futile and irrational, the desire to control is therefore all too understandable: to entrust oneself to mystery is to open oneself to the possibility of being devastated, to death and love at once, to death and love in their very inseparability from each other.

This brings me back, then, to the sense of dread I had as I drove from one Orange to another - in search of the Seton Hall campus but also, I've admitted, trying at least to delay if not indefinitely defer my arrival. I did not know what to expect from the "seminar" to which I had been invited. But neither, it seems, did Monsignor Liddy, who was deliberately ambivalent in his description of it as a "cross" between a retreat and a faculty development workshop; nor, as it turns out, did any of the participants, who signed up for it for reasons they had difficulty articulating and with mixed feelings of eagerness and anxiety similar to my own. I did not know what to expect from my colleagues; they did not know what to expect from me. Most importantly, perhaps, none of us knew what to expect from the situation into which we were placing ourselves except that it was liable to require us to connect our hearts with our minds and to speak, face to face, cor ad cor, to each other.

What is remarkable, then, is, first of all, that this is what, in fact, actually happened. It was not business as usual. It was not a continuation of our plans, and did not entail the operationalizing of any strategy. Precisely because we came together without knowing what to expect and without having any goal in mind, this coming together created, as it were, an open space within which the unprecedented and the unknown were allowed to unfold. Here, I think, Lewis Hyde's concept of a "gift economy" is relevant and illuminating. A gift-economy is a kind of circle within which gifts keep circulating, there is no clear-cut distinction between giving and receiving because everyone does both and thereby keeps the gift in circulation. In fact, giving is set in motion by the open-hearted receptivity of the receivers. In such an economy, no one and nothing is in control. For this reason, the emergence and unfolding of this process always has something of a miraculous character. But insofar as it cannot occur unless those who would participate in it are willing to actually relinquish control, it seems especially miraculous when it occurs in our culture, which is, it seems to me, more obsessed with control than any other in human history.

By emphasizing the "miraculous" character of this kind of experience, I am suggesting that none of those who participate in it are to be credited with creating the "space" - the "circle" of gift-exchange - within which it happens. This space is created, I would argue, by that which brings the participants together: by the drawing power of the mystery itself into which they allow themselves to be drawn. To be sure, courage is needed if one is to relinquish control and entrust oneself to the dreadfully unpredictable future. But courage, I think, always takes shape as an "amen" to grace. And this brings me to what was for me, and perhaps for my colleagues too, unique about this Seton Hall seminar experience: here, in this open space, I was able to say openly and freely, "The mystery is grace, the mystery is the unprecedented unfolding of a divine comedy." For within this open space I was not just allowed but encouraged to give free, uninhibited rein to wonder - and not, as I hope, to censor myself if wonder happened to lead me to religious affirmation. It was this freedom to trust the unpredictable throe of inquiry, no matter where it led, this freedom to speak from the mind without having to tournie the heart, to be the intellectual without having to bracket or leave unspoken religious conviction.
- it was this freedom that, for me, was unprecedented. I would synopsize it as: the freedom to be myself without reservation. This is what I had been drawn to— and dreaded. It was, in its own way, awful and liberating: an experience of love.

This freedom is not synonymous with the "academic freedom" that is, as it were, the birthright of post-Enlightenment intellectuals. It is, surprisingly as it may seem, a more radical and inclusive freedom, in exactly the way that, according to Aquinas, the life of religious faith is more radical and inclusive than the life of reason. Here, in the "open space" of Seton Hall, I experienced a freedom not available at my own secular university. And though I do not mean to presume to speak for them, it did seem to me that my fellow participants experienced a sense of freedom similar to my own because of the eagerness with which they spoke cor ad cor and discussed the mysterious play of grace in their intellectual and personal lives, as well as the temptation to betray this mystery by trying to control it. As our conversations unfolded, it became important to tell the story of one's spiritual exploration and evolving religious identity - Jewish, Christian, Islamic, non-denominational. The gift-economy engendered by these conversations was distinctly catholic in character: it gave all of us the freedom to narrate our own story and be our different selves.

Now most of us post-enlightenment, liberal intellectuals are inclined to think that, where freedom exists, it does so in spite of, not because of, institutional structures - and especially in spite of religious institutions. But the experience of freedom that I have described occurred because of Seton Hall and, more particularly, because Seton Hall is a religious university that is willing to give those who belong to it, and those who visit it, the freedom to be themselves and to participate as selves in the gift-economy that grace creates. Freedom and the unpredictable play of grace are, it seems, inseparable from each other. And Seton Hall, by virtue of its willingness to trust both and entrust itself to both, becomes a venue for both - hence a venue for the possibility of the miraculous.

In doing all this, Seton Hall is, it might be argued, simply doing what it was, after all, originally founded to do. But this is more surprising than it might seem at first blush. For it seems to me that one of the tragic ironies that all too often befalls institutions is that, over the course of their historical evolution, they come to repress the very realities to which they are supposed to give us access, and to suffocate the individuals whose liberation they were created to promote. This is especially tragic and especially ironic in the case of religious and educational institutions; since they exist to give us access to the meaning of our lives as a whole, it is especially devastating when they subvert the purposes they are meant to serve. But perhaps it is the very gravity of these purposes, the terrible weight of responsibility they carry, that makes them especially liable to become agencies bent on controlling the future, instead of allowing it to unfold. I am thinking, here, especially of institutional Catholicism which is, according to its own account, the bearer of a responsibility than which none greater can be conceived: responsibility for the infusion of divine grace into human history. Given the overwhelming gravity of this charge, it is understandable that the Church has repeatedly, throughout the course of its history, sought to control what is taught and studied and even said within what would otherwise have been the open, unsupervised spaces of its institutions. For the only alternative to control is to be open to the unprecedented future, to trust the unpredictable three of history, and to enter into an unfolding mystery the meaning of which cannot be discerned ahead of time. To trust history in this way always and necessarily requires risking everything. And institutions, especially religious institutions, do not like risks; they try to plan everything so that what happens inside them does not get out of hand. But any effort made by the Church to control the future is a tragic betrayal and repression of the very grace whose operation the Church is supposed to foster. For grace, as divine, is unpredictable and uncontrollable. The Church itself teaches this, and hence is, in this matter, at the mercy of its own convictions: it is conscience-bound to abandon its desire to control the future and entrust itself to the play of grace.

This may sound like madness, especially in light of our obsession with control. But, according to the Church itself, it is divine madness and as such ought to animate its institutions. My experience in the Seton Hall seminar gave me an intimation of what the implications of this are for the Catholic university, at this troubling moment in its historical evolution - an intimation of what such a university would become if this madness were to shape its identity: a venue for catholicity that gives human beings the open space they need to be utterly themselves, and grace the open space it needs to play its miracle among them.
THE ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
by Raquel Benbunan-Fich

Etymologically, the English word school — derived from the Latin sola — comes from the Greek word for leisure. The concept of leisure is “an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to perceive the reality of the world.” 1) Leisure is far from idle inactivity. “Leisure is the disposition of receptive understanding, of contemplative beholding, and immersion - in the real.” 2)

The original idea of the university was to be “a place of leisure in the sense of a place of rest and stillness, where young men could be receptive.” 3) The mission of academic institutions was to awaken the students’ search for meaning. However, the Industrial Revolution and the mechanization of the workplace changed the core mission of many universities from knowledge-based education to skill-based training. Today, the demands of modern society are transforming universities into career-training institutes. Hence, the original mission of higher education schools has been dominated by the need to prepare students for the workforce.

Basically, education consists of the exchange of information between the professor and the students. As such, the Information Revolution and Information Technology (IT) in particular have a lot to offer to transform higher education by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this information transmission.

Nevertheless, education is much more than just transference of knowledge or skills. “Education is concerned with the whole: whoever is educated knows how the world as a whole behaves.” 4) Broad educational goals include socializing students, developing their abilities to function effectively in the society, and facilitating the cognitive and social development of each student. In this broader context, IT and computer-mediated communication systems can introduce powerful environments to enhance social and intellectual “connectivities” and help achieve these broader educational goals. 5)

Teaching and the role of the professor

There are two opposite but complementary views of the teaching/learning process. On the one hand, teaching can be one-way “objectivist” transmission of knowledge from the professor to the students in which each student learns individually. On the other hand, teaching can be a communal experience where knowledge is created through constructive dialogue and group discussion, in which the professor facilitates the process.

Consequently, professors can follow two alternative models: lecturer or enabler. The “lecturer” professor is mainly interested in transmitting information. The “enabler” professor is concerned with facilitating the discussion and the “creation” of knowledge.

Teaching in the “objectivist” framework assumes that there is an objective reality and the goal of learning is to understand that reality and modify the behavior accordingly. The one-way professor-centered model of knowledge transmission is at the core of this model. For this “lecturer” professor, a good student is one who can remember facts and gather knowledge from textbooks and other sources, and successfully apply them in tests and exams.

The alternative teaching/learning model is based on a “constructivist” perspective, in which knowledge is created or constructed by each learner in interaction with others. The role of the professor is to facilitate, to give context to the discussion, so that knowledge can emerge. For this enabler-professor, the best students are those who develop critical thinking and are able to “create” meaning in collaborative assignments or group discussions.

In both models, the professor is someone who has attained a high degree of understanding and knowledge in a particular subject, by virtue of years of experience, research and study in the field. The role of the professor is truly complex. “Though the professor is but one person, he is an incredible combination of many roles, a composite of concentric spheres, a talking onion. He is a purveyor of knowledge, a researcher, a counselor, an advisor, an authority figure, a human being.” 6)

Professors who follow the objectivist model are mainly “lecturers” and those who apply the constructivist approach are primarily “enablers.” Many professors combine these two models depending on the requirements of the course, the demands of the topic and the characteristics of their audience. The nature of the teaching/learning model has important implications for the selection of effective applications of IT in education.
Roles of Information Technology in Education

Information Technology (IT) can be integrated into education in at least two different ways: (1) to transmit content (to deliver instruction), and (2) to support communication between professors and students, or among students. In the content-transmission paradigm, IT can mediate the lecturing process by complementing or replacing the traditional role of the professor and printed materials. In the communication-support paradigm, IT can be used to extend faculty availability beyond scheduled times, to establish links to other classmates and to carry out collaborative learning activities.

Content-transmission generally takes place during the lecture, in which professors present the materials and students try to understand and assimilate them. This approach is consistent with the objectivist model of learning and the “lecturer” professor. In this context, Information Technology (IT) can mediate the lecturing process as a presentation technology to improve the efficiency of content-transmission. IT can also be used as a repository of course notes and lecture materials in a course web site. Downloading this information from the course home page (before or after) the lecture, would improve the efficiency of content transmission.

IT can completely mediate the content-transmission in Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), allowing professors to use their time for more demanding tasks. Typically, CAI involves the one-on-one interaction of students with a computer program that teaches the concepts and provides opportunities for individualized drill and practice. The use of CAI is more suitable for a subject matter using the following sequence: basic concepts, formulas and equations, and structured problems that require the application of such formulas.

CAI reinforces learning and improves the efficiency of content transmission due to the student’s involvement and ability to proceed at his/her own pace. The benefits are contingent upon the cognitive aptitude of the student, the nature of the material and the degree of the student’s control over the software program. Since CAI automates the delivery of instruction and the assessment of the students’ performance, professors relieved from content-transmission duties could use their time to individually assist students with difficulties and/or to engage students in more intellectually stimulating exercises related to the course.

Another application in which IT completely replaces the content-transmission role of the professor is the Electronic Lecture. These electronic lectures are completely delivered via computer (in textual, visual or audio-visual form). The material covered is, in general, an extension of the topics covered in traditional lectures.

Online quizzes are another alternative to automate the assessment of the students’ performance. They consist of short tests that students could take directly at the computer. The test usually consists of multiple choice, multiple true/false and other objective questions. The quiz program times the student, collects the responses, computes the grade, provides feedback to the student and enters the score on the professor’s grade-book.

IT can do much more than just transmitting course-related material or automate some of the professor’s activities; IT can support collaborative learning environments that exist beyond the scheduled lectures. “Discussion and communication about the course can be a continuous activity, rather than being limited to a short scheduled time once or twice a week.” The students can communicate their ideas, comments or questions when they are “fresh.” In these environments, the technology structures information exchange, supports peer-interaction and faculty-student interaction, and overcomes time and space barriers.

The use of Computer-Mediated Communication Systems (CMCS) in education can provide place-independent communication and time-independent communication. By lifting the geographical constraints, these systems allow members of different areas to be part of the same course. Students have expanded access to other peers, experts or sources of information, regardless of their geographical location. By overcoming the time constraints, these systems facilitate self-paced and self-directed learning, and improve in-depth reflection, formulation of comments and development of topics.

CMCS can be used to support group communication and to carry out collaborative learning activities such as case study discussions, debates, group projects, simulation and role-playing exercises. When used properly, CMCS enhance the quality of the collaborative learning experience and reduce some of the problems that affect participation in a face-to-face environment.

IT in Education: Tool, Machine or Medium?

There are three main roles that IT can play in education: (1) to complement the traditional content-transmission activities of faculty, (2) to automate information-transfer or assessment tasks of teachers and
(3) to support group communication between students and professors, or among students. Three metaphors can be used to convey the nature of these three roles.

In the first type of applications (content-transmission to complement the professor), IT is used as a tool or an appliance. IT-based educational tools are pieces of equipment like hammers or drills that extend and enhance the capabilities of the lecturer-professor. Examples of such tools are presentation technologies and the use of a course web site as a repository of materials.

In the second group of applications (automation of some of the professor's tasks), IT is used as a machine because computers work by themselves and can be programmed to teach or evaluate by themselves, automating some of the traditional tasks of the professor. CAI and E-lectures are examples of content-transmission carried out by computers instead of professors, while online quizzes are examples of automation of the students' evaluation.

In the third type of applications (communication support), IT is used as a new medium to exchange information and to carry out collaborative learning activities. The Internet and the increasing degree of connectivity at all levels of society offer a new educational setting that extends the availability of professors beyond scheduled lectures and office hours, and prolong course communication beyond the classroom. In this new environment, the enabler-professor can implement continuous collaborative learning activities.

In sum, the tool metaphor emphasizes the capabilities of the technology to enhance content-transmission, the machine metaphor focuses on the automation of some of the tasks of the professor and the medium metaphor highlights the potential of a new environment of continuous collaborative learning. The tool and the machine metaphor correspond to a mechanistic view of IT in education and follow the assumptions of the objectivist model of teaching, while the medium notion stems from a more organic conception and thus corresponds to the constructivist model of learning.

A course web site could combine these three metaphors. Professors can post their class notes, assignments or handouts on the course homepage, therefore using IT as a tool to enhance the efficiency of their content-transmission. The site could also feature E-lectures and online quizzes, which automate some of the faculty's tasks and thus follow the notion of machine.

Additionally, chat rooms or asynchronous conferences could be used to discuss class topics or carry out collaborative learning assignments beyond the scheduled times, to reach students at remote sites and to bring guest speakers from all over the world to give a lecture or just to "participate" in a course. In this case, IT is used as a totally new educational medium, removed from the temporal and spatial constraints of brick-and-mortar classrooms.

Conclusions

Many of the current uses of IT in education appear more driven by the availability of the technology than by the potential learning benefits. Appropriate IT applications depend on the pedagogy and the nature of the course. The true challenge is not to incorporate IT but to make the best possible use of it in order to enhance the educational experience of the students. As a contribution in this direction, this essay has explored three different models of application of IT in higher education through the metaphors of tool, machine and medium.

Tool and machine types of applications belong to the mechanistic view, where IT can be used to improve the efficiency of knowledge transmission and/or to automate some of the activities of the professor. These two metaphors correspond to the one-way objectivist model of teaching. The medium metaphor, on the other hand, consists of the use of the virtual environment where new interactions can take place. It is an environment in which teaching and learning are continuous activities and knowledge emerges from the interaction of students in collaborative learning assignments and group discussions.

IT could change the role of both the lecturer and the enabler-professor. Those teaching in the objectivist paradigm will find themselves liberated from some routine teaching tasks and could devote more time for stimulating intellectual activities with the students. Those teaching in the constructivist paradigm will find a brand new medium to conduct collaborative learning activities and engage their students in continuous intellectual explorations. So, in both worlds there are more possibilities for engaging students in the search for meaning.

It is possible that IT could restore some of the original mission of the universities and shift the focus back to the search for meaning and intellectual exploration in higher education. These goals will probably be achieved if applications of instructional
technologies are subordinated to – and consistent with – the pedagogical model that drives a course. IT applications in higher education should be the means to achieve broader educational goals rather than ends in themselves.

References


2. Pieper, op. Cit., p. 31


4. The term Information Technology was first used by Leavitt and Whisler in their seminal article Management in the 1980s. Harvard Business Review, November-December, 1958, pp. 41. But today the term is commonly used to refer to the convergence of computer and communication technologies and its applications.


13. The distinction between tools and machines is based on the Ortega y Gasset (1941) argument that the tool is an extension of the human being, while the machine exhibits more autonomy of operation and can function without the intervention of a human operator. Ortega y Gasset, J. Thoughts on Technology. Revised reprint of "Man the Technician" in Toward a Philosophy of History. New York: W.W. Norton. 1941.

Birth is a beginning,  
And death a destination,  
But life is a journey,  
A sacred pilgrimage  
Made stage by stage  
From birth to death  
To life everlasting.

These words, taken from a prayer read during the High Holy Day services at my synagogue, have special meaning for me. As I reflect on the journey my life’s work has taken me, I am struck by a powerful link between giving birth, facing death and spirituality.

I began my professional career as a nurse working in labor and delivery. I was drawn to this area of nursing partly by the awe I experienced when I had first witnessed a birth, during my student days. Seeing a woman give birth brought up emotions that I had no words for back then. I only knew that I had been moved beyond all reason and that there was no other specialty in nursing for me. As I look back on that experience, I realize that it was more than just witnessing the miracle of a new life beginning. It was how this unmedicated woman could integrate the power of birthing energy with the strength of her own being and accept the sacred work of creation that inspired me. When each of my three daughters were born years later I understood how the awesome act of giving birth can have a profound effect on a woman’s life.

Although working with childbearing women has remained my passion over the years, more recently, my professional practice has evolved to helping women deal with the events associated with the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Women with this potentially life threatening illness are often forced to confront their own mortality. I have noticed that many women faced with a diagnosis of breast cancer develop a greater appreciation for life. It has been cited in the nursing literature that in some women the experience of a life threatening illness leads to self-transcendence and greater emotional well being. Reed defines self-transcendence as the experience of extending self-boundaries inwardly, outwardly, and temporally to take on broader life perspectives, activities, and purposes. Although giving birth in modern times is rarely considered a life-threatening illness, I believe that for some women the experience of giving birth can also provide an opportunity for self-transcendence.

While participating in this year’s Catholic Studies Seminar Divine Madness and the Intellectual Life: Exercises in Appreciation, I began to reflect on birth and death, two very diverse yet somehow similar life altering experiences. Giving birth and facing death both have the potential to awaken spirituality and thus open the individual to a greater appreciation for meaningful life. This paper will focus on giving birth as an opportunity for self-transcendence.

Why is it that for some women the process of giving birth takes on a spiritual dimension and for others it is only approached with fear and dread and avoided at all costs? Gayle Peterson, in her book Birthing Normally, points out that most women labor in the same way they live. Labor is a crisis situation for most women. They approach it the way they approach any crisis: Some believe they are powerless, while others try to assume control. Many women choose not to experience a natural labor and birth but instead choose to “control” the process with the use of technology and pain-obliterating anesthesia. Too many women today approach labor with the wish, stated or unstated, “Take care of this inconvenience, please. I don’t want to feel a thing — just hand me the baby when it’s over!” What women need most in labor is encouragement and loving support for their abilities to birth normally. Women’s confidence and ability to give birth are either enhanced or diminished by the care provider and place of birth. Sadly, too often women don’t get the encouragement they need because many doctors and nurses hold the same attitudes about labor as they do about any medical crisis or inconvenience — cure it as soon as possible. Thus, most women today opt for routine use of epidural anesthesia. In doing so they are deprived of the opportunity to experience an event that has the potential to shatter their existence and to grow to greater spiritual and psychological fullness.

Our spiritual selves are an intrinsic part of us, although it is also true that we spend less time focusing on this part of our lives than we do on just about anything else. For the most part, we go through our lives believing that if we learn as much as we can about the material world — our bodies, our education, our jobs, ad infinitum — we will be in control and able to contend
with life's challenges. Traditional childbirth education classes emphasize the need to learn everything there is to know about the process of labor and the technology that will be there to help if necessary, along with some coping strategies. Couples expect that if they attend classes and practice their breathing and relaxation exercises they will be prepared to cope with the challenges of labor. One thing that is often absent in childbirth classes is a discussion of the spiritual aspect of this life-affirming experience, the recognition of God's presence in the miracle of life.

When I propose the notion to my undergraduate nursing students that giving birth naturally can be a spiritual experience, they often look at me as if I am "mad." Why, they ask me, would anyone want to "suffer" when modern medicine can provide anesthesia to take away all the pain? Why bother to experience a natural birth? Why not plan to feel as little as possible? This often leads to a philosophical discussion on birth. I want them to appreciate birth as normal, natural and healthy. We hear a great deal about the pain of childbirth but very little about the joy and the pleasure of feeling the contractions, bearing down as the baby pushes into the world and how a woman feels in harmony with the rhythms of her body as it does the incredible work of birth. I try to help them recognize that the experience of birth profoundly affects women and their families and that women's inner wisdom can guide them through birth. I contend that in order to be transformed by birth one must truly experience it. Some students "buy into" this philosophy.

However, for others there is continued questioning as to why anyone should needlessly have to or want to endure pain. This leads to ongoing intellectual dialog. Miller writes:

Being open to upsetting experiences and the radical questions they provoke seems like "madness." But Plato argued that this kind of "madness" is divine because it is the font from which the religious and the intellectual life spring. . . . Our secular culture encourages us to "deal with," "cope with," and "manage" such experiences so that we can maintain control over our lives. But religious traditions seem to unanimously suggest that, if we allow ourselves to be shattered by these experiences, they can have a transformative impact on us: they can lead us to become appreciative participants in mystery, instead of controllers.  

Perhaps this argument explains the need for women to "suffer" somewhat in labor. "Suffering, Aeschylus says in Agamemnon, is the greatest spiritual teacher. It is through suffering that one learns whether God exists." Miller argues that "suffering is the exact opposite of being in control. It means opening oneself to what is horrifying, instead of recoiling from it." In trying to manage or control pain and suffering in labor, one takes away its capacity to upset the core of one's being. When allowed, suffering in labor can turn everything upside down and lead one to become an appreciative participant in the mystery of birth. "When the very center of the self is deeply affected, one's whole way of thinking about the world, as well as one's whole way of feeling it, is profoundly and permanently altered." The person one was before has, to some degree, ceased to exist — and so has the world one used to live in.

Women who are able give up the notion of controlling their labor and open their hearts to the dread, horror, wonder, awe and mystery of the process allow for a radical rupture of their existence. In the book Birthings from Within, England beautifully articulates this process:

In the last, most intense hours of labor, I had unexpectedly become mindless, floating in boundless empty space between contractions, unoccupied by any thoughts whatsoever. This timeless bliss was regularly pierced by sharp pain reminding me that my head was still attached to a body! But in between contractions, my mind would simply float away. Near the end of labor, my ego mental chatter and birth plans all receded into the activity of birth. My thinking-mind plummeted into an immense silence in which I felt bathed in love and well-being. It was then, for an unforgettable moment, that I felt a oneness with all mothers who had ever given birth, and to all mothers all over the world who were laboring and giving birth with me that night. For a fleeting moment, I saw all of us reaching deep inside for strength to break through the mental and physical limitations, which we had assumed to exist. No longer feeling isolated, I noticed a surge of compassion and vigor. It seemed that my effort was in some way helping others though labor, and their effort was helping me. In giving birth I had become a link in the eternal chain of mothers. This profound sense of connection with other women was a turning point.
The mounting intensity of labor forced complete surrender of this woman's body and will, dissolving her ego, ideas, and familiar sense of self. There was no fear of dying because there was no 'self' left to resist and fear. At that transcendent moment she had become birth itself. Perhaps, this represents the spiritual birth of woman into mother.

How can healthcare providers help women to achieve this kind of self-transcendence during birth? First there is a need to acknowledge that the work of normal labor is painful. It is natural to seek pleasure and avoid pain. It is essential to survival to avoid or fix pain that is life-threatening. When we touch something hot, our response is to remove our hand — and in doing so, we protect ourselves from serious injury. But normal labor pain doesn't need to be fixed. It is a healthy sensation that provides direction for women moving through the maze of labor. In Really Teaching Lamaze: The Power of Pain, Lothian explains:

The pain of labor is not simply an unpleasant side effect of the stretching cervix, contracting uterus, and descending baby; feeling the pain and then responding to it has the power to actually facilitate the process of labor and birth. Unrestrained by fetal monitors, intravenous devices, and confinement to bed, women respond by changing position, rocking, walking, rubbing, massaging, and moaning. Women try any number of things, eventually figuring out what works best. And as women get comfortable, try to feel better, and actively 'do something,' their contractions gain strength, the cervix stretches, and the baby settles into the pelvis, rotates, descends through the birth canal, and is born. Focused awareness, responding to what she is feeling, and finding a rhythm evolves as the woman experiences the pain of her labor. Knowing what to do, often without thinking about it, is inner wisdom at its best. These women are not passively enduring pain; they are on a personal journey only they can take. Their pain guides them in their journey. Over and over we need to emphasize,

"you know how to give birth. You know just what to do." Anything that interferes with a woman's ability to experience her contractions or to respond to them in a variety of ways has the potential of interfering with the progress of labor.{[12]}

Women who trust their body's ability to give birth seem to have an intuitive sense that guides them. The challenge of giving birth today is to develop confidence, to trust inner wisdom and to allow nature to do its thing. Women who are able to labor and give birth relaxed, confident and with loving support experience an inner harmony that brings with it strength and endurance. The pain that is a natural part of childbirth becomes manageable. Experiencing labor and birth rather than obliterating the experience, allows women to feel the interweaving of the joy and pain, to work very hard and delight in their incredible accomplishment.

When this is accomplished a woman's body is often permeated and nourished by spiritual energy and guidance. Having faith and trust in this reality is an important part of creating healthy childbirth. When a woman has faith in something greater than her intellect or her present circumstances, she is in touch with her inner source of power. Learning to connect with this inner wisdom, or spirituality, is not difficult, but neither our intellect nor our ego can control either the connection or the results. Often this spiritual awakening and greater appreciation for life does not occur until someone is faced with death. Why not open the door so that birth as well as death can help guide women through this significant journey with insights, wisdom, and reassurance that will heighten their spiritual awareness and create a more meaningful life?

Imagine what might happen if the majority of women emerged from their labor beds with a renewed sense of the strength and power of their bodies and enhanced spirituality through giving birth. When enough women realize that birth is a time of great opportunity to get in touch with their true power, and when they are willing to assume responsibility for this, we will reclaim the power of birth as an opportunity for self-transcendence and come to realize the miraculous gift of being.
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THE WONDER OF WRITING
by Agnes Hooper Gottlieb

“A blank page is God’s way of showing you how hard it is to be God.”

—Anonymous

I am a writer, but why do I write?

“Why do you write?” I asked my writer husband and co-author. “I write for the most fundamental reason,” he said, “because they pay me to do it. Would you ask a plumber, why do you fix toilets?”

Can it be that simple? There must be more than this. It isn’t fun. It isn’t easy. Why do I write?

Legendary sports writer Red Smith aptly captured the terror professional writers feel about their craft when he quipped, “Writing is easy. I just sit down at the typewriter, open a vein and bleed.” Another hack journalist, Gene Fowler, suggested staring “at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.”

Writing is hard. Writing is work. Writing is torture. Writing is painful...Get my drift? I will do just about anything to avoid the task of writing — I have been known to scrub floors, invite 12 people to dinner and cook a gourmet meal for them, clean my basement, anything to avoid writing. One of journalism’s great names, H.L. Mencken, observed that writing books was “a most unpleasant occupation. It is lonesome, unsanitary and maddening.” Few writers when asked say that it gives them joy. They describe fear and terror and a need, no one says it is pleasurable.

That’s why I find it so ironic, given that professional writers understand the enormity of the chore and perform Herculean tasks just to avoid it, that just about everybody in the world who doesn’t write thinks that they could have been writers. Just about everyone in the world is planning to write a book. “Everyone, they say, has a book in him,” wrote Michael Legat in An Author’s Guide to Publishing, “True, but in most cases it should stay there...”

The scene is a cocktail party. I’m mingling. Sometimes I tell people I’m a professor. Sometimes I tell them I’m a writer. Almost uniformly, if I say I’m a writer, the response is immediate, “I was going to write a book” or “I thought about becoming a writer, but then majored in accounting” or, my favorite, “I love to write.”

Love to write. Are you gone? I hate to write. I have never enjoyed writing. Writing isn’t something I love. It’s work. It’s torture. It’s...alas, what I do. Why do I write?

Love to write. Why does everyone think they can write? Can you imagine that same cocktail party — “Hi, I’m a brain surgeon.” “Oh, yes, I was thinking about becoming a brain surgeon.” I don’t think so. But when the topic is writing, everyone thinks they’ve got talent. Perhaps that’s because everyone does, indeed, learn to write. Nobody has ever given me a lesson in brain surgery, but many of the formative years of my education included writing as a foundational underpinning. “All of us learn to write in the second grade,” quipped basketball coach Bobby Knight, “Most of us go on to greater things.” I didn’t.

My first grader came home this year with rudimentary stories in what the educators call creative spelling. Don’t let the spelling slow down the story. Don’t stop to get the grammar correct. Get the story down to nurture critical thinking. We’ll worry about grammar in fourth or fifth grade. So, even my first grader thinks he is a budding Ernest Hemingway. With that kind of positive reinforcement, it’s surprising that there are so many could-have-been writers out there and not so many who actually do it and make money at it. As William Stafford described it, “My question is, ‘When did other people give up the idea of being a poet?’ You know when we are kids we make up things, we write, and for me the puzzle is not that some people are still writing, the real question is why did the other people stop?”

Our seminar on Divine Madness focused especially on the wonder of wonder. I want to focus on the wonder of writing. What is it that makes me a writer? Why is it so full of wonder?

I try to remember when I first began to write. Perhaps it has nothing to do with love or talent. Perhaps it is heredity. My father was a newspaperman. He worked for the Newark Evening News, first as a reporter, later as an editorial writer. Then it folded and he was bitter. Don’t do it, he warned. But writing was in my blood. Like my students, I too was one of those people who was told from an early age that I was a good writer. I was news editor of my high school paper, but I didn’t want to be a writer. I wanted to make music with equations and fractions. I decided to major in math. That lasted one semester. For lack of a better idea, I turned to journalism.
I was good at it. I liked asking questions and crafting the answers into a story. I took a creative writing class and dam near flunked. Stick with the facts, ma'am. I did.

I decided on a career in public relations, but my employer, New Jersey Bell, had cutbacks and, in my senior year in college, I was laid off, entitled to unemployment. With a source of income, I found the luxury of an unpaid internship, but these were belt-tightening days in industry and the post-Watergate boom years of newspapers. I got an internship at the Associated Press and was seduced by the fun of news reporting. On my graduation day from Seton Hall University, the news editor at the AP coincidentally called and offered me a job.

Eight months as the broadcast editor for New Jersey gave way to years as a reporter and editor. The reporting side was fun, so I stuck with that. In 1980, I moved to Brussels and got a job as the editor of a dry, monthly business magazine that I spent two years trying to make readable. Freelancing provided bylines in The New York Times and Newsday. I could write the definitive 400-word story on anything.

In grad school, I wondered if I could find it in me to meet the 20- and 30-page assignments. With the help of a Leading Edge Model D rudimentary computer, I could. My professors criticized my work — it wasn’t scholarly enough (Did that mean, I wondered, that it was too readable or understandable?).

I took a journalism history course and realized that this would be my path. I studied with one of the foremost scholars in journalism history, Dr. Maurine Beasley of the University of Maryland. Graduate school wasn’t easy and writing wasn’t fun. History was like journalism except the subjects were dead (in this aspect, it was cool — there were no disgruntled subjects who could call to complain). I tackled the biography of the first woman journalist in Baltimore for my master’s thesis — 30 pages of it were eaten by a computer. Trust nothing, I learned.

My dissertation explored the work of three 19th-century women journalists — 356 pages, not bad for a writer who specialized in 400-word stories. I learned the secret: write one 400-word story and then take each sentence and write a 400-word story about it. Stop when you have filled 356 pages. “Don’t go for your doctorate,” my 10-year-old daughter told her aunt. “It’s too hard on the family.” My children, it seemed, wondered why I write.

When mundane academic writing lost its edge, I cooked up an idea to write a book with my husband. We recruited two close friends, also writers, got an agent and sold the idea of a book on the 1,000 most important people of the millennium (ranked from 1 to 1,000 if you believe that chutzpah). After two and a half years, countless hours at the computer, innumerable arguments and dozens of bottles of wine, 1,000 Years, 1,000 People: Ranking the Men and Women Who Shaped the Millennium was published in November 1998 on my teenage daughter’s birthday.™ I boasted that few women could say they gave birth twice on the same day and, indeed, the comparison was apt. Writing a book was an intense labor that, like childbirth, had a great payoff.

Now, after years of journalism, years of freelance writing and years of teaching writing, it should be easy. It’s not. Just this summer, I was awarded a national fellowship from the American Society of Newspaper Editors as part of a program to put journalism professors back in the newsroom. Six weeks at The Record in Hackensack, N.J. The editors there took one look at my resume, noticed that their courthouse reporter would be starting his vacation on the same day I was starting at the paper, and decided to have me fill in. I was terrified. I repeated my mantra, “Writing is full of wonder. Writing is wonderful.” That first day, a veteran reporter escorted me over to the courthouse. He started the conversation with: “I never graduated from college.” A great way to impress the professor. What have I gotten myself into, I thought. Then, within five minutes of my arrival at the pressroom, I locked myself out with the only known key to the room on the other side. What have I gotten myself into, I asked. Then, when I finally convinced the cleaning service that I was legit and got back into the press room, the fire alarm went off. I left the building (with my key), but couldn’t get back in because I had no identification (my purse was in the locked press room). I convinced the Bergen County Prosecutor and a Superior Court judge to vouch for me. What have I gotten myself into, I asked.

The six weeks passed quickly. I spent hours sitting in courtrooms trying to find a lead to my story and mulling over the question of the summer: Why do I write? During the fellowship I discovered that I really am a good reporter. After 20 years away from a newsroom, it’s good to know that I really do know how to do what I teach others to do. They offered me a job; I said no. “But does my work make you feel better about the future of journalism education?” I asked my editors. It did. It didn’t explain for me why I write, but it made me feel better that I do.
Our Divine Madness seminar explored who we are and what we do. “The reason I became a philosopher is because I can’t play music,” our discussion leader, Jerry Miller, said. “I really want to play opera, but the closest thing I can get is being a philosopher.” Miller described a “pivotal experience” of his life when he was 19 and destitute and living a sparse existence in Milwaukee. Dressed in galoshes with pajamas under his pants to keep warm, he came upon an opera and went inside. He said it was “an encounter with transcendent mystery” which helped define who he is. Another participant at our seminar described his defining moment as the coming of age experience of shooting a deer. Others described the wonder of Christmas morning, of making a child breakfast, of watching a son sleep. Miller posed this question, “Did we not enter the field we entered because we fell in love?” Is that why I write? I have no memory of falling in love with writing.

It was with this question in mind that I went in search of why writers write and what it means or meant to them. My husband is in good company. That old blowhard Samuel Johnson once remarked, “No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.” Mark Jacobean drinks from that same cynical fountain. “For the money,” he says. “What other reason could there be?” But that’s a lousy answer because if I was in it for the money, I would have become an accountant for a big six firm, or I would have become a slip-and-fall lawyer, or I would have become a podiatrist. I am definitely not in this for the money.

In a more reflective moment, my husband speculated that perhaps he decided to write because, after a childhood of painful shyness, writing was a way to avoid speaking. If he wrote, he was not pressed to speak. “Perhaps if I had not gotten over my shyness, I could have been a great writer.” But I was never shy, so that also fails to explain why I write.

And, of course, I am a journeymen newspaper writer, not a great writer. But, perhaps I should stay away from sorting out the various levels of writing. That always leads to the troublesome question of what is a great writer. Ayn Rand or John Grisham? I hardly think so, but millions pay millions to read what they’ve written. Take James Joyce, author of Ulysses, voted this year the greatest book of the century, and Joyce’s wife asks him, “Why don’t you write books people can read?”

Ray Bradbury, author of The Zen in the Art of Writing, described writing as a life-sustaining act. “If you did not write every day, the poisons would accumulate and you would begin to die, or act crazy or both — you must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy you.”

Cynthia Ozick called it “an act of courage.” Margaret Atwood agreed. “You need a certain amount of nerve to be a writer, an almost physical nerve, the kind you need to walk a log across a river.”

Eureka! Words like courage and nerve. I like those words. Is that why I write? It feels right. Perhaps, I like the challenge. Every day I sit at my word processor and stare at the technological equivalent of a blank page. Can I do it again? What will result? For me, I believe, the purpose isn’t to be found in the outcome — the news story, magazine article or book chapter — for me, the journey is the reason. Recreating myself on paper one day at a time. Perhaps, just perhaps, that is why I write.

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6. Writing from the Body, p. 10.
8. Ibid., p. 9.
THE SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN MODERN LIFE

by Anthony L. Haynor

There is widespread consensus that sociology as an academic discipline emerged as an effort to explain the development of modern society as a unique period in human history. The sociological tradition has made an invaluable contribution to our understanding of modernity as a phenomenon and process that has transformed in fundamental ways our social institutions (the economy, the family, education, politics, law and religion), our relationships, and our identities. One can see in the work of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Alexis De Tocqueville, and their successors a serious attempt to identify the peculiar challenges that institutional modernity poses for individuals in their pursuit of meaningful lives. How various sociological writers have cast and framed these challenges in the subject of this essay. The goal of the essay is to demonstrate the critical role of the sociological tradition in historicizing our conversation about the meaning of life. The seminal insight offered by this tradition is that those of us living in modern society search for meaning under a set of social conditions that are historically unique and specific. Our biological experiences are inevitably and necessarily contextualized by these conditions.

One implication of this line of thinking is that the debate over meaning cannot fruitfully take place in an historical vacuum. A second implication of this approach is that the various philosophical perspectives (both metaphysical and ethical) on the nature of being are themselves, at least to some extent, historically grounded. Deserving particular attention is the question of the metaphysical and ethical underpinnings of the sociological investigations to be presented. That is, what definitions or conceptions of a meaningful life are sociologists employing (either explicitly or implicitly) in their analyses of the modern situation? In raising and confronting these issues, this essay attempts to contribute as well to a productive conversation between philosophy and sociology.

This essay focuses on seven processes essential for an understanding of the modern situation. These processes represent cultural values (conceptions of the desirable) that most of us living in a modern society have to one extent or another internalized. They have also been institutionalized in the organizational fabric of the society and in the “cultural scripts” that guide individual action in modern societies. Each is considered in turn, with particular attention given to the implications of each process for living meaningful lives. An attempt is then made to show how they are interwoven (that is stand in a relationship of interdependence and reciprocal influence) or stand in tension or conflict with one another.

Commodification

Commodification refers to the process in capitalist society (the form which modernity took in the West) by which things are assigned value on the basis of their marketability. All human relationships tend to become commodified in capitalist society through the utilization of money as a medium of exchange. Workers are salaried employees whose productive energies are sold in the labor market. The goods and services produced through the workers’ labor become commodities that are purchased by consumers. Commodification transcends and even obliterates national, religious and ethnic boundaries.

According to one interpretation (rooted in the Marxist tradition)11, the process of commodification is intimately and intrinsically linked to the process of exploitation. Workers are not compensated at a rate commensurate with the true worth of their labor. The owners and controllers of capital run their enterprises in order to maximize profit. This involves not only to the “extraction of surplus value” from workers, but also the aggressive marketing of goods and services to potential customers. Acquisitive needs are created and fueled through advertising. Consumers become convinced that what they crave is what they need, but these “needs” are in large part “false.” The owners and controllers of capital thus engage in the manipulation of consumers. The processes of exploitation and manipulation are interdependent.

The analysis of commodification has been extended in an interesting way as the economy has changed its base from manufacturing to services. In dealing with customers and clients (i.e., consumers), workers market themselves, their personalities, and their emotions. The commodification of personality is part and parcel of the process of exploitation to the degree that it generates profit for the owners and controllers of capital. It is also intimately related to the process of manipulation to the
degree that "emotion work" is used cynically to get consumers to purchase a given service. 8

According to this line of thinking, the very existence of commodification as an organizing principle of a capitalist society undermines, perhaps more accurately, cripples the ability of individuals to live meaningful lives (even those who control capital). In the first place, the human person's natural drive for creativity (homo faber) goes unfulfilled in a work environment that is alienating. The overriding concern is to minimize the costs of production. This is accomplished through a more extensive division of labor and an enhanced reliance on non-human productive forces (i.e., technology). The creativity of work is not a factor in the organization of the work process. Consequently, workers are alienated (or estranged) from the product of their labor and from their co-workers. The fact that one produces in order to "exchange" rather than to "use" goes to the heart of this estrangement from the productive process. In the second place, the equation of worth with market value is seriously misguided. One eschews activities for which there is no monetary compensation (e.g. the devaluing of unpaid work). Self-respect is defined in terms of the exchange value of commodities you possess. The meaningfulness of one's life is defined in terms of market success: the salary your skills command in the labor market, the price your product or service yields in the market, your ability to get a bargain or obtain a "positional good." Self-worth is proportionate to the exchange value of what you sell (goods, services or labor) and what you consume. Commodities take on a "sacred" status; the places where they are bought and sold have become modem-day temples.

How can one live a meaningful life given such an interpretation of commodification? Meaning is derived through social and political action aimed at restructuring in a fundamental way the productive process. But, what if one is "condemned" to live in a society for which commodification is such a powerful organizing principle? A case is made that exploitation, manipulation, alienation and the "fetishism of commodities" are necessary outcomes of a society rooted in commodification, and that it is only through the removal of these conditions that human beings can live meaningful lives. The argument put forth is that commodification constitutes an impenetrable barrier to human fulfillment and creativity.

The main problem with this interpretation lies in its overly structuralist bias. First, all individuals to the same degree do not internalize a commodified world-view (that is a marketing orientation or a consumerist mentality). There are many people who choose not to define self-worth or assess value on the basis of market success. In fact, one can argue that more and more people are questioning such a criterion of value. Second, in defining meaning in terms of institutional change, the efforts by individuals to find meaning in their intimate and everyday relationships and social involvements are dismissed. The obsession with macro-level change crowds out the possibility that individuals can have transcending experiences in their life experiences. Third, in focusing on the way in which societal rewards are allocated, meaning becomes too closely associated with distributive justice (the proportionality of reward to investments). The fact that the system by which resources are distributed is not "fair" does not negate the possibility of living a meaningful life. These forms of structural determinism are grounded in an overly materialistic view of life and of the human person 9.

There is another take on commodification that is rooted in the work of Georg Simmel.10 According to this view, commodification contributes to a global economy, a process that breaks down particularistic allegiances out of which ethnic and religious conflict and violence flow. It is the very universalism and "abstraction" inherent in a commodified society that reduces intergroup conflict. Commodification widens one's social networks and serves to eclipse social distance between groups. This is a powerful and seductive interpretation of commodification. While it is true that it breaks down particularistic boundaries ("I don't care whether you are black and yellow, as long as I get green out of our relationship."), it doesn't create solidarity or community. It might, in certain situations, prevent you from engaging in violence against groups, because it would be bad for business, although many wars and imperialistic conquests in the modern period have been engaged in to help ensure market success. It does not foster attachments between buyers and sellers beyond those of a purely pragmatic nature. To look at commodification in terms of "abstraction" in fact validates a critical point made by the Marxist perspective presented above: namely, that commodification encourages people to "thingize" each other. Buyers and sellers define each other as resources to be exploited in the marketplace. Everything else about them becomes irrelevant. Given the sorry legacy of ethnic and religious conflict, one could view this as an improvement. But, we should be cautioned against turning commodification into some kind of a communitarian breakthrough.
Rationalization and Control

By rationalization is meant the process by which efficiency comes to constitute a central organizing principle of social life. Emphasized is the selection of means that can more efficiently accomplish goals. Little or no attention is devoted to the rationality of the goals themselves. Efficiency is maximized to the degree that the procedures considered and selected are calculable (that is, quantifiable and measurable), and standardized (that is, removed from individual caprice). Means are chosen on the basis of an understanding of chains of causation (which X would lead to which Y). Part and parcel of the rationalization of life is the demystification of life. Primacy is placed on understanding how the world works so that one may control it. The emphasis on “experts” makes sense in this context. People in modern society tend to rely for guidance on those who have demystified their particular knowledge domain and are thus in a privileged position to help them control more effectively environments that have heretofore resisted their control. Rationalization is also clearly reflected and epitomized by bureaucracy. The division of labor, the chain of command, the recruitment to positions on the basis of formal training, and the codification of rules, policies, and procedures are all designed to maximize control over the movements of people and the delivery of goods and services.

There are different lines of thinking regarding the rationalization of life in modern society. One approach is to see rationalization as pervading every sphere of life: the economy, politics, education, religion, and even the family. According to this view, even one’s private life (with intimates and significant others) has become “colonized” as it were by the forces of rationalization (and commodification as well). If this is true, is it possible to live a meaningful life under such circumstances? The answer is no because rationalization places us in an “iron cage,” in which our agency, that is, our capacity to act spontaneously, is choked off by the rules and procedures that “person-proof” life to a considerable extent. Demystification leads to “disenchantment,” the sense that the world is devoid of wonder or awe. Such an interpretation leads to a profound pessimism regarding the very possibility of meaning in the modern world. The only antidote to rationalization so conceived is the Nietzschean assertion of power, the conscious attempt to break out of the iron cage whenever possible and as often as possible. To what degree can this only lead to frustration, given that the existing social arrangements do not tend to validate such assertions?

The other strategy is to take oneself out of person-proofed social environments and to participate only in environments that respect human agency and spontaneity. This is easier said than done.

Another line of thinking is that individuals in modern society are able to carve out a private space or sphere in which the forces of rationalization do not hold sway. It is in this private space or sphere that individuals are capable of asserting their spontaneity, of tapping into their craving for mystery, awe and wonder. This becomes their refuge from the deadening experiences of bureaucracy and the controlling effects of experts. The private sphere becomes that zone in which the individual can seek and at least partially achieve authenticity. Through friendships, family relationships and leisure activities, the individual is able to create a “haven in a heartless world.” There are two problems with this line of thinking. First, it tends to underestimate the degree to which the private sphere has been colonized by the forces of rationalization and commodification. Second, it consigns and condemns the public sphere (of work and citizenship involvement) of one’s life to meaninglessness. It is difficult to see this as an acceptable road on which to travel.

A key question is this: what would we be giving up if we were to live in a less rationalized society? What is the tradeoff involved? Some argue that bureaucratisation through its formal procedures safeguards individual liberties, rights and autonomy. The challenge confronting modern society is to have these safeguards in place and to person-proof where necessary in the service of organizational stability without having an environment that suffocates and stifles human creativity and agency. A tall order indeed!

Equality and Peer Sensitivity

The modern world has moved significantly and unarguably in an egalitarian direction. This means first, the deligitimation of authority (whether based on age, rank or even expertise); and second, the inclusion of more and more people into the “societal community.” In the case of the first process, there is an acceptance of the equivalence of opinions and judgements, and a validation of individual feelings, tastes and interpretations. In the case of the second process, there is the extension of formal rights associated with citizenship, from suffrage rights to the right to education, to equal protection under the law, to the right to a minimally acceptable standard of living. These rights have been extended to women, new immigrant groups,
people of color, and more recently to gays and lesbians as well.

Equality emphasizes at its core inclusion rather than exclusion. It focuses on our likenesses rather than our differences. The notion of “equal protection under the law” involves the extension of rights to people regardless of their ethnic, gender or racial differences. “Public opinion” is mass opinion: all opinions are determined to have identical weight.

Of particular relevance to the subject of this essay is the degree to which individuals in modern society rely on the opinions of their peers when making decisions or in assessing their performance. [13] To be guided by one’s peers is to be captivated by an egalitarian spirit. The “truth” is thought to lie not in tradition, not in commands issued by authority figures, not in the judgments of experts, but rather in public or majority opinion.

Defenders of equality thus conceived see this ethos as the victory of populism over elitism. Critics argue that such “other-directedness” undermines human autonomy and makes the individual susceptible to the vagaries and fickleness of public opinion. Those who rely on peer opinions lack an inner core. They are buffeted by whatever the prevailing currents of thought happen to be. The sentiment is also expressed that a mass culture reflecting the lowest common denominator is mediocre at best, and debased at worst. But, what are the implications of an egalitarian spirit for living a meaningful life? Proponents of egalitarianism argue that a peer orientation fosters tolerance, mutual respect, sensitivity to the opinions of others, and a non-judgmental attitude toward other people. Critics, on the other hand, link other-directedness to a lack of integrity. A meaningful life is one in which individuals act in ways that are consistent with their characterological core, deep-seated beliefs and values, internal “gyroscope,” and conscience.

Liberty as Privacy

Individualism has been closely associated with modernity in the minds of many observers, commentators, and analysts. But, individualism (as is the case with modernity itself) is a very slippery term, one possessing multiple meanings. Often these meanings have become conflated. The three processes or cultural themes (liberty, individuality, and individual sacredness as the basis of community) to be presented in succession represent distinct dimensions of individualism in a modern context. The objective is to show how they can and need to be unpacked.

Liberty as a value involves at its core “negative freedom,” by which is meant the absence of external constraint. It is freedom from the sanctioning power of others. To have liberty is to have a zone in which one is independent of social constraints and left alone to act as one pleases. According to classical liberalism (in contemporary parlance, libertarianism) it is the existence and maintenance of this zone of privacy that is the cornerstone of a humane and enlightened society. The chief libertarian concern is “totalism,” a social arrangement in which the individual’s life is completely controlled by the state and its various arms. But, other social groups (one’s family, ethnic group, religious group, or employing organization) are more than capable of exhibiting totalistic tendencies (e.g. the Amish community’s prohibition on schooling past a certain age). It is the goal of classic liberalism or libertarianism to protect the individual from such tendencies, wherever the source. (It is interesting to note that the state, itself a source of totalism, is used to protect individuals from totalistic tendencies that are seen as emanating from other social groups.)

In attacking individualism as privacy, an association is made between privacy, on the one hand, and dehumanization, rootlessness, and separation from one’s fellow human beings, on the other. [14] The argument is that one’s full humanity can only be developed within a community. A private life is one in which individuals are not attached to entities above and beyond themselves (egoism) and lack integration into a system of social norms (anomie). Privatization is a recipe for self-absorption and weak self-regulation.

Defenders of classic liberalism and libertarianism would counter that negative freedom (that is, freedom from the suffocating control that groups exercise over human beings) is a significant evolutionary breakthrough in human history, and one for which modernity is to be credited. It is not necessarily the case that individuals when left to their own devices exercise their privacy in anti-social, egocentric and unrestrained ways. In fact, they would argue that human beings have natural sympathies and if left to their own devices would enter voluntarily into cooperative social arrangements with others. It is the stranglehold of repressive structures (particularly the state) that prevents the expression of such natural dispositions. (What is not given enough attention is the fact that once such cooperative arrangements are formed, they become encrusted in the
form of structures that then limit the privacy of those who subsequently participate in the collectivities that emerge.) They would argue further that liberalism has developed a workable strategy designed to prevent liberty from degenerating into license. The “no harm” principle permits and encourages the exercises of liberty to the degree that the liberty of others is not undermined.\(^\text{14}\) A society is modern to the degree that this principle is accepted and embraced.

From a classic liberal and libertarian point of view, a meaningful life is one in which individuals possess a zone of privacy and are encouraged to exercise the independence that this zone entails to form relationships in accordance with their natural inclinations. A life with a larger zone of privacy is more meaningful than one with a smaller zone of privacy. The assumption is that negative freedom produces positive, pro-social outcomes, the harm principle being sufficient to prevent individuals from acting in ways that diminish or dilute the independence experienced by others. A telling critique of this approach is that the very celebration of independence has led and continues to lead to behavior that prevents society from producing necessary “public goods.”\(^\text{13}\) The so-called “free-rider problem” and the “tragedy of the commons” result from excessive, not insufficient, privacy. What happens when the natural sympathies posited as a given are not in evidence?

**Subjectivity and Individuality**

Individualism, as we have seen, has been linked to privatization, that is, the independence from social constraints. Another meaning given to individualism is that it involves in its essence the ongoing effort on the part of individuals to make or become themselves. Individualism from this perspective is conceptualized in terms of the process of self-discovery and self-transformation.\(^\text{13}\) Individualism is defined as *individuality*, in the sense that the emphasis is placed on our separateness and our uniqueness, on how we are different from others. Under modern conditions of life, our identity is wide-open. It is achieved, not ascribed. *Subjectivity* comes to the fore. Modern persons are in a continual state of reflectiveness about the kind of people they have become, are becoming, and want to be.\(^\text{17}\) Reflectiveness can involve a rational assessment of discrepancies between our ideal identity and our operative identity, leading to conscious efforts to reduce existing gaps through acts of will (the “active” version). Or, it can involve an ongoing effort to interpret or make sense of lived experience (the “contemplative” version). In the former case, the concern is with *self-creation*, that is, with controlling the direction that our identity takes. In the latter case, the concern is with *self-evolution*, that is, with interpreting our lives as they play themselves out over time. In either event, the end result of subjectivity is the construction of a coherent and unified life philosophy that we can call our own.

We begin to appreciate our individuality when we first dichotomize the world into “I” and “not-I” (Stage 1).\(^\text{13}\) Initially, this is experienced in terms of indiscriminate wants and desires. We then come to define our individuality in terms of a unique *organization* (rankings, prioritizing) of wants and desires (Stage 2). Others (“not-I”) are viewed as buttons to push (as things to be manipulated) in order to achieve our individualized structure of preferences. At this stage in the development of our individuality, we are sensitized to the viewpoint of others only to the degree that such “role-taking” assists us in achieving our preferences. We can then go through a stage in which we “identify” ourselves with the perspective of significant others: their world becomes our world (Stage 3). The next possibility is that we seek to harmonize or align our preference structure with the preference structure of significant others (Stage 4). The next stage involves detaching oneself from the immediacy of one’s relationships and arriving at an understanding of role expectations that makes sense in particular spheres of life (Stage 5). Individuality at this stage involves living in accordance with these generalized expectations. The final stage consists of integrating the expectations that govern various involvements, facing up to and addressing contradictions and inconsistencies, and forging out of this process an overall life philosophy. (Stage 6)

The search for individuality in the modern world can be classified in terms of two basic strategies: *authenticity*\(^\text{23}\) and *autonomy*.\(^\text{14}\) By “authenticity” is meant the pursuit of an identity that expresses one’s inner core or essence. The objective is to “transcend” one’s social roles and group involvements and develop a life philosophy that bears the imprint of one’s uniqueness. To be authentic is to adopt a life philosophy that insists that we are more than the roles we play or, more extremely, that we are not the roles that we play in society. “Autonomy” is the attempt on our part to reconcile and integrate the unique and the collective aspects of our humanity. An autonomous identity is one that is committed to those rules and only those rules that “make sense” by virtue of the fact they are consistent with the person’s inner core.
There is an interesting dialectic at work in the stage model presented here. Stage 1 and 2 represent the "authenticity" strategy. One could legitimately refer to these stages of identity as "pre-social" in nature. Our collective self triumphs briefly in Stage 3, but in Stage 4 we see the attempt on the part of individuals to reconcile the perspective of others with their own perceived inner core. At Stage 5, the individual has "internalized" the expectations of others in a way that is worthy of voluntary commitment. At the final stage, the individual is fully autonomous in that a coherent life philosophy capable of addressing contradictions and inconsistencies has been constructed and affirmed.

To live a meaningful life is to take seriously the project of self-discovery. Through reflection, individuals uncover their inner core, their individuality. For some analysts of modernity, individuality is expressed by transcending the boundaries imposed by group life. For other commentators, it involves the cultivation of autonomy, which involves the struggle (often torturous) to be collective beings in ways that validate and express the very core of our being.

The Sacredness of the Individual as the Basis of Community

We come now to the third meaning of individualism in the modern society. This is the notion that it is the individual that is deserving of special sacred status. From a modern perspective, the individual supplants God and society as the primary object of sacred attachment, reverence and awe. This means that the essential dignity and worth of each and every human being is to be respected. By virtue of their intrinsic preciousness, all efforts need to be taken to develop every person's full potential. Human beings are precious both because they are human (this celebrates what all members of the species share) and because they are unique (this celebrates differences in temperaments, talents and ancestries). Human beings are seen as resources to be nurtured and cultivated. Persons deserve to be treated as if they matter.

The principle of the sacredness of persons not only guides individual conduct but forms the basis of solidarity in modern society. It is the glue, the cement that binds individuals to each other. It replaces "tradition" and particularistic loyalties to the basis of solidarity.

A meaningful life witnesses the inherent dignity of all persons, most especially, those who are "challenged" and vulnerable (e.g., the sick, the poor, the mentally ill). People live meaningful lives to the degree that they treat others and are treated as if they matter.

Pluralization and the Encounter with Otherness

The modern condition is characterized by a profound fragmentation of consciousness. Life in modern society is "differentiated," that is it takes place in spheres (familial, economic, political, religious), with each operating in accordance with its own inner logic. These logics tend to be discrepant in nature (e.g., love one another in the family, exploit each other in the economy). Experience is made intelligible by drawing on perspectives (scientific, aesthetic, moral, technological) that do not cohere, and that are not easily integrated.

In modern society, there is "group expansion." This means that the individual participates in a wider variety of groups and organizations than at any time in human history. Each group requires a partial commitment from individual members, and no group commands the total loyalty of the individual. Our group involvements tend to be segregated rather than overlapping. In addition, the modern age is one of relentless stimulation. We are bombarded by and exposed to a plethora of life perspectives and life styles, not to mention information bytes to be processed. From one standpoint, this tends to produce a "blase" attitude, associated in particular with modern urban life. One cannot become emotionally involved with every perspective or datum with which one is confronted in everyday life. In order to function on a practical level, these objects of stimulation have to, in large part, "roll off our backs." The emphasis here is on the degree to which these discrepant and discordant perspectives are incomensurate, that is, embody assumptions about reality that cannot be bridged or reconciled. Here, pluralization is linked to relativism. From another standpoint, the modern temperament (some would say the postmodern temperament) is one that encourages the individual to "dialogue" in an active way with perspectives and data that are inconsistent with one's own definitions of reality. The pragmatist notion of "fallibilism" is relevant here. According to this intellectual stance, the individual's life philosophy is provisional and contingent, and in addition, subject to modification in the face of new approaches, information and evidence.
How can one live a meaningful life under conditions of pluralization? If a relativist strategy is utilized, confronting the internal contradictions contained within one's own perspective or "tradition" becomes a highly meaningful activity. If a fallibilist strategy is adopted, then meaning takes the form of openness to the modification of one's perspective as a result of the conversations engaged in with other discourses or traditions. At its heart, the pluralization of consciousness involves our encounter with "otherness." This encounter can result in the incorporation of each person's perspective into the evolving life philosophy of the other (a likely outcome of a fallibilist strategy)

Connections, Tensions and Contradictions

If it is the case that these seven themes constitute the core of the modern world view, a critical issue has to do with the extent to which they (1) reinforce or provide necessary conditions for each other (Connections), (2) pose challenges for each other (Tensions), (3) are in fundamental opposition to each other (Contradictions). Does the modern world view provide individuals with a consistent set of cultural scripts for pursuing meaningful lives? Or, does the modern world view involve tradeoffs, in which case following one cultural script means that another cultural script cannot logically be followed? This is a exceedingly complicated question and space does not permit me to explore it in great detail, but some observations can be made.

The first issue has to do with the logical connection between and among the various cultural scripts, and these are indeed considerable. For example, commodification can be seen as an attempt to rationalize production. Commodification, it could be argued, only makes sense if individuals have the liberty to buy and sell. There are many individuals in modern society who through the commodities they sell and buy construct their authentic lives. One could argue that there is an affinity between equality and the sacredness of the individual. In addition, one could make a plausible case that the encounter with otherness could easily take the form of separation and conversion unless there is a fundamental commitment to equality. Also, the quest for individuality is facilitated by the existence of a zone of privacy. Finally, the quest for autonomy involves in a central way an encounter with otherness.

The second issue involves the tensions that exist between and among the different elements of the modern world view. For example, the rationalization of life poses serious challenges for the encounter with otherness. The former has a homogenizing thrust; the latter focuses on heterogeneity. A definite tension exists between the colonizing tendencies of rationalization (efficiency as an organizing principle in all spheres of life) and the value placed on individual liberty. The attempt by elites to rationalize social life has obvious implications for individual liberty. Also, there is a possibility that public opinion can turn deaf ear to the sacredness of a certain category of individuals. There is an obvious tension between the desire for liberty and privacy and a commitment to the sacredness of all human beings within the community. In addition, there is a tension between a genuine encounter with the perspectives of others, on the one hand, and a foundational commitment to the equivalence of all opinions and judgments, which in a sense obviates the need for an encounter. Finally, there is a tension between the relativist assertion of incommensurability and the universalistic conviction that all human beings possess an inherent sacredness. What if the others whom one encounters do not share the conviction that each human being is sacred?

The third issue concerns the existence of contradictions between the seven cultural themes that define modernity as a perspective on the world. For example, one could argue that commodification (which "thingizes" people) contradicts the belief in the sacredness of the individual. Also, the rationalization of life collides with the project of self-discovery. An inherent conflict exists between "person-proofing" and the effort to find one's authentic self or autonomous self. Similarly, a serious conflict exists between the desire for control, on the one hand, and a commitment to the sacredness of the person. One must also recognize that the desire for authenticity can conflict with the rationalizing imperatives of organizational life. Finally, there is a conflict between the search for authenticity on the one hand, and the kind of "group think" mentality associated with public opinion.

The strands that comprise modern thought are interwoven in very delicate and precarious ways. Some modern commentators have chosen to emphasize certain elements and ignore or give short shrift to the others (e.g. libertarians who fixate on liberty while giving only cursory treatment to the other elements; or postmodernists who emphasize fallibilism while neglecting the foundational belief in the sacredness of person). In searching for meaning in modern life, it is necessary for each and every one of us to determine for
ourselves whether the seven principles of modern culture and society identified by the sociological tradition are indeed worthy of our commitment and adherence. It is then necessary to apply those principles embraced to our everyday life experience, with the full recognition of the tensions and contradictions that may need to be worked out as a necessary part of this process. It is only in and through this struggle for coherence and unity that we who are living in modern society can lead truly meaningful lives.

Implications for "Divine Madness"

Is a commitment to the modern project presented in this essay compatible with a desire to experience and participate in "Divine Madness"? I possess a modern temperament in significant ways. On the other hand, I do consider myself to be a believing, engaged Christian. I do not see how a commitment to commodification can in any significant way facilitate one's immersion in Divine Madness. Just the opposite. It tends to lead to false idolatry, an appreciation not for Divine mystery, but for commodities. Sacredness becomes attached to commodities, rather than to God's gift of grace. The pervasive rationalization of life, with its emphasis on control is antithetical to the experience of Divine Madness, which at its core presupposes giving up control. To be overly sensitive to public opinion is to be bound to the thoughts of finite human beings, rather than being open to the infiniteness of the Divine presence. Privacy can provide use with the space necessary to experience the presence of God in our lives. However, if it cuts us off from our fellow human beings, then we become cut off from how the Divine is working through our communion with our fellow human beings. The search for authenticity as well as the view that the individual is the vessel of sacredness blinds us to the reality that God is the source of our individuality and our sacredness. Finally, our encounter with others can involve an encounter with Divine Madness only to the degree that we recognize that Divine grade is working through those others whom we encounter.

Is it easy to experience Divine Madness under conditions of modernity? Obviously not. In fact, it is frighteningly challenging and difficult. One can immerse oneself in Divine Madness only if one recognizes and is self-conscious of the peculiar pitfalls, challenges, obstacles posed by modernity, as well as the opportunities and resources that modernity makes available to us in our attempt to live meaningful lives.

References


3. This critique of a materialistic conception of the human person has been expressed in Catholic Social Teaching.


7. This term was introduced by Max Weber at the end of his The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1958.


10. This is a phrase taken from Christopher Lasch.


15. The term "gyroscope," is used by Riesman.


17. The argument that individualism can under particular conditions degenerate into egoism and anomie in modern society was developed by Emile Durkheim. See, for example, Suicide. New York: Free Press, 1951.


26. In Catholic Social Teaching, this is the doctrine of "personalism." This has been particularly emphasized by Pope John Paul II. One could argue that while this has been a long-held teaching of the Church, it was the encounter with modernity that brought it to the fore. Of course, from a Catholic perspective, our dignity and worth stems from the fact that each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. The modern viewpoint represents a secularized version of personalism.

27. See Simmel, op. cit. in particular, Levine's "Introduction."


32. I have chosen not to address in this essay the complicated if at all understandable distinction between modernity and postmodernity. The themes of commodification, rationalization, and liberty tend to be associated with modernity. The encounter with otherness is clearly more associated with postmodernity. How the other themes fit into this dichotomy is not all that self-evident.


34. This is consistent with the argument put forth by Pieper, Joseph. Leisure: The Basis of Culture. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998. Pieper makes the point that a life spent in rational/functional activities is one that cannot put individuals in touch with their inner core or in communion with God. He was certainly not advocating a privatized existence.
RE-PRESENTING HISTORY IN ART
by Jürgen Heinrichs

I.

It was a great privilege to participate in Divine Madness and the Intellectual Life: Exercises in Appreciation, a Seton Hall faculty development seminar facilitated by Dr. Jerome Miller in late May. What has now become an experience I would not want to miss had initially presented itself quite differently as a case of "bad timing." Let me explain: The announcement for the seminar had stirred my interest at a time when the event was still weeks away. I signed up and eagerly looked forward to what promised to be an unusual configuration of academic work and spiritual retreat. However, by mid-May I found myself in a very different situation. Classes had ended but papers and exams continued to pile up on my desk at a rate faster than I could mark them. As I juggled many other ordinary and long-postponed chores of daily life a general end-of-semester fatigue manifested itself in tangible physical and mental exhaustion. In other words, a certain madness - less divine than perhaps ordinary in nature - had preceded the seminar.

In addition, another endeavor had turned out to be more challenging than expected: Berlin - Reinventing the Cultural Capital, my graduate course in the museum professions program, was about to depart for Europe right after Divine Madness. I had looked forward to this course for a long time but I underestimated the complexity of the tasks involved: academic conceptualization, travel arrangements, reading assignments, program design, and pre-departure orientations. Challenged by the formidable task of completing everything on time, I was about to withdraw from Divine Madness at the very last moment as I feared that I had hopelessly overtaxed myself.

Little did I realize then that there could not have been a better time for the experience that was about to unfold. Jerome Miller's remarkable talent for energizing a sometimes weary group successfully removed us from "the distractions and diversions of everydayness."[1] The workshop in many ways reconnected us to the spiritual core of our existence during this time of high stress. It positively ruptured our busy lives and made us realize to what extent we had become trapped in what we affectionately came to refer to as "the box" - a metaphor for futile efforts to control our lives by shielding them from both the wonder and the dread of human experience. Alternatively, Miller suggests that "radical questioning precipitated by upsetting experiences is both religiously and intellectually liberating."[2]

In keeping with the spirit of Divine Madness, this essay presents an exploratory exercise in the practice of appreciation. The seminar was such a fruitful experience because it upset the often numbing flow of our busy lives. Yet, the significance of the seminar reaches far beyond mere personal or institutional benefit. Not some "feel-good" meeting but rather a challenging intellectual and spiritual endeavor, this workshop enabled us to reconnect with our heart, the inner core of the self, that mysterious center of our being that is so inexplicably opaque and distant from ourselves.[3]

Inspired by the momentum of Divine Madness I shall explore another disruptive event that was to unfold on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. The staggering sight of young children in front of a crumbling fence of a former concentration camp prompted me to reconsider ruptures in our personal lives in light of the greater calamities of history. A contemplation of Walter Benjamin's "angel of history," I propose, may enable us to reconcile the utterly personal with the widely historical. Obviously, this inquiry must remain a humble attempt to approximate a layered and highly complex human experience within the limitations of a short essay.

II.

On June 4, about one week into our Berlin course, we visited the former concentration camp Sachsenhausen, now a memorial dedicated to commemorate the Holocaust.[4] An hour's subway ride from the center of Berlin brought us to the small town of Oranienburg, located just northeast of the capital. One of the students, we noticed, had arrived in suit and tie, an unusually formal outfit for this hot and humid day. As we wondered and asked he replied: "It is my way of showing respect for the place and the lives that vanished!" We were speechless in admiration for the nobility of this young man.

The general mood of the students was subdued in anxious anticipation of what they might encounter at this grim site of terror. A young woman, our guide, greeted us at the gate. Dr. Marlies Bollow, a Berlin sociologist,
was most qualified to convey both the historical information and the challenges of her work. Her introduction was as informative as it was sensitive to the profound nature of the subject. She carefully balanced the presentation of general information concerning the past with more historically differentiated probes into the phenomena of anti-Semitism and national-socialism.

Yet, a plethora of scholarly articles and classroom discussions could not buffer the immediacy of terror at Sachsenhausen. Many of the camp's original installations were destroyed during the liberation by the Allied forces in 1945. However, the gatehouse along with several barracks and watchtowers still exist. Stretches of the old barbed-wire fence surrounding the camp have survived as well. Given the professional background of our students and their familiarity with museum work, I had encouraged Dr. Bollow to allow us a behind-the-scenes look into the challenges of her work. Thus, we pondered the very issues that continue to occupy historians and museum professionals alike: How did the foundation take upon itself the immensely difficult task of exhibiting the unexhibitable? In light of the fact that the architectural substance at Sachsenhausen - like that of Auschwitz and other camps - had begun to decay we wondered: Should the original substance be preserved by all means or should one allow it to decay over time? Would replicas of, say, the rusting barbed wire compromise the historical authenticity of the place? Or should the crumbling fence be replaced with new wires in order to provide as complete an appearance as possible for educational purposes?

As we toured the camp the overall silence indicated that everybody was busy processing the flood of ambivalent impressions. Sachsenhausen, it became clear momentarily, differed from any other museum we had visited. The historical presence of unspeakable terror lent the memorial an aura quite different from mediated representations of the Holocaust in, say, Steven Spielberg's 1993 movie Schindler's List.

Because I had visited Sachsenhausen on several previous occasions since my own high school days, I did not experience the same degree of shock in response to this topography of terror anymore. Instead, the initial impact had given way to a sorrowful revisiting of this haunting evidence of the most brutal genocide in modern history. Yet, as we traversed the large, grassy area where prisoners once used to line up for roll call, a staggering sight drew my attention and prompted me to take a photograph: a group of young children, their backs turned to us, was sitting in front of the fence (Fig. 1).

Behind them, a bleak sign depicted a white skull-and-cross-bones against black ground. Obviously, the sign or this replica of its original had warned prisoners to stay clear of the electrified barrier. The fence, with its dilapidated barbed wire and cracked concrete posts is clearly visible in the background. We wondered about the children's bent heads. As we passed by the group at a closer range we realized that they had drawing pads on which they sketched the skull-and-cross-bones sign along with the broken-down fence behind it. The face of death with its odd grinning mouth stared out at us in its dreadful minimalist expression of doom as we shared the children's perspective.

Instantly, a painful feeling of anguish overwhelmed me as I saw these children, perhaps not even 10 years of age, exposed to this most dreadful marker of violent death. As I contemplated their striking artistic endeavors another thought came to mind. Earlier that week television reports about the ongoing massacres in Kosovo had described how refugee children had painted and drawn pictures that, in turn, bore witness to the unspeakable terror in their young lives. However, at the same time, the sight of the drawing children instilled me with a sense of sincere hope that education about the darkest chapter of 20th-century history may one day help to eliminate hate and violence altogether. Just as our student had dressed in formal wear out of respect for those who had vanished at Sachsenhausen, so these children may one day become the key to reconciliation, love and understanding. As we moved to the next exhibit I could not help but turn around again and again. The sight of these children has left a deep imprint in my memory and has fed my imagination ever since.

Fig. 1: Children Drawing Fence Installations at the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, near Berlin, Germany. June 4, 1999.
"A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. The angel of history must look like this. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurling it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay a while, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise that has got caught in his wings, and its strength is such that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him mounts up to the heavens. What we call progress: that is this storm." [71]

Benjamin’s visual allegory has become an Andachtsbild, a meditative image, that relies on ekphrasis, the blending of a description of a picture into that of an imaginary reality. This “thought image” encapsulates the unfolding complexity of the historical process. [72] The shocked face of the angel mirrors the catastrophic violence of war and daily life. The Medusa-like features of his face, the open mouth, staring eyes, and frozen gaze convey the paralyzing force of terror. Yet, the angel cannot pause and obey his desire to heal and “to make whole what has been smashed.” His open wings suggest that the angel is blown away by a storm over an inexorably growing pile of rubble on the ground in front of him. As this pile of rubble coincides with our position as viewers Benjamin’s angel evokes not only the catastrophic course of history but our own powerlessness as witnesses of this history as well.

The “angel of history” painfully reminds us that the gruesome lessons of the past do not necessarily translate into future healing and recovery. Too often do we experience our own powerlessness in the face of continued hate and killings around the world or in our own cities. The senseless destruction of life in civil wars or, for instance, more recently in high schools around the nation, reiterate Benjamin’s notion of “a catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of [your] feet.”

By juxtaposing the photograph of the drawing children at Sachsenhausen with Benjamin’s interpretation of Paul Klee’s Angelus Novus I am not
suggesting that there is a direct link between both representations, nor do I suggest that my observation at Sachsenhausen can be mapped onto the events surrounding the Holocaust itself. Instead, the delicate interface between historical catastrophes on the one hand, and their perception and representation, on the other, caught my attention. How do we perceive and represent such cataclysms in history? Are we looking back at the historical rubble of our century from an enlightened and educated viewpoint? Do we share the angel’s perspective? Or does Benjamin’s allegory suggest that we are locked into the same place as that “storm of progress” that relentlessly propels history into the future? If so, then redemption will be associated with a counter-movement of sorts that consciously commemorates the growing pile of historical debris. As we pause and look back we may be able to fathom one of our greatest challenges, that is, our inability to mourn. It is precisely the drawings of those children that may lead the way in making sense of the senseless: perhaps we must pause and temporarily step outside our busy lives from time to time in order to comprehend fully the drastic lessons of history as we perceive and represent them in art, literature, music, and our scholarship.

References


8. For Interpretations of the “angel of history” as a symbolic figure for the contradiction-laden alignment of life, art, and politics see O. K. Werckmeister “Walter Benjamin’s ‘Angel of History,’ or the Transfiguration of the Revolutionary into the Historian” Critical Inquiry 22, 2 (Winter 1996), 239-267.

ART AS SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION
by Susan K. Leshnof

As an artist and an art educator, I have often wondered what the force is that drives me to create and to inspire others. Although the prospect of creating an artwork pleasurable to behold is not under challenge, it has also been the process of getting there, the active creative process, that has drawn me. Upon reading Joseph Pieper's book, Leisure, The Basis of Culture, I realize now that it is the basic human craving for leisure that makes the artistic process so appealing. Like others, I had never considered leisure in the profound way that Pieper describes.

Pieper, a Catholic philosopher writing in Germany in 1948, found modern society with its emphasis upon work to be remarkably deficient in leisure. To understand leisure as the desired state of consciousness that Pieper discusses, it is best to explain what leisure is not. Leisure is not idleness but rather "an inner absence and preoccupation, a calm, an ability to let things go..." (Pieper, 1998, p. 31) Pieper states that the metaphysical-theological concept of idleness according to the code of behavior of the High Middle Ages meant that "man finally does not agree with his own existence; that behind all his energetic activity, he is not at one with himself." (p. 28) Leisure, on the other hand, is the "cheerful affirmation by man of his own existence, of the world as a whole, and of God - of Love..." (p.29)

For Pieper, leisure is only possible if harmony is achieved with oneself - an inner harmony - as well as with the world and its meaning. (p.33) He felt that one who experiences true leisure would recognize "the mysterious character of the world, and the confidence of blind faith." (p.31) The more elevated experience would include celebration of creation, itself, and ultimately, divine worship. As a theological philosopher, Pieper took this concept of leisure to a religious level in concert with medievalists and stated further that the conditions for experiencing true leisure included "a receptive understanding of contemplative beholding, and immersion - in the real." (p.31) According to Pieper, leisure "is the condition of considering things in a celebrating spirit." (p. 33) And the greatest joyfulness comes with inner recognition of the wonder of creation.

Pieper describes true leisure as an active experience, feeling like "one who opens himself; not of someone who seizes but of one who lets go, who lets himself go, and 'go under,' almost as someone who falls asleep must let himself go..." (p. 32) He expresses the outcome of leisure as the "surge of new life that flows out to us when we give ourselves to the contemplation of a blossoming rose, a sleeping child, or of a divine mystery..." (p.32) According to Pieper to be truly at leisure is "the power to step beyond the working world and win contact with those superhuman, life-giving forces that can send us renewed and alive again, into the busy world of work..." (pp.35-36) For this reason to be "at leisure" is what Pieper describes as a basic power of the soul. (p.35)

The capacity to experience leisure, then, requires the human being to be in touch with the soul. This can be achieved through the human act of knowing. Both ancient philosophers and medieval thinkers understood that spiritual knowledge involved two types of intellect: ratio - knowledge gained through discursive thought, and intellectus - knowledge gained through 'simply looking,' where understanding presents itself without proof. (p.11)

Thomas Aquinas stated:
"Although human knowing really takes place in the mode of ratio, nevertheless it is a kind of participation in that simple knowing which takes place in higher natures, and we can thus conclude that human beings possess a power of intellectual vision." (p.12 in Q.XV,11)

Aquinas' statement refers to the type of simple knowing - intellectus - that plays a role in the attainment of supernatural or transcendent intellectual vision associated with angels but achievable at times by humans and leading to the contemplative life. He viewed the vita contemplativa as the highest form of living, which as Aquinas wrote, is "not properly human but superhuman..." (pp.12-13)

Spiritual knowing, then, encompasses the material and immaterial realms, and spirit, according to Pieper's definition, is "the ability to comprehend the world," (p.87) the world meaning the totality of being. The experience of leisure, then, is a contemplative state in which the intellectus or intellectual vision participates within discursive reasoning.
At its best, the active process of artistic creativity offers the contemplative experience of leisure that Pieper describes. The artistic process can cause such total absorption and self-involvement that one becomes unaware of immediate surroundings and time passing. For some, if the process is "going well," art-making becomes a respite from ordinary matters and duties, a "break" from life's demands. It is a transcending experience from the work-a-day world.

The active process of creating art provides an opportunity to fixate one's attention on a subject as it is explored more and more intimately. One's active responses are usually registered through marks and colors, creating a link between the artist and the world. Frederick Franck (1973) perceives the act of drawing as this heightened awareness of nature: "I have learned that what I have not drawn I have never really seen, and that when I start drawing an ordinary thing I realize how extraordinary it is; sheer miracle ... I discover that ... there is no ordinary thing. All that is, is worthy of being seen, of being drawn." (p. 6)

Franck expresses this transcendent linkage between the artist and the world in the process of drawing from nature. Through the act of drawing, the life force of all being is experienced and a harmonious linkage with the world is made - the "contemplative beholding and immersion in the real" that Pieper describes:

"Each leaf of grass is seen to grow from its own roots... No longer do I 'look' at the leaf, but enter into direct contact with its life-process, with life itself, with what I, too, really am ... Their growing is my growing, their fading I share." (p. 7)

There are precedents in the history of art education for strong connections linking the study of art, contemplation of nature and resultant spiritual experience. Nineteenth century romantic philosophy perceived nature as divine radiance and creation. At the turn of the 20th century, the study of nature was considered to be a primary subject in school for spiritual development. It was believed that the appreciation of master landscape paintings as well as the execution of nature drawings in painstaking structural detail provided students with opportunity for spiritual growth and moral development.

In 1902, a report on the aims and scope of elementary art education was presented to the National Education Association by an appointed Committee of Ten. The report states how emotions can be transformed into reverence and admiration for human beings and God with the scope of art education.

"The particular scope of elementary art education is the field of the sensibilities, or aesthetics, the leading forth of the emotions from mere capricious spontaneity to the serenity of the habitual admiration and reverence for all ideal and aesthetic expression in sensitive matter and for the aesthetic realization of the self-active, free spirit of man and of God..." (Wyant, 1997 p. 72)

The same report stated that the general aim of art education was the "progressive development of the soul 1) out of slavery of mere sense perception ... 2) into and thru the category of the understanding and the reason ... 3) to the freedom of pure thought. (p. 72)

The development of the soul through the artistic process is exemplified by the writings of several painters selected to be master art educators during the early years of the newly formed Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany (1919-1933). These painters not only described the importance of recognizing and expressing their sense of self, but also write about the methodology for achieving the requisite inner harmony.

As one of the leading schools for the training of craftspeople in the early 20th century, the Bauhaus gained much of its early reputation through the appointment of well-known artists to its faculty. These artists, in an effort to inspire greater creativity from their students, relied upon their spiritual resources for their own exemplary artistic production and included this dimension in their pedagogy. Essentially they believed that the source for self-expression in art was the spiritual center of the individual.

Vassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), who joined the faculty in 1922, had written Concerning the Spiritual in Art 11 years earlier. In that book he wrote that the artist "must search deeply into his soul, develop and tend it, so that his art has something to clothe and does not remain a glove without a hand." (1977, p.54)

Kandinsky’s spiritual concerns partly centered on releasing the inner need of artists to realize a non-material experience as an artistic form:

"The spiritual life, to which art belongs, and of which she [art] is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. This movement is the movement of experience. It may take different forms, but it holds at bottom to the same inner thought and experience." (p.4)
Kandinsky stated that in painting, artists are seeking "a road" leading inward to the spirit, that the spirit must be exercised for creative expression and that "the starting point for the exercise of the spirit ... is the study of color." (pp.35-36) Kandinsky believed that artistic expression was the outcome of working in unison with one's spirit.

In 1914, Kandinsky prepared a lecture in Cologne in which he stated that "the genesis of the work of art is cosmic in character. The originator of the work is thus the spirit. The work exists abstractly even before it has been embodied, before it has become accessible to human senses." (Grohman, 1958, p.92) Clearly Kandinsky's attitude toward artistic creation necessitated direct contact with one's spirit and its release into artistic form.

Johannes Itten (1888-1967) organized the Basic Course that was compulsory for all new students during the early years of the Bauhaus. He also was concerned with a method "to liberate the creative forces and thereby the artistic talents of the students." (Itten, 1975, p.7) He believed that "experiencing is a faculty of the mind and spirit." (Wingler, 1969, p.49) He wanted students to arrive at inner vision, which required both concentration and a "relaxed frame of mind." (Itten, p.110) In order for students to arrive at their "own awareness," Itten preached and practiced Mazdanzan, a derivative of ancient Zoroastrianism, in order to bring all the emotional, physical and intellectual powers of the human being into harmonious balance. For Itten, human creativity required inner harmony as a prerequisite.

Paul Klee (1879-1940) viewed the artist within a cosmic framework, stating in 1923 that the artist "is a creature in the earth and a creature within the whole, that is, a creature on a star among stars." (Wingler, p.73) He viewed creation as an ongoing process deriving from a primeval power that he called "Genesis eternal." (Klee, 1984, p.45) Klee felt that if the artist could adopt this way of viewing existence by tracing natural form back to its creative source - and, at the same time view nature within the ongoing process of creation, the resulting energy might well fuel the artist's own creative powers in a parallel manner. He said, "Such mobility of thought in the process of natural creation is good training for creative work. It has the power to move the artist fundamentally." (p.47)

According to Klee, by focusing on the primeval power, the artist can "more readily ... extend his view from the present to the past, the more deeply he is impressed by the one essential image of creation, itself, as Genesis, rather than by the image of nature, the finished production." (p.45) Klee associated abstract artistic expression and the intuitive process with a realm beyond the visible world. In his essay, "Ways of Nature Study," Klee viewed the artist as a creator who with a maturing philosophical outlook about being part of nature, could achieve "a completely free representation of abstract shapes beyond the consciously schematic approach." (Winger, p.73) According to Klee, the naturalness of this approach would lead to "the creation of works that are the image of God's work." (p.73)

Oscar Schlemmer (1888-1943), who taught at the Bauhaus from 1921-1929, stated that "total self-absorption" led to a sense of oneness with God, the universe, nature and existence from the time of Creation.

"Like the mystics, today's artists hope to pass through total self-absorption to oneness with God and the Universe. Everything is part of nature, part of the fabric of the universe." (Schlemmer, 1972, p.53)

Like Klee, Schlemmer perceived the artist within a cosmic framework and connected to God through the spirit. Schlemmer believed that the idea for creating art either derived from the times or from inner subjectivity and was itself the source of form; the spirit guides the hand." (p.29)

These Masters of Form, their official titles at the Bauhaus, offer powerful examples of art educators who perceive art as a spiritual expression. They concur that artistic creativity is a spiritual activity whose genesis is divine. How does the art educator release the spirit of the individual to participate in the active process of creativity? This is the art of teaching art.

Betty Edwards, author of Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain (1979), bases her pedagogy on the dual hemispheric modes of the brain. Through carefully planned exercises, her famous approach develops the non-verbal, more intuitively oriented right side of the brain for artistic activity. Her teaching style is based upon having students learn to switch from the analytical, rational left brain activity to the more intuitive, nonlinear, right brain function; to let go of verbal, deductive reasoning in favor of non-rational understanding toward an appreciation of these two hemispheric ways of knowing. Edwards' successful method of teaching drawing requires students to utilize the non-rational way of knowing.
Bipolar brain theory is reminiscent of the medievalists distinction between intellect as ratio and the intellect as intellectus, the difference between knowledge gained through discursive thought and knowledge through simply looking. Edwards' application of bi-polar brain theory to learning how to draw becomes more synchronized with Pieper's concept of leisure in the following statement from her second book, Drawing on the Artist Within:

"Drawing gives one a feeling of power - not power over things or people, but some strange power of understanding or knowing or insight. Or perhaps it is just the power of connection itself: through drawing, one becomes more connected to things and people... In drawing, there is always the sense that if you can just look closely enough, see deeply enough, some secret is going to be revealed to you, some insight into the nature of things in the world." (1986, p. 231.)

For Edwards, the analytical observation of objects required in the drawing process can lead to the intellectual vision of being that Thomas explains. Edwards believes that the act of practice of drawing makes the intellect more nimble to switch from the left to right brain dominance, which, in terms of this discussion, can increase the human capacity to have insight and spiritual experience.

During the artistic process, moments of pure leisure in the most profound sense are attainable, which by itself, irrespective of outcome, make the activity worthwhile and life celebratory. For this most essential reason, I am driven to create and to inspire others as well.

References


IN THE THROE OF WONDER:  
AN ESSAY ON JEROME MILLER'S TEXT  
by Richard M. Liddy

One look through the eye of a telescope may be all it takes for a child to become an astronomer in her heart - if the glimpse of the stars it offers her makes her feel like she has been given access to an inexhaustibly fascinating world in comparison with which her ordinary world suddenly seems not just uninteresting but insubstantial. [1]

People in the 1840s hearing John Henry Newman preaching in Oxford were often heard to say, "He told me about myself." I had similar feelings reading Jerome Miller's In the Throes of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in the Post-Modern World. Miller plumbs feelings that we are not accustomed to explore: feelings of wonder and anguish, of fascination and terror, of dread and awe. Most of the time we are too caught up in "life," and in trying to organize and control it, to sense these deeper levels going on within us. Miller describes the theme of his work,

...it is an attempt to understand certain matters of the heart - certain experiences which have a profoundly transformative impact on us because they affect us in the core of our beings. Wonder and horror are such experiences, as are the experiences of anguish and awe to which they lead. Our culture has prejudiced us into thinking that these experiences are subjective, emotive responses to events in the world that can be objectively described. I explore here a very different possibility - that such experiences are discursive in character and open to us realities which are not accessible to us as long as we are governed by everyday practical concerns. Indeed, when we plumb the meaning of these experiences, we find that they are charged with ontological significance....I am concerned throughout with how such experiences transform our knowledge of what is by awakening us to realities of which we would otherwise be oblivious. [2]

Miller has been particularly influenced by the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Marcel. It is particularly Heidegger with his phenomenological-style analyses on the experience of ordinary living that influences his method.

Nevertheless, in a very interesting chapter, "From Heidegger to Lonergan," Miller acknowledges that the work of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) also has something to offer Heideggerian thought - and "postmodern" thought in general.

One of the reasons that I find Lonergan's theory of knowing, as it moves from the given to insight and from insight to judgment, more convincing than Heidegger's is because it accords so deeply with Heidegger's theory of ecstatic temporality according to which we are carried beyond whatever experience or insight or judgment we have reached by the throe of a mystery which we can try to repress but whose grip we never escape. [3]

In particular, Miller is fascinated by the experience of wonder. Aristotle called wonder "the origin of all science and philosophy." Miller sees it as an opening up beyond the present, the given, the "what's at-hand." But if wonder moves us beyond the data, what does it move us to?

It is an opening up to "the other" in all its differences. The young child hesitating before a secret door she has discovered epitomizes such wonder. The door is fascinating; it beckons her. And yet at the same time she hesitates and hangs back, fearful lest in opening the door she be exposed to "the other" that might change her forever. And yet...if she turns away and remains locked into the everyday world, if she tries to keep everything "under control," she can be turning away from genuine joy.

In a real sense wonder is "who we are" - born to wonder about all that is because "being" has already caught us up in her "throe." Certainly wonder is occasioned by the here and now, the given, "what's in front of us;" but it also carries us beyond the given to the unknown - the "other," the wonderful.

Thomas Aquinas said that our human spirit has about it a certain infinity - it is even open to God, capax Dei - because it can ask questions. A movie title from years ago, "What's it all about, Alfie?" witnessed to this capacity of our spirits to ask fundamental questions. Giving free rein to such questioning, rooted in wonder, can be frightening. It also can be revolutionary. Socrates'
accusers were right in suspecting that unlimited questioning has a revolutionary impact.

For the very act of asking an unrestricted question shatters our ordinary world and gives us access to a literally unlimited horizon. In doing so, it awakens an inexhaustible longing which might otherwise have remained dormant but which, once ignited, has a potential for effacing every competing passion.¹⁴

By questioning rooted in wonder - and only by such questioning - are our minds open to the real. In fact, according to Miller, it is not we who break through to the unknown in such experiences. It is the unknown, which breaks through to us, igniting in us the eros of the desire to know. This is, as Socrates warns us in the Phaedrus, a kind of divine madness.¹⁵

For one thing, by giving free rein to such questioning we might make the terrifying discovery that we have been wrong. In a chapter entitled “The Love of Wisdom and the Consolations of Fallibility,” Miller states that one cannot continue the process of inquiry except by openly accepting the dangerous possibility to which inquiry makes us liable: the possibility of being wrong. Fallibility is precisely the condition of being always in relationship to truth but never in possession of it.

...only someone secure in her fallibility knows how insecure she will always be in her relationship to truth. She alone is wise enough to know that by not claiming to have a hold on it, she allows truth to exercise its gentle but inexorable influence over her.¹⁶

What wonder and questioning open us to are “worlds,” worlds somehow linked to each other within being.

That the ball which the child holds in her hands has a certain atomic structure, obeys the chemistry of rubber, can be pitched and caught in an exciting game, can be used as a symbol for a planet or as an example in a philosophy essay - all of this the child can come to know if she follows wonder where it leads, into one universe of discourse after another.¹⁷

Some of these worlds we enter for a while only to return to our ordinary lives. But sometimes a world so captures us that it becomes for us the center of our world - it becomes our world. It uproots our previous presuppositions so radically that our life takes on a new meaning. Indeed, “being” takes on a new meaning. “The old order has passed away; all things are new.”

In many cases a painting or a text only becomes our world for as long as we are caught up in viewing or reading it. But sometimes through the pages of a book, or the lens of a microscope, a person enters a world that radically and permanently alters her because it persuades her to make it the center of her entire life. And if no world is more fascinating, more filled with promise, more evocative of an inexhaustible plenitude, than the one we begin to enter when we look into the eyes of another person, it is not because they blind us to everything else but because we see reflected in them every one of the worlds that beckon us.¹⁸

Of course, our human tendency is to bring the new world under our own possession and control, to subvert its autonomy and “otherness” to our own desires. This, of course, is the death of love - death by asphyxiation.

...implicit within wonder is an imperative to leave untouched the other whose goodness we become aware of through it. The longing generated by wonder’s initial encounter with that goodness, far from being analogous to desire, moves in the exactly opposite direction - not toward possession of the other but toward a deeper and deeper “letting be” of it.¹⁹

Such self-expenditure is contrary to the conservative logic of consumption which governs sense-desire. The fundamental conflict in us is the one that exists between the extravagant self-expenditure of eros and the economy of control. Miller’s images of economic life spark reflections on our economic lives as “consumers.”

For whereas appetite operates speechlessly and moves toward consuming the other, eros inspires us to invent the poetry of praise, to practice an etiquette of reverence, to pour out of ourselves a love for the other which we cannot bear to keep contained.¹⁰

Even work can be transformed by such love. Thus, we speak of someone as “full of life,” when she is animated by an apparently inexhaustible enthusiasm, which transforms even the mundane chores of everyday life into expressions of love.

If we have not found a way of access to the reservoir of eagerness and intensity which makes such self-expenditure possible, it is because our way to it is blocked by the fears and appetites, the insecurities and
possessions, which keep us attached to our lives.\[^{111}\]

Miller describes the death involved in love's self-surrender.

The mortal import of eros, the fact that it costs the lover not less than everything, and actually requires a willingness to die, has always been symbolized by a wound. But from the viewpoint of eros, it is a privilege to be vulnerable to this wound and a joy to suffer it because only in and through one's suffering of it does the other become accessible. The mortal consequences of self-expenditure may not be evident to those who are in the first blush of the enthusiasm which inspires it. The more wholly given over the lover is to what he loves, the more his love approximates dying, but it may very well not seem like dying at all but rather like being truly alive for the first time. But sooner or later, in one way or another, the terrible paradox of eros will open that wound, originally effaced, and make it pour out its anguish. For precisely because eros prompts one to spend oneself on the other and not possess her, one cannot remain faithful to its life-affirming impulse except by giving up the very other to which one is giving oneself. To give oneself to the other always means precisely to lose the other.\[^{112}\]

Finally, there is immanent within the wonder opening on love the awe and worship that is elicited by the sacred. Reading Miller's prose is itself an evocation of the sacred.

...there is immanent within wonder the awe that is elicited by the numinous - and the sense of one's own poverty, one's own nothingness, that is awakened by an encounter with what is radically Other and overwhelmingly sacred. Only the sacred moves us utterly. But this passionate ec-stasis, precisely because it leaves no part of us unaffected and carries us beyond ourselves, is itself, as the etymology of the word 'passion' suggests, a kind of suffering, indeed, a kind of death.\[^{113}\]

A Personal Experience

As I read Miller's book this summer, I was also trying to tie together a text I have been working on about an event that took place in my own life many years ago.

In the mid-1960s I was a young priest studying philosophy in Rome. I had been there during the Second Vatican Council, an event which had undercut many traditional beliefs of Catholics and which now, in its aftermath, was precipitating battles between "liberals" and "conservatives." My own insides were in turmoil.

It was within this context that I came under the influence of one of my teachers, Bernard Lonergan, S.J., and his massive work, Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding. Day after day, week after week, in a small room in the back of the library at the Casa Santa Maria in Rome, I pored over that text. Miller summarized the effect that Lonergan's Insight had on me during those months of intense study in 1967.

To be under the sway of a great work does not only mean that one assents to a particular set of key propositions contained in it; it means that one is so deeply engaged by the way of thinking that animates it that one's own way of thinking is profoundly and permanently transformed. This can only be when we allow ourselves to enter inside the body of a work, instead of trying to seize on a list of theses that can be extracted from it. A great text is a world which we can understand only if we inhabit and learn to feel at home in it. As this process progresses, we find that we cannot enter and leave the world of the text as casually as we pick up and put down the book; for our thinking gradually comes to be governed by the same three of questioning which generated the text. This does not mean that we have mastered the text; it means, in fact, something nearly the opposite of this - that we are surrendering ourselves to the eros of inquiry which moves the text; and spending ourselves in service to it. To claim to have mastered a text would itself be proof that one had not understood it.\[^{114}\]

This is how I feel about Miller's In the Three of Wonder. Moments of wonder and of insight are moments in that process of "falling in love" and "being in love" that Lonergan came to identify as the deepest level of human living, and to which Miller dedicates a beautiful chapter. Just as ordinary interpersonal love does not swallow up the beloved, but rather sets the lover free to love all that is lovable, so a real world of meaning, a real text, a real painting, is not turned in upon itself in this way.
Precisely what makes it radiant is the fact that, at its very center, it opens out into a multiplicity of different directions, each of which has the possibility of leading us to another world. The distinguishing characteristic of a real world, as contrasted with a system, is precisely the fact that it does not try to protect itself from a collision with other worlds or from nothingness itself, but rather gives us a way of access to the very possibilities of its deconstruction.\textsuperscript{115}

LonerGAN’s Insight opened me to a new way of thinking that has remained with me for many years. Miller’s text was a new step in helping me to think new thoughts and to discover new worlds.

This, I think, is what Plato was suggesting when he argued that if the lover were to “abate his violent love of the one” person on whom he has concentrated his passion, he might be led to all the other worlds he first became aware of through her radiance. But if, instead of letting go of the one, he holds on to her, he will lose not only those other worlds she beckoned him to enter, but her own surpassing strangeness, the universe he originally saw open to him in her eyes.\textsuperscript{116}

References


2. Ibid., xi-xii. Cf. 184 on feelings as “intentional.”

3. Ibid., 76-77.

4. Ibid., 1.


6. Ibid., 31.

7. Ibid., 38.

8. Ibid., 89.

9. Ibid., 114.

10. Ibid., 114-115.

11. Ibid., 116.

12. Ibid.


14. In the Three of Wonder, 33. Cf. also 67-68: “For both Being and Time and Insight invite the reader to undergo an intellectual conversion - and not a conversion about this issue or that but one regarding the meaning of being itself. Indeed, according to the transcendental argument which these texts share, the truth of being is not accessible to us in any other way except through the kind of intellectual crisis and conversion which they try to make compelling for us. Being and Time and Insight are not texts that have to be violently broken open in order to make them comparable to each other because each of them is already caught up in the three of the same crisis in the meaning of being to which radical thinking must always be drawn.”

15. Ibid., 95.

16. Ibid.
Those who say that a rose is a rose by any name are thinking of labels only in a denotative sense. In a connotative sense different labels imply different attributes; no two labels are likely to imply the same attributes even when they refer to the same object. It follows then that some labels can be more meaningful than others in a connotative context, and some labels may not adequately describe the object in question.

The labels used to describe accounting statements do not fully perform their assigned task. The connotation associated with the labels like income statement and balance sheet raises expectations that are not fully realized by the informational contents of these statements. Such shortcomings have been well known to accounting professionals. Eldon Hendricksen, echoing such criticisms, wrote, “Already there are rumbles that the income statement will see its demise in the near future unless drastic changes are made to improve the story it tells” (p. 139). The demise has not come about, but the criticism remains regarding not only the income statement, but also other accounting statements. Hendricksen himself has noted what may well be the underlying cause of the criticisms directed at accounting statements, by saying: “The main difficulty with an emphasis on the accounting process and the conventional reporting structure is that the accounting terms and measurement have little or no interpretational significance to real-world phenomena. They are the artifacts of the accountant and while it is possible that such artifacts can be useful in making predictions of real-world phenomena, the evidence does not support the validity of making the structure of accounting its basic objective” (p. 115).

The criticism of accounting reports would be lessened if there was clear perception among the users about their tentative nature. The accounting statements are “accounting artifacts,” whose usefulness is best limited to the context in which they are produced. Expecting them to do more than what they are capable of doing is bound to be irritating. The tentative nature of accounting statements could well be understood by using the word fiction to label them. The term is used in the sense in which it has been used by the likes of Jeremy Bentham, Hans Vaihinger, Frank Kermode, Alvin Keman, and Wallace Stevens. The theory is used to look at accounting.

When the above-named authors used the term fiction, they were thinking of the word in terms of its Latin roots. For them the word implied: to shape, to form, to invent, to pretend, and to fabricate. Hans Vaihinger, as reported by Kermode, saw fictions as “mental structures” that are relied upon by man as aids in cognition: “the psyche weaves this or that thought out of itself; for mind is invention; under the compulsion of necessity, stimulated by the outer world, it discovers the store of contrivances hidden within itself. The organism finds itself in a world of contradictory sensations, it is exposed to the assaults of a hostile world, and in order to preserve itself is forced to seek every possible means of assistance” (p. 40). As noted by Kermode, Vaihinger “distinguishes many different types of fiction: the paradigmatic, for example, which includes Utopias, and we may add apocalypses; the legal, where the fiction has a function in equity (as when a court may deem that a wife who died at the same instant as, or even some time later than her husband, pre-deceased him, so as to obviate an inequitable double payment of estate duties; or as when, after a certain lapse of time, after receipt, one is presumed to have accepted delivery of a postal packet); the fictive zero-cases of mathematics; the fiction of the thing-in-itself, or of causality; … ‘the last and the greatest fiction, the fiction of an Absolute’” (p. 41).

Alvin Keman has also theorized about fictions. He sees them as being at the core of the human cognitive process. He maintains: “We live in a world composed largely of our fictions, ranging from our dreams to our systems of government and our cosmologies, and we create and use new fictions every day in an attempt to order our lives and make them happier and more meaningful” (p. 10). Fictions, according to Keman, “humanize the world by giving it the shape and meaning that the mind conceives, not that which the world dictates” (ibid.). Keman sees them not as “exact imitation of reality or mere amusements but as direct attempts to grapple with and transform an active force, constantly locked in struggle with the opacity and density of things, the endlessness of time, and the undifferentiated continuum of being” (ibid.).

The American poet Wallace Stevens, more than any other poet, used the term fictions in his essays and
poems. His use of the term is very much in line with that of Vaihinger and Kerman. The dominant subject of his works was the relationship between the human mind and the reality around it. His poetic subject was analysis and description of the manner in which the human mind seeks to understand, name, and make sense of the world of which it is a part, but at the same time different from it.

A brief poem of his, "Anecdote of the Jar," exemplifies Stevens' perception of the human cognitive process. Though it does not use the word fictions, it does poeticize the very ideas theorized about by Kerman and Vaihinger. It starts by describing a very human action, the placing of a jar upon a hill in Tennessee. The act by the persona:

... made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.

The human artifact, "gray and bare," was "like nothing else in Tennessee," and "it did not give of bird or bush." Still it was "tall and of a port in air," and more importantly, "took dominion everywhere." It must be realized that the jar had dominion only in that particular place. Outside that "wilderness" it loses its focusing capacity, just as without the jar, the "wilderness" becomes uncharted.

By juxtaposing the jar with an alien environment, the poem makes it the focus of what is an uncharted wilderness, according to the persona. Once it is introduced into the landscape, the landscape is no longer wild; the jar has taken dominion. The process described in the poem is not unlike what a hiker is likely to do if he finds himself in an uncharted and "slovenly wilderness." He is likely to find himself a landmark and then use it to chart his hike. In the same way, a surveyor has to fix his bearings before he starts on his survey. One could also compare the act in the poem to what in the discipline of rhetoric "was once called nominatio" (Kerman, p. 207). It refers to "the naming and listing of things . . . the most basic act of consciousness in the world: the process by which man articulates the world to make it signify, and hence renders it inhabitable" (ibid).

The poem is a metaphor for the cognitive process. It describes how the mind interacts with the world around it. In interacting with his environment, man's mind seeks to name it and describe it, separate chaos from order, and to abstract meaning and significance.

If one is in need of a catch phrase to describe the act in the poem, one could call it the Genesis Syndrome: in trying to name the world around him, the human mind is in effect imitating the God of Genesis. To help man's passage through the universe, which is not human, man has to rely on signposts, landmarks, security blankets, rules, paradigms, and what Vaihinger, Kerman and Stevens have called fictions. Man has through the ages selected and even fabricated the fictions that help him go about the business of living. Such fictions operate in a wide variety of disciplines. The reason for their existence lies in their utility, and their origin is to be attributed to the ability of the human mind to invent them.

More specifically, fictions can be seen as performing at least three functions. It is in terms of these functions that we can see their relevance to accounting theory.

The first of the three functions of concern to us here deals with the ability of fictions to describe things for us. They serve as signs, having their origin in "the human need to create metaphor, to bring objects into relation with consciousness, to make the objective world cease to be 'other' from man, to give it meaning and warmth" (Kerman, p. 9). Through fictions "a fragmented and alien world of things is illuminated and claimed by being 'humanized'" (ibid.). As noted by Kerman, "man could not live with his self-consciousness were he not a sign-maker and a sense-maker, and this is no doubt one of the chief functions of his fiction-making" (p. 189).

The second function served by fictions is their ability to impose a pattern on "the vastness and shapelessness of the process we call time" (Kerman, p. 9). Kerman goes on to say: "There are no beginnings and no endings in the world's time, only an endless flow out of the eternity of the past and into the eternity of the future. But men, by creating such calendrical fictions as A. U. C. [ab urbe condita, from the founding of the city of Rome in 735 B.C.], or historical eras like 'The Classical Age' or 'The Modern Period,' or plots like 'Once upon a time — and they lived happily ever after,' remove a segment of time from the great flux and confer wholeness upon it by giving it a beginning and end as absolute as that of the individual life beginning with birth and ending with death" (ibid.).

Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction is an excellent discussion of how fictions provide a pattern to the faceless eternity. In it Kermode has discussed writers as diverse as Plato, Sorokin, Homer, Robbe-Grillet, St. Augustine and William Burroughs to show how man has imposed fictions on an otherwise nameless reality around him.
In addition to "conferring 'totality' or structure on a number of objects and events that would not otherwise be related to one another or have a definite start and end" (Kernan, p. 9), fictions also help man to carry on a "process of separation and identification": allow man to clarify "the undifferentiated mass of 'stuff' — animal, vegetable, and mineral — out of which man as a distinct species, then individuals, emerge into identity for a long time, and to which they return in death unless fame or an afterlife preserves them as individuals" (ibid.).

The function of accounting is to keep track of an entity's activities and to evaluate its performance. It does so in monetary terms. Using dollars and cents, accounting is "holding a mirror up to nature," to use a phrase from Shakespeare. It uses its reports to reflect upon the entity. To assist the accountants perform their reporting tasks, the profession has developed the so-called GAAP — generally accepted accounting principles. These principles and what the accountants seek to do with their help are means to do the very same function attributed to fictions — that of describing and naming the surrounding reality. The GAAPs and the accounting reports generated are very much like the Stevens' jar in the wilderness. They allow the users of those reports to chart their way and to measure a firm's performance. In so doing, these reports show a similarity to the first function attributed to fictions earlier.

The contents of financial and accounting reports, one must remember, are merely representations. They are not reality of the entity itself; rather, using fictional conventions, these reports seek to name the reality. Besides being fictions, these reports rely on fictional means for their preparation. These could be understood in the context of the other two functions attributed to fictions.

As noted earlier, fictions give a pattern to the flow of time. Accountants using the fiction of accrual and a host of others, help prepare the income statements, which seek to define the performance of an entity in a time period. The income statement would not be fabricated were it not for such concepts as matching, depreciation, bad debt expenses, warranty expense and inventory valuation rules. But these, as we all know, are estimations that we know are not absolutely true and yet are useful. For without them we would be hard put to know how the firm performed in a given period. The fiction of an income statement is no more than an attempt to compartmentalize time, helping users judge the entity's performance.

One is remiss in his perception of accountants if he looks at them only as information collectors. In addition to gathering information, accountants must classify that information. In so doing they are performing the third function attributed to fictions, that of differentiating and classifying. Through the use of the balance sheet, accountants seek to classify the information they have collected. By using labels such as current assets, owner's equity, and through the assorted valuation allowances, accountants seek to differentiate the financial position of an entity in terms of its assets and obligations. But the labels and the classifying schemes, one must remember, are quite tenuous and rely on assumptions, such as historical costs used for the balance sheet presentations of the assets. Like the income statement, the balance sheet is also a fictional design differentiating the assets, liabilities and the worth of an entity.

Looking at accounting and what it seeks to do in light of the theory of fictions is not as radical as it may sound. The noted authors W. A. Paton and A. C. Littleton have asserted that "the fundamental concepts or propositions of accounting, like those of other fields, are in themselves assumptions in considerable measure or are predicated upon assumptions which are not subject to conclusive demonstration or proof" (p. 21). They go on to say: "Accounting might seem to be scientific in point of view since it deals in some measure with objectively determined facts. Accounting, however, can never become completely scientific, because its factual materials can never be determined with complete and conclusive objectivity. Business does not lend itself to laboratory analysis and its activities do not follow mathematical formulae" (ibid.).

By juxtaposing the theory of fictions alongside accounting, one merely reinforces what Paton and Littleton have argued. Knowing that accounting reports are not the reality itself, but its representation, an imperfect representation at that, can help the users of accounting reports be on their watch. Knowing that the information is fictive need not be merely esoteric. It can indeed play a role in the actions taken by employees, managers, stockholders, and labor unions. The numbers, such as earnings per share, are often given the status of dogma, but investors ought to know what is involved in the calculation of numbers such as EPS. This knowledge could save them from wrong investments. The knowledge of the nature of net income in the case of labor unions can lead to better informed wage negotiations between the unions and management. Because net income is positive does not
mean the entity is viable — net income shown in the financial statement does not exist except on paper and one should not mistake it for cash flow. All through the sixties American steel producers were showing positive returns, even as they were sliding into outdated production modes because of antiquated physical plants. But this slide into obsolescence was not apparent to those who thought net income was reality itself.

It seems that in the United States the establishment — FASB — through its pronouncements, the escalating barrage of them, is seeking to make statements more scientific, which, as pointed out by Paton and Littleton, is a tall order. It would be better not to go against the facts, to work with them instead. This requires that we have the clear perception that accounting reports are no more than the fictional means that can help us perceive the entity’s performance. They are like Stevens’ jar in the wilderness in that they allow us to chart the fiscal environment of the entity, but we must remember that they do so only tentatively. While seeming to be the focus, they still do not relieve us of the need.

References


UNTITLED RONDINELLA
by Thomas Rondinella

Location: A film production house set in the middle of Havana, Illinois.
Time: 8:00 a.m.

It is ‘Day Four’ of a twenty-four day shoot on a film that everyone said could not be done with such a low budget. For the past two years my writing partner and I have worn many hats: creators, writers, producers, investors. An exhilarating high-low experience in which anything could go wrong, and indeed had. Now from the expression on the production manager’s face, I knew we had hit another snag. ‘The septic tank of the production house backed up and there is feces floating in the basement.’ The same basement in which the assistant director, a former, recently graduated student of mine, had been sleeping. Her first ‘welcome to the film world’ experience. The production manager looked straight in the eye. “What are you going to do?” Without missing a beat I replied, “I’ll take care of it.” So I begin ‘Day Four, Five and Six’ as producer with a mop and Lysol in hand, cleaning out a polluted basement.

‘Divine Madness’ was the theme of 1999’s Faculty Summer Seminar at Seton Hall University. The Madness of the aforementioned moment is obvious. Very little in film and video production is controllable. One plans a day to go in a certain direction and then prays that all the divergent elements will come together. A maddening process for sure. But what of Divinity?

Whether one owns the title of writer, producer, director, or editor, one conceives the concept and attempts to mold it, but is inevitably called to step back and enjoy as the project takes on a life of its own. There’s the exhilaration of living in the moment, getting through the day, facing the next challenge at hand. There’s the beauty of watching ideas take shape on celluloid. There’s the joy and connectedness of communicating private feelings and thoughts to a stranger-audience. To be able to touch viewers in their hearts, where it most matters. To help them see things from a new perspective. The build-up of images striking the eye. The art of the moving image, not just in the action of the video or film, but in the responses that emit from the audience. The ultimate experience of creating a make-believe world and the people that populates it. Somewhat like giving birth. Enter: Divinity.

Location: A film crew house in the middle of Havana, Illinois.
Time: 9:00 a.m.

It’s ‘Day Seven’ when another toilet backs up in a house shared by 10 crew members. I am once again conveniently dispatched to do emergency plumbing, shoveling raw sewage into a bucket. "Is that really part of your job as producer?" my former student later asks. "Well, yes, sort of," I reply. I can read her mind: "After four years of college, do I really want to do this?"

She will hopefully know the answer to that question by ‘Day Twenty-Four.’ The answer will be found within her heart and soul, for video and film production is more than a job. It is a passion.

The secular world knows passion as ardent love, boundless enthusiasm, and strong sexual desire. Passion knows many objects: lovers, children, pastimes, careers. Filmmakers have often acknowledged their work as passion, employing visceral terms. Art Linson, producer, states “the first trick - the most important trick - is to find something that gets your heart beating.”[1] Brian DePalma, director, says “I’m devoted to what I’m making, what I am is up there on the screen.”[2] George Lucas, producer/director: “When I finally discovered film, I really fell madly in love with it; ate it, and slept it twenty-four hours a day.”[3] Martin Scorsese: “I can’t help it. I love movies - it’s my whole life and that’s it.”[4] These are not cerebral teachings about video/filmmaking. They are descriptions of the emotional, inner drives. Sam Spiegel, director, puts it simply: he sees a story and gets the urge to do it. [5] Christine Vachon, an independent film producer, writes, “I’ve been passionate about movies all my life...not just anyone can make low-budget movies that matter - it takes incredible nerves and passion...It takes knowing everything, but not knowing so much that you’re not prepared to take the leap off that high building - the leap of faith.”[6] A leap of faith, indeed. An act of trust in the Divine.

The passion to create comes from the Divine. “Creativity is an experience - to my eye, a spiritual experience... Creativity is God’s gift to us. Using our creativity is our gift back to God. Our creative dreams and yearnings come from a divine source. As we move toward our dreams, we move towards our divinity.”[7]
The saying goes “Faith is caught, not taught.” Can the passion to create meaningful video and films, thereby approaching the Divine, be taught? No, but it can be unleashed.

Thus one necessary aspect of teaching video and film production is to pass this divine passion on to the students. As professor, I engage the students in their own uninhibited creative imaginations, encouraging them to be open to all feelings and ideas. I challenge them to give of themselves to the project; to take risks and not settle for the obvious. I ask them “has this story been done before?” “Why create this concept now, at this place, with these characters?” “Where are you in this project?” “Why should I or anyone else watch, care about this story?” “How will I be changed?” “How are you being changed by it?”

In challenging the students to be vulnerable, I make myself an example to them, allowing them to view the passion within me. I reflect through my bodily energy, the fluid movement of screen images. I praise them for not just achieving the end product, but for striving to speak more through their art. I share with them the wonder of the collaborative process. Thus, the professor of video and film production must be more than an instructor of students. He/she is called to be an inspiration. Martin Scorsese credits his film professor Haig Manoogian for instilling in him his own passion for film. “Haig really inspired us. He had this almost religious zeal, so that if you had an idea, before you knew it, you were out in the streets and in the middle of filming.”

A production teacher’s primary responsibility to the students is to awaken that ardent, bottomless passion for the art form. “Thanks, Haig” reads the closing title of Scorsese’s Raging Bull. Hard on the heels of this follows a citation from John 9:24-26 about the man who once was blind but now can see. It is Scorsese’s final tribute to the man who made him see and who consequently died just before the film’s release.

The video and film professor sets his/her students on a journey of self-knowledge. “The act of creation is significant and valuable in and of itself, and personal fulfillment and happiness; the by-products of all your creative endeavors. But remember, in the end, one writes stories to learn, to further one’s own growth as a human being.”

This is not to say that production in video and film is a self-indulgent exercise. The Divine calls us not to selfishness, but to selflessness. The objective of creative self-exploration is to then offer our life to another. So too, with video/filmmaking. Just as students become more aware of self, so too they need to be more deeply aware of their audience. The video and film process does not end when the product is put into bins for final distribution. It continues well into the arrival of the audience, delves deeply into their reactions and responses, and flows into the days that follow as they digest the meaning of the movie. Divine passion does not die down. Nor is it confined to one’s own heart. Divine passion affects the lives of others for the good. “Lots of filmmakers want to do something important. There’s great validity in wanting to do something that enriches someone else’s life.”

Location: A trailer parked in a dark, desolate cornfield.
Time: Midnight.

It’s ‘Day Ten’ of production. Because of a housing shortage, I am attempting to get some desperately needed sleep in my sixth different bed in as many nights. Tonight I’m sharing a twin bed with my co-producer in the make-up artist’s trailer. I lie completely still, arms tight around my torso, fearful of waking my unwelcome, snoring guest. As I stare out into the black night, I anxiously wait to set up the coffeepots for the caterer at 5:30 a.m. And I thank God that we are more than a thimble of the way through shooting.

Madness - yes. Passion - the drive to create. The Divine - gives us the gifts of creativity and passion. However, for Christians, passion is more than a life-giving process. Passion is also a reminder of the death and resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

There is great risk involved in the creative process. The result of our creativity is in many ways, a reflection of self. Which means that when the project fails, the creator may feel like a failure. The risk of video and film production involves opening oneself up to the judgments and high expectations of others. Passion provides the drive to do so, and the Divine offers the support. As professors, we welcome our students into the risk-laden world of video/filmmaking. Part of instilling in them Divine passion is to challenge them to risk failure and to die to self. We do our students no noble service in protecting them from failing in an educational environment. For they will eventually fail in the secular world, only to be greeted by even harsher judgments. We model this to our students by ourselves not being afraid to fail in their presence. I involve students in video and film productions outside of the University, in an effort to provide them with practical experience. This also means that they get to see me in action. Recently on a video shoot, I was not prepared
with the necessary audio cable. Rather than covering up my mistake, I pointed it out to my students. Thus, a moment passed in which my classroom instructions on pre-production took shape and we all learned once again—an object lesson. As professors, we acknowledge that in order to do something well, we must first be willing to do it badly.

At the same time, we offer our students the support of the Divine, who in dying to self, was resurrected. We are reminded of the boxer Jake LaMotta in Scorsese's movie Raging Bull. His manager-brother challenges him to shed some weight and fight an unknown opponent. After an intricate play that leaves LaMotta baffled, his brother puts it simply: "So do it. If you win, you win. And if you lose, you win." So it goes with risk-taking. There is something enlivening about expanding our self-definition. [11] Only after we die to self-security will we discover a newly resurrected self. Where else is that more apropos than in an educational environment that mixes passion with the support of the divine.

Location: The production office in Havana, Illinois.
Time: 6:00 p.m.

It is 'Day Twenty' when I hesitantly dial my phone number back home, calling my wife whom I have not seen in three weeks. She cheerfully answers and I can hear the animated voices of our three young daughters in the background. After a superficial update on the production, I approach a topic of rough waters. The charges we have put on our credit card to kick off the movie will probably not be reimbursed as I had promised.

The investors' movies are going fast and will barely get us through to post-production. A dull silence greets me and I know we are both thinking the same: "Hasn't this happened too many times before?"

Most students know the financial struggle of production. Working an extra part-time job to not only meet tuition costs, but to finance student films. Begging family members to act as investors in which there will most likely be no return. In many ways, being stripped of one's financial security is like being stripped of one's self. There is simply nowhere to go. The death of indebtedness to others and the lack of monetary enjoyment can be stifling. Without divine passion, it is mere suffering. With divine passion, however, there is hope of resurrection. George Romero, a pioneering independent filmmaker says, "Even though I was in heavy debt, I remained passionate about making feature movies. It was what I really wanted to do with my life." [14]

The mere physical demands of video/filmmaking would be doubly painful if not for the spiritual rewards of approaching the Divine. "I'm going to be working flat out for the next six, nine, twelve months. The picture had better have some meaning to me. Otherwise the physical labor (very hard indeed) will become twice as exhausting." [10] Once again, divine passion steps in and offers energy to the weary and higher purpose to the discouraged.

Perhaps Martin Scorsese puts it best when he recalls that early in his life he embraced the priesthood as the surest means of salvation, "wanting that vocation, selfishly, so that I'd be saved... I wound up finding a vocation in making movies with the same kind of passion." [11] One must first live and die in order to be saved. Pursuing video and film production can set one on this Passion journey.

Location: An editing room in New York City.
Time: Eight months after production.

The lights come up after watching the uneventful edited version of the film. I lean back in my chair and stare at the monitor. Silence hangs in the air. No one makes a move. Finally my partner and I look at each other and slowly we smile. Our film is finished, the creation is finally formed, our "baby" has a life of its own. All the sacrifice of time, sleep and money fades away and culminates in this cassette of material. It feels good.

In the end, the goal of the video and film production professor is to help the student harness the divine passion necessary for the creative process to be rewarding. One can compare video/filmmaking to the cultural role held by the cathedral in the Middle Ages. The cathedral was the focus of much creativity: the architecture, the sculpturing, the stained glass, the paintings, the tapestries. The skills of the masons, those who hauled the concrete, the welders, the weavers. The values, ideas and efforts of the time were focused into the aesthetic environment. Now, take the videos/films of today: the storytellers, the storyboard artists, the photographers, the financiers, the costume designers, those that carry the equipment, and those that serve the food. All who collaborate to produce a video/movie that will hopefully, without guarantee, be shown to an appreciative audience. [17] The completed cathedral overwhelms the visitor with its massive scale. The completed film on a theatre's large screen possesses the same capability of impressing awe and wonder onto the viewers. All the creative elements click with uninhibited imagination. The moments of madness and the drive of passion touch the Divine.
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DIVINE MADNESS:
A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

by Carolyn F. Rummel

The weeklong seminar spent with Jerry Miller and my colleagues from the university was certainly an intellectual high point during the past academic year. The intriguing title of Divine Madness and the Intellectual Life piqued my interest in the seminar and Jerry's refreshing mode of interacting with the group along with the discussion that took place during the seminars made the entire experience challenging and enjoyable. It is most difficult to summarize the concept of 'divine madness,' especially when it is a term coined by another individual. However, a bit of a discussion is necessary for the reader to grasp the major premises of the seminar.

From my perspective and understanding, divine madness takes places when one allows oneself to be fully open to the experiences of life without necessarily trying to control these experiences. In our contemporary society, which focuses on control, situations in which control is threatened are very often stressful for the individual, until such time as control is regained. The general societal belief seems to be disruptions in life, which threaten one's control of one's life, are bad while regaining control, is good. The premise of divine madness is that "if we allow ourselves to be shattered by these experiences, they can have a transformative impact on us: they can lead us to become appreciative participants in mystery, instead of controllers." (J. Miller, personal communication, December 10, 1998) We have to allow ourselves to be open and to be able to deal with the fear that frequently accompanies this loss of control in order to bring ourselves to this higher level of experience. Life is an unfolding mystery, which we are not going to experience if we must remain in control. For too long we have been ruled by the head; it is time to be open to the heart, which is the core of the person.

Newman, a nursing theorist, states that disease can be viewed from the perspective of being part of the implicate (or hidden) order made explicate (or apparent). While disease, as it becomes explicate, can result in chaos for the individual, the individual is often able to make order out of the chaos and transcend the experience, reaching a new level of health. Transcendence of the limitations of the disease does not necessarily mean freedom from the disease; it does mean more meaningful relationships and greater freedom in a spiritual sense. Newman considers these factors as an "expansion of consciousness." (1994, p.65)

Lamendola and Newman (1994) studied individuals with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease within the theoretical framework of health as expanding consciousness. "The men in this study moved from being separated, alienated individuals in search of their place and connection in life to more meaningful, authentic relationships with self and others." (p.20) Although these men were facing a potentially life threatening illness, their lives had been transformed in the process and many of them stated that they were living more authentic meaningful lives than before their illness.

Myss (1998) talked about the period of chaos, which occurs when one is confronted with a "shattering" experience, be it a life threatening illness, an unexpected divorce, or the death of a loved one, as being a "surrender point" - a point at which one can either revert to old habits and ways of dealing with the situation or be open to a new pattern of response, which will help one expand to a new level of consciousness. Kubler-Ross (1997) identifies what can and often will happen to human beings facing death from cancer, stating that "they are in the process of being destroyed by a malignant growth and yet can emerge as a butterfly emerges from a cocoon with a sense of peace and freedom, not only in themselves but in those who are willing to share their final moments..." (p. 12) In these examples, the crisis situation has the potential to lead to profound, transformational changes in the life of the individual. Individuals can become, in the words of Miller, "appreciative participants in mystery, instead of controllers."

The ideas discussed in the seminar are ones, which are being addressed by a wide variety of authors. Williamson focuses on many of these issues in her book A Return to Love (1993). Her basic premise is that we operate either from fear or from love, either from the ego or from the spirit. She believes that the "ego uses everything to lead us further into anxiety while the Holy Spirit uses everything to lead us further into inner peace." (p.41) Williamson defines Holy Spirit as God's "eternal communication link with his separate sons." (p. 38) Zukav (1990) in The Seat of the Soul discusses external power as related to the ego and authentic power as related to the spirit/soul. He believes that "we are evolving from a species that pursues external power into a species that pursues authentic power." (p. 27)
Pearsall (1998) in a fascinating book titled *The Heart’s Code* states that “in our striving to become more and more capable of controlling our world, we seem to have become much less connected within and with it.” (p. 16) His basic premise is that the brain has taken over control while little attention has been paid of late to the heart. He encourages listening to the heart as we begin to “build a bridge between the bio-mechanical wonders of modern medicine, the spirituality of ancient traditional healing systems, the various alternative or complementary medicines, and the wisdom of religious scholars and spiritual leaders.” (pp. 6-7).

Dossey (1989) looks at various eras of modern medicine. He identifies Era I medicine, from the beginning of modern science until the mid-20th century, as having a focus on the body with treatment modalities being mainly surgery and medication. Era II medicine focuses on the body/mind with the development of psychoneuroimmunology and the acceptance of the interrelationships between the body and the mind; treatment modalities include biofeedback techniques, relaxation, and the use of meditation. Dossey believes that we are entering Era III medicine, which incorporates a true integration of mind/body/spirit. Era III medicine is based on the premise that “the mind exists nonlocally in space and time, extending beyond the individual brain and body.” (p. 266) In summary, these authors seem to be presenting beliefs, which encourage the careful examination of how we live our lives. Are we driven more by our brain and our need to control or are we open to the mysteries of the universe as made apparent to us through our hearts and our souls? Are we running on brain energy or heart energy? Are we appreciative of the connectedness that we have with one another — that we are all of one mind? Are we open to transformational experiences that have the power to fill us with awe and wonder?

As a nurse of many years, I have personally witnessed the transformation in individuals and in families, which can result from facing a life threatening illness or the death of a significant other. For individuals who are transformed, life will not return to the old normal. Individuals will tend to live in the present, using the phrase, “yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift,” as a useful guide for daily living. A young woman for whom I am currently caring talks about being a much more authentic and real person since her diagnosis of life threatening cancer. Individuals grapple with what is truly important in their lives. The ordinariness of life becomes extraordinary.

The recent best selling book *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Albom, 1997) poignantly presents a chronicle of a remarkable individual living life fully in the moment until the point of death.

In the seminar, we talked about coming to the abyss, falling into the abyss, and arising, approaching serenity on the other side. At the bottom of the abyss, one is faced with nothingness, yet in this nothingness there is the miraculous gift of being. I believe that the challenge for me is to be open to the mysteries of life and continually to be appreciative of the present, even though I have not faced a potentially life shattering experience. My recent studies of holistic nursing, which focuses on the true integration of body/mind/spirit, have been of as much if not more value to me in my personal life as in my professional life. I do believe that I reached a “pseudo-abyss” in the months preceding entering the holistic nursing program and am trying hard to live from my heart with love. Keeping in mind what is important in life and being open to and aware of synchronous events are issues I deal with on a daily basis. My belief that life is an unfolding mystery (the implicate order being made explicate) as well as my belief that we are all part of one another’s collective unconsciousness, help to guide me. My own spirituality and practice of meditation help to keep me centered.

On a professional level as a nurse educator, there are implications for the nursing curriculum. Nursing has in recent years been described as a discipline, which includes both the science and the art of nursing, although the focus has often been more on the science end of the spectrum. Over the past 10 years, there has been a trend to focus more on the art or the caring side of nursing, with many nursing theorists writing on various aspects of caring, becoming and transformation. Our own work in the undergraduate department is leading us to a revision of our undergraduate curriculum, which reflects to a greater extent the holistic nature of patient care with an integration of mind/body/spirit (with perhaps, a focus on the spiritual component), the caring nature of nursing and the importance of the development of long-term relationships with a culturally diverse group of clients. Just as we want to know what our patients are experiencing, so also should we want to be involved with the experiences our students are living as well as make sure that the students are paying attention to the potentially life transforming events that their patients are experiencing. I would like to have the inclusion of journals or logs as a greater part of the student experience.
For many years, nursing research studies tended to be quantitative in nature, focusing on the measuring of a small number of individual variables, which were selected as being reflective of the whole. Nursing research paralleled the reductionistic nature of medical science and research. Currently, qualitative research in nursing is gaining momentum. Nurses are using a phenomenological approach to study the lived experiences of individuals undergoing a variety of potentially transformational life events. My own research interests lie in the hospice area and I am studying the lived experience of making the decision to enter a hospice program. Within qualitative research, the individuals speak to one another from the heart. Rather than being completely objective, the process necessitates a level of involvement between the researcher and the subject.

We all, students and faculty alike, should be open to the mysteries of the universe, acknowledging the important role of science in our lives, but also knowing that we have within ourselves great power. This power can change our life and help each of us to live a life that is not based on the need to control because we are fearful but on love energy and the ability to reach out and help others—a life that evolves as much to the heart as from the brain. “The shift from fear to love is a miracle. It doesn’t fix things on the earth plane; it addresses the real source of our problems, which is always on the level of consciousness. The only real problem is a lack of love. To address the world’s problems on any other level is a temporary palliative—a fix but not a healing, a treatment of the symptoms but not a cure.” (Williamson, 1993, pp. 23-24)

References

TECHNOLOGY AND REBIRTH: OPENING THE WORLD OF WONDER THROUGH INSIGHTFUL PEDAGOGY

by Rosemary W. Skeele

"In a moment of insight it all comes together and makes sense."

Jerome Miller 1999

At Seton Hall University technology has humanized learning. These words bring hope and pride and a look back at change with an eye that sees rebirth. Phew! I said it and I'm glad, although I can see lips forming the words “misguided technocrat” and hear groans of displeasure from some professorial peers — colleagues who have just endured or who are in the midst of incredible and unsettling change caused by the demon computer. Academic authorities feel badgered and battered by attacks on their personal educational beliefs and philosophies, urged to become proficient in new technologies, and coerced into modifying their methodologies and teaching postures. All this while observing limited academic resources being reallocated to accommodate the implementation of technology.

Technology - Pain and Rebirth

For hundreds of years we college professors have been cozy, friendly, caring, reading, studying, talking, sharing, teaching, debating, saying what's on our mind, and loving most of it. We and our predecessors have created a special realm for ourselves. Within that world we set our objectives, design our schedules and carry out the tasks related to achieving our goals. We develop a way of living that encompasses our personal and professional goals and allows us to maintain control over our lives. Happy and content with the model for living we create for ourselves, we skirt change and we are often successful. Much change is gradual, or particular to a discipline. Very seldom does change transform society, permeate every level of human activity, or progress at the rate that technology has advanced in the last 20 years. "Computing, today, is a new educational imperative. It has moved from being a desirable luxury to a necessity at all levels of academic...Instruction (Molnar, 1990 as cited in Rivard, 1998, p. 33)."

Many faculty dodged technology for awhile, smiling and nodding, "knowing" that like so many other intrusions it would probably go away. After all, educational television had little effect on the classroom. But technology didn't disappear and we had to carefully elude or parry its proponents. We read all the adverse research. We pointed out its absurdities, and trivialized its place in our profession, trying to invalidate this intruder. But more and more of our colleagues were trying it out. They were adapting it to meet their needs. It wasn't the panacea that was originally touted, but it was the engine that was driving so much in our world. They had the startling realization that shopping, banking, communications, research, perhaps even colleges and universities would never be the same.

For many of us, technology provided our world-shattering event, that radical experience that would penetrate our private realm and provoke us to transform our teaching. The introduction of technology encouraged us to reflect on the qualities of teaching excellence and the activity of teaching itself. Whether or not we embraced technology, we now had an incentive to create new learning environments in our classes — to be reborn. We were given the opportunity to try new pedagogies, to promote classroom practices that invite meaningful and uninhibited discussion, and to assist our students to leave their insular worlds and remove the limitations that practicality places on intelligence.

Everyday is Sunday

Josef Pieper contends that the "whole life of the working human being is consumed (p. 42)." To know, to be able to accept knowledge we need to be at rest. It is noted by Pieper that, throughout history, Sabbaths or days of rest have had considerable social significance. He quotes P.J. Proudhon who described the profound social importance of Sunday, "The servants regain their human dignity for a day, and put themselves on a level with their masters (Proudhon as cited in Pieper, 1948, p. 47-48)." This suggests to me that the day of rest was a symbol of power. The servants became empowered when they could share the same activities as their masters.

The word school was derived from the word for leisure. Universities were to provide the leisure time for young people to study the liberal arts, to ask
questions, to cultivate a love and craving for knowledge, to develop their imaginations, and discover wonder with no thoughts of work. The realities of the world today, our student body, their needs, and the perceived role of the university are a great distance from these ideals. How can we as academics encourage these worthy goals and help our students achieve the satisfactions derived from them? New learning theories and pedagogies help us to share power with our students. Constructivism empowers students by putting them on the same level as their masters. It rejects the “sage on the stage” role of the academic and invites both teachers and students to become learners sharing the responsibility for constructing knowledge.

When we explore the role of academics, we simultaneously consider the role of learners and some interesting tensions begin to emerge as we define learning. If we believe that students are simply empty vessels passively waiting to be filled with knowledge, learning becomes a process of transmission. Pedagogy becomes a moot question and a talking head satisfies all requirements. Current educational thought views learners as active beings who construct, interpret and reconstruct rather than simply absorb knowledge. The nature of learning is very different if we ascribe to this philosophy. As Kelly (1955) says, the learners are scientists who hypothesize about how the world works and use the new understandings they have gained to reshape the mental constructs they use to make further predictions. Here the learner has more control of the process of knowing, and the teacher, in the words of Giroux (1988), promotes not only academic achievement, but also endeavors to “empower students so they can read the world critically and change it when necessary (p. xxxix).” Making everyday a Sunday by helping the student escape from ordinary life and become a participant in the universe of meaning is the ultimate measure of learning.

**Transformative Intellectuals**

John C. Haughey, S.J., who led the 1998 Summer Seminar on Knowledge and Wisdom, stated that “One functions wisely within a discipline only if one is not content to stay within its quasi-sovereignty and sublates it by moving it and oneself toward wholeness.” (Sowa, 1998, p.7) In the field of education, technology is one piece of the giant curricular puzzle that produces educators and educated people. The choice of pedagogy must be a protected academic freedom that educators reasonably exercise. Faculty have the knowledge to create the curricula and the environment most suited to the needs of their discipline as well as their students. They must maintain their autonomy by taking on this responsibility and its accompanying risks. To accomplish this task means that they must be proficient not only in their discipline, but with pedagogical content — how to effectively teach subject matter content. “Pedagogical learner knowledge revolves around procedural ways in which teachers deal with and support learners” (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992). To which it should be added that pedagogy should emerge from a widely accepted, research-based corpus of knowledge, principles and practices. We must possess the depth and breadth of knowledge needed to make informed decisions about learning. “Transformative intellectuals” is the phrase used by Freire and Macedo (1987) to describe the nature of our work.

The past 49 years of computer use have created more information than we could possibly control or access without the computer. 1950 was the year we began using computers for commercial purposes. From the beginning of recorded knowledge up to the year 1950 we had a controlled and manageable body of knowledge. Every 10 years from 1950 to the present we have doubled that amount of information. Today that ten year time period has decreased to every five years.

The old notion that teachers were pitchers filled with knowledge whose job was to fill up the empty vessels in their classes has no validity today. A school, much less a single teacher, does not have the ability to transfer the amount of information a person needs to be successful or just survive in the world today. Learning is more than a process of transmission. We have allowed technology to change the way we live, communicate and learn. Our charge now as faculty is to adapt to these changes – to adopt methods and strategies that exploit this change in our lifestyle, culture, and learning.

**Technology as Pedagogy**

According to Miller (1999), in our culture we want to be transformed without being devastated. This doesn’t appear to be a logical wish since transformation includes the end or “death” of something as we know it. The integration of technology has meant the end of teaching practices as we know them. This has been
difficult. We’ve had to study and learn new methods, new skills and new machines. However, our technological transformation at Seton Hall has been so widespread and meaningful because the University — faculty, administration, staff and students — have planned, made commitments, taken risks, experimented, expended creative energy, and become partners in the implementation of this curricular evolution. The risk of dehumanization of the teaching/learning process has always been a consideration during the transformation. “Properly used, however, modern instructional media can individualize and thus humanize this process to a degree previously thought unattainable....what is important is not so much what machines are present in the classroom but rather how the teacher guides students in their use (Heinich et al., 1999, p. 22-23).”

Technology and humanism are not mutually exclusive. They often coexist to produce certain outcomes. Students who learn through repetition find computer-based instruction less stressful than a college lecture. Technology is a more humane solution. Courses that encourage students to use e-mail and online discussion groups as adjuncts to classroom activity are high in humanism. Students have constant dialog with their instructor and peers. I have a colleague who loves to communicate with his students. Technology has helped him fulfill his personal instructional mission and provided the connection that opened the door to technology for him. Here he reflects on his initial experience with Learning Space:

The Discussion Group has been more than I had hoped for, both in quality and quantity. The level of discourse has often been reflective and scholarly, with references to previous coursework, theories, and philosophies of education. Many students write extensively, expressing their concerns, their doubts, their frustrations and their satisfaction with the events surrounding their learning. I recognized immediately that the traditional classroom format never gave so many students so much of an opportunity to share. Chatty, brash, and opinionated students no longer intrude on the needs of the other students. Anyone who had anything to say, any question to raise, or any concern to address was suddenly free to do so, with no constraints other than their own circumstances might impose. The responses they receive from each other are more reasoned and useful, I suspect, than those given in the rush of the limited amount of time in the traditional classroom.

Another observation has been the creation of sub-groups or virtual communities in my class. There have been recognizable groups of two, three and more students who respond regularly to one another. They offer advice, empathize, and trade ideas. Where a student’s posting has identified a problem, support has emerged from throughout the group (Skeele, 1998).

Any class that doesn’t engage students through teacher/student or student/student interaction is certainly low in humanism. Computers can assist students to become stakeholders in their education by making decisions about their own learning. “Technology does not preclude a humane teaching environment (Heinich et al.).”

**Support and Challenge**

The University wisely recognized that the use of technology for instruction must be accompanied by reform in pedagogy. Faculty and students must be able to use technology reflectively. Skill in assessing, evaluating and delivering information and material is critical. From its inception at Seton Hall we have treated technology as a methodology that must enhance the curriculum and use it as an opportunity to encourage the use of other methods. Collaboration, independent learning, critical thinking, and alternative forms of assessment are easily integrated with technology use. Students suffer when they are the victims of a routine education in which all of the choices are made for them. They are not involved in learning or understanding or allowed to reach higher levels of understanding — to gain insight, to get excited about learning. Academics often are torn between their somewhat contradictory roles as transmitters of tradition and agents of change. Their dilemma frequently plays itself out in pedagogical debates over the best methods of developing independent thinkers and lifelong learners. Faculty were encouraged to recognize the potential for technology to allow them to use pedagogical practices more likely to engage the modern learner.

Numerous initiatives were developed to assist faculty who wanted to confront technological change in their classes. Peer assistance programs paired master
teachers with faculty seeking curricular methodology as well as technical knowledge. Tech Buddies accompanied us to class to assure that ports, bays, sockets, plugs, and other mysteries were explained and connected. Curriculum Development Initiative grants were offered to teams of faculty for program redesign efforts that included technology. Special funds for virtual courses and programs gave recognition to the time, sweat and knowledge required to metamorphose a classroom-based course to an on-line curriculum. We have workshops, seminars, courses, Help Desks, CAT Lab, laptop computers for faculty, laptop computers for students, computer labs, web sites, wired classrooms, wired dorm rooms, and wired grass. The array of curriculum materials I can choose from is inspiring. It would be unreasonable to try to use all of it, but isn't it nice to have a selection to choose from? Seton Hall is among a select group of colleges. I like being among the “have's.” I like receiving e-mail from graduate students who want to attend Seton Hall because they crave learning that takes place in imaginative, creative ways. I like having a reputation for something other than basketball. I like being #16 and I love being #1 (ranking in Yahoo! Internet Life magazine Most Wired Colleges 1999). Most of all I believe in the impact practice and pedagogy have upon students.

Support from the university and the personal challenge to reflect upon our pedagogy spur action and commitment. We become empowered when we conjoin thought and behavior, theory and practice, reflection and action. If we develop rationales for our practice, provide research-based approaches to curricular change, and contribute locally and globally to the body of knowledge that engenders effective teaching and learning, our students still have a chance to develop a love of thinking and a rationale for their lives, their ambitions, and their work. Let us hope that through the learning process we can help preserve some of the youthful, undistracted thirst for wisdom that is available within our students.

Epilogue: Life's Contradictions

During the seminar, three hours each day were devoted to contemplating my escape from the prison of labor so that I could perceive the reality of the world, while 21 hours were consumed developing reams of paper with 12 point characters to justify a government grant. Sandwiched in-between were family, cooking, homework, laundry, driving, and all the bourgeois jobs that separate me from philosophical insight. What's a girl to do? Since I am trapped in the tyrannical demands of the working world, which Pieper (1948) tells us have overtaken the university, it was difficult while writing this piece not to portray myself as an unabashed, anti-intellectual pragmatist or as a reincarnation of Erma Bombeck. My brief, but enjoyable peek into the philosophical world was an intellectual respite from my hectic routine - the antithesis of our study. Since, I teach the “servile arts”— instructional design and technology — I decided that my only hope for salvation was to exhort my colleagues to examine their teaching methods and their effect upon our students.

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THE PROVOST'S KITCHEN
by Jennifer J. White

The kitchen, according to the editor of Bon Appetit magazine William Garry, is the most forgiving room in a house. “Show me a recipe that calls for slicing and dicing,” Garry writes, “and I’ll show you that all sharp-edged objects are possessed by devils, and that they all lust for my flesh.” Garry recalls incidents leading to singed eyebrows, blown off oven doors, and egg dripping from the ceiling. Inspite of these culinary adventures, or misadventures, as the case may be, Garry remains unfazed. In fact, Garry looks at these experiences not as setbacks but as opportunities to learn. Paradoxically, Garry appears to be motivated by these experiences; experiences that the faint of heart might find devastating, or at the very least discouraging. He writes, “But all these disasters, and many more, are only temporary. The oven door can be repaired... The eyebrows grow back — a bit gray, true — the burns and cuts heal, and any lingering scars can be passed off as the honorable mementos of war or sport. The kitchen forgives.” Who would have thought that someone so inclined to disaster would not only be at home in the kitchen but actually make a living by navigating and managing, even inviting, these “incidents?” Garry explains this insanity. “Out of the chaos come wonderful things to eat. That’s why professionals are so happy and comfortable in the all-forgiving kitchen. It feels like home.”

I love to cook and I feel at home in the kitchen. I am naturally drawn to the kitchen in part because, like a reptile on a sunny rock, I seek warmth. Heat from the oven, the flame on the stovetop, hot running tap water, all soothe my heart and soul like balm. Taking time to explore cookbooks, culinary magazines, grocery store isles and farmer’s markets provides me with the tools and the freedom I need to express myself and to explore my environment in a way I am not normally able. Meals I create come to represent my moods and provide for me a way to communicate with and have access to the people I care about. Friends naturally gather in the kitchen, creating more warmth. Conversations, peoples’ lives, evolve in this space. Meals become the context for sharing hopes and dreams, in the quiet hours of the evening away from the noise and confusion of a restaurant, away from the drone of the office. Conversations and a developing sense of community compete with nothing other than the din of the microwave or the whistle of a teapot. Not only do I need Garry’s interpretation of the kitchen to be accurate, I pray to God that it is. Expressions of my heart and soul are bound up in the kitchen.

Debra Castro explains that she and her mother-in-law relate to each other in the context of sharing recipes. The relationship the two women have is bound up in their own understanding of ingredients and techniques; it is the language through which they communicate “our cooking skills and our lives.” Author Susan J. Leonard writes “even the root of recipe — the Latin recipere — implies an exchange, a giver and a receiver. Like a story, a recipe needs a recommendation, a context, a point, a reason to be.” A recipe is not worth much in and of itself. It does not have meaning until someone gives it a shot in the kitchen and then the success or failure of a recipe depends not so much on how it tastes but on what was created between the people taking part in the experience of sharing it. So, if I am the chef expressing myself in the kitchen, my recipes are the scripts, and my cookbooks and culinary magazines are my history. Recipes provide for me a context for conversations with myself and with my loved ones.

Cooking is my passion. I don’t hide the fact that I would rather be in the kitchen than almost anywhere else. Why then am I university administrator? The truth is — I like my job. In the kitchen I create, I build something cohesive out of disparate ingredients, I take time to figure out what ingredients are available to me and do the best I can to create something from those ingredients that feels good to me, something useful, meaningful. I take risks, I make a mess and I hope, in the end, I create something that is pretty tasty but, if not, I’ve enjoyed myself along the way and have helped eek out a bit more life in the process. I clean up the mess and wait for the next opportunity to create again.

I believe I do the same thing in my job. I try to bring together various people and ideas — these are the ingredients — and build something that, hopefully, others will find useful or meaningful. Sometimes I make a mess. Sometimes the creation isn’t so great. But I believe the Office of the Provost is forgiving. In fact, I pray that the Office of the Provost is forgiving because, like in the kitchen, some of my heart is expressed in my
work. But here in the Provost’s office, more is at stake than my ego as a chef when I lay out a meal. What is at stake when faculty members, deans, students, and administrators come together in this kitchen are students’ hopes and dreams, and faculty members professional aspirations. At stake is the health and vigor of a whole community of scholars and friends who are trying to form servant leaders in a global society — who are trying to be good people.

So what is my script in the Provost’s Kitchen? What are the recipes I use here in the office that allow me to find my professional voice in the way I have found a personal voice at home in my kitchen? What do I share with the deans and the faculty that create for us a context for sound and productive conversations about our lives as academics? Policies and proposals written and shared with each other are not enough for me to feel fulfilled, nor do I believe that they are capable of advancing the shared agenda of strengthening our academic community and reaching the goal of forming leaders for a global society. Maybe then the recipes we use here are simply the opportunities themselves that we create for conversation and for building relationships with each other? If that is the case, then I must focus more, no, focus almost exclusively, on making sure my job is about creating opportunities that allow members of our community to share conversations and ideas.

Christopher Kimball, editor of Cook’s Illustrated magazine, writes “Cooking is the amalgamation of a life, the gathering up of tiny bits of experience and knowledge, rolled into a perfect circle of dough or kindly spooned into a worn casserole.” Teaching and learning rarely lend themselves to such neatness. If only our students were as receptive as our favorite dish, if only our skills were enough to render this perfect circle of dough. But gathering up bits of life can never be neat and Kimball goes on to write about something more closely aligned to the essential messiness of teaching and learning: “Cooking is about making do with the crudest of tools, rolling dough with a wine bottle or baking blueberry cobbler on a covered grill when the power fails after an evening’s thunderstorm. Cooks overcome inconvenience and muddle through to the end without complaint, changing plans for want of an ingredient, or plunging wildly in a new direction inspired by a whiff of freshly picked rosemary or the burst of flavor of a ripe tomato.” Kimball tells us here that we just need to improvise. We improvise in the kitchen, we improvise in our work, and we improvise in our lives.

Garry and Kimball share a similar theme in their writing. Both authors explain their craft not by what they actually do in the kitchen but by telling us about what they create and how they create it for themselves and for others. They explain their lives and their connection to their trade by explaining their relationships, their feelings, and their actions. Garry takes risks and finds strength in bumbling through an experience. His attitude toward the kitchen as a forgiving place seems to reflect satisfaction with the process of creating, painful though it may be, something good and tasty out of chaos. Kimball writes too about the process of creating. Kimball explains that only part of the experience of cooking is about the cobbler that you put on the table, the rest of it, almost all of it, is about finding the right ingredient by accident, or by improvising with one utensil when another isn’t available. All of this is to say, it’s about pulling pieces together, gathering up “tiny bits of experience and life” to try and create a coherent, hopefully tasty, whole.

So, in the Provost’s kitchen I try to be mindful of the process of creating. I try to be mindful that my job is not to impose a structure to distribute proposals. It is to gather up bits and try to create something creative, coherent, and hopefully, meaningful to someone or to our community. And all the while hope that my audience is forgiving.

References


Sometimes, not always, actually not even very often, but sometimes, I sit in a darkened theater and when the lights come up after a performance, I feel transfigured. I feel transported, I feel, perhaps, full of wonder. Wonder at the play? Wonder at the experience? Wonder at the talent? I am filled with wonder because I have experienced something that has awakened in me uninhibited, creative imagination and hopefully has already or will at some point, lead me to some insight.

How did that happen?

Some might venture a guess that perhaps the play, the story, is what has that capability and that the artistry of the writing is what has truly affected the receiver. I agree. I am sure that the better the play, the better the experience. However, being a member of the ‘acting’ community, I would have to profess that the play cannot stand alone.

What brings life to the theater are the people who bring life to the characters that the playwright has so deftly created. If that were not the case, what is the point of performing the piece to begin with? Plays, as any truthful playwright will attest, are written to be performed. Of course, this is not to neglect the other artists who contribute to the production: the set and lighting designer, the sound designer, the costumer, etc., nor to imply that the effect of the production as a whole is not great. However, if there are no actors, there really is no reason to sit in the beautifully designed and well-lit theater.

The actors must be creating some sense of humanity that will lead the audience to some new insight. The playwright has given them the words, but we have all witnessed the lack of insight that the mere recitation of words can bring. If it were the play alone, why then would one be prompted to view Laurence Olivier’s Hamlet and then see Sir John Gielgud’s rendition of the same role? The difference lies in the actor’s interpretation and the extent of ‘self’ that each one is able to bring to the role. We all know the great work prior to seeing the production - everyone dies in the end! Of course there is great insight just in the reading of Shakespeare, but the performance of the play is what has the ability to affect us immediately in our souls. I would therefore have to suggest, that it is the performance of the actor that has the greatest ability to affect the audience and it is because of that, I am so deeply offended by the poor recreation of life that quite often occurs on the stage!

Accepting this premise, how does one achieve such great artistry, such great expression? Why is Olivier’s Hamlet better than Keanu Reeves’? That is the question - especially for a teacher of the art! How does one lead the student of acting to create wonderment and ultimately how does this affect our humanity on a universal level?

Oddly enough, I believe that the task lies in the teacher’s ability to lead the students to uninhibited, creative imagination, which will allow them to then portray people who are not uninhibitedly creative! I suggest that these characters are not creative since it is usually through these characters’ discovery of insight during the course of the play that the audience is able to gain a cathartic and insightful experience. Characters who are already uninhibitedly creative are generally not in conflict and therefore rather uninteresting to observe for a two-hour stretch. True, we may see them in conflict with the world, but then we are learning through their conflict with the ‘ordinary people’ how to attain a higher level. So, the majority of the play concerns itself with characters whom are not particularly insightful, and yet for the actors to do justice to the creation of these people, they must be in an uninhibited, creative and insightful state.

How do we get there?

Well, oddly enough, we got there a long time ago - when we were children. The wonder of the child, the innocence, the creative play that they are able to engage in uninhibitedly, is something that we lose as we age. Perhaps we recapture it as we approach our winter years, but generally speaking, we lose touch with that openness probably from puberty. Our societal sensors prevent us from ‘making fools’ of ourselves by imposing judgments - our own and our peers.

The approach to acting - spontaneous acting whereby excitement and wonder is achieved - lies in the actor’s ability to once again touch those childlike impulses. Sanford Meisner - a renowned acting teacher/coach - touches upon it in his exercise called repetition. 111 At the core of this exercise is the understanding that the participants are in an open and creative state. They
must be clear of outside influences and in touch with their own state of being as well as receptive only to the force that is being addressed to them.

The willingness to ‘be in the moment’ appears to be a natural state for children. They are able to take imaginative leaps because they are not concerned with the effect or judgment of the consequences. In fact, the only problem for them occurs in not being committed to the moment. They are cut out of ‘the play’ when they no longer are using their uninhibited, creative imagination.

This, too, is true for the actor. This ability ‘to play,’ to be unconcerned with the constraints of time and place, is key to creativity. However, in life is it possible to not be preoccupied with such constraints? [And sadly, is it not these constraints that make us the goal-oriented, uptight and ego-driven individuals that we are?] If the three sisters in Chekhov’s play of the same title had not been so obsessed with ‘getting to Moscow,’ would they not have in fact gotten there? Unfortunately, their search for ‘Moscow’ was an outward search when what they truly sought was inward. The achievement of ‘Moscow’ is the freedom to ‘let go’ of our constraints and egos and enter the abyss, ultimately leading to wonder and insight. (This is a perfect example of characters who lack creative imagination and yet the creation of these characters can only be achieved through uninhibited creativity.)

The achievement of spontaneous acting too, is the freedom to ‘let go.’ The wonder, openness, excitement and spontaneity of the child are so joyous to watch. Such recreation in the form of acting can also be joyful. If we see a theatrical production we are taken in by the sheer vulnerability and fragility of the performers, will we not somehow be transformed? I believe it is inevitable. Simply by the nature of our own humanity, we are moved by another’s defenselessness to the world.

A valuable acting exercise entitled, ‘neutral man/woman,’ attacks this very issue. The student dons a mask that expresses no emotion - it is neutral. (The purpose of the mask is to erase the face so that the student does not depend on facial expression to indicate a feeling thereby contriving an emotion.) As the student works in this mask, he or she is put in several commonplace situations that are new and unknown to this neutral person - this new being. The actor must work to see ordinary things as brand new experiences, dispensing with the traditional view of these tasks and situations and allowing a different understanding to take place.

For example, a neutral man finds a tire. Without the knowledge of the uses and functions of the tire as we know it, what can he discover about such an object? What possible uses are there for such a round, rather heavy article? The discoveries can be amusing as well as insightful and the exercise enables the actor to stop the traditional thinking process and to simply experience.

This is an exciting venture - to simply experience. We so rarely do this in life. This is why I suggest that the creation of complete human beings in the theater is the creation of those who do not simply experience and yet to just experience is a necessity of those who do create.

Now, are we willing to take such chances with ourselves? Are we willing to allow the world to ‘have its way with us’ and trust in the inevitable grace of God to protect our souls from utter destruction if we do in fact show that complete nakedness?

As actors, we had better, or we disgrace the very art! But, as people, the thought is terrifying. Children do this because they trust and are not clear about the consequences - they have not yet learned ‘control.’ But adults know the outcomes and understand the ramifications of this lack of trust. Where then can we grown-ups go to escape the confines of our ‘box’ of goals and deadlines and restrictions?

Well, we all have our different sources of joy and wonderment. Some of us go to the mountains, some to the sea, and some to the theater! And when we go to the theater, we go for many different reasons — to be entertained, to be educated, to have a cathartic experience, to see a mirror of ourselves — but, the bottom line is, to experience the wonder of what real humanity is about. And it is that wonder-filled experience, achieved through the actors’ creativity thus producing theatricality, that places theater at the very core of the liberal arts education!

As a teacher of acting, my hope is to give my students the understanding of “active non-doing.” This phrase is used in the Alexander technique of movement. The concept is one of ‘letting go,’ of allowing the students to be childlike and respond to each other without premeditation. There are of course guidelines in all the exercises - one is not allowed to hurt another, etc. But the principle is the same that is used in many eastern religions. It is the basic concept put forth in the Zen philosophy, (beautifully illuminated in the book Zen in the Art of Archery — an invaluable text for an acting class) and in Josef Pieper’s book Leisure, The Basis of Culture — the philosophy of just being.
In a marvelous book by Marlo Morgan, Mutant Message Down Under, a woman takes a walk-about in the outback of Australia. She has no idea where she is headed, how long she will be gone or what she will encounter. She trusts her whole existence to the Aboriginal tribe who she accompanies. She learns to be open. She, in turn, experiences. She experiences what life, nature, God and the universe present to her. She eventually attains insight. She listens and responds and consequently understands. Interestingly, she claims that the Aboriginal tribe communicates through mental telepathy.

"It was really remarkable. If I had not witnessed it myself, it would have been hard to believe, especially the communicating by telepathy. Mental telepathy was something I sensed the people back home would find difficult to believe... The reason, according to Oota, that Real People (the name of the Aboriginal tribe) can use telepathy is because above all they never tell a lie, not a small fabrication, not a partial truth, nor any gross unreal statement. No lies at all, so they have nothing to hide. They are a group of people who are not afraid to have their minds open to receive and are willing to give one another information. But it would never work in my world, I reasoned, where people steal from the company, cheat on taxes, have affairs. My people would never stand for being literally "open-minded." There is too much deception, too much hurt, too much bitterness to hide. But for myself, could I personally forgive everybody whom I believed had wronged me? Could I forgive myself for all the hurts I had inflicted? Later during my journey, when they worked with me to develop my mental communication, I learned that as long as I had anything in my heart or my head I still felt necessary to hide, it would not work. I had to come to peace with everything. I had to come to forgive myself, not to judge, but to learn from the past. They showed me how vital it is to accept, be truthful and love myself so I could do the same with others."

Ah, to be that still! To be that open to experience! We all have the capability to reach that state of being. The actor can do this without actually going to Australia - if correctly guided. He can gain insight into the humanity that the theater presents. And we, as audience, can encounter it through his creation. It is the key to inner peace as a human being and the key to creativity as an artist. And, it ultimately unlocks the door to wonderment. We can find it in our hearts and we can find it in the theater!

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BIOGRAPHIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

RAQUEL BENBUNAN-FICH is currently an Assistant Professor of Computing and Decision Sciences at Seton Hall University's Stillman School of Business. During the 1997-98 academic year, she was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the IS Department at the NYU Stern School of Business. She received her Ph.D. (1997) in Management Information Systems from Rutgers University, her M.B.A. (1989) from IESA, Venezuela, and her B.S. in Computer Engineering Cum Laude (1986) from Universidad Simon Bolivar, Venezuela. Her publications include journal articles, conference papers, and several other publications in Spanish. Her current research focuses on computer-mediated communication systems, asynchronous learning networks, electronic commerce and evaluation of Web-based systems.

ANTHONY HAYNOR is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Seton Hall University. He received his doctorate from Rutgers University. He teaches courses in social theory, socialization over the life course, social change, political sociology, and sociological practice. Professor Haynor is currently working on a book that develops sociology's contribution to ethical decision-making and problem solving. Other research interests include workplace transformation and modern character structure. He is also involved in the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race. Dr. Haynor is a member of the Society of Applied Sociology and the Society of Catholic Social Scientists. He is married to Bridgette and has a 6-year-old daughter, Renikah.

WENDY C. BUDIN, is an Associate Professor of Nursing and Program Director of the Lamaze International Childbirth Educator Certification Program at Seton Hall University. She received her Ph.D. in Research and Theory Development in Nursing Science from New York University. Her area of clinical expertise is health care of women and childbearing families. She also teaches nursing research to undergraduate and graduate students. Professor Budin is involved in an ongoing program of research dealing with adjustment to breast cancer. She received one of the first NJ Breast Cancer Visiting Research Scholar Fellowships, awarded by the NJ State Commission on Cancer Research, 1996. Professor Budin also received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Nursing Council, Seton Hall University and the Governor's Nursing Merit Award for Nurse Researcher. She is co-author of Nolte’s Essentials of Nursing Research (sixth edition), Springer Publishing Company.

JÜRGEN HEINRICHS is Assistant Professor of Art History at Seton Hall University. He teaches the modern and contemporary periods in Western, American, and African American art and visual culture. His research focuses on intercultural communication and seeks to explore new theoretical avenues of dialogue between "western" and "non-western" art and culture. Prior to coming to Seton Hall, Jürgen Heinrichs taught at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. He holds a Ph.D. from Yale University and an M.A. from the University of Hamburg, Germany.

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RICHARD M. Liddy is the University Professor of Catholic Thought and Culture and Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University. He is also a senior fellow of the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. His doctoral dissertation was on the work of the America philosopher, Susanne K. Lander. In 1993 he published a work on Bernard Lonergan titled Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan. He is presently writing another book on his own personal appropriation of Lonergan’s work. He has also written on the thought of John Henry Newman. He is interested in the topics of art, education, formation and church leadership.

Jerome Miller, facilitator, has taught for 27 years at Salisbury State University, Maryland, where he serves as Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the Philosophy Department at the Charles R. and Martha N. Fulton School of Liberal Arts. He is the author of two books, The Way of Suffering: A Geography of Crisis, published by Georgetown University Press, and In the Three of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in the Post-Modern World, published by SUNY Press. His areas of expertise and interest include contemporary continental philosophy (such as the works of Heidegger, Levinas) and Bernard Lonergan. He has published on these areas in a variety of journals and is currently at work on a book on the meaning of historicity.

W. King Mott, Jr. is Dean of Freshman Studies and a faculty member in the Department of Political Science. He recently published a book, The Third Way, where he examines the economic theory of John Paul II. Dr. Mott is a member of the APSA, Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. After finishing his doctorate at Louisiana State University, he taught at the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas as an associate professor.

Athar Murtuza is an Associate Professor of Accounting in the Department of Accounting and Taxation at the Stillman School of Business. His teaching interests include cost and managerial accounting. He is also interested in the issues involved with the communication of financial information. His earlier incarnation led to his doctoral degree in literature with a dissertation titled “Without Benefit of Clergy: Assessing Kipling’s Religious Beliefs and Imperial Views.” He just finished the second edition of his book published by John Wiley, which applies to the documentation of accounting procedures notions he learned while studying Meyer Abram’s views concerning literature’s ability to serve as both a mirror and a lamp. Athar argues in his book that the documentation process need not be just archival, instead, it ought to be illuminative for the organization, serving as an occasion to learn and to re-design. During the academic year 1999-2000, he will be spending his sabbatical leave as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religious Studies Department at Yale, studying the contemporary relevance of the Islamic financial ethics and antecedents for accountability as presented and interpreted in the works of Islamic scholars from 7th to 14th centuries.

Thomas R. Rondinella is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication. He received his M.F.A. in Film Production from New York University and his B.A. in History from Seton Hall. In addition to teaching, Tom continues to work in various aspects of the film and video business. He is currently finishing post-production on a video documentary about the New Jersey Children’s Choir. His feature film credits include 15 film editing credits, three screenwriting credits and two directing credits. His current feature film project as producer and editor is Charming Billy, which debuted at the Independent Feature Film Market in New York in September 1999. He and his wife, Sharon, a youth minister, have three daughters, Laura, Rebecca and Julia.

Carolyn F. Rummel, R.N., Ph.D., C.N.S., C., has been a faculty member in the College of Nursing since 1971. An Assistant Professor, she serves as Chairperson of the Department of Undergraduate Nursing and teaches Research in Nursing. In May of 1999 she completed a post-master’s certificate program in Holistic Nursing at the College of New Rochelle. She is interested in qualitative research examining the lived experience of making the decision to enter a hospice program and believes that there is a great deal more that nurses can do to help patients within the spiritual domain. Carolyn and her husband Peter are the parents of two sons who are Seton Hall graduates.
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JENNIFER J. WHITE is the Executive Assistant to the Provost at Seton Hall University. She holds a B.A. in Psychology and Early Childhood Education from the University of Richmond, an M.Ed. in Educational Administration from Beaver College and a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Virginia. She works closely with the deans, associate deans, department chairs, and the Academic Council to facilitate communication and information flow among the various colleges and to manage the daily operations of the Office of the Provost. She also serves as a liaison to other divisions within the University.

DEIRDRE A. YATES is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, specializing in theater. She received her undergraduate degree in theater from the University of California at Riverside and her M.F.A. in Acting from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She studied abroad at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, toured the country with the National Players and has performed regionally from Seattle, Washington to Washington, D.C. Her work as a director has been seen in the Theatre-in-the-Round and most recently at the Harold Clurman Theatre in New York City. Professor Yates currently teaches acting, directing and children's theater courses at Seton Hall University and has performed here with the Celtic Theatre Company. She is a member of the Yates Musical Theatre for Children and was a member of the original founding committee for the Center for Catholic Studies.