

ART KNOWLEDGE AND THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY ART
DEPARTMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF POSTMODERNISM

by

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a sociology of art knowledge. It explores relationships between art knowledge and institutional structures, making visible how and why certain conceptions of art are hierarchized and generalized so as to be considered essential to the nature of all art. It renders problematic the existing situation in which the art traditionally taught in schools and universities is, for the most part, insular and culturally singular in basis, and examines why this cultural singularity persists in a society which is culturally pluralistic. The thesis is that the university art department has the monopoly on defining, legitimating, and perpetuating this insular and culturally singular art knowledge for transmission through the school system to all cultural and social groups.

The ways in which the university effects art knowledge are discussed in terms of the university's curricular structuring and disciplinary ties; its social role as patron, producer, definer, legitimator, and socializer in the arts; and in terms of its ability to neutralize "avant-garde" attacks, including the postmodernist incursion of popular culture into the realm of "sacred" culture. The theoretical framework of this critical analysis is a sociology of knowledge, and the materials for analysis were obtained by reviewing public documents on art programs, policy on the arts in postsecondary education, and a cross-disciplinary selection of literature in social theory, educational theory, aesthetics, and art history.

The institutional structures and norms described throughout the study present significant resistance to the postmodernist commitment to challenge conceptual parameters and hierarchies of art knowledge that hinder a broadening of the cultural base of art. The study makes imperative the need to seriously consider this resistance if educational systems are to embrace the artistic activities of a diverse population and if art is to move into a more vital and relevant role in society. It makes imperative for sociological study of art systems (which in the past has concentrated almost exclusively on the role of museums, galleries, critics, dealers, and artists' "lofts") to take into account the role of the university art department as a primary institutional basis of art knowledge, and as a definer of cultural knowledge about art.

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DEDICATION

To my new son Max, who's life began upon completion of this endeavor.

And to my parents, who offered encouragement and love throughout.

CHAPTER 1

ART KNOWLEDGE AND THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY ART DEPARTMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF POSTMODERNISM

Art, as traditionally taught in schools and universities, has had, for the most part, a singular cultural basis rooted in the "Great Tradition" of the western European Renaissance and in western philosophical aesthetics (exemplified in the writing of such influential educators as Broudy, 1972, and Smith, 1982, 1985). Recent writings (as evidenced in Foster's anthology on postmodern culture, 1983) have indicated that such a view is limited and ultimately detrimental to art education. The notion of a singular cultural tradition is currently being replaced in some circles with a pluralistic view of social and cultural foundations of art education, embodied in work which has been given the term postmodernist. Postmodernism, in its loose pluralistic sense, holds that there are more world views than those embodied in western fine art and its modernist aesthetic.

In the spirit of postmodernism, this study renders problematic traditional conceptual hierarchies of art in education. It does this by exploring relationships between art knowledge and institutional structures, particularly university art departments. Its method of inquiry is an interpretive/critical one, drawing on a range of sources not normally found together, to make connections and make visible a condition that is too often experienced as a facticity. Its theoretical framework¹ developed from general principles of the sociology of knowledge. The study presents a sociology of art

knowledge--a sociology of the cultural practices, beliefs, and myths about art, as well as the formal art methods and art concepts typically taught in schools and universities. The materials for its critical analysis were obtained by reviewing research studies of artists and their development, public documents on individual art programs, policy on the arts in postsecondary education, and a cross-disciplinary selection of literature in social theory, educational theory, aesthetics, and art history.

Why must a sociology of art knowledge, or any approach that takes up the postmodernist cause of exposing and disengaging hidden values and assumptions of older categories of fine art, take into serious account the university art department? The thesis is that the university art department has the monopoly on establishing and perpetuating art knowledge for transmission through the school system to society. The university art department is the institutional and cultural basis of art knowledge in western society. It defines cultural knowledge. It defines artistic reality. This function becomes of critical concern to postmodernists when combined with the second thesis: nowhere have the traditional conceptual hierarchies of art that exist in western society been at once more powerful and more subtly disguised than in the university.

Behind the assertion that the university art department is the institutional basis of art knowledge are several institutional relationships between universities and art knowledge. One is that compartments of knowledge are framed and maintained by the departmentalism of universities. Second,

university art departments are the occupational base for most art teachers in schools. That is, art teachers take into the school system the specialized concepts, skills and ideologies that go along with being an artist, which they acquired through their B.F.A. or similar art degree programs. The university art department organizes those rites of passage, those effective forms of socialization into that small specialized subculture in which certain art knowledge is perceived differently and valued to a greater extent than it is in society at large. Third, university admission and graduation requirements directly influence course offerings in secondary schools. The school curriculum seems to be organized in terms of the nature of and relative priority given to differing curriculum areas in universities (Apple, 1979). Fourth, because many art critics, art historians and other art scholars are situated in university art departments, their development of theory and ideas about art is bound up with university processes and structures. The values they bring to bear in assessing or researching individual works, artists, or styles ultimately affect reputations in the art world. These aesthetic values become part of the students' knowledge of art and, in turn, affect their actions, including what visual images they produce or what careers they strive for. Fifth, because of the vast economic support of the arts within North American universities, especially during the 1960s and early 1970s, universities have assumed the role of patron of the arts. They exert influence on art knowledge in much the same way as have dealers, galleries, museums, the earlier systems of commissions from individual aristocratic patrons, or exhibiting in eighteenth and nineteenth century European Academies.

Universities significantly affect art knowledge also in their predictable ability to absorb and empty originally oppositional art styles of their subversive qualities. Originally oppositional, modernism is now part of the accepted culture.² The once scandalous modernist paintings by Picasso are now part of the canons taught in schools and universities. Once established in schools and universities, a style or aesthetic comes to be regarded as classic or academic by a new generation of artists and writers on art. Put another way, the point in time when modernism lost its subversiveness is the point in time when it became institutionalized in schools and universities (Jameson, 1983). Does it follow that postmodernism will lose its emancipatory potential to shake up older categories of art knowledge at the point at which it is incorporated into the university curriculum? Can a broadening of the cultural base that postmodernism demands ever be possible in art study within institutions which have traditionally had a vested interest in preserving a realm of high or "sacred" culture against the surrounding environment of "kitsch" (Greenberg, 1961) "schlock", and the "philistinism of . . . TV series and *Reader's Digest* culture" (Jameson, 1983, p. 112)? Is the art institution ever likely to accept postmodernisms that include

that whole landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and Grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery and the science fiction or fantasy novel. They no longer "quote" such "texts" as Joyce might have done, or a Mahler; they incorporate

them, to the point where the line between high art and commercial forms seems increasingly difficult to draw. (Jameson, 1983, p. 112)

Not surprisingly, postmodernist challenges have so far been less than effective in significantly changing the cultural base of art instruction. Warhol's high-profile attempts to broaden the boundaries and blur the distinction between commercial and fine arts are now taught as "classics". Even many punk art forms have been absorbed within the universities' self-appointed role of supporting developments perceived as being on the frontiers of knowledge.

While it has yet to be seen if a more extensive incorporation of postmodernist art forms into the university curriculum will be effected and, if so, what it might look like, another manifestation of the postmodernist shift is currently operating out of universities. Increasingly within the last fifteen years, a type of discourse, a new "contemporary theory" (Jameson, 1983, p. 113), has been coming out of departments of sociology, anthropology, art history, film studies, literary studies, and modern history. One of the more recent additions has been the serious challenge mounted by several art educators against the dominance and uncritical acceptance within elementary and secondary schools of the traditional culturally singular subject matter of art instruction, as witnessed in the founding of the *Caucus for Social Theory and Art Education* and the *Journal of Multi-Cultural and Cross-Cultural Issues in Art Education*. Educators of this

persuasion describe art education as including the study of popular, folk and ethnic arts, mass media, the built environment, and other visual forms that lie outside or on the fringe of the dominant tradition. Popular films, quilts, weaving, television advertising, and housing design, are all seen to have a valid place alongside expressionist painting and Renaissance "masterpieces" in the dialogue of art. Bersson (1982) and Nadaner (1983) have stressed the educational and social implications of the increasing proliferation and penetration of society by the mass media and popular culture. Rather than accepting all visual forms within popular culture and mass media as equally valid for study, they advocate that education in art should assume a role of social criticism and social reform. The proliferation of visual forms in which the message is often militaristic, classist, racist, or sexist³ demands critical inquiry and critical understanding on the part of children and the public. Education must no longer limit its subjects of study to those which have been sanctioned by western elite traditions. But neither can it depend on the existing modernist aesthetic as a model of criticism. It is not enough to simply be able to identify the color and texture relationships in a magazine or television advertisement that uses sexual imagery to sell luxury cars. What is required is the identification of the social context, the cultural values of the targetted audience, the value system underlying the work, the social and cultural implications of this value system, the language of delivery and its relationships to the meaning of work, and so on.

Other art educators within the postmodernist discourse (Andrews, 1984;

Chalmers, 1984; Stanley, 1985, for example) take a different emphasis. For them, pluralism necessitates broadening the boundaries to include the study of not only the popular culture and mass media that reflect the dominant culture, but the visual forms of many cultures. They believe that in a society in which several ethnic groups exist, a multicultural approach to art study helps dissolve ethnic stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings.

Such sociologically based challenges to the parameters of existing art knowledge in schools may offer some insight into art study in postsecondary institutions, even though perceptible change in the cultural base of art instruction in school classrooms (Chapman, 1981; Muth, 1985) ⁴ has been no greater than it has been in university art studios. What is more disturbing than a lack of change is that contemporary change could very well be toward, rather than against, intensification of the existing singular cultural basis. An example is the recent highly organized promotion in the United States of the wealthy J. Paul Getty Foundation's "discipline-based" model of art instruction. Discipline-based models have been used in Canada in several local curriculum guides (for example, the *British Columbia elementary fine arts curriculum guide and resource book*, 1985). Compatible with what occurs in general education, this curriculum model, in its original form, is based primarily on sequenced, academic study of "legitimated" master works of the "Great Tradition". Furthermore, it is modelled on the traditional *university*-based fine arts professions--those of the art historian, the aesthetician, the art critic, as well as the artist; it does not adequately incorporate the sociological or

the anthropological study of art, for example, which carries critical tools for looking at art inclusively rather than exclusively.

As academic content assumes a more prominent role in art study and as art educators continue their efforts to raise the level of art knowledge in mainstream, pluralistic society, the critical consideration of the parameters, social functions and institutional basis of the art knowledge promulgated in education becomes of increasing concern. Consideration of these sociological factors, especially the interrelationship of art knowledge and universities, becomes even more imperative, if we accept the thesis that the university art department has the monopoly on defining and perpetuating art knowledge for transmission through the school system to the public. It is unlikely that change in art education in schools and, contingently, change in the attitude of the public toward art is likely to occur without some kind of simultaneous change in art instruction in universities. But as yet there is little indication in the literature of any major efforts towards, or even concentrated discussion about, change in university art instruction. In fact, research and information concerning the general subject of art instruction at the postsecondary level is sparse and sporadic.⁵ Of what little there is, most either paints a psychometric portrait of art students (Barron, 1972; Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976), their career attitudes and professional development (Adams & Kowalski, 1980; Madge & Weinberger, 1973; Whitesel, 1980), or their painting styles (Montalto, 1983); or, in earlier decades, endorses the place of fine art courses in general university education (Dennis & Jacob, 1970; Griswold et al., 1965; Mahoney,

1970). There is a distinct lack of literature that questions, as this study does, the premises of the institutional and knowledge structures of art instruction in postsecondary education from a critical sociological perspective or in light of the issues surrounding postmodernism. Research which most directly addresses the relationship between art knowledge and institutions is found within the sociology of art.⁶ However, those who have developed accounts of art systems (Albrecht, 1968; Becker, 1982; Manfredi, 1982; Simpson, 1981; Wolff, 1981b) either neglect or give merely superficial mention to the social role of postsecondary art institutions in their proper but almost exclusive concentration on the influence of critics, dealers, galleries, museums, and "lofts" upon definitions of art and, ultimately, attitudes about education in art. Given the role of postsecondary education as patron, protector, definer, producer, and educator in the arts, this neglect is unwarranted. By showing how university art departments play a significant role in defining, legitimating, and transmitting art knowledge, this study attempts to add a key piece to the incomplete sociological account of art systems and art knowledge and, ultimately, to suggest future directions for art study in the aftermath of postmodernism.

While committed to the search for adding to our understanding of art systems, there is a political position embodied in this study which embraces and defends ethical ideals of a society of individuals who "respect, revere, and celebrate individual differences and cultural diversity" (Blandy & Congdon, 1987, p. 2). Such a society cannot be realized unless its educational systems honor and provide for the artistic activities and

contributions of a diverse population. The agenda of this study is clear: to make visible that which impedes this ideal. The study argues that the traditions, norms and institutional structures of universities present resistance to a genuine broadening of the cultural base of art. A thorough recognition of this resistance and the ways in which it impedes or dominates is the first step toward reform. Individuals cannot change that of which they are unaware.

NOTES

- ¹ The theoretical framework remained malleable throughout the process of critical analysis. It was reworked as the complexity of the issues increased with the gradual collection of information and with the organization of ideas. Although a focus developed as materials were collected, the research was not approached to accept or reject a hypothesis. Rather, the research was conducted inductively. To use Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) analogy of qualitative research, the process of inductive analysis is like a funnel. Things are more open at the beginning or top, and more directed and specific at the bottom.

The resulting theoretical framework of the study and the organization of chapters is summarized at the end of chapter 2.

- ² Unless indicated otherwise, the term "culture" is not used in this study as it is often used in ordinary language. An individual of culture is popularly described as one who, in the words of the American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1949, p. 29) "can speak languages other than his own, who is familiar with history, literature, philosophy, or the fine arts." That North Americans speak of going to university to become "cultured" or that they refer to the fine arts as "high" culture as opposed to "low" culture, promotes a conception of fine art as the domain of a privileged social class. It is a conception that constrains peoples' perceptions, interpretations and behavior, and affects the structures and functioning of organizations, including the institution of art instruction in postsecondary education. This issue is dealt with further in chapter 3 in discussions of "cultural capital" and "high status knowledge".
- ³ John Berger (1972) would say that the fine arts lead the way in conveying such messages.
- ⁴ One reason why change overall in art instruction in classrooms has

been almost imperceptible is that for classroom teachers, teaching art has consisted of picking up examples of formula "school art" or free self-expression activity from their own teacher education in art, rather than, for example, the critical discussion of art in society. A second reason has to do with the institutional structure of schooling being such that it is difficult to move away from the conventional model in which the production aspects of art have functioned for students, teachers, principals and parents as a desired and expected relief from the academic school routine (Efland, 1976).

- ⁵ This lack of research has been ascertained by surveying literature within the general areas of art education, visual arts, and sociology. This survey included a computer-accessed ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) search.
- ⁶ The sociology of art as a scholarly tradition and body of knowledge dates only from the mid-sixties, with Arnold Hauser's (1959) study of the social history of art. Yet, its inquiry into the nature of art as a social entity is rooted in Marx's systematic analysis of society and theory of ideology.

CHAPTER 2

ART IN THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Formal education in art, or in any endeavor, deals with the selection, management and transmission of knowledge. Knowledge is structured so that some is "intentioned" knowledge, a term used by Esland (1971b, p. 84) to describe what a society considers important and purposeful knowledge. Other knowledge is considered spurious, or peripheral, or is totally overlooked. The formal curriculum of schools and universities is made up of a set of arrangements of intended knowledge, or what a society considers important and purposeful knowledge. The selection of this stock of knowledge is less an intentional manipulation of minds by educators than it is a process of selection based on what is taken to be the significant past, *the* tradition. By looking at art as a specialized discipline of curriculum knowledge, we can consider how that one collection of knowledge is selected from an almost unlimited number of combinations, and why it is considered important enough to be transmitted through the school system to society.

Some broad theoretical groundwork in the sociology of knowledge, especially knowledge appropriated for education, is sketched out in this chapter in order to facilitate the more particular task of understanding why we have the highly specialized and insular forms of art study that we do.

The intent is to facilitate an understanding of the mechanics of art knowledge, the socially accepted rules, assumptions, and institutional mechanisms that make certain traditions and conceptions of art important and others relatively unimportant. The sociology of knowledge puts up for questioning knowledge that may otherwise be taken as fixed, predetermined, and statically hierarchical. This study does not treat fine art knowledge as an unquestioned virtue sanctioned by tradition. Nor does it question whether art knowledge is socially produced, but rather in what ways and to what extent.

This chapter sketches out the general nature and organization of knowledge, first, in broad theoretical terms that describe the distinctions and relationships between formal educational knowledge and the knowledge of the everyday world, and next, in terms of the organization of formal educational knowledge constituting the curricula of most North American schools and universities. From this framework of the organization of knowledge, some concepts and basic theoretical principles as they might apply to art knowledge in particular are derived as a basis for the basic arguments in subsequent chapters. Of particular interest is the strength and extent of maintenance of the boundaries of knowledge categories, for, this, it will be argued, determines not only what counts as art knowledge, but also the status and legitimation of art knowledge in education and society, and, subsequently, its ability to perpetuate itself in the face of changing social circumstances and postmodern challenges.

The social construction of reality

The term "art knowledge" is used in this study to represent not only the art methods and art concepts which are formally taught during class time, but all forms of thought involving art. The kinds of cultural practices, myths, values, norms, resources, symbols, beliefs and attitudes that are selected and organized within schools and university art departments can be considered as art knowledge. Such broad coverage is consistent with an attempt to chart a framework of the nature and organization of knowledge and introduce, in the most general terms, the position of art knowledge within it.

In the sociology of knowledge literature, the term "knowledge" has been so broadly conceived that it has often come to be equated with the term "culture". As Robert Merton (1957) notes,

Not only the exact sciences but ethical convictions, epistemological postulates, material predications, synthetic judgements, political beliefs, the categories of thought, eschatological doxies, moral norms, ontological assumptions, and observations of empirical fact are more or less indiscriminately held to be "existentially conditioned." (p. 467)

For Berger and Luckmann (1966), the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with such a broad array; it must concern itself with whatever passes for "knowledge" in a society, regardless of its ultimate validity or

invalidity by whatever criteria¹. The sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes by which a// human knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations, such that the taken-for-granted "reality" of the "man in the street" is understood. The sociology of knowledge is, for Berger and Luckmann, concerned with the analysis of the social construction of "reality". This is where their understanding of the field differs from what had generally been meant since the term for the field "the sociology of knowledge" was first coined in 1924 with the publication of the German philosopher Max Scheler's essay "Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens" (Scheler, 1960, cited in Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For Berger and Luckmann, and for this study, "ideas" or theoretical thought is only part of the sum of what passes for knowledge or what is "real" for members of a society in their everyday lives. Theoretical formulations of society, whether they be scientific, philosophical, mythical, or aesthetic, do not exhaust what members of a society "know". It is "the social construction of reality" that must instead be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge, because this is what constitutes the fabric of meanings in a society by which that society acts.

Berger and Luckmann admittedly owe their redefinition of knowledge to Alfred Schutz. Schutz's (1962, 1964) field of inquiry was the structure of the commonsense world of everyday life. His focus was a phenomenology of the natural attitude or, in other words, the discovery in full depth of the presuppositions, structures and signification of the common-sense world. Although he did not elaborate a sociology of knowledge *per se*, he did

state that the sociology of knowledge is misnamed and should focus on all typifications of "common-sense thinking".²

Common-sense thinking occurs, as Schutz (1964) writes, in this way:

We rely upon the fact that our fellow-men will react as we anticipate if we act toward them in a specific way, that institutions such as governments, schools, courts, or public utilities will function, that an order of laws and mores, of religious and political beliefs, will govern the behaviour of our fellow-men as it governs our own. In terms of the social group we may say with Scheler that any in-group has a relatively natural concept of the world which its members take for granted. (p. 121)

There is a zone of things taken-for-granted that, at a given time, does not seem to need further inquiry, even though we do not have a clear and distinct understanding of its structure.

The fact that we do not understand the Why and the How of their working and that we do not know anything of their origin does not hinder us from dealing undisturbed with situations, things, and persons. We use the most complicated gadgets prepared by a very advanced technology without knowing how the contrivances work . . . The man in the street has a . . . knowledge of recipes indicating how to bring forth in typical

situations typical results by typical means (Schutz, 1964, p. 120).

Schutz contrasts, on the one hand, the "man in the street" who has a working knowledge of many fields with, on the other hand, the experts' knowledge, which is restricted to a limited field but therein is clear and distinct. According to Schutz, all our possible questioning of the unknown presupposes the existence of and arises only within a world of taken-for-granted things.³

The term "art knowledge" is used in this study in the spirit of this broad definition of knowledge addressed by Schutz and detailed by Berger and Luckmann. But there is another reason for looking first to Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge that is critical to the thesis: With the distinction these authors make between the formal "experts' knowledge" and the taken-for-granted knowledge of everyday reality there is a distinction in status. Knowledge in the former sense, the sense normally conceived of in everyday terms as having to do with "truth", scholarship or wisdom as pursued in academic institutions, signifies thought forms which are of high status. Possessing such knowledge is thought to represent a desirable and privileged status for an individual, one which is distinguishable from a state of ignorance. Furthermore, those who possess knowledge of this sort are considered authority figures; they define and legitimate the behavior and experiences of others. For example, members of the upper ranks of the church have long maintained the right to define what a "state of grace" is and what the nature of sin and salvation is (Berger, 1969). Likewise,

professionals who teach fine art in postsecondary institutions and in schools are involved in defining for their students the range of art experiences thought appropriate to them. Art teachers are socially designated experts in matters of art knowledge. They assume a professional mandate to impart wisdom and truth, to define artistic ability, and to assess and categorize students. The conceptual disjunction between the art professional and the layperson untutored in the fine arts of western high culture confers legitimacy upon art teaching and learning, and affects the extent to which such art is defended, insulated, and maintained by its exponents in education.

Fine art knowledge as a finite province of meaning in the macrostructure of knowledge

Given the distinction between knowledge in the everyday world and what Schutz termed "expert" knowledge, in what ways are the two related? In what way is the specialized art knowledge typical of art departments related to the "common stock" of knowledge outside the specialized fine art world? According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the relationship is this: When compared to everyday reality, all other realities appear as "finite provinces of meaning, enclaves within the paramount reality marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience" (p. 24). All such "finite provinces of meaning" are characterized by a turning away of attention from the reality of everyday life. While there are, of course, shifts in attention *within* everyday life, "the shift to a finite province of

meaning is of a much more radical kind . . . In the context of religious experience this is called 'leaping'" (p.25).

Art, in the western high culture sense, is one such finite province of meaning in which "leaping" is of a radical kind. The leaping that takes place between aesthetic experience and the world of everyday experience is illustrated well with the case of the theater.

The transition between realities is marked by the rising and falling of the curtain. As the curtain rises, the spectator is "transported to another world," with its own meanings and an order that may or may not have much to do with the order of everyday life. As the curtain falls, the spectator "returns to reality," that is, to the paramount reality of everyday life by comparison with which the reality presented on the stage now appears tenuous and ephemeral, however vivid the presentation may have been a few moments previously. (p.25)

Berger and Luckmann's notion that the reality of everyday life retains its paramount status even as such leaps take place follows from Schutz (1964, p. 124), who wrote, "It is the zone of things taken for granted within which we have to find our bearings." So, although some art experiences may involve leaping from everyday reality, they remain an "enclave" within everyday life rather than of their own discrete reality.⁴

Berger and Luckmann's treatise about the paramount status of the reality of

everyday experience is a reminder that artists, even those who, in the tradition of the Romantic movement, hold the "purest" artistic intentions and claim indifference to the public by not wishing to recognize obligations other than the intrinsic demands of artistic production, live in the reality of everyday life. Ideas about art and artistic activity as well as works of art are formed in a context of public definition, no matter how exclusive this public is. It is in these terms that the artist is defined and that the artist defines her or himself (Bourdieu, 1971). Much of the writing on art and artistic "creation" in the past has, however, addressed fine art as if it was an autonomous realm that transcends the social world or as if it was impervious to sociological analysis and its attempt to situate art in its context. Sociological analysis, such as the sociology of knowledge and the Marxist and phenomenological approaches from which it derives, has been successful in exposing many of the hidden and "sacred" assumptions in what we now identify as the "Great Tradition" of fine arts. A basic tenet of the sociology of knowledge is that knowledge is socially produced and socially defined. Art knowledge of any sort is no exception.⁵ Individuals construct their reality rather than discovering a reality which is somehow fixed and impermeable. Knowledge is not, contrary to common assumption, something external to the individual, something fixed, predetermined, or even commodity-like. Rather, knowledge is fundamental to an individual's experience of everyday life. In this broader view,

knowledge is seen as permeating the entire 'fabric' of a society through the consciousness of its members, and as providing the frames of reference by which all individuals organize their lives.

All action is, therefore, grounded in knowledge--people act on the basis of what they take account of--that is, what and how they interpret. (Esland, 1971, p.41)

The broader definition of knowledge, like that put forward by Berger and Luckmann, reminds us also that the finite provinces of meaning, the theoretical knowledge thought to be the domain of the "expert", accounts for only a small part of the knowledge "in use" among individuals in society. And the art knowledge expropriated for education accounts for an even smaller amount. Practical and immediate problems constitute the majority of our everyday knowledge. For most students, this art knowledge remains external to their experience. Little relation exists between the knowledge found in education and the reality of their own daily lives, especially given the diversity of their social and cultural backgrounds in contrast to the cultural exclusiveness of art knowledge typically taught in schools and universities. This art knowledge will, for most, never be actualized as their own reality but will remain that of the art teacher or the artist.

For students specializing in fine art, on the other hand, it is much more likely that fine art knowledge will constitute their frames of reference. Their specialized art knowledge becomes integrated with their everyday knowledge. This specialized province of meaning becomes such an important part of their culture that it often creates for them an identity in which their everyday actions and beliefs are based. Helen Muth (1985) writes that

art educators (or for that matter artists, art historians, art students, and others specializing in fine art) have "dual identities": one within the everyday reality of their respective cultural alliance, and one within the specialized discipline of fine art. "Discipline knowledge", the term she gives the latter identity component, is acquired through formal training in art. Though rooted in an everyday culture, the art professional has developed a world view that is discipline-oriented. "Discipline knowledge becomes the tool and the criteria [sic] to address all sorts of issues whether within the province of the discipline or not" (p. 28). Discipline knowledge becomes a criterion for "cultural knowledge", a term used by Muth and others⁶ to describe a knowledge domain that is more diverse than discipline knowledge and which is embedded in various symbol systems, artifacts, and cultural institutions of an individual's everyday world. Once an individual becomes a member of a discipline, the discipline has an organizing effect on the individual's way of thinking: "Its distinctive mode of thinking is not restricted to problems which fall within the discipline itself. The discipline thus becomes an integrated part of a person's psychological environment" (Muth 1985, p. 33). The notion of discipline knowledge shaping an individual's identity is a general theoretical explanation that fits particularly well with descriptive studies of fine art students (chapter 4) wherein the overriding feeling is that "art is life" or that "art is a way of being outside society" (Ridgeway, 1975).

Knowledge boundaries and university departmentalism

The extent to which a discipline of knowledge becomes an integrated part of an individual's identity and affects that individual's beliefs, values and routine actions in everyday life is related to the structure and social status of that knowledge discipline. One useful way to think about and discuss the structure of a discipline of knowledge and its status and relation to other knowledge domains is to describe knowledge in terms of its boundaries, their nature, and the way in which they are maintained.

Knowledge, especially that which is appropriated for educational knowledge, is bounded, differentiated, and structured within. Often these boundaries correspond to boundaries of social frameworks, such as university departments, research specialities, or professions (Holzner, 1983). Such social frameworks and their attendant social values shape and limit what knowledge domains are considered relevant and which are peripheral, distrusted or rejected. Understanding the nature of art knowledge in education and society requires recognition of this basic relationship between knowledge boundaries and institutions. Principles of knowledge boundaries will be reviewed as a theoretical basis for arguing in subsequent chapters that the nature and maintenance of boundaries relates to the legitimation and status of art knowledge (chapter 3) and to the strength of commitment to the artistic identity and the discipline of fine art (chapter 4). The mechanisms for acquiring and maintaining legitimation and for developing a following of recruits in art are important to the art department's capacity

to maintain traditional insular conceptions of art knowledge in a pluralistic environment.

A set of principles of educational knowledge boundaries was developed by Basil Bernstein (1971), a British sociologist of education. Bernstein developed his framework in an abstract way, with the suggestion that

we can go into any educational institution and examine the organization of time in terms of the relative status of contents, and whether the concepts stand in an open/closed relationship to each other. I am deliberately using this very abstract language in order to emphasize that there is nothing intrinsic to the relative status of various contents, there is nothing intrinsic to the relationships between contents. (p. 48-49)

A key concept in Bernstein's analysis of the nature of differentiation of formal educational knowledge is "classification". "Classification" is a boundary maintenance concept; it refers to the relationship between knowledge categories or curriculum contents and the way in which they are differentiated. To state Bernstein's principle of classification simply: Where classification is strong, boundaries are strong and contents of knowledge are relatively pure (unmixed). Strong boundaries insulate contents from each other. A knowledge area, which may be thought of as a sort of conceptual box, stands in a closed relationship to other content areas. There is little confusion about which bits of knowledge fit in which box. Where boundaries between contents are weak or blurred, in the other extreme,

insulation is reduced and the relationship of contents is open, permitting a mixing of the contents of the boxes.

The strength and nature of boundaries can be thought of not only as they might occur between specialized knowledge areas, as in the case of the traditional school curriculum, but between specialized knowledge areas and commonsense or everyday knowledge. Insulation between "pure" and "applied" knowledge is most likely to be strong (Bernstein, 1971). In the case of art knowledge, this does not seem surprising, given the autonomy or lack of relatedness typically perceived between the world of everyday life and the finite province of art discipline knowledge typically taught in schools and universities. A strong allegiance to either the identity of the fine artist or to the applied artist is to be expected. This is confirmed by evidence from studies of art students wherein allegiance to the fine arts ideal is so strong that, according to one researcher (Griff, 1964, 1970), it acts as a mental block preventing fine art students from switching allegiance to the applied arts (chapter 4).

Operating on the strength of boundaries, Bernstein identifies two structural types of educational curricula: "collection codes" and "integrated codes." A collection code refers to any organization of educational knowledge in which the contents are clearly bounded and insulated from each other and stand in a closed relation to each other. Knowledge in a collection code tends to relate only minimally to everyday experience. With curricula of an integrated code, on the other hand, the strength of boundaries is reduced

and the contents stand in an open relation to each other and to common-sense knowledge.

Attempts to implement integrated code curricula are sometimes found at the primary school level where, with only one classroom teacher responsible for almost all subjects, thematic or cross-disciplinary approaches can be more readily implemented. Such approaches, where they exist, tend to blur boundaries more than does the common practice of teaching distinct subjects in distinct blocks of time. In secondary and postsecondary education in western society, the curriculum is generally of the collection type. Subjects, including art, are typically taught as parts of a package made up of distinct specializations. The day is divided into units of time, and knowledge is organized according to this time schedule. The time allotted to the subject usually indicates the educational worth attributed to it. (As known so well, in many schools art is allotted a small unit of time on a Friday afternoon, often to be replaced by field trips and Halloween parties.)

The subject areas of the collection code are defined and maintained by the departmentalism of universities. The university department is the knowledge base and the occupational base of teachers in both schools and universities in the sense that teachers have been trained in, and university professors are "experts" in, a particular discipline of knowledge defined by a tradition of research and teaching activities of a university department. What also works to maintain discipline boundaries is that administration processes

such as the allocation of funds and staffing occur on a departmental basis. The structure of knowledge which is presented to students is the structure in which it is organized within educational institutions. Bernstein (1971, p.106) states:

Social order arises out of the hierarchal nature of the authority relationships, out of the systematic ordering of differentiated knowledge in time and space, out of an explicit, usually predictable examination procedure.

The collection code generates a power system within educational institutions (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985) in which the department head can affect knowledge organization to a far greater extent than students. With integration codes, on the other hand, the teacher/student power structure shifts toward cooperation, as teachers make decisions about knowledge and teaching in conjunction with students.

Educational knowledge that is distanced from everyday knowledge and packaged in a collection code tends to be experienced as a facticity. Knowledge becomes somewhat like an object or commodity in that it is advertised as external to the individual, fixed, predetermined, value-free, and available to anyone with the motivation and time. In actual fact, it is more like private property to which only a few have access. Berger and Luckmann describe the objective quality of knowledge and, in a more general sense, the apprehension of all human phenomena that have been categorized or classified, with the term "reification". Reification is an

extreme step in the process of objectivation "whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-humanizable, inert facticity" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 83).

Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra human terms. Another way of saying this is that reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity as *if* they were something else than human products--such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 83).⁸

The sociology of knowledge, or, in the case of this study, the sociology of *art* knowledge, makes knowledge-as-facticity problematic. Only then can questions be asked and answers sought regarding the parameters of art knowledge, the social meanings and functions and ultimately the validity of this knowledge for education and society. It is this phenomenon of knowledge experienced as a facticity which art programs and individuals must make problematic if their artistic activities are to do more than reinforce traditional fine arts values.

Specialization, subject loyalty, and the social order

Both collection and integrated codes give rise to a series of sub-types, each varying in the relative strength of their boundaries and the strength of maintenance of these boundaries. Within curricula of the collection code, Bernstein identifies specialized and non-specialized types.⁹ A specialized collection code, to which art students belong as subject specialists in the educational system in western society, is indicated by "subject loyalty". With each step in educational life, subject loyalty is systematically developed in students as they specialize and, is then transmitted by them as some in turn become teachers. Specialization creates quickly an educational identity which is clear-cut and bounded, or which is, to use Berger and Luckmann's (1966) description of finite provinces of meaning, "marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience" (p. 24). The deep structure of the specialized type of collection code is, according to Bernstein, "strong boundary maintenance creating control from within through the formation of specific identities" (p. 56). The educational identity is "pure" in the sense that educational knowledge is uncommonsense knowledge; it is highly insulated from "applied" and commonsense knowledge, giving it something of an esoteric quality with special significance to those who possess it.

Very early in a child's life the frames of the collection code socialize her or him into knowledge frames which discourage connections with everyday realities. For the majority of students schooled in the western world, the

framing of educational knowledge is tight. Education means socialization into the existing order and into assuming that the boundaries of the world's educational knowledge are fixed and impermeable. Education has usually meant learning to work *within* a received frame.

It means, in particular, *learning* what questions can be put at any particular time. Because of the hierarchical ordering of knowledge in *time*, certain questions raised may not enter into a particular frame. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 57)

Bernstein makes the interesting point that when this frame is occasionally relaxed, it is more often for purposes of social control of forms of deviance than for purposes of transmitting knowledge that might be more relevant to students. When this weakening of the boundaries is introduced, it is usually "with the less 'able' children whom we have given up educating" (p. 58). Or, ironically, a relaxed frame is available to a select few students in the most academically advanced (graduate) level of formal education; here, students may not necessarily be given or accept "a given selection, organization, pacing and timing of knowledge realized in the pedagogical frame" (p. 57). As Bernstein explains:

The ultimate mystery of the subject is revealed very late in the educational life. By the ultimate mystery of the subject, I mean its potential for creating new realities. It is also the case, and this is important, that the ultimate mystery of the subject is not coherence, but incoherence; not order, but disorder; not the

known but the unknown. As this mystery, under collection codes, is revealed very late in educational life--and then only to a select few who have shown the signs of successful socialization--then only the few *experience* in their bones the notion that knowledge is permeable, that its orderings are provisional, that the dialectic of knowledge is closure and openness. (p. 57)

To sum up Bernstein's principles of knowledge boundaries: the stronger the boundary, 1) the more educational knowledge tends to be differentiated and specialized with strong insulation between "pure" and "applied" knowledge, 2) the more it is taken for granted and left unquestioned by teachers and students, 3) the stronger the sense of subject loyalty which, in turn, works to maintain boundaries, 4) the less power teachers and students have to affect knowledge, and, importantly, 5) the more rigidly knowledge areas are hierarchically arranged. Knowledge, as it exists in the curricula in most North American schools and universities, is marked by strong boundaries characteristic of the collection code. Educational knowledge is sharply drawn into a set of insulated and relatively unmixed subject areas that are divorced from everyday life. Students, art students included, are socialized into the view that what they learn in formal education is predetermined, fixed, and unrelated to everyday knowledge. Most students never realize that knowledge is not certain and given, but is capable of being understood in different ways and includes knowledge of everyday life.

As Bernstein's critics have pointed out, his concepts of "classification", "framing", "collection code", and "integrated code" are abstract and static (Apple & Wexler, 1978; Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). His naming process of the organization of educational knowledge is part of a search for social patterns and does not explain the continued existence or the origins of such arrangements in society (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985; Gibson, 1977; Pring, 1975). Furthermore, Bernstein's analysis takes little account of variables, such as the potential influence that students may exercise in shifting a curriculum characterized as an integrated code back to a collection code as their competitiveness asserts itself; or, as another example, the administrator who, by imposing restrictions on teachers, turns a curriculum characterized by weak framing into one that is strongly framed. However, the usefulness of Bernstein's set of principles, as with any theory of the sociology of knowledge, lies in its ability to provoke critical contemplation, rather than take as given, the nature of knowledge and how it is organized. Bernstein's concept of collection code--the knowledge structure most students are socialized into through their formal education--seems to fit with what descriptive research (Goodlad, 1984, for example) tells about the nature of education in general. But what does knowing that education in general is characterized by the collection code mean in terms of art knowledge in particular?

If art, as part of the formal curriculum of schools and of universities, belongs to a collection code as Bernstein characterizes it, then the following statements would apply: The boundaries of *art* knowledge as it is

taught in universities and schools are strong. Its content is pure in the sense that there is little confusion about whether the study of line and texture or Cubist paintings will be found in an art class or in a physics, geography, or dance class. Art, specifically its sub-type fine art, is a specialized curriculum subject that is insulated from the knowledge realm of the everyday world. Specialization in fine art quickly creates an allegiance to and an identity based on that specialized discipline of knowledge. This specialization and subject allegiance in turn function to maintain and perpetuate existing knowledge boundaries and hierarchies.

Like any other subject specialty in educational institutions, art is blocked into a timetable (although usually given little priority). Art students, like students specializing in any discipline of educational knowledge, have been socialized throughout their school years into a collection code structure of knowledge. They have come to take knowledge and its disciplinary boundaries as a given, as predetermined, fixed, and statically hierarchal. Attempts to break through the disciplinary knowledge boundaries from within the discipline of art are impeded by the fact that art in universities and schools exists within and is part of a larger collection code of differentiated, insulated, and hierarchically arranged subjects. Even *within* the arts, fine artists insulate and protect their new found occupational status from applied artists, who are perceived to be of lesser status (Adler, 1979).

Attempts within any subject specialty to integrate that subject with other knowledge domains, including everyday knowledge, risk running into strong

boundaries maintained through subject allegiances. Discipline allegiances function as a powerful agent in affecting the organization of educational knowledge. Many subject groups have a personal interest in the maintenance and propagation of their own discipline.

If you are interested in propagating your own discipline, then you do not want somebody else's to encroach too much on it. Those of us who work in higher education are perfectly familiar with the phenomenon. We carve out for ourselves a little area, and if anybody else puts his foot on it, then woe betide him! (Fowler, 1977, p.123)

Despite everything that has happened in the post-war era towards the integration of curriculum subjects in schools and universities, the power of curriculum politics remains as strong or perhaps even stronger than it ever was. Disciplinary boundaries and membership become increasingly rigid, and interdisciplinary studies more remote, when competition for scarce resources increases, as has happened in education in North America generally, since 1970. The structures of knowledge and the boundaries of experience that have been in place for so long in western educational systems constitute a social order. That is why Bernstein (1971) states that if there is "a crisis in society's basic classifications and frames" there is "therefore a crisis in its structures of power and principles of control" (p. 67).

SUMMARY OF ART KNOWLEDGE PRINCIPLES, AND LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, some theoretical principles regarding art knowledge were developed from a sociology of knowledge framework. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Art knowledge, as traditionally taught in schools and universities, is a finite province of meaning, a specialized discipline, that is highly differentiated and insulated from other specialized disciplines and from everyday knowledge. The very fact that art is a subject in the formal curriculum of schools and universities contributes to this differentiation and insulation. The compartments of curriculum knowledge (or subjects) are framed and maintained by the departmentalism of universities.
2. It is this very differentiation and insulation from everyday knowledge that permits the "pure" or fine arts to maintain significantly more status than "applied" art, but less status than other knowledge disciplines in education. In other words, the legitimation of art in education is ambiguous.
3. Within the general domain of art knowledge, specialization occurs such that the fine arts are differentiated and insulated from the applied arts. Specialization in fine art creates quickly an identity, a strong sense of subject loyalty, which functions to maintain the existing differentiation, insulation, and hierarchical arrangement of art knowledge categories.

These principles supply a theoretical framework of art knowledge upon which subsequent chapters are based. Chapter 3 builds on the first and second principles and argues that the insulation of certain narrow

conceptions of art knowledge from other educational subjects and from everyday reality in itself confers status to such art knowledge, while at the same time maintaining art's peripheral position in society and in education. Furthermore, it is because fine or high art has been academicized and incorporated into the formal curricula of universities rather than left in workshop apprenticeship training or technical colleges that it is able to maintain its social legitimacy, ambiguous as it may be. Legitimation is crucial to a discipline's survival. The extent of social legitimation achieved by an art institution helps determine that institution's ability to maintain its role in defining and perpetuating its art knowledge. Rather than risk further loss of legitimation, the discipline of art is likely to maintain the legitimation that it has inherited from its socially-accepted traditions and strengthened through academicization. It protects those boundaries that have in the past defined it as high status knowledge. While the discipline protects these boundaries to keep in art's status, it keeps out, at the same time, the arts of less legitimated cultures and social groups.

Chapter 4 supports the third principle by providing descriptive and empirical evidence of the commitment fine art students develop toward their knowledge discipline. It demonstrates that the university art department is very effective in socializing students into the fine art subculture. Socialization is an effective mechanism by which the university art department preserves its status, ambiguous as it may be, from outside challenges such as those that the postmodern art world present. Once commitment is established, the discipline is protected, maintained, and

transmitted to others through education--a social process known as "cultural reproduction".

Chapter 5 outlines traditions that have exerted authority in establishing, legitimating, and in turn, perpetuating the insular type of art knowledge dominant in education. Art knowledge lives in traditions. The traditions outlined in this chapter are the academies of (high) art, the university's liberal arts ideal, and the philosophical tradition of arts-for-arts-sake aesthetics. With the authority of these socially-sanctioned western traditions and their association with privileged social groups, the university is able to maintain the Renaissance-derived fine arts as its knowledge base. Furthermore, these traditions have provided artists and art students with the motivation required to pursue art in the face of conflicts and economic hardships endemic to the pursuit. During the era of the early European academies, a motivation was the capacity bestowed upon the artist to discover the laws of God's universe. This concern with the divine was gradually replaced by the liberal arts educational ideal of the intellectual. It was the notion of the artist as intellectual that eventually permitted the production of art to accompany the understanding of art in the university curriculum. Academicization has been an effective and well-used legitimating strategy for some art knowledge.

As further support for the argument that universities maintain and perpetuate certain insular art traditions, chapter 6 presents some challenges within art schools to traditional art knowledge boundaries, and posits that

these challenges have been largely ineffective in broadening boundaries. The structure of universities is such that, once absorbed, avant-garde challenges, including more recent postmodernist attempts to expand art boundaries to include popular and commercial art, have been emptied of their potential to effect significant change in broadening the cultural basis of art in education.

Finally, chapter 7 briefly summarizes the social functions of university art departments in effecting art knowledge, and speculates, in light of the university's propensity to maintain traditional western conceptions of art, on how postmodernist approaches might best be incorporated in attempting to broaden art's cultural base. Postmodernism is not simply a particular style in art but a multi-disciplinary discourse. A broadening of traditional boundaries of art may be best effected through increased discourse between the art department and the disciplines identified as carrying the tools for critical analysis and effecting change.

NOTES

¹ Berger and Luckmann (1966) suspend the issue of the ultimate validity of knowledge in their sociological investigation of knowledge. Although not taken up in this study, there have been several criticisms made of using a broad and, for some, indiscriminate definition of knowledge (Holzner, 1983, for example). For discussion of this see Merton (1957, p.467-484). Merton takes up in detail the question of whether all the diverse kinds of "knowledge" stand in the same relationship to their existential or social basis, or whether it is necessary to discriminate between spheres of knowledge precisely because this relationship differs for the various types. In reference to the "systematic ambiguity" that he claims exists, he consults the writings of Marx and Engels, Scheler, Weber, Durkheim, Granet, and Sorokin.

² Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.15-16) quote two passages from Schutz

(1962, 1964) in which he deals most directly with the sociology of knowledge:

All typifications of common-sense thinking are themselves integral elements of the concrete historical socio-cultural *Lebenswelt* within which they prevail as taken for granted and as socially approved. Their structure determines among other things the social distribution of knowledge and its relativity and relevance to the concrete social environment of a concrete group in a concrete social environment. Here are the legitimate problems of relativism, historicism, and of the so-called sociology of knowledge (Schutz, 1962, p. 149).

Knowledge is socially distributed and the mechanism of this distribution can be made the subject matter of a sociological discipline. True, we have a so-called sociology of knowledge. Yet, with very few exceptions, the discipline thus misnamed has approached the problem of the social distribution of knowledge merely from the angle of the ideological foundation of truth in its dependence upon social and, especially, economic conditions, or from that of the social implications of education, or that of the social role of the man of knowledge. Not sociologists but economists and philosophers have studied some of the many other theoretic aspects of the problem (Schutz, 1964, p.121).

³ Also central to Schutz' (1962) thinking is the proposition that there are "multiple realities". There are as many realities or social worlds of experience as there are individuals. This suggests that social interactions and social constructs are to be approached subjectively, from the the phenomenological reality of individuals. While recognizing this notion of multiple realities and the difficulties the associated subjectiveness could entail for inquiry, this study deliberately brackets and formalizes one "paramount reality" (Schutz, 1962, p. 341), a reality that is paramount to, although often taken-for-granted by, fine art students, and is embodied in their social interactions. When singled out from the flow of experience, as this study intends, the reality of this social group becomes an object of awareness, it becomes problematic and ultimately in a position where it can be contemplated in terms of social change.

⁴ Language is one factor in this. Everyday reality is grounded in language. Language provides the machinery by which knowledge, no matter how tenuous or ephemeral, can be organized in our consciousness and conveyed back into the order of everyday life. The "meaning" of a visual work of art or a dream can be made accessible to everyday experience by integrating it linguistically, back

into the order of everyday life. Language is capable also of constructing symbols in art that are highly abstracted from everyday experience. Language "soars into regions that are not only *de facto* but *a priori* unavailable to everyday experience," hence constructing "immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world" (Berger & Luckman, 1966 p. 38). Art belongs to an historically important symbol system of this kind, as does religion, science, and philosophy. But even this is brought back to everyday reality as many of these highly abstracted symbols are retained and accumulated in "a social stock of knowledge" which is transmitted from generation to generation and which is available to the individual as real elements in everyday life.

- 5 An issue that is addressed in some sociological writing on art (Bird, 1979; Hauser, 1983; Wolff, 1983) concerns the reduction, especially by some orthodox Marxist analysis, of matters of aesthetic value to entirely social or ideological explanations. The problem is this: On the one hand, the Marxist doctrines of historical materialism and class struggle are viewed as a valid method of analysis of society and of exposing many of the extra-aesthetic elements such as the values held by various classes or the influences of political, economic, or moral ideals. On the other hand, a need is perceived to rescue the concept of the aesthetic and the concept of individual subjectivity from the "desacralizing" sociological reduction of political worth. Yet when this rescue is attempted it is difficult to defend without resorting to relativity, nostalgia, or universal, timeless aesthetic quality. This study does not set out to resolve this issue, nor simply dispose of it. Rather, it takes a stance similar to that of Howard Becker's (1983, p.36):

By observing how an art world makes those distinctions rather than trying to make them ourselves, we can understand much of what goes on in that world.

Becker approaches his research on "art worlds" as he would with any other occupation. To view art and the art community through the lens of the sociology of occupations or organizations is, as LaChapelle (1984, p.36) writes, "a useful way to avoid a strong propensity that exists to rank artists, types of art, art periods, and almost everything that has to do with art hierarchically and then to write only about the top of that hierarchy." Likewise, this sociology of art knowledge addresses art as a knowledge category in the same sense that one would address mathematics, geography, or even life skills.

- 6 Muth borrows the term from D. H. Feldman's work in the field of cultural geography (1980), *Beyond universals in cognitive development*. Clifford Geertz' (1973, 1983) writings in interpretive anthropology are

notable examples of the notion of cultural knowledge.

- ⁷ In conjunction with the concept of "classification", Bernstein uses the concept of "framing" to refer to the relationship between teacher and student, in particular, to the degree of control available to the teacher and the student.
- ⁸ Berger and Luckmann (1966) use the example of marriage to illustrate that both complex theoretical systems and mental constructions can be described as reifications:

Marriage, for instance, may be reified as an imitation of divine acts of creativity, as a universal mandate of natural law, as the necessary consequence of biological or psychological forces, or, for that matter, as a functional imperative of the social system. What all these reifications have in common is their obfuscation of marriage as an ongoing human production. As can be readily seen in this example, the reification may occur both theoretically and pretheoretically. Thus the mystagogue can concoct a highly sophisticated theory reaching out from the concrete human event to the farthest corners of the divine cosmos, but an illiterate peasant couple being married may apprehend the event with a similarly reifying shudder of metaphysical dread. Through reification, the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature. It becomes necessity and fate, and is lived through as such, happily or unhappily as the case may be. (p. 84)

- ⁹ North American postsecondary education is less specialized, meaning that a range of subjects and a variety of combinations can be taken and "streaming" into an educational specialization delayed longer, than in England, for example (Bernstein, 1971). But even students who have not specialized into a discipline seem to know where they are tending towards in terms of the sciences or the arts, or between the pure or the applied, or even between having or not having a specific educational subject emphasis or occupational identity. They may harbor some underlying concept or vision of themselves as the 'well-rounded' and 'cultured' liberal arts type, or the skilled, employment oriented type.

CHAPTER 3

THE UNIVERSITY AS LEGITIMATOR OF ART KNOWLEDGE

The very insulation or conceptual disjunction described in the preceding chapter between art knowledge, in the traditional western high culture sense, and everyday knowledge consigns art to the realm of "high-status" knowledge and maintains its place in the formal curriculum. But at the same time, ironically, this disjunction functions to isolate such art knowledge and maintain its peripheral status in education and in society. Ambiguous as it may be, the social legitimation that such art knowledge enjoys is due in large part to the fact that art is now a subject taught in the university. The university, it is argued, is a legitimating institution. Once cloistered within the university, art can remain a specialized province of meaning insulated and elevated from "lower status" applied knowledge areas and everyday knowledge, and, subsequently, not taken to be a vital or relevant force in society. This chapter describes how traditional conceptions of art have their status and legitimation conferred, and why this status is enough to maintain art's place in education but not enough to permit it to seriously compete in curriculum politics with academic and technologically-related educational subjects. Art's stiff competition with other knowledge areas for limited resources in education unfortunately tends to cause knowledge boundaries and disciplinary ties to strengthen, rather than loosen to include less legitimated but more socially and culturally relevant arts. If the arts of popular culture, industry, and ethnic communities were incorporated within the educational context, as has been

happening within the postmodern art world, both on a wider scale and in an informed, critical way, perhaps art would be in a more vital and less ambiguous position.

HOW ART KNOWLEDGE INHERITS STATUS

Art knowledge as high status knowledge

The possession of fine art knowledge, or any discipline of knowledge in education, is thought to represent a desirable and privileged status--one which is distinguishable from ignorance. Discipline knowledge, as described in the previous chapter, implies theoretical thought and ideas contributed by the so-called "expert", as distinct from the cultural beliefs and values of the taken-for-granted reality of the "person-in-the-street". The assumption is that the thought systems of educational knowledge are superior to common sense and the thought systems of those who have not been or are to be educated. This assumption is implicit in formal education. It sustains the hierarchies implicit in education: of teacher over student, of secondary schools over elementary schools, of universities over applied colleges, of fine arts over applied arts.

This quality of abstractness and the unrelatedness of a knowledge area to everyday reality are two closely related characteristics which Michael Young (1971) uses to describe what he calls "high status knowledge".¹ The applicability of these criteria to art knowledge seems clear, given Berger

and Luckmann's (1966) concept of finite provinces of meaning and Bernstein's (1971) principles of knowledge boundaries. Art, perhaps more than most other subjects in the curriculum of schools and universities, is frequently characterized as abstract and removed from everyday reality. There are, in addition, two other characteristics which Young uses to describe high-status knowledge: "literacy" and "individualism". Young argues that much of the knowledge which is established in the curriculum as "high-status" displays these four (what he calls) "consistent characteristics". Young's criteria of the status of knowledge areas are used here to describe the status that traditional conceptions of art knowledge in particular maintains in education. Once this status has been established, the mechanisms and processes may be identified by which such art knowledge is able to secure and legitimate this status.

The issue of the status or the "stratification" of knowledge is a crucial structural dimension of the organization of knowledge. It is a crucial dimension in the organization of *art* knowledge, of the power structures of traditional, singular ways of thinking about art versus pluralist or postmodernist ways of thinking about art. It is difficult to conceive of the possibility of a curriculum of knowledge which is differentiated without being hierarchically arranged. Assumptions about the stratification of knowledge are implicit in our ideas of what education is, and what knowledge is worthy of constituting formal education. By considering to what extent and by what criteria different knowledge areas are stratified,

we are led to consider the social base of different kinds of

knowledge and we can begin to raise questions about relations between power structures and curricula, the access to knowledge and the opportunities to legitimize it as "superior" and the relation between knowledge and its functions in different kinds of society. (Young, 1971, p. 35-36.)

The latter two characteristics in Young's description of high-status knowledge--individualism and literacy--fit with what is generally thought of as art knowledge. Individualism, or what Young considers the avoidance of group work or cooperativeness, is a characteristic commonly equated with creativity and artistic activity in this century. The fine art world is often characterized as the mecca of individualists. Many writers argue that artistic production is an individual and solitary act of self-expression, and that education in art should facilitate or initiate, not interfere with or inhibit, this private individualized process. Newick's (1982) article in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* entitled "The experience of aloneness and the making of art" is illustrative. So is the phenomenon of the art instructor as the curriculum, so familiar in postsecondary education (Barron, 1972) and in schools (Gray & MacGregor, 1987). Furthermore, where art teaching has incorporated the study of the history and philosophy of art, it has been a study of artists, as reflected in an interest in biographies and also in visiting artists who, as the art critic Martha Rosler (1981, p.31) put it, like "enviable meteors, light up the campus for awhile, and then streak off on their trajectories of fame."

Art teaching has frequently neglected to situate the individual in the social world. It has neglected to account for the various structures and institutions of artistic production and the numerous other people that make the production of any work of art possible. It has neglected to show that art is "collectively produced" (to borrow Howard Becker's 1982 term). The focus on the artist as supreme individualist, as individual creator, emerged in the Renaissance (chapter 5) in relation to the bourgeois ideology of the individual as genius which developed concomitantly with the rise of capitalism in Europe (Barthes, 1977; Hadjinicolaou, 1978; Wolff, 1981b). It is a social type that is misleading. The identity of "individualist" is merely an abstraction that can, in Michael Apple's (1979, p. 10) words,² act as "an ideological presupposition that keeps us from establishing any genuine sense of affiliation with those who produce our comforts, thus making it even more difficult to overcome the atrophication of collective commitment."

The final characteristic that Young uses to typify high status knowledge is an emphasis on written as opposed to oral or other forms of presentation--"literacy" as he terms it. Subjects requiring formal written examinations place emphasis on literacy rather than oral expression and are more highly legitimated than courses in studio work, where formal written exams are seldom given and the only formal evaluation may be verbal class critiques of student work or grading of portfolios. Young mentions, in citing Weber (1952), that what counts as knowledge depends on whether it can be objectively assessed. Implicit in education is the idea that if it

cannot be evaluated, it's not worth knowing. There is a long-standing conviction maintained by many artists and art instructors that the "objective" evaluation of artistic activity is unsuitable or even impossible. In fact there has been a great deal of suspicion toward any verbal form of analytic or intellectual activity practiced by artists (Naylor, 1981). However, this may be changing with the shift in many postsecondary art departments to conceptual art and verbal procedures (Madge & Weinberger, 1973; Montalto, 1983), and with the shift in art education in schools from "creativity" and free expression to "discipline-based" activity. Art as a subject specialty may now be aligning more closely with its academic context and its characteristics of literacy and evaluation, which Young claims typifies high-status knowledge.

If this shift toward conceptual art and discipline based art education is taken into account, art knowledge sustains to varying degrees all four of the characteristics of high-status knowledge that Young identifies: abstractness, insulation from reality, individualism, and literacy. It should be made clear that these characteristics persist not because knowledge is in any meaningful way best made available according to these criteria, but because "they are conscious or unconscious cultural choices which accord with the values and beliefs of dominant groups at a particular time" (p. 38). They can be viewed as social definitions of educational value. They are specific historical consequences of an education system based on a highly valued model of "bookish learning" (Young, 1971, p.38), first intended for medieval priests, later extended to lawyers and doctors, and since

increasingly replacing the apprenticeship model of training for vocations in industrial societies--the preparation of artists being an example.

The academic model has become so institutionalized that it has come to provide a standard against which all other forms of knowledge and knowledge acquisition are compared. High status knowledge has come to be associated with that which is traditionally taught in universities to the academically ablest students. It is in terms of these standards that a student's educational success or failure is defined. Courses in "low status" knowledge areas are associated with those who have already failed according to academic definitions of knowledge. Even success in "low status" knowledge area courses is defined in these terms as failure.³ It is not surprising that university art departments make great efforts to dispel the popular belief that the art student population is made up largely of those who are unable to "make the grade" in academic subjects. According to Madge and Weinberger's (1973) study,⁴ many fine art students demonstrated potential for careers in fields other than art, such as English, science and math. "Few if any of them were the 'drop-outs' of the anti-art student stereotypes" (p. 271). That art programs attract academically able students is a conclusion designed to provide further support for the characterization of art as a high-status discipline of knowledge, worthy of more priority in the curriculum than it currently receives.

Art knowledge as cultural capital

The status of traditional conceptions of art knowledge in education and in society can be described another way: We can say that this art knowledge is a form of what some sociologists call "cultural capital". Cultural capital includes a familiarity with those aspects of culture which are considered part of an elite life style.

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1968, 1973) describes cultural capital as the advantage that the upper and middle-upper classes have: the language, skills and mannerisms that are rewarded but not generally provided in education. Cultural capital includes an awareness of the mechanics of the education system and its value as a means to an end. It is tacitly preserved in schools, which take it as a natural rather than a social gift. Bourdieu asks his readers to think of cultural capital as they would economic capital. Cultural capital affords advantages to those who possess it. Cultural capital, like economic capital, is unequally distributed throughout society and this distribution is dependent in large part on the division of labor and power in that society. As so many sociological studies demonstrate, the apparently open and meritocratic North American system is predisposed to favor those who have this cultural capital. (See, for example, the papers published in Brown's, 1973, anthology.)

A major component of cultural capital, as Bourdieu describes it, is attendance at art galleries and theatres, where the cultural basis is usually

singular. DiMaggio and Useem (1982) demonstrate just how crucial the fine or "high" arts are as a form of cultural capital, especially for the upper classes. They argue that the high arts are a prerequisite for ascent into the top of the class hierarchy and for sustaining power. "Involvement in high culture provides a means for high-status individuals to affirm their claims to class position". It offers "a convenient yardstick for assessing the merit and cultivation of persons" (DiMaggio & Useem, 1982, p. 182). They note that in a complex and mobile society where individuals of different classes interact and status groups are not solidly demarcated, involvement in and preferences for the styles of the arts which are considered part of an elite lifestyle become an insignia of class status.

For the middle and upper-middle classes, participation in the high arts provides an opportunity for symbolic identification with the upper classes (DiMaggio & Useem, 1978). Fine and Ross (1984) write that these arts provide a setting for "identity transfer", for enacting an institutionally sanctioned and preferred role where they can "adopt and wrap themselves in these symbolic identities" (p. 249). Gallery and museum openings, cinema previews, performances of opera and ballet are "ritualistic representations of preferred class positions". Data from a variety of surveys and attendance figures from across North America demonstrate a pattern: the high arts, including visual arts, opera, ballet, modern dance, theatre and classical music, are consumed most frequently by professionals, next in frequency by other white-collar employees and managers, and so on as one descends the class hierarchy (DiMaggio & Useem, 1982).⁵ Attendance at

these events has recently been increasing, suggesting that cultural capital is sought by more than a small elite, however. In Canada, participation in arts-related activities grew significantly faster than all other leisure time activities. Attendance at museums and art galleries grew at an average annual rate of 2.6 percent and at live theatre at 2.1 percent. By contrast, attendance at sports events increased at an annual average rate of 1.3 percent, and television viewing by 1.4 percent (Canada Council Research and Evaluation, 1985). Another related statistic is that over one-fifth of all continuing education courses offered by American universities are in the fine arts (Hillman-Chartrand, 1986). If these data, along with the abundance of art appreciation books on the shelves of popular bookstores, are any indication, tinkering in high art knowledge is widespread. This phenomenon is humorously reflected in *The bluffer's guide to art* (Lampitt, 1971), a brief collection of satirical anecdotes and art facts for popular reading--enough "recipe knowledge" (to borrow Schutz' term) to provide the "bluffer" with enough of a vocabulary to get by at "the kind of social evening (Sangria and cheese will be served) to mark the end of an extracurricular course on 'The Cubists: How square in fact were they'" (p. 198). In ridiculing the language of the "cultured" elite, this advice is offered:

If confronted with that most terrifying of questions: 'Yes, but what is art?

You may quote Schiller, who said, 'Life is earnest, art is gay.'

Or . . . be vague Never use a two-syllable word where a multisyllabled one will do.

Something like this usually works: . . . there is a modular

rationale which in its volumetric appeal sublimates a certain sense of inner violence which can only be compensated for by an ethnic explosion of solidarity that will extrapolate into the subconscious bigotry of abstractionism as it's manifested today. (Frost, 1971, from the foreword to Lampitt, 1971, p. 198)

As Fine and Ross (1984) write, by indicating *where* people want to be, they are also indicating *what* they want to be. "The constraints on one's mundane reality are made temporarily to vanish" (p. 250). The point has also been made that the attractiveness of high culture to the middle classes is partly contingent upon the continued exclusion of the poor and working classes (DiMaggio & Useem, 1982).

Art knowledge of the culturally singular high art tradition, in summary, is valued cultural knowledge, or cultural capital. Cultural capital is the currency of the "New Class" or what is sometimes called intelligentsia (Gouldner, 1979, p. 197).⁶ Just as a stock of accumulated tangible goods and resources brings in income and advantages for the Old Class, an accumulation of cultural capital, of valued cultural knowledge and competencies, including a familiarity with the high arts, affords advantages to the New Class members who possess it (Hamblen, 1985).⁷ Artists, as members of university faculties and as producers and manipulators of valued cultural knowledge, are members of this privileged social group. However, those who produce and manipulate applied, popular, or other visual forms not part of, or on the fringe of, the sphere of high status knowledge or cultural

capital are less likely to belong to this privileged social group or wield the power advantages it affords. Even though these artists believe they have the means to improve society, their actual ability to compete and exert influence in education and in society is limited by the extent to which their specialty is legitimated in society. Social legitimation is a crucial factor in understanding the organization of art knowledge, and, in turn, the possibilities for change in the hierarchial structure of art knowledge.

AN AMBIGUOUS INHERITANCE

Given the art-as-capital and the art-as-high-status knowledge scenarios described above, how can art's precarious position in education be accounted for? One way is in terms of cultural capital theory, as Karen Hamblen (1985a) has shown. Art is a form of cultural capital that has, to put it simply, ambiguous legitimation. Capital, whether it is economic or cultural, is socially defined. Any skill, knowledge or other cultural good is only as valuable as society says it is. "Herein lies the problem and the primary source of the art educator's problem", writes Hamblen (1985a, p. 2):

The extent to which any type of capital has legitimacy is measured by its enforceable claims when there is a threat to withhold its services; capital is legitimated to the extent its absence would create a social void. This economic law of cultural capital has potent implications for art education. All too well aware of their marginal position, art educators have wisely

not tempted the social fates by threatening to withdraw their aesthetic capital services. Rather, the field of art education has often been characterized by adjustments and accommodations to fickle social validations of worth. (Hamblen, 1985a, p.3-4)

As Hamblen (1985a, p.3) states, "disenfranchisement is a modal characteristic of the field." At the elementary and secondary school level, the ambiguous legitimation of art is apparent on many fronts. The results of a recent survey conducted by the British Columbia Arts in Education Council (1986) provides a local demonstration of the ambiguous legitimation of art maintained by parents. Over 50 percent of the 75 superintendents and 71 chairpersons of school districts in the province surveyed believed "that parents, by and large, attach 'some' or 'very high' importance to fine arts courses" (p. 16). When asked if most parents feel that the fine arts should be reduced in favour of aspects of the curriculum deemed essential for employment, 59 percent of both superintendents and chairpersons reported that they did not believe this to be the case. Yet, at the same time, over 70 percent of both groups also believe that parents would like to see a greater emphasis on "applied" or "science" courses in the curriculum. Parents are concerned with how well the education system prepares students for the workforce (according to 91 percent of superintendents and 87 percent of chairpersons).

In educational administration, not surprisingly, school board officials and trustees speak highly of the value of arts education in promoting creative

thinking and self-expression, while at the same time underfunding the arts and instead putting limited resources into computer technology and applications⁸, science, and mathematics.

Within the university community, the ambiguous legitimation of art is manifested in expressions of doubt that studio art programs have a place in the university curriculum. One university president (at the University of New York at Buffalo) observed that in common rooms and faculty clubs, art "is often referred to as 'hobby lobby' or other terms of opprobrium" (Meyerson, quoted in Rosenberg, 1973, p. 95). "Comparable questions are not raised about mediocre art historians" (p. 95). Similarly, an art historian encountered the view on his campus that:

The artist does not know what he is doing, that he does not understand his art, nor how he produced it, nor its place in the culture and in history. (Brandstadter, 1969, p.45).

Among artists on faculty, there is a recurring expression of the concern that artistic activity is not treated on par with research and scholarship. It is expressed in the struggle to have art exhibitions considered in place of scholarly publications as indicators of excellence within academia. It is expressed in the struggle to have admission criteria for B.F.A. programs include criteria based on more than numerical academic grades⁹, and to have at least one arts course count toward secondary school graduation requirements and even university and college admission requirements. And it is expressed in the debate about the terminal degree in studio practice; for

students pursuing a career as a practicing artist, the terminal degree is an M.F.A., while the mark of the professional art historian and art educator is the Ph.D. or an equivalent doctoral degree.¹⁰

Much of the doubt about the role of art in the university curriculum involves perceptions of the production of art itself. In contrast to medieval western European practice in which art production was better defined and could therefore be imparted in a more systematic fashion, the present postmodern era of pluralism and rapid changes in art styles, with its attendant confusion about what art is, or what an artist is or does, makes it difficult to decide who is to be educated as an artist and how (if at all!). The perception also persists that much that goes on under the rubric "art" is not worth educating for. Those who can find no critical standards in art may think that anyone can be an artist by publicly declaring oneself to be such, as long as that individual is emotionally or politically involved. Or for those anti-art proponents who say that art is dead, what then is the point of educating people in a "dead" discipline? Or, if artistic pursuits are viewed as dealing with little more than "technique" as opposed to "philosophy", or worse yet, if art is viewed as little more than a "libidinal release" (Ackerman, 1970, p. 68) of unconscious or emotional impulses without recognition of the more complex notions of art activity as illuminating ways of perceiving, understanding or influencing the world around us, how is one to make a solid case for the inclusion of artistic activity in university education? The "unwholesome split" (Arnheim, 1969, p.3) of nondiscursive from discursive knowledge modalities that underlies

these doubts is not just a function of art programs but is inherent in western society generally. This attitude that intuitive, imaginative, creative thought, and hence art production, cannot be taught links art with naïveté and even ignorance. It is something that postsecondary education--the function of which is taken to be imparting knowledge--is not equipped to deal with or even to honor (Rosenberg, 1973, p.101).

While many have expressed reservations about the place of artistic activity in the university curriculum, others have spoken of the necessity for a campus environment that is conducive to creative and inventive thinkers--the philosopher, the genius scientist, and even the artist. "Let's cherish the screwball" stated the president of the State University of New York at a commencement address (Hamilton, quoted in Herstand, 1962, p. 165). Creativity was at that time the watchword. Sparked by the Soviet Sputnik and the ensuing "space race", philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists avidly investigated the concept of creativity. They looked to the arts for clues on what makes an individual creative. Artists and art educators basked in the legitimation and resulting material resources that the ethos of creativity brought to the arts in education.

Interest in the arts was at an all time high during the 1960s and early 1970s in North America. One of the great bodies of support for the artist was a highly visible youth culture; the arts represented for youth a set of values that seemed contrary to establishment values. Increasing numbers of these youths were spending more and more time in postsecondary

education. Governments, as well as university and college trustees and administrators, presumably in response to the increase in student enrollments in the arts, were providing funding for research about the role and nature of art programs in universities and colleges.¹¹ There was also a great building boom in new fine art centers on campuses (The Arts, Education, and Americans Panel, 1977). Donors were caught up in the glamor of the fine arts, making the raising of funds for arts buildings relatively easy. Arts centers were copies of lush metropolitan centers of art.¹² The enthusiasm for handsome buildings accords with the art-as-capital phenomenon, and demonstrates well the attendant ambiguousness. In acts of pious sentimentality toward the high arts, society tends to enshrine them in expensive Pantheons. Once enshrined, however, the arts are removed from the everyday world where they may be revered, but also ignored. "The support of art education as an expendable and isolatable luxury commodity promotes segregation as effectively as outspoken opposition", wrote Ackerman (1970, p. 68).

The general public may recognize the value of preserving the artistic heritage and they may even recognize the value of education in art, yet at the same time they believe that education in the applied sciences and associated technological fields is more important. Scientific and technical knowledge is the knowledge schools take as *the* most important knowledge they want to maximize (Apple, 1979). While art's prestige lies in its history and its ability to serve the humanist rhetoric of liberal education (chapter 5), the benefits of funding scientific and technical knowledge are more

visible and more easily accountable. Not only is the content of technical knowledge more readily identifiable, teachable, and testable than in the arts, but the connection to the structure of corporate economies is seen to be more direct. Maximizing technical knowledge satisfies pressures both from corporate structures and from parents for educational institutions to fulfill a role in selecting and preparing agents for positions in the workforce. Art knowledge is seen to be of less value in this respect than other forms of educational capital, even though art knowledge, in the traditional high culture sense, is nominally a member of the family of high-status knowledge areas.

In the political struggle carried on by representatives of an increasing number of knowledge areas for limited resources and priority within the curriculum of schools and universities, art educators are just one group who believe they provide knowledge and skills essential to the betterment of society. The art educator's ability to compete and exercise power in curriculum politics is limited by the extent that art is legitimated in society. Legitimation is a critical factor in any sociological analysis of knowledge. The organization of knowledge is one thing, but how a society accepts and lives with this order is another. In the end, after having settled on matters of whose definitions will prevail, who makes decisions, at what level these decisions are to be made, how they are to be carried out and evaluated, and so on, "a curriculum exists because a society believes in the knowledge it contains and the fairness with which it is distributed" (Eggleston, 1977). Legitimation is the justification and defense

of group action and patterns of belief. Existence is sanctified by "bringing it under the dominion of the ultimately right principles" (McClure & Fischer, 1969). Not surprisingly, art education in schools and universities has been redefined and marked by shifts in emphasis--not unlike the army or the clergy--as it has searched for contemporary social legitimation. In the latest attempt to secure legitimation it has shifted from a focus on creativity and free expression to academic and verbal procedures. Both emphases have, at the appropriate times, provided resources and legitimation for art in education. When caught up in the struggle for legitimation, particularly in the current educational climate that favors academic "basics", the propensity to loosen art knowledge boundaries and incorporate the study of visual forms with less social status (but often more cultural relevance) weakens.

THE UNIVERSITY AS "LEGITIMATE LEGITIMATING INSTITUTION"

There is a hierarchy of types of art institutionalized within western society's educational systems, just as there is a hierarchy of subjects institutionalized in education. Art-as-high-status-knowledge and art-as-cultural-capital refer to the consecrated arts: fine art painting and sculpture (and in the other arts, theatre, literature and classical music). The so-called "lesser" arts are not included: the popular, commercial, ethnic, and applied arts--those areas, within what Bourdieu (1971) terms the "sphere of the arbitrary as regards legitimacy".¹³ The hierarchies are not static, but may vary in the course of time. Examples of those arts which are in the

process of being legitimated, according to Bourdieu at the time, were cinema, jazz, and photography.¹⁴ The "lesser" arts have remained closer to the everyday reality of the public, and in this regard differ most from what counts as high status knowledge. The fine arts, on the other hand, have developed abstract and academic qualities and an increased remoteness from everyday knowledge. The fine artist, who in the past declared an indifference to obligations other than the intrinsic demands of artistic work, has maintained the intellectual's ideal of knowledge for its own sake. Fine artists, in being farther removed from their medieval status as artisans, have moved into a place at the head of the value structure in many art schools and art departments (Hubbard, 1971), while artists working in the crafts and the applied arts have less prestige because of the association of crafts and applied arts with everyday life. Artists working in teacher education faculties or departments have the least prestige of all art personnel in postsecondary education, according to Hubbard (1971), because of the value traditionally placed on the exploration of ideas for their own sake above pragmatics. The various artistic forms institutionalized in a society's academic systems are organized according to a hierarchy derived from degrees of cultural legitimation, independent of individual opinion (Bourdieu, 1971). The high art/low art stratification is so thoroughly institutionalized that a general obligation exists to adopt an attitude to fine art which is, as Bourdieu writes, "pious, ceremonial and ritualistic" (p. 175). There is an attitude among members of the public that there are objective norms which should be adopted when viewing the fine arts, but these may be replaced with individual judgement in the case of "lesser" arts that are

outside the sphere of "consecrated culture".

The legitimation of some art forms over others is conferred by the educational system, especially the universities--what Bourdieu terms the "legitimate granters of legitimacy". While literature, classical music, painting and sculpture are taught in the academic curricula of schools and universities, furniture design, and advertising design, for example, are taught primarily in specialist vocational institutions for which little cultural legitimacy in terms of aesthetic criteria is claimed. Other visual forms that surround us in everyday life, such as billboard advertising, television, and popular movies, are only occasionally dealt with, if at all, in academic curricula. They have, as Bourdieu would say, a "non-legitimate authority".

In the absence of an institution devoted to teaching them systematically and methodologically, thereby giving them the seal of respectability as constituent parts of legitimate culture, most people experience them in an entirely different way. (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 175)

The stratification that has resulted as the fine arts moved "up" into the ivory tower of the university, while leaving other art knowledge areas "behind" in vocational schools, points to the important role universities play in defining and legitimating the status of certain art knowledge and its place in education. Ambiguous as it may be in relation to other curriculum subjects, the legitimation that art knowledge, in particular fine art knowledge, enjoys comes in large part from its being taught in universities.

where knowledge and academic procedures are typically viewed as the primary institutional concern. The association of art with universities increases the perception of art as an intellectual concern and a valid field of study.

Art departments in universities are well aware of their legitimating context. It is not uncommon to find official statements in program catalogs and other public documents that emphasize art as an intellectual form of inquiry well suited to the university. As stated in a brochure¹⁵ for Queen's University's Bachelor of Fine Arts program (undated),

A university with its traditions of scholarship and research is well suited to embrace the distinctive forms of creative enquiry pursued in a program of fine art. The environment of a university effectively supports a proper climate and balance between the practical concerns of the studio and the complementary requirement of academic studies.

As has been the case with other fields of endeavor that have attempted to secure legitimacy through academicization, there has been a shift of attention to standardizing entrance and graduation requirements, standardizing course content, establishing a uniform rate of matriculation, marking the successful completion of a course of study by an awarded degree, formally designating domains of authority and expertise and recognizing this with the use of hierarchically significant titles, and, of course, moving artists into offices (Adler, 1979).¹⁶ In Canada, it used to be that most students wishing

to be artists went to art schools--the Vancouver School of Art (renamed the Emily Carr College of Art and Design), the Winnipeg Art School, the Ontario College of Art, L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, or the Victoria School of Art and Design (now called the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design). These were autonomous and did not grant degrees. In the 1950s the system began to change. The Winnipeg Art School became part of the University of Manitoba and developed a degree granting program. The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, although still autonomous, is now a degree-granting institution. Even though it may be recognized that degrees in art have no ultimate value in the assessment of artistic competence, a college that awards degrees is better able to compete with the universities in a society in which credentials and labels have become increasingly important for teaching, for graduate studies¹⁷, and for other professional programs. Art colleges and fine art departments in vocational colleges have to compete with the university's lure of degrees, scholarship support, library resources, access to laser generators, audio-video transmission and other technological advances in art. Other benefits include access to a community of scholars in anthropology, sociology, political science, philosophy and literary studies, and to the cultural and social life of a large campus. "University is a way of life, an atmosphere, a feeling of things constantly happening around you and to you", as York University advertised in its Fine Arts brochure (1985-1986)

Whether universities formed studio art programs or whether art colleges became degree-granting institutions, the fact of the matter is that education

in art is now entrenched in academia and has adopted many of its structures. The university is the institutional basis of art knowledge. The typical artist is now educated in an institution of postsecondary education, with universities being the major centres for instruction in the arts (Adler, 1979; Dennis & Jacob, 1968; Freundlich, 1980; Montalto, 1983; Michael, 1970; Ridgeway, 1975; Villenes, 1982)¹⁸. The awarding of degrees to artists is commonplace. Harold Rosenberg (1972) made reference to this as early as 1965 in discussing a "Young America" exhibition:

Only one of ten leading artists of the generation of Pollock and DeKooning had a degree while of thirty artists under thirty-five shown in "Young America 1965" at the Whitney Museum, the majority had B.F.A.s or B.A.s. (p. 39)

For Martha Rosler (1981), an American art critic, this "development of a highly ramified art-teaching apparatus within colleges and universities" (p. 27) is part of the "felt need within capitalism to cultivate art as an (internalized) ideological control" that has secured a firm foothold for art teaching in postsecondary education. The invention and propagation of the M.F.A. degree, Rosler writes, has led to a surplus of credentialed art students who automatically look to postsecondary education for employment, although in fact they will acquire these positions only with the "utmost luck and relatively low wages" (p. 29).

Attempts to reformulate the artist's role to one of philosopher and "ideas man", as embodied in the conceptual art movement of the 1960s and

1970s, and the move of fine art into universities may also be partly understood as an adaption to structural changes in the economic support for the arts (Adler, 1979). Conceptual art "needs patrons rather than collectors" (Lippard, 1973, p. 8). This is a role suited to academia (Adler, 1979). With its critical and speculative elements, wrote Adler (1979, p. 17), the conceptual art of the sixties appeared to be "a genre of academic art finely adapted to the pressures of the new university habitat".

Although the academicization of art may have been adaptive and thorough, the classic attitude within art departments has been one of suspicion and even opposition toward academia as an appropriate center of artistic work and education in art. There is suspicion of the ideal of academia as a productive, creative work center with relative freedom supported by institutional resources and with rewards based solely on individual merit. Success in the system of academia is seen instead to require a certain kind of acceptance of the status quo (Hamblen, 1986) of the academic institution. The mission of art is held to be different or even contrary to the mission of scholarship. The academicization of art jars with the social type of the artist, with its treasured qualities of eccentricity, individualism and freedom of lifestyle. Artists have frequently expressed opinions that the large bureaucratic structures and rationalistic educational methods of universities are oppressive, stultifying and detrimental to art production and the activities of creative individuals. People who may have been drawn to art in the first place because, like Marcel Duchamp, they did not want to go to the office

now squirm slightly in their university offices like resettled gypsies in a pristine new housing complex. Forced to do some of the despised "paper pushing" in the very opposition to which their occupational identity was formerly defined, they enjoy their new comfort and security while suspecting the new milieu to be incorrigibly sterile both as a setting for the socialization of new occupational generations and for the production of significant new achievement. (Adler, 1979, p.17).

With the alliance of art with universities, artists have found themselves searching for a compromise, for ways of retaining, on the one side, the financial and status advantages, the well-equipped studio facilities and access to leading artists that the university can provide, along with, on the other side, artistic freedom and a bohemian, less formally organized art scene. Accordingly, art departments are caught balancing the legitimating structures of academia with the legitimating structures of the fine art world. What secures legitimation in general education, does not always secure legitimation from the fine art world. The broadly educated human being is an educator's ideal, not necessarily an artist's ideal. An artist, as Adler (1979, p. 15) conjectures, "might well prefer his student to be locked in a closet with his violin for four years if his chances of emerging an 'idiot genius' were thereby enhanced." The undergraduate art student who is required to maintain a minimum level of achievement in a variety of subjects in order to meet graduation requirements has to balance studying for exams in English, history, or philosophy with spending an eight hour

day in a painting studio.

The university's pursuit of legitimation from the fine art world

If adopting academic structures does not necessarily secure legitimation from the fine art world, what does? There is a set of highly informal and loosely integrated institutional structures and channels through which artists seek legitimation. Many of these structures were adapted by art programs soon after the inception of studio art programs in universities, at a time when the traditional ideals of creativity and individualism were at their peak. These structures have remained in spite of the changed climates in education toward "disciplined" study of the "basics", and, in the fine art world, toward the more historical/social/political ethos of postmodernism. These structures, when incorporated within art programs, work to legitimate these programs in the eyes of the art student (chapter 4) and in the eyes of the fine art world. Presumably, these structures function also to legitimate and reinforce the traditional ideals of artistic activity which they represent. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) have outlined those institutional structures and channels through which artists seek legitimation. They are mentioned here as another type of legitimacy-seeking strategy institutionalized in art programs, but one that carries potential conflict in that it does not always fit with the previously described characteristics of high status knowledge.

One such significant legitimating institution is the "loft"¹⁹. The loft is much

more than just a large workspace in a vacated factory or warehouse. It has become an important symbolic institution for art students to communicate a message of their commitment to becoming an artist, and to develop a "following" (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). In lofts, as Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi write,

There are parties at least once a week; the more memorable they are, the more likely it is that the young artist's name will be widely known . . .

A loft without parties and without visitors, a loft that is not known in artistic circles, is not a *loft* in this institutional sense.

(p. 187)

The art exhibition is another legitimating institution important in establishing a public identity for an artist. The prestige of the institutional setting of the exhibition usually determines the extent to which that exhibition is able to legitimate an artist. Acquiring a contract with a reputable gallery secures, at least temporarily, one's status as an artist. So does being selected for one of the "biennials", those large juried, invitational shows, descendents of the large annual painting salons of nineteenth century Europe and the Venice Biennale which began in the 1890s (Gluek, 1981). The biennials benefit the young artists selected by giving them, in the words of a curator of the Whitney Biennial, "credibility, a stamp of approval. It's a kudo that might make them more attractive to a dealer" (Haskell, in Gluek, 1981, p. 99). The work is seen by an international audience and, "even more significant is the fact that the work is put into the context of

American art" (p. 99). Exhibiting in a reputable gallery or juried exhibition may also lead to a review by an art critic for a newspaper or national fine art magazine. In this sense, the art critic also performs a legitimating function.

Another step in the legitimation of the contemporary artist is the move to New York. In the western fine art world, perhaps more than in most other fields of endeavor, the power to confer legitimation has historically been centralized--Florence in the early Renaissance, then Rome, then Paris, and in this century, New York. The belief of many members of the fine art world is that unless an artist is recognized in New York City, his or her artistic status "remains at best marginal" (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976, p. 191)²⁰.

Knowing how to gain legitimation through the above channels is an aspect of art knowledge that art students consider very important. They recognize that being legitimated by the appropriate social institutions is a major criterion of success--who you know is often more important than what you know. Some of this art knowledge they learn informally outside the art program and some through the art program. Art departments generally make visible attempts to provide studio space of some sort and to hold critiques and informal seminars with visiting artists which, in effect, symbolizes the "loft" and its social milieu (Montalto 1983). In addition, recognition of the importance of the exhibition in conferring legitimacy and launching students into the fine art world is fostered through the required

graduating exhibitions of the work of M.F.A. and undergraduate fine art majors, and by organizing field trips to galleries and museums in New York or the nearest major art centers. Art teachers in schools also quickly come to recognize the importance of exhibiting student work in establishing the legitimacy of their art program, even if this legitimation comes from the educational system rather than the fine art world. As Hawke (1980) wrote in his ethnographic study of a beginning art teacher in a junior secondary school, the art teacher

did appreciate validation of his efforts by the principal, of his performance as an artist, and sought extension of that validation through students' art displays. Nevertheless, as an artist, he held in disdain the staff's opinion of the actual art works completed by the students. (p. 249)

This "entrepreneurial" aspect of art knowledge, particularly the belief that one's status as an artist is dependent on success in New York, reinforces a mainstream in art, a set of western high art ideals represented by modernism and its New York "scene". Several writers on art have found this problematic. Rosler (1981), for one, writes that it furthers the "gospel of New York, the empire center of art". It is, she adds, an effect of the "routinization of art training" (p. 28), which is part of a general rationalization of professional training in all areas. It furthers the "eradication of regionalism in art, a process that is well-advanced and that answers to the purposes of the market and ultimately to those of the ideology of global capitalism" (p. 28). Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi

recognize its contribution to at least three social processes that conflict with the cultural mores of the artist as individualistic and self-sacrificing.

They exacerbate the competitiveness in the already crowded art world of New York. If they want to survive in it, they have to use a certain amount of aggressiveness, shrewdness, entrepreneurship, and one-upmanship--all qualities that . . . are foreign to their personality. Second, by paying attention to the trends, they risk becoming "trendy" themselves. And finally, by their presence in New York, they confirm the city's preeminence in art, a circumstance they personally deplore. (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976, p. 195)

This entrepreneurial and "hustling" aspect of art knowledge does not fit with the characteristics of what is normally considered high-status knowledge. Nor does it fit with postmodernist attempts to disengage art from the modernist mainstream and its resulting restrictions to artistic activity. If art programs incorporate these entrepreneurial aspects of art knowledge in their search for legitimation from the fine art world as indispensable institutions for preparing "professionals", they face a risk both of forfeiting their acquired status of art as an intellectual concern, as "high-status" knowledge suitable as a discipline of study in universities, and of moving out of line with postmodernist sentiments. Yet, according to Montalto's (1983) study of three "renowned"²¹ M.F.A. programs in the United States, these very experiences art programs provide "beyond the easel", beyond the formal art knowledge of the intended curriculum, are most

important in helping graduates develop attitudes and beliefs to sustain them in their socially committed role as artists. To be an artist requires not only a knowledge of the concepts and methods of their art, but a knowledge of the legitimating structures and processes of their art world and the concomitant behavior and commitment required for conferral of the seal of legitimacy as an artist. An implication is that not only must the formal intended concepts and methods of art change in art instruction, but so must alternatives be presented and perceptions changed regarding what legitimates an artist in contemporary society. The following chapter looks in more detail at how commitment and identity develop in fine art students, and argues that the legitimating structures in the fine art world prevent "reality slipping" and legitimate for the art student the insular art knowledge embodied in most art departments.

THE DIFFICULT TRADE-OFF

To consider the legitimation strategies of art departments in terms of cultural capital theory, as Hamblen (1985) has for art educators, is to note that artists are "seeking various and sundry allies in order to legitimate aesthetic capital and to provide a professional market for its products" (p. 9). One very important alliance is with universities. By being members of university faculties, artists are legitimated as members of the intelligentsia or New Class. The alliance extends and reinforces their historical role as specialists in cultural capital, in the manipulation of valued cultural knowledge, skills, and styles. However, in conforming to admission

requirements, completing required assignments for numeric grades, receiving academic degrees, and the like, artists have adopted the rational educational structures of the technocratic segment of the intelligentsia. They have adopted the legitimating language of general education, although perhaps not as obviously as at the school level, where a discipline-based model of art instruction is becoming a viable and respected alternative for many classroom teachers. The unique educational experiences that were seen as an antidote to the ills of technocratic rationality and which art educators have for decades prided themselves on having provided for students, have recurrently been held to be at risk of being surrendered for the dominant technocratic rationalist model of education (Black, 1966; Hamblen 1987, following Goodlad, 1985). Technocratic rationalism is characterized by standardized content, an emphasis on efficiency of means, behaviors that are routinized, outcomes that are predefined, and decisions and content that are presented as nonproblematic and self-evident (Hamblen, 1987). Artists and art educators have developed this alliance with the technocratic segment of the intelligentsia,²² even though they see themselves as members of the humanist segment, claiming "a moral superiority over the technocratic intelligentsia, who have been imputed to be without moral scruples in their application of mechanistic solutions to human problems." (Hamblen, 1985, p. 9). The fact that this model has been taken up for art programs in education speaks to the dominance of that system (Hamblen 1985b; Beyer, 1984).

Art educators at all levels of education are involved in a difficult

trade-off: When art is presented as structured and testable subject matter, it may gain legitimation and be better able to secure a mainstream position in education, but it is, at the same time, open to charges of reductionism and the loss of its ability to provide unique and culturally relevant experiences in education and society. Is there not a credible way to both bring art into the mainstream and equip it with a culturally broader and more meaningful knowledge base that responsibly and realistically supports the basic aims of education? It seems unlikely that there is as long as university-based artists continue to entertain what Adler (1979) has identified as "aesthetic separatism" (p. 18), that is, an inclination to define, in theory, the arts as essentially related and equally worthwhile, while at the same time excluding from this "'family' the 'poor relations' (fashion design, advertising art, handicrafts) which had been left behind in vocational schools with the move 'up' to the university" (p. 18). Adler observed in her ethnographic study of the California Institute of the Arts that the trustees exhibited a rhetoric of patriotism and service to society, and a concern with the social integration and usefulness of art. Trustees favored bringing under one roof both the "fine" and "commercial" arts. However, the artists found this "disagreeably alien". While frequently announcing the collapse of disciplinary knowledge boundaries and calling for "cross fertilization", the artists maintained the knowledge boundaries of their "pure" specialization.

They heatedly opposed the integrative impulses of culture's industrialists (their patrons) with an insistence upon the strict segregation of occupational castes. Since aesthetic innovation is likely to be spurred by changes in the artistic division of labor,

such concern to protect their occupational status from the threat of unseemly association placed limits upon the artistic developments which could be countenanced at the Institute---just as it does elsewhere. (Adler, 1979, p.123)

These artists were interested in integrating only the disciplines which were equal in social status, even though an alliance with the working class, "inasmuch as New Class humanists have often seen themselves as champions of popular causes" (Hamblen, 1985, p. 10), and an alliance with the study of popular, folk, and commercial art might have been a viable way of broadening the capital base and linking the study of art to populist principles of democracy. "The working class has often formed the legitimating power base of intellectuals who can then claim widespread support for their programs and expansion of cultural capital" (Hamblen, 1985, p. 10).

The art school scenario that Adler describes plays out the theoretical account of the nature of knowledge and knowledge boundaries developed in the previous chapter. Specializations of discipline knowledge are "finite provinces of meaning" (to use Berger & Luckmann's term, 1966) characterized by strong boundaries which differentiate them from other knowledge disciplines and from everyday life. It is the differentiation of discipline knowledge from the knowledge of the everyday world that confers status to that discipline. This status is maintained by disciplinary boundaries, especially in situations of stiff competition for limited resources. Competition for scarce resources encourages the development of

political groups with unambiguous boundaries. Disciplinary ties become more rigidly claimed, keeping out "lowbrow" relations. So although the university may be recognized for having brought different fields together, mutual collaboration and influence between artists working in the visual arts and individuals in other arts and other fields of study, including those fields that carry the critical tools needed to effect a broadening of art's disciplinary base in education, are impeded by the rigid demarcation and maintenance of the university's disciplinary boundaries. The following chapter deals with a social mechanism that is very effective in maintaining existing boundaries and hierarchies of art knowledge.

NOTES

- ¹ For his characterization of the stratification of knowledge, Young draws on Bernstein's (1971) "integrated" and "collection" codes of curricula and particularly their sub types in which knowledge is highly specialized or not.
- ² Apple bases this notion of "individualist" on Raymond Williams' (1961) work.
- ³ Note that curriculum reform is more likely to come about in low status knowledge areas than in the high-status areas associated with the academic curricula of universities. Curricular reform for the young and the less academically "able" does not undermine or affect the interest of those in positions of power in the social structure. This may suggest why we see more changes in art education at elementary levels than at the secondary and university levels.
- ⁴ In Madge and Weinberger's (1973) study, fine arts students "showed the widest range of achievement in other fields" (p. 59) in comparison to graphic arts students. Thirty one percent of the fine art students interviewed answered "yes" to the question "Was art your best subject?" Approximately this number had considered careers in fields other than art, most of which required university academic preparation. Details of which subjects art students had excelled in are not given specifically for fine art students.

According to the artists interviewed in studies by Getzels and

Csikszentmihalyi (1976) and Griff (1970), however, one of the reasons why art students, both fine artists and graphic artists alike, were in art school was because they were unable or unwilling to 'make the grade' in academic subjects. Details are sketchy, making generalizations about the academic ability of art students difficult.

⁵ Attendance data also indicate, according to DiMaggio and Useem (1982) and Hillman-Chartrand (1986) that level of educational attainment is the best predictor of arts attendance. With the increasing differentiation of postsecondary education, institutions with narrowly technical curricula cannot be expected to inculcate involvement in the high arts to near the extent that traditional liberal arts institutions do. Prestigious liberal arts colleges and universities remain the educational institutions where a familiarity with the arts can be cultivated and hence are an affirmation of, or in association with, an elite class position.

⁶ Gouldner (1979) uses the term "New Class" to encompass what he sees as two distinct groups: "intellectuals" (humanists) and "technical intelligentsia" (technicians, engineers, and so on). Gella (1976), however, states that "almost every author has a different concept of the intelligentsia, though most of them use the terms intelligentsia and intellectuals interchangeably" (p. 8).

⁷ Cultural capital can be income-producing, even though its basis is education, not economics. Bourdieu (1973), in examining the close but complex relationship of the possession of cultural capital with the possession of social/economic capital in the upper class in France, argues that cultural capital is most effective, that is, brings in opportunities and income normally inaccessible to those who do not possess it, when combined with economic capital and political power. Those with economic capital have more chances of possessing cultural capital, but, interestingly, they are also more able to do without it.

⁸ By way of illustration, the British Columbia Ministry of Education's additional funding program, "Fund for Excellence", effected in 1986, is quietly nicknamed by some school district administrative staff as the "fund for computers". Almost all of the projects accepted for this funding involve large purchases of computer equipment and terminals. Little of the fund was left for other than computer purchases or computer applications. No programs in the arts received funding.

Also, in regard to (under)funding of the arts in education: in a survey of school district superintendents and board chairpersons (British Columbia Arts in Education Council, 1986), 50 percent reported that the proportion of the school budget allocated to fine arts instruction at both the elementary and secondary level, had declined from 1981 to 1985. When asked if fine arts programs were able to withstand cuts in their materials budgets than were other courses in the curriculum, "56 percent of the superintendents and 59 percent of the chairpersons indicated that fine arts programs are less able to endure cuts as they

are more materials-dependent than many other courses" (p. 15). And "asked if fine arts courses are more susceptible to reduction in times of fiscal stress than are other parts of the curriculum, 75 percent of superintendents and 62 percent of chairpersons indicated agreement" (p. 15). This study also indicated that full time arts teaching positions declined markedly from 1976 to 1985.

That the three programs which usually comprise the teaching of fine arts in schools--visual art, music, drama--together accounted for only approximately six percent of all teaching (in 1982), also attests to the marginality of the fine arts within the total curriculum.

- ⁹ What art instructors look for in potential studio art students is not necessarily the same as what philosophy or biology professors look for in their applicants. One instructor identified the criteria used in her art department (University of Alberta) for reviewing an applicant's portfolio as follows:

- a) breadth of exposure or variety of experience;
- b) technical or manual dexterity;
- c) observational skills best exhibited through observational studies;
- d) evidence of energy, curiosity and imaginative or inventive thinking.

(Ingram, 1986)

- ¹⁰ The debate over whether the Ph.D. should be the terminal degree in studio practice appeared frequently in American journals in the 1960s. Quinn (1962), for one, pointed to both the extensiveness and seriousness of work involved in a studio graduate degree and the advantages that Ph.D. recipients have over studio graduates in the matter of hiring preferences for faculty positions. Hubbard (1971) noted that administrators discriminate in favor of those in possession of the doctoral degree, sometimes, in the United States, with the support of state laws concerning promotion. Such favoritism in the past, along with the "publish or perish" promotion system, has reinforced the priority of degrees, scholarship and published research over artistic pursuits as an indicator of excellence within academia. Yet the official position remains that adopted by the College Art Association at the Midwest College Art Conference in 1960 and resolved again in 1970 (Montalto, 1983) The M.F.A. is the terminal degree in the field because the "Ph.D. or other doctoral degrees are not appropriate ways of measuring success in creative fields" (quoted in Montalto, 1983, p. 43). A Ph.D. would merely place an academic symbol on an art program in order to make that program more acceptable to the academic environment in which it is situated. Although the awarding of a doctorate for studio art education did not gain much ground, the artists' very attempt to secure such a symbol which is in many ways contrary to the values traditionally held by artists suggests that art production, by being situated in academia, has adapted to and assumed some of academia's values.

- ¹¹ The majority of research and information that exists on the subject of

art in higher education comes in large part from this period in American history (for example: Barron, 1972; Dennis & Jacobs, 1968; Feldman, 1970; Griswold et al., 1965; Mahoney, 1970; Risenhoover and Blackburn, 1976; Ritchie, 1966).

Previous to this period, studies relating the subject of the visual arts in postsecondary education were few and far between. (These were Smith, 1912; Hiss & Fansler, 1934; Goldwater, 1943)

In Canada, comprehensive documents on art in postsecondary education are rare. There is the Canadian Cultural Information Centre's (1965) reference handbook on facilities for the study of the arts. This document was little more than a listing of the names and addresses of the 52 institutions that at the time offered opportunities to study the arts. In 1972 a similar reference handbook was published by Statistics Canada, this time listing 121 institutions that offer opportunities to study the arts. These directories are, unfortunately, the extent of Canadian material that takes an overview of the subject of art in postsecondary education. However, they do establish that the number of institutions with facilities for the study of the arts in Canada doubled from 52 in 1965 to 121 in 1972, indicating that Canada, like the United States, experienced an increase in the late 1960s and early 1970s in programs of art study, presumably to meet the demand of a dramatic increase in enrollments. Most of this increase was in studio programs rather than art history. The result is that the production of candidates for studio teaching in postsecondary education far exceeds the demand.

Note that at a more local level, two listings of programs in British Columbia were prepared. Colton (1964) assembled a report to assist the British Columbia Art Teacher's Association. It is not specific to art in postsecondary education but instead comprises a broad listing of various channels through which the visual arts may be developed in the community under the following categories: secondary schools; art schools, universities, and vocational schools; seasonal programs, adult education programs; recreation programs; art associations; public art galleries. The other local document is a directory prepared by Kava (1979) for the Director of College and Institute Programs for the Province of British Columbia. This merely lists art programs in postsecondary educational institutions in the province along with abbreviated program objectives reported from program catalogs, and some details such as approximate enrollment in programs.

- ¹² The heavy dollar investment might have been better used for improving existing facilities or for basic curriculum concerns (Mahoney 1970). Architects were called in before funds were provided for a thorough review of what the building was for. Interest in the building itself was easier to get than money for curriculum concerns. The outward image too often overrode interest in providing space that could adapt to potential new forms of art, or that had walls and

floors that could take hard use.

- 13 The examples Bourdieu gives of this are dress design, interior design and furnishing, cosmetics, and cookery.
- 14 In understanding the legitimation process and, ultimately, the acceptance of certain artistic forms as appropriate educational knowledge, it is useful to consider the case of an art form that has recently acquired increased legitimation as a fine art; namely, photography. Note that photography is now incorporated within academia, but not (yet) to the extent that painting and sculpture are. Photography is currently advertised as a specialization in many, but not all, fine art departments. As expected, it is offered in most departments of applied arts. It has also been the subject of much aesthetic theorizing (by Rosenblum, 1978, and Sontag, 1977, for example), which helps to support and legitimate it. Rosler (1981) provides a brief account of the incorporation of photography into the fine art market in the late sixties and early seventies:

Conceptual and Pop artists who wanted to avoid the deadening preciousness and finish of high art and who were moving toward a narrative literalism brought photography and video into the galleries; for Pop artists, photography was a form of quotation from mass culture, no more intrinsically respectable than comic books. Conceptual artists, moving away from "object making", also were attracted by the anonymity and negative valuation attached to these media. Never far behind, though, dealers were learning to capitalize on the seemingly unsaleable by seizing on the category "documentation", which relies most heavily on written material and photography. This gave these media an art gallery "rightness" that still retained a look of newness. Meanwhile, of course, the photography that was self-consciously art was drenched in Modernist sentiment, seeing its mission as the exploration of the special potentialities of the medium. (Rosler, 1981, p. 48)

Photography demonstrates, according to Rosler, the restructuring of culture in the early 1970s into a "more homogenous version of 'the society as spectacle', a process accelerated by the increasing importance of electronic media . . . and the consequent devaluation of craft skills." With this comes the "increasing ability of dominant cultural forms to absorb all instances of oppositional culture after a brief moment and convert them into mere stylistic mannerisms" (p. 48).

But the legitimation of photography as high culture began much earlier. Becker (1982) explains how Alfred Stieglitz, a pioneer of American

photography, made the decisive organizational moves that shifted photography from the status of amateur camera clubs with "craft" standards to a fine art. Stieglitz produced, on a small scale of course, much of the institutional paraphernalia which justified photography's claim to be a fine art: a gallery in which work could be exhibited and where painters, sculptors and photographers could be introduced to one another (Stieglitz' marriage to the painter Georgia O'Keeffe furthered this painting-photography connection); a journal containing fine reproductions and critical commentary which provided a medium of communication and publicity; and subject matter and style that departed from the imitation of painting favored at the time. Becker notes Edward Weston as also influential in shifting the status of photography to a fine art. Weston was the first American photographer to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship. He also developed a style that combined stern realism and standards more common in the world of high art with the symbolic effect of photographic tonalities.

- ¹⁵ Brochures and catalogs are particularly useful because they tend to present a symbolic language, a formalized picture of how the organization functions to serve the need of art students, and of the belief-systems of the art culture. When using catalogs and brochures for evidence of certain values and objectives, it must be remembered that these materials represent an official view, a side put forward by the authors--likely, in this case, administrators and educators--as an attractive means to represent or "sell" a particular program to the public, to funding sources, and to the market of potential art students.

There are two approaches to researching any phenomenon: One is to investigate what actually exists; the other, as above, is to investigate how a phenomenon is presented to and perceived by its public. How accurately documents prepared for public consumption reflect, if the latter is the case, the actual day-to-day practice of the programs they advertise, would not be the issue. Rather, the intention would be to look at ideals, program goals, stated objectives, or even the lack thereof, as a way of getting an idea of the dominant cultural norms and recurring themes that are formalized in the objectives.

- ¹⁶ With the visual arts, these academic structures have been around since at least 1950 in the United States, at which time a survey of American art schools found that all of the eighty schools sampled had established formal entrance requirements. These included high school graduation certification as well as the usual portfolio submissions and interviews, and a credit system for measuring students' advancement. With only a few exceptions, they granted degrees (McCausland, Harnum & Vaughn, 1950).

- ¹⁷ As universities formed studio fine art programs and as art schools became degree-granting, M.F.A. programs were eventually developed so that Canadians could be as qualified as American artists and thus could teach in Canadian programs. It was the earlier situation, when

graduate degrees were attainable in the U.S. but not yet in Canada which may be responsible for the present situation in art schools in which Americans tend to dominate art faculties.

- ¹⁸ Surveys of artists provided consistent evidence that the education of artists is well entrenched in institutions of higher education, although most do not distinguish between university education and college or art school education. The Empire State College Visual Arts Survey (Villenes, 1982) reported that of more than 200 practicing professional artists of "international, national, and regional reputations" (p. 30), at least 90 percent had had a formal education in which they had studied drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking design, and art history, and if their field of specialization required it, commercial or industrial design, or crafts. The only artists interviewed in the study who had not had such training were born before 1920. In Michael's (1970) study, only two painters, three printmakers, and two weavers of over 200 artists surveyed did not have any formal training. Ridgeway's (1975) study reported similar findings. Of the 28 practicing American artists she interviewed, all but three attended universities or colleges.

- ¹⁹ Most of the 79 fine art students that Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) studied who obtained the highest "success scores" as artists (based on a measure of achievement indicated in students' permanent records on file in art schools) started their careers in a loft, even if this meant renting jointly with their colleagues. In fact, the six art students with the highest scores had all rented lofts while still in school. As far as the authors could determine, none of the "unsuccessful" former students did this.

- ²⁰ In Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's sample of art students studied, four out of the six most successful as artists eventually moved to New York. The remaining two, believing that their success as professional artists depended on it, were planning the move. One former art student, who spent two years teaching art at the University of Minnesota before moving to New York, explains:

The new is what people are only just talking about; it's ideas that count, not products. One can see where it's at from magazines, but it's not the same thing as living it. (p. 191)

- ²¹ Montalto's (1983) selection of "renowned" art programs was based on a ranking of the greatest number of artists from each school represented in the Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial Exhibition Catalogues. Montalto's stated reason for this selection criterion is that the Whitney Museum is--and he quotes from the catalogue itself--"an individual survey of some of the most important and provocative

American painting, drawing, sculpture, film, and video produced . . . by living artists." A strong criticism could be made concerning the biases and exclusiveness of the Museum's exhibition criteria (a concern not addressed in his study), and the possible consequent implication that the study may be neglecting art programs that represent art form and qualities not acknowledged by the Whitney Museum. What did result, however, from Montalto's system of ranking art programs was a convenient and interesting representation of three extremely diverse perspectives toward art study: The San Francisco Art Institute has a rather unstructured educational environment; Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts stresses the socio-political, cultural, environmental, and historical nature of art; and the Yale School of Art and Architecture has a very structured and prescriptive program in which students are encouraged to study many art movements and styles rationally and systematically before arriving at their own.

- ²² The alliance with the technocratic segment has been formed also in the sense that artists look to computers, holograms and other new technologies as potential new media in art production. And in schools, the technology of the computer is explored for its possible contribution in art classrooms (Hamblen, 1985)

CHAPTER 4

FORGING THE ALLEGIANCE TO ART:

THE ART DEPARTMENT AS EFFECTIVE SOCIALIZER

The model of the organization of knowledge, derived from Berger and Luckmann (1966), is one in which reality is socially constructed, socially maintained, and can be changed by human activity. But in spite of this, reality attains the quality of an object that cannot be willed away by the individual (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Likewise, knowledge, by which individuals make sense of their reality, attains the status of an object. Knowledge becomes knowledge-as-fact. Socially produced reality, including knowledge which is "legitimate" or associated with truth or scholarship, becomes part of an individual's reality through a process of socialization.

Socialization is an important component in the analysis of the relationship between social structure and art knowledge. It is the complex process through which individuals develop a sense of identity and internalize the knowledge, skills, values, and motivation of the culture and subcultures to which they are affiliated. These internalizations, in turn, govern their actions and conceptions of these actions in both everyday and professional situations. In turn, for individuals to be initiated into and assume full membership in the specialized fine art subculture, they must learn and internalize at least the essential core of that subculture's shared basis of knowledge, which includes not only the formal "experts'" knowledge as found in art curricula, but an understanding of the subtleties of dress,

speech and mannerisms which identify the members.

A complex paraphernalia exists through which individuals gain entry and publicly demonstrate commitment to the fine art subculture. Certain institutionally established and publicly acknowledged educational procedures have to be gone through and proof provided of competence. The art department plays a significant role in getting individuals committed to the role of "artist". It is, as this chapter argues, an effective "socializer" into the highly specialized fine arts subculture. It is so effective that its recruits become committed in spite of the ambiguous legitimization of art and the conflicts this involves; the attitude in schools that art is second-rate to the sciences and other academic subjects; a lack of parental support for art as a career choice; the unlikelihood that an education in art will lead to a financially secure career; the ill-defined and elusive role of art and the artist in society; and the equally unclear objectives and content of art programs (National Endowment for the Arts and National Council on the Arts, 1978; Ritchie, 1966).

The strength of commitment to artistic identities that this chapter demonstrates by reviewing empirical and descriptive research of artists and art students lends further support to the argument that art departments play a significant role in preserving the traditional conceptual hierarchies of art knowledge that impede a broadening of art's cultural base toward a more vital and relevant role in a culturally pluralistic society.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization has been given attention within behavioristic learning theory (Homans, 1961; Skinner, 1953), Piaget's (1928) cognitive developmental approach, Freud's psychoanalytic theory (Mackie, 1980), and symbolic interactionist views (Becker et al., 1961; Mead, 1934; Olesen & Whittaker, 1968). Socialization that takes place during the formative years of childhood has been studied in terms of the development of language and individual identity, the learning of cognitive skills, the internalization of moral standards and appropriate attitudes and motivations, and some understanding of social roles. Although this type of socialization may lay the foundation for later learning, it does not completely prepare individuals for occupations, sexual relationships, parenthood and other roles in adulthood. There is, then, in any society further or "secondary" socialization.¹ The extent and character of this later socialization is determined by the complexity of the division of labor and the concomitant social distribution of knowledge in society.

It is possible to conceive of a society in which no further socialization takes place after primary socialization. Such a society would, of course, be one with a very simple stock of knowledge. All knowledge would be generally relevant, with different individuals varying only in their perspectives on it. This conception is useful in positing a limiting case, but there is no society known to us that does not have *some* division of labor and, concomitantly, *some* social distribution of knowledge; and as

soon as this is the case, secondary socialization becomes necessary. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 127)

Later socialization is the internalization of institution-based subcultures. It requires the acquisition of role specific or specialized knowledge; knowledge that arises as a result of the division of labor. The subcultures internalized in this later socialization generally represent partial realities or finite provinces of meaning (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) in contrast to the everyday world and its common stock of knowledge. "Yet they too, are more or less cohesive realities, characterized by normative and affective as well as cognitive components" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.127).

Berger and Luckmann also suggest that the character of secondary socialization depends upon the social status of the body of knowledge concerned.

Training is necessary to learn to make a horse pull a manure cart or to fight on it in battle. But a society that limits its use of horses to the pulling of manure carts is unlikely to embellish this activity with elaborate rituals or fetishism, and the personnel to whom this task has been assigned is unlikely to identify with the role in any profound manner; the legitimations, such as they are, are likely to be of a compensatory kind. Thus there is a great deal of socio-historical variability in the representations involved in secondary socialization. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 128-129)

If, as Berger and Luckmann suggest, the character of socialization depends on the status of the body of knowledge concerned, then one would think that the ambiguous legitimation of art would mean that socialization into art is also ambiguous. However, this appears not to be the case. Although socialization into fine art is socialization into a discipline in which there is little consensus about the nature and purpose of artistic activity in society, or indeed whether this activity can even be taught, descriptive studies of art students (Barron, 1972; Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Griff, 1964; Madge & Weinberger, 1973; Strauss, 1970) demonstrate that art students are *unambiguously* committed to their discipline. Art students have been socialized into specific identities that are based on a strong sense of subject loyalty. In order for socialization to be this successful, art students must *perceive* their discipline as having social status, in whatever way they define status. The art department, it is argued in this chapter, is the agent which cultivates these perceptions in students and solidifies commitment to the discipline of art and the identity of artist, even in those likely cases in which an artistic identity may have already been gradually cultivated in childhood and adolescence. Despite the ambiguous legitimation the outside world attributes to it, identities are strengthened through interactions within the art department, with its insulation of the knowledge boundaries of the fine art discipline from other disciplines and from everyday or common-sense knowledge.

This implicates the university art department or art school with perpetuating traditional conceptions of art knowledge as a specialized discipline sharing

many of the characteristics of "high status knowledge" (Young, 1971) such as abstractness and relative differentiation and insulation of certain art knowledge from other knowledge areas, both "pure" and "applied", and the knowledge of everyday experience. By maintaining existing knowledge boundaries through the promotion of specialized subject identities in its students, the art department plays a major role in the cultural reproduction of an insular body of knowledge which is, as the postmodernist position holds, untenable in a pluralistic society. Most of the studies of art students that will be reviewed below are not very recent, unfortunately, nor do they specifically document the Canadian context. They do, however, constitute the bulk of the research done on this topic. They represent a range of methodological approaches--interviews, surveys, and psychological tests and measures.

PROFILE OF AN OUTCAST POPULATION

Madge and Weinberger's (1973) study of art students in Britain effectively portrays the fine art student as extremely committed to the role of artist. It demonstrates that a sense of being different from others outside the fine art world is a dominant perception among fine art students, although how they express it may vary. "Individuals with this feeling" Madge and Weinberger write, "wanted to dissociate themselves from *something*" (p. 273). In the school years this might have been the school authorities and the values of the institution, but in art school it became something larger and more vague, like the values of society. As one fine art student in

Madge and Weinberger's study stated,

I take no interest in outside things. I am bound up in my own world. (p. 111)

Often the feeling of difference is described by the students in terms of their being more analytical and open-minded than others outside their art world. It is often expressed as a sense of privileged ability to see through the values of the larger society.

I felt I was different, I had a more questioning attitude. Doing art at school was the outward sign of my difference. (p. 110)

I am aware of so many more things. Non-artists do not perceive the deeper implications of the system within which we live. I question things more, such as the validity of motives. (p. 111)

I think in a different way from others, more deeply; it's a different kind of learning to university and training college. (p. 111)

One's outlook is bound to be different. Art students have different ideas about life and society. They couldn't do the kind of jobs most people do. (p. 112)

In this self-perception of being more analytic and open-minded than others

lies not only the students' sense of difference but a sense of superiority.

I can't communicate with others, I have to talk to them on a lower level (p. 111).

The sense of difference and the sense of superiority that fine art students expressed was directed not only toward those outside the art school, but even toward their colleagues within the art school who work in the applied arts. The difference in values and self-perceptions between fine art students and applied art students illustrates how strongly the boundaries are maintained between the so-called "pure" and "applied" arts. The boundaries of fine art knowledge are so strong as to separate its proponents ideologically from those in the applied arts. Fine art students see graphic art students as "more like others in the world," "less individualistic," they "take things more at face value," "lack commitment," "are not very interesting," "are totally lacking in any consideration of their subject or involvement in it," "only aim at technical satisfaction," are "primarily interested in making money" (p. 115), and so on.

The graphic design students, on the other hand, felt that the difference fine art students speak of was an act, and the design students tended to resent it. This came across strongly in responses to the question "Is there a difference in outlook between those in your area and those in other DAD [Department of Art and Design] areas?" (p. 112). As one graphic arts student stated:

Fine Art students set up introversion as a cult. They tend to work in their own void with personal ends. (p. 113)

And another:

Fine Art students seem more intense about things, and enlarge upon difficulties, as they have so much time to think about them. (p. 114)

The way most graphic design students experienced their relationship to the fine art students is one in which, as one graphic design student stated, "Fine Art students tend to look down on Graphic Design students more than vice versa" (p. 115). The fact that so many of these kinds of responses were given to amplify the straight yes/no question "Is there a difference in outlook between those in your area and those in other DAD areas?"² points to the part played by each faction in defining the norms and self-perceptions of the other.

Fine art students and graphic art students define themselves differently also in terms of group membership. As many as 94 percent of graphic design students in Madge and Weinberger's study saw themselves, in their final year, as members of a group. In the case of the fine art students, however, feelings of membership declined over the three years of the program, such that in the final year only 16 percent saw themselves as members of a group. They made comments such as "I see myself as an individual," and "We are not a group, and this is good, as it proves we

are not influencing each other to a great extent." (p. 116). Madge and Weinberger summarize in regard to the fine art students,

Having dissociated themselves from other pupils at school, from the outside world as a whole, and from students taking a parallel course in their own college, they eventually felt themselves to be dissociated from the other students on their own course. (p. 274)

Madge and Weinberger's study effectively portrays an "individually hyper-developed Fine Art student" (p. 277), extremely committed to the role of artist. Fine art students are "typically individuals who cultivated their individualities, both as an end in itself and as a presumed means of entering the ill defined and elusive role of artist" (p. 269). What started as a 62 percent proportion of fine art students in the final year of their secondary school education claiming they were different from non art students increased to 83 percent in the final year of art school. As these students moved into the role of artist, they took on identities of the traditional social type of the artist, such as supreme "individualist". They came to view themselves as *having* the characteristics of the role (Reitzes & Burke, 1983).

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), in their longitudinal study of art students and recent graduates of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, administered to students in fine art, the applied arts, and art education a set of tests designed to measure values ("theoretical",

"economic", "aesthetic", "social", "political", and "religious") and to measure personality ("sociability", "conscientiousness", "sensitivity", "imaginativeness", "shrewdness", and "self-sentiment"). The pattern that emerged is congruent with expectations generally held for each specialization:

Advertising and industrial artists are almost indistinguishable from each other. In a manner consistent with their future roles, they accept the value of material gains and sociability more than do the other groups... Art education students, whose task it will be to teach, outscore the other groups in social value. Finally, the fine art students have the low economic-high aesthetic value pattern, which makes them the most "artistic" subgroup within the total group of artists. They reflect to an extreme degree the value pattern that differentiates art students from college norms. (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976, p. 50)

Two earlier studies by two American sociologists (Griff, 1964; Strauss, 1970) support the kinds of results regarding role internalization that Madge and Weinberger and Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi found. Both these earlier studies also demonstrate differential experiences of students majoring in different visual art fields--fine art, commercial art, and art education. Anselm Strauss (1970) conducted two or three hour interviews with seventy students and recent graduates of, again, the Art Institute of Chicago. Of most interest are the interviews with five male students who entered the fine arts program with vaguely formulated notions of becoming commercial artists, and who then underwent a "conversion experience" into the fine

arts. Strauss describes the conversion experience and what they were up against:

They develop negative attitudes toward commercial work and learn that art is something more than techniques and a job. Art is a twenty-four hour matter... Acquaintanceship with other students fills in the meaning of art as *weltanschauung*, with hot discussions and sometimes the discovery of associated art forms, such as ballet and drama.... They have their troubles with parents, since they are breaking formal agreements to enter commercial art--one boy's father cut off his allowance in an effort to bring him to heel, but the boy moved away and got a job to support himself. These students have other strains also arising out of the conversion experience: ...fighting the attempts of instructors to teach techniques which appear mundane compared with problems of self-expression; breaking with former industrial-art friends; facing the future with no skill to fall back upon for economic support. For these students the [art] school has opened a rich world and has at the same time allowed them to take initial steps in finding a place within it. Whether or not they become successful or creditable artists, they are deeply committed to their artistic identities. (p.174)

Mason Griff's (1964) study of art students in Chicago indicates that once students enter the art school they sometimes switch from applied art courses to fine art courses, however, the reverse rarely takes place. The

ideological commitment, as Griff explains, is so significant that fine art students cannot break through this "mental block" to contemplate switching from one field to the other without considerable damage to self-esteem. The fine art student has been "imbued with the notion that there is one art--fine arts--and that other forms, such as commercial art, are *not* art within the context of its true meaning" (p. 77) Students of the applied arts, on the other hand, have not been exposed to a similar orientation. They have no ideological attachment to the fine arts. Reference is made to the fine arts along the lines that it is, Griff writes, "something 'good', or that it is great art but impractical from a commercial standpoint." This permits them to better bridge the gap between commercial and fine art.

The following is an excerpt from an interview Griff held with a fine art student who had recently come into contact with commercial art students at a night school course. It is particularly telling of the allegiance to the fine art ideal and how strong the boundaries are which separate fine art knowledge from that of the applied arts.

At first we learned figure drawing. There were many commercial artists there... Their technique wasn't like the fine artist's. They go only to see the model. They just draw the model from the commercial artist's point of view. It's to appeal to the public rather than for art's sake. You ought to see the model and what they do to her features when drawing her. Most of the models are old and ugly bags; but they transform them into beautiful vivacious women with sex personified. They would completely

exaggerate the eyebrows and the rest of the anatomy--you know what I mean... they were cheapening themselves by distorting what they saw.... I guess they have their place; but it's disgusting to me. (p.78)

One last study of art students worth mentioning is Montalto's (1983) phenomenological study of the art styles of three M.F.A. painting programs. It too lends support to the notion of the strong commitment of fine art students to their specialization. The fine art ideology is so pervasive, Montalto concludes, that it transcends any one single method or art style in painting. In fact, as he argues, it functions as the strong socializing force and motivator that keeps faculty together despite the diversity that may exist among their art styles.

These studies of art students all arrive at a similar picture of the fine art student as highly committed to the historical type of artist that originated with the Renaissance. Fine art students' identities are so completely formed during their postsecondary art programs that they insulate and defend their specialization--their art knowledge, with all its values, beliefs and behavior codes as well as its methods and concepts--from other knowledge domains, including that of their colleagues in the applied arts. Given this, how are individuals recruited to the fine arts subculture? Who has access to and who takes up its specialized knowledge?

THE SOCIAL PARAPHERNALIA FOR RECRUITMENT

Art, unlike medicine or law, is an open field with unclear career possibilities. Although a legitimating institution for artists, the art department does not directly bestow artistic status in the sense that a school of law or medicine certifies legal or medical status. Recruitment into an art world is neither tightly controlled nor tightly limited. Few applicants are refused admittance to art schools and few are expelled. Theoretically, almost anyone who has the time and money can enroll in any number of formal art programs. Yet this is not to say that individuals just drift into art. There is a "whole social paraphernalia for getting persons committed to their artistic identities", states Griff (1970, p.147). Entry into art school may be the first major step toward full commitment to the role of artist, yet the process of artistic identity formation begins for many in early childhood. It is a process that seems more fortuitous than engineered.

Artistic identity formation in childhood and adolescence

It is a cultural assumption that artists are marked by signs of unusual "talent" in art at an early age; that artistic talent is a gift that some are born with and some not (Chapman, 1980). Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), however, were unable to find in the history of the early lives of any of the art students or art graduates they studied any one incident that served as an unmistakable sign of exceptional talent or an affinity toward

a future vocation as an artist. There was no clear message in the record of these artists that said "this child will be an artist." Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi instead began to see in these histories a highly complex formative process of innumerable and seemingly insignificant events that gradually built up to form an artistic identity. In elementary school, the ability to draw was one of the more crucial factors. All of the artists Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi studied recall how they were able to amuse or impress their schoolmates and teachers with their drawings; and they all remember being increasingly asked by their teachers to design posters and lend extra help in decorating the classroom. Yet they all insisted that what established their artistic identity was not so much any particular "gift" but simply greater dedication to art. Saturday morning art classes of the sort sponsored by the community art gallery or by the community arts council are another factor in establishing a childhood identity as artist (Griff, 1970). These classes are many children's first (and for most, only) contact with peers having similar dispositions toward art or with an instructor who is an artist.

Presumably, those children who had been singled out for their artistic abilities by their peers or teachers are those most likely to continue to take art courses in secondary school. It is in secondary school that art teachers may offer encouragement to take art courses in postsecondary education and possibly even a career in art (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). It is conceivable that this is the first time many of these students have given thought to art as a career possibility, rather than as simply an

enjoyable pastime at which they are good. Public and self recognition of one's artistic ability does not automatically trigger one to identify with the professional artist (Griff, 1970). There are fewer "youthful deciders" in art than in medicine, for example, where recruits are determined to be doctors from a very early age (Rogoff, 1957).

Except for the role an elementary school teacher may have in singling out students for their artistic abilities or the role a secondary school art teacher may have in converting the artistically identified student's notion of art as a fun pastime into art as a vocation (Griff, 1970), art in school is not a significant contributing factor in the decision to study art at the postsecondary level. In fact, according to testimonies by art students and artists, most persisted in their decision to take up art *in spite of* their experiences in art classes in school (Madge & Weinberger, 1973; Woods, 1987). One art student in Britain recalls:

I cannot remember any of my ideas or attitudes being approved of at school, except on one occasion when my high productivity in potato-patterning was warmly received. (Madge & Weinberger, 1973, p.129)

Several artists whom Woods (1987) interviewed also expressed the opinion that art instruction in school was uninspiring.

The fortunate thing for me in terms of my later thinking about art is that I never associated what they called art in school with what I later began to think of as art. What they call art was

stupid. It was all rote. There is nothing exciting about it. The teacher would demonstrate how to begin and hand out materials.

I found it totally boring. (p. 69)

In many schools students are faced with prevailing pressure towards science or other subjects leading to places in universities and ultimately to rewarding and financially secure careers. The view of one Canadian school counsellor, who holds responsibility for students' program and career guidance, is typical: Art, as he sees it, is useful as an outlet from the rigors of other subjects but poor as a vocational opportunity for students (Hawke, 1980). This attitude toward art was also reported by the art students in Madge and Weinberger's (1973) study. More than two thirds of the total 174 art students interviewed responded to the question "How was art regarded at school?" along the lines of: "it was not taken seriously or was regarded as a second-rate subject or as recreational or suitable for drop-outs" (p.58).

The pressure toward careers in *other* than the fine arts comes in large part from parents, and often results in serious conflicts (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Griff, 1964, 1970; Ridgeway, 1975; Strauss, 1970). Upon hearing of their offspring's intention to become an artist, parents often reverse their attitude from one of encouragement and pride in childhood artistic abilities to one of disappointment and even dissuasion. Some parents, particularly those of the middle and upper classes, go to great effort to see that their offspring are exposed to fine art for its

"cultural" values, but not to the extent that it is permitted to become an attractive vocational choice. Typical of this situation is the case of an elementary school in an affluent urban area.³ The school was an arts-oriented one with a principal who was visibly active in the legitimated fine arts, and respected in the community for this. The school's enrolment was consistently very high in the primary grades but dropped significantly in the upper elementary grades. The parents were keen to introduce their offspring to the arts, stressing the cultural, humanist, and other related values of the arts that schools do. But at the point where academic studies were seen to be of increased importance, parents transferred their children from the arts-oriented school to another school where academic studies that lead most directly to professional programs in university were emphasized.

If parental concern has not been expressed in the elementary grades, as in the above situation, it may occur during the students' secondary school years.

High school was... the time when some of the parents began worrying that their sons were not turning out as they had hoped. Ed's parents, who thought his paintings "pretty" when he was in elementary school, became "uptight" when they realized that he was in earnest about art. Ed reports, "Because they were Catholics, they thought painters only did naked ladies, so they sent me to convent school." (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976, p. 212)

In the population of parents of both art and non-art students that Madge and Weinberger (1973) studied,⁴ the most general *expressed* attitude was one of tolerance, that "it is up to the child to decide" (p. 53). However, these authors also noticed that some overt opposition to art as a career did exist. Some parents looked on art students as "lay-abouts" (p. 52).

The most strenuous objection parents are likely to make to their offspring's intention to become an artist, as Griff (1970) describes, is that the painter cannot hope to earn "a good salary and a nice home" solely from painting. There is the fear that traditional symbols cherished by families will have to be forfeited. The bohemian stereotype of the artist violates the professed mores of the traditional American ideal. Note that an artist may, in fact, have no choice but take up the bohemian lifestyle in order to subsist on the scant financial rewards of "pure" artistic activity. To add to this, is the perception of artistic pursuits as feminine; a son as an artist is for some parents a source of discredit.

Parents' shift in attitude from one of encouragement and reward of childhood artistic flair to disapproval later of fine art as a career choice signifies for Griff (1964) the alienation⁵ of the artist and art in contemporary culture. It signifies the ambiguous status of art in society, and is something which art students face early in their careers. Parents may recognize, although not necessarily at a conscious level, the value of the fine arts as cultural capital; however, at the same time, the vocation of artist does not fit with the expectations of occupational prestige they

hold for their children. This is a manifestation of the historical ethos that it is far more noble to patronize the arts than to practice them. However, with art's institutional basis in universities rather than vocational colleges or workshops, parental support for an offspring's decision to study art has presumably become somewhat easier to secure. Social tensions and contradictions are mediated through placement in acceptable institutions. This patronize-but-don't-practice attitude is expected to be most prevalent in the more affluent classes. An artistic career does not generally result from an education at an elite private school. The attitude voiced by a student in Griff's (1964) study who came from a relatively upper class neighborhood was that, "people there are 'proper'. The art institute has a Bohemian reputation and a strangeness about the place, so that not many students go there" (p. 80). Nor is it expected that many students of low economic standing enroll in art programs, according to Griff (1964), because goals in the lower classes are oriented toward immediate gratification and because income is a significant concern for this group.

For the most part, art is viewed as pure nonsense by the lower classes... Art is thought to be the domain of the wealthy who they believe comprehend it (p. 85).

Presumably, then, it is from the middle classes that those most likely to become members of the fine art subculture are to emerge.⁶

Motivation to study art

Given the pressures from parents and from the school against choosing fine art as a career, what makes one decide to enter art school? For many, entering into art school represents not merely an opportunity for acquiring greater skill in art or a way to avoid academic study, but an attractive lifestyle based on individuality, a general lack of interest in money and respectability, freedom from the nine to five work routine, and a nonutilitarian use of labor--the antithesis of the middle-class values from which most of these art students come. The glamor in the lifestyle and anti-establishment values associated with the artist is the reason for entering art school most extensively and consistently documented. In Madge and Weinberger's (1973) study, for example, the following are typical student comments:

Lots of my non-art friends are only concerned with clothes and materialistic things. My parents are only concerned with their own life and achieving security. (p. 111)

And:

Other friends' lives revolve around jobs, drinking, women--I have nothing in common with them. (p. 111)

These kinds of values may develop in reaction to watching parents and friends feel trapped, defeated, or unfulfilled in jobs with few challenges or opportunities for personal expression and freedom. From psychometric

studies, Frank Barron (1972) suggests that these students value the "independent way of life" (p. 49) so strongly that this has determined their vocational choice. He developed a portrait of the fine art student that reflects these values:

In personality, the students are notably independent and unconventional, vivid in gesture and expression, rather complex psychodynamically but with an emphasis upon openness, spontaneity, and whimsicality rather than neurotic complicatedness...

In brief, they choose to do what they value most, and this itself sets them apart from many apparently better adjusted people who are doing what they would rather not (p. 49).

But it may be an oversimplification to say that those who opt for the role of artist are simply expressing a divergence with the dominant values in society. Madge and Weinberger suggest that there may also be cases where the student may reject the stereotypical bohemian lifestyle and the idea of the artist's outlook as necessarily being different from others and instead may seek to equate his or her role as an artist with more highly regarded intellectual roles, such as that of the scientist. Emphasis on the more highly legitimated intellectual aspects of artistic activity and the trend toward conceptual art, may have created sufficient latitude for the satisfaction of either motivation.

But in either case, the expectation of the art program is that it is free of

restrictive organizational controls, at least relative to other educational programs. It is expected that the art school offers freedom to work in a situation where one can define for oneself what to do and how to do it. As Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) state, the thought of having "complete control over each action, the immediate results of each movement, the concreteness of the products are powerful rewards" (p. 216), and all contribute to the decision to become an artist. When Madge and Weinberger (1973) asked art students both at the secondary school level and at the postsecondary level "What is your motive for doing art?", 73 percent gave "enjoyment" as their motive. For those students in their second or higher years of art school, equally prominent was a group of motives which included self-expression, emotional release, compulsive need, and furthering personal development.⁷ Not one fine art student gave career or earning capacity as a motivation for doing art.

One former fine art student's reasons for entering art school summarizes several of the ideas discussed above. In a letter about the fate of idealism in art school, he recalls:

When I entered the university's art program as a freshman, my reasons for being there seemed clear to me. I had "talent": a knack for making photograph-like drawings and nicely balanced compositions. I believed, thanks to reading advertisements to art schools, that one could make a secure living with such skills. I liked being praised for my drawings and cartoons, and was vaguely aware of an intrinsic satisfaction that did not depend on

hearing applause. And after twelve years of schooling I was vividly aware of a desire to stay as far away from term papers and libraries as possible.

My outlook was characteristic of many new art students. It was not, I think, hopeless. The intrinsic joy of creation was already, confusedly, within me. And I was ready--as I discovered later--to put energies into activities that promised to make society more livable. (Winter, 1970, p.15-16)

Upon entering art school, this student became increasingly disillusioned to the point that he eventually dropped out with, he claims, no regrets. He could not see art as being good for anything but a technical exercise--in his words, "useful only for giving urban intellectuals something to talk about" (p.16). Of course, at any point along the initiation and learning sequence, an individual may become disillusioned and opt out, especially if that individual enters art school with an expectation of being taught about art in a structured way, and instead is faced with loosely structured curriculum and instruction reflecting a romantic belief in the "untutored genius". The disillusionment could also conceivably occur if skill in drawing--upon which the student had gained artistic recognition in the first place--is an insignificant criterion for success in the program. Both a loosely structured curriculum and an emphasis on abstract, conceptual, performance or new media forms, rather than on drawing skills, are common realities of art programs.

The most crucial test of the fit between, on the one hand, a student's skills, expectations, motives and external pressures and, on the other hand, the realities of the art school is the first year of art school. In other words, the first year is the most crucial first step in a commitment to the role of artist. By the third year of their art program, identity as an artist has been affirmed (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Madge & Weinberger, 1973). Art students have become immersed in and have internalized the art knowledge of the fine art subculture. Even though this set of values, mannerisms, as well as formal curriculum skills and concepts has ambiguous cultural legitimation, the art school or art department has effectively legitimated this art knowledge for its new recruits. It has legitimated for many art students a career choice that is viewed by parents and academic counsellors as a poor vocational alternative. Through interactions within the art department, students develop and solidify commitment to conceptions of art knowledge valued within the department. If these conceptions are based almost exclusively on a mainstream modernist way of thinking about art, as is most often the case, so too is it likely that these conceptions become the norm for students.

THE FUNCTION OF THE ART DEPARTMENT IN PREVENTING "REALITY SLIPPING"

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) concept of adult socialization does not presuppose the same high degree of identification as does socialization in childhood. This is because the contents of later socialization have a "brittle

and unreliable subjective reality", whereas in early socialization the child internalizes the world of his or her parents as *the* only world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Yet in later socialization, the degree of identification can vary. Learning to become a professional artist involves immersing oneself in the subject and ways of art and identifying with acclaimed artists to an extent not as necessary for the person learning to be an engineer, for example. Berger and Luckmann would say this difference comes from the intrinsic differences between the two fields of knowledge, and "between the ways of life in which these two bodies of knowledge are practically applied." (p.133) Where the values of a knowledge area are in sharp contrast with those of the larger society, as with the case of much art knowledge, there has to be an intensification of the socialization of the artist. Berger and Luckmann's example of the musician and the Catholic priest works well to illustrate this:

It may be assumed that a musician in the making in contemporary America must commit himself to music with an emotional intensity that was unnecessary in nineteenth century Vienna, precisely because in the American situation there is powerful competition from what will subjectively appear as the "materialistic" and "mass culture" world of the "rat race". Similarly, religious training in a pluralistic situation posits the need for "artificial" techniques of reality-accentuation that are unnecessary in a situation dominated by a religious monopoly. It is still "natural" to become a Catholic priest in Rome in a way that it is not in America. Consequently, American theological

seminaries must cope with the problem of "reality-slipping" and devise techniques for "making stick" the same reality. Not surprisingly, they have hit upon the obvious expedient of sending their most promising students to Rome for a while. (p. 134)

Likewise, we could say that the art school practice of sending bus loads of art students to New York City is a device also adapted for preventing "reality-slipping." In the case of the education of artists, as with Berger and Luckmann's example of priests, there are "techniques...designed to intensify the affective charge of the socialization process" (p. 133), to make the identification more complete or closer to that found in primary socialization. Almost everything within art programs reinforces the importance of art and the artist, and functions to strengthen the student's identity as artist and solidify the commitment to the fine art discipline: courses in art history that demonstrate the centrality of art to human life and history; the camaraderie among fellow art students and the conversations with art teachers who are themselves artists; simulating the loft environment through activity in the studios and a program of visiting artists; the encouragement to exhibit one's work; the emphasis on visiting galleries; and other practices described in chapter 3 as legitimating institutions within the fine art world. These are all devices that function to prevent "reality-slipping". In Woods' (1987) interviews with 30 "eminent, full-time" (p. 53) participants in the visual arts community in Vancouver, British Columbia, the importance of the learning environment, more specifically, the studio-loft atmosphere and discussions with peers, was

alluded to several times. As Woods summarized, and this resembles Montalto's (1983) summary, "direct exposure to art and artists was still regarded by most as significant to the development of empathy" (p. 122).

The following interview responses are illustrative:

We were in and out of each other's studios. People lived in an area together. It was probably just as exciting as New York's SoHo was a few years ago. The art school and the creative life of the city was all interwoven (p. 100).

And another:

We were always discussing each others' work. That was a big part of the art classes. This was more valid than everything (else). It was a way of things making sense. There were visitors, painters, and writers...(p. 102).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that where "commitment to the new reality" is institutionally defined as necessary, as in the case of the ambiguously legitimated fine arts, the relationship of the person to the "socializing personnel" becomes "charged with 'significance'". That is, the socializing personnel take on the character of significant others *vis-a-vis* the individual being socialized" (p. 133). We could say that the phenomenon of the art teacher as the curriculum, as master artist in a studio workshop setting (rather than in the rigid teacher/student hierarchical structures of the traditional classroom) functions to "charge" that teacher with significance for the art student.

The individual then commits himself in a comprehensive way to the new reality. He "gives himself" to music, to the revolution, to the faith, not just partially but with what is subjectively the whole of his life. The readiness to sacrifice oneself is, of course, the final consequence of this type of socialization. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 133).

In summary, commitment to the role of artist is not without its sacrifices and conflicts, many of which arise from the ambiguous legitimation of art (chapter 3). From the decision to take up art as a career, many students face alienation from their parents, uncertain career possibilities and earning capacity, and dedication to an enterprise that is seen by many as peripheral and having little to do with problems in the "real world". But in the words of Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976, p. 218):

other career plans which have been kept alive because art appeared to be such an unlikely occupation, fade away. The art school becomes a crucial link in the long sequence of experiences from preschool experiments with crayons to final success as an independent artist.

If the critical test of the effectiveness of the socialization process lies in the ability of individuals to play the roles in which they may later find themselves (Inkeles, 1968), then socialization into the artist's role is indeed effective. Through interactions within the art department, art students come to identify with the role to the extent that they appear to have taken on

characteristics of the social type of the artist (Barron, 1972; Madge and Weinberger, 1973; Montalto, 1983). Their identity is based on a culturally limited set of western romantic artistic ideals. It is based on a finite province of meaning, a specialized discipline of knowledge that is highly differentiated and insulated from everyday knowledge and other specialized disciplines, including its "poor cousin", the applied arts. Furthermore, it is a specialized body of sanctioned knowledge that has been shaped and framed by the institutional structures of the art department and the university's collection code curriculum. The art department is a major player in the process of getting individuals committed to this specialized and insular discipline. The allegiance it cultivates in its recruits functions to defend, maintain, and perpetuate the differentiation and insulation which on the one hand elevates fine art by maintaining its place in the realm of "truth" and scholarship, as opposed to knowledge of the everyday world; but, on the other hand, maintains fine art's position as peripheral to technocratic disciplines thought to be of more immediate value in the "real world". Through the processes of socialization and academic legitimation, the art department has become so effective in the cultural reproduction of its traditional conceptions of art knowledge that it is able to impede significant postmodernist reform toward the broader knowledge base it needs to move art education into a more vital and relevant role in society.

NOTES

- ¹ "Secondary" socialization is the term Berger & Luckmann and others use to refer to the socialization that takes place in adulthood, in contrast to "primary" socialization which takes place in childhood.
- ² Only eight percent of the graphic design students and 26 percent of the fine art students answered "no" to this question.
- ³ This case is based on personal discussion with an administrator of that school district.
- ⁴ Madge and Weinberger (1973) found that the number of parents with an "actual artistic interest or activity" in art was higher, but not significantly so, for art students than for non-art students. In 14 out of 50 families of non-art students, one or both of the parents had an interest in the arts, as compared with 14 out of 42 families of art students.
- ⁵ The words "alienation" and "artist" appear so frequently together that their conjunction has almost become a cultural cliché, explains Barbara Rosenblum (1985):

This fact, alone, compels sociological attention precisely because clichés are shorthand forms of discourse which simultaneously conceal and congeal social processes. (p. 35).

Following from Marx's treatment of alienation, sociologists see it as a function of a lack of control over the work processes and separation from the final products. Rosenblum argues, however, that artists have a very high degree of control over the work process in terms of choice of materials and technologies, work pace, and control over the aesthetic judgements that determine the form of the work itself. It is the marketplace relations over which individual artists have little control.

- ⁶ Of the 174 art students in Madge and Weinberger's study, 142 came from schools generally attended by the middle class: 92 from grammar schools, 25 from comprehensive schools, and 25 from secondary modern schools. Only 15 came from private schools. Eleven came from technical schools, and six from special art schools.
- ⁷ Ninety-two percent agreed with the statement "The value of an art education is in furthering personal development in whatever direction this may lead" and 89 percent agreed with the statement "The freedom given to each student to follow his own development here is very valuable" (p. 70).

CHAPTER 5

LEGACIES THAT LEGITIMATE: SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE ACADEMICIZATION OF ART

As with any discipline, art knowledge has a history through which a body of respected knowledge has developed. In other words, the selection and organization of knowledge in education is less a conscious process by educators than it is a consequence of a significant past--*the* tradition. This chapter outlines the significant past of traditional conceptions of art knowledge. Key historical determinants of the core meanings and systems of socially sanctioned art practices are presented in this chapter as three traditions or legacies: the long academy tradition of drawing and painting "noble" subject matter, the liberal arts educational tradition, and a philosophical art-for-art's sake tradition of aesthetics. Together these traditions function as a set of authorities that purport to legitimate the place of art in education and determine the activities and concepts acceptable to education in art. With the authority of these socially-accepted traditions and their association with privileged social groups, the university art department is able to maintain the traditional fine arts as its knowledge base, despite postmodernist objections to the cultural exclusivity of such knowledge. Furthermore, these traditions have provided artists and art students with motivation to pursue art as a career in spite of the economic hardships it brings. A fourth significant tradition is discussed in chapter 6, namely, the more recent avant-garde tradition of rejecting all of the above traditions.

The claim was made earlier that the dominant forms of art knowledge and practices currently embodied in educational institutions in western society are not representative of, or relevant to, many of their clients. Such a claim demands consideration of the following questions: Whose knowledge is it? In what kinds of institutions does it originate? Why is it respected and other art knowledge not? How has it been able to retain its exclusivity in a pluralistic society and persist for so long? This chapter, in reviewing some social and historical background to art knowledge, attempts to provide some insight into these questions. In so doing, it also demonstrates further the obstacles postmodernist attempts at reform are up against, namely a formidable set of legitimating legacies.

The claim was also made that the institutional alliance of fine art with universities has been crucial in maintaining art's social status and position in education (chapter 3), even though the alliance, with its associated constraints of disciplinary ties and academic procedures, has been a source of complaint for many artists. This chapter demonstrates that emphasizing the scholarly and theoretical base of a discipline, as has occurred within the last few decades with the move of art into universities and eventually into graduate studies, is not a new strategy for legitimating that discipline and elevating its status in society. Attempts--not always successful--to reformulate the artist's role from skilled artisan to philosopher and "ideas man" began as early as the Renaissance and culminated in this century with the conceptual art movement.¹

THE LEGACY OF THE ART ACADEMY

Emancipation from the status of laborer

Before art knowledge of any sort could become a matter of significant attention to a cultural elite and be conferred the status that goes with being part of formal educational knowledge, of "what counts" as knowledge, the concept of art had to first develop away from being a manual trade in medieval society. Art during medieval times was regarded as one of the manual crafts, and the profession of artist had no special status.

The institution responsible for preparing artists in medieval western society was the workshop. An apprentice learned from a master the practical aspects of the profession while at the same time contributing to workshop production. However, it was frequently the case that the pressure of commissions limited the time the master could devote to teaching apprentices (Kelly, 1974). The master's priority was to satisfy the interests and aims of his clients--the higher clergy of the Church and the nobility and chivalric classes (Hauser, 1983). Because this activity was directed to the tastes and norms of the ruling classes, questions of artistic freedom and the social status of the artist were of little consequence. Almost all fourteenth century Florentine artists came from peasant or working class circles. The profession was considered too degrading for members of the ruling and upper-middle classes to consider as a serious vocational choice (Antal, 1970).

As with most occupations at that time, artists belonged to guilds formed for the purpose of protecting the art trade and artists. Painters, sculptors and architects were each organized in separate guilds. But at the beginning of the fourteenth century in Florence, the painter's organization was joined to the large guild of doctors and apothecaries (Antal, 1970). This larger guild was comprised of members of numerous crafts who relied upon dealers to supply various wares such as chemicals and drugs to the doctors, dyes, pigments, and waxes to the painters and to the wool and silk industry, and so on. It was the association with doctors and apothecaries, and especially with merchants who imported valuable Oriental wares, that permitted the painters to gain enough social and economic standing to enable them to eventually separate themselves from the tradesmen and the stigma attached to manual labor (Antal, 1970).² Unlike the sculptor, who often worked for large communal enterprises, as Donatello worked for the Cathedral works in Florence, the painter had frequent and personal contact with an identifiable client of a more elevated social standing--a banker, a merchant, a prior, a prince or a prince's officer (Baxandall, 1972). Some painters travelled about Italy to paint frescoes, and in so doing, became known to more clients (Antal, 1970). Some were admired for their professional achievements and stood out as individual personalities to their patrons. This is the case with Giotto, the first individual artist to be mentioned in any Florentine chronicle. From linking the name of an artist to a work of art or to an event, records concerning the artist's life, career and social status came into being (Kris & Kurtz, 1979).³ Through travel and contact with patrons, some painters

gradually assumed an elevated class-consciousness, and may have even pushed for artistic liberty for themselves whenever there was a chance. Artistic freedom was increasingly evident in their compositions and to a greater extent in their style, or handling of materials, but not for some time to come in their choice of subjects. As Baxandall (1972, p. 3) writes, "in the fifteenth century, painting was still too important to be left to the painter." A painting was the deposit of, among other things, a commercial relationship. The client contracted the painter to reproduce a painting after his own specifications, and in some cases, as with the client Borso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara, the painter was paid by the square foot (Baxandall, 1972).⁴

Art meets academic: The academies of art

A combination of the strict discipline within the guilds,⁵ the artist's raised consciousness enabling him to see this strictness, and a sense of artistic liberty that came with an improved social and economic status, led artists like Leonardo Da Vinci and Michaelangelo to break from a system they felt was restricting to their artistic abilities. A concept of art instruction was sought that would elevate artists to a more prominent status than was possible through the purely practical training of the workshops. At the end of the fifteenth century in Florence, Lorenzo de Medici opened the first teaching workshop that comes closest to a "school" in the present day sense of the term. This event signalled a change from the tradition of painting as craft. It also signalled a separation of the teaching of art from

the practice of art. Unlike the masters of guild workshops, Bertoldo, a sculptor and the director of the Medici workshop, did not require that his students' training include assisting the master on commissioned work. Rather, instruction was based on the study of the antique and modern works in the Medici collection (Kelly, 1974).

It was not until 1563, however, that the first institution was founded that could be called an academy in the sense of a venue for theoretical studies and scholarly routine of courses. This institution, the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, is considered the prototype from which all subsequent art academies derived (Kelly, 1974). Its founder's original intention was to improve upon the practical instruction in the guild workshops by including wider theoretical knowledge and academic regulation (Hauser, 1983). This academicization of art instruction was a decisive step in the formation of the artist's consciousness as socially elevated.

Giorgio Vasari,⁶ the academy's founder, for the first time proposed theoretical subjects such as mathematics, physics, perspective, anatomy, and color theory to be taught in the form of evening courses, insofar as they had a bearing on painting, sculpture, and architecture (Pevsner, 1973). For Vasari, the essential quality of the artist was something more than that of the tradesman, but not the pursuit of worldly honors and fortunes. Rather, it was a sense of genius, a divine gift bestowed by God (Gaunt, 1963). The artist was seen as having the capacity to discover the laws of God's universe. In his treatise *Lives of the painters, sculptors, and architects* (1963),

Vasari is translated to this effect: "We may indeed say that those who possess such gifts as Raphael are not mere men but rather mortal gods." The artists' special ability to discover the laws of God's universe was an inspiration for artists of the Renaissance period. Some of this motivation still keeps many art students, as profiled in chapter 4, committed to the pursuit of art despite the economic hardships, the attitudes held by schools, parents and peers that art is a second-rate discipline, and other difficulties. Vasari's inquiry into nature and the divine can also be viewed as a kind of inquiry into the qualities that distinguish art from craft. It marks the beginning of the autonomy of art and, as Hauser (1983) notes, the crisis of modern art.⁷

Through a process of diffusion, the academic system of preparing artists spread until it eventually dominated the system of art education in France, Holland, and later, the German states and England.⁸ At the core of this growing system of academies was a conception of the social role of the artist that was not only to dominate throughout the next three centuries, but was also to block the adaptation that might have provided for its expansion (White & White, 1965). In France, the Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, founded in 1648, established a virtual monopoly such that all opposition was officially thrust aside. Private schools and workshops were prohibited by the crown, forcing all "free" painters into the Academie's organization (Kelly, 1974; White & White, 1965). The Academie Royale dictated the standards that artists were expected to attain. Its jury, responsible for selecting paintings for exhibit in the annual spring salon,

acted as gate keeper to the artistic world (Farrell, 1982), preventing artists who had an ability for innovation or who were not in favour of this powerful alliance from exhibiting in the Academie. It also made it difficult for them to exhibit elsewhere (Kelly, 1974).

The Academie Royale's rigid doctrine of a hierarchy of subject matter by cultural importance, a definition of "correct" style as epitomized in the work of Poussin, and a routinized program of training to inculcate those precepts was to persist as the basis of the Academic system (White & White, 1965). The doctrine, with its hierarchy of subject matter and its undertone of morality, is summarized by White and White (1965, pp. 6-7):

1. Classical and Christian themes are the only proper subject matter.
2. Only the most perfect forms (as found in classical sculpture and the painting of Raphael) should be selected from nature to portray such subjects.
3. Only a certain set of "nobly" expressive positions and gestures (again classical or high Renaissance in origin) are appropriate in the representation of the human figure.
4. The human figure is the highest form and expresses perfect, "absolute" beauty.
5. Pictorial composition should preserve classical balance, harmony, and unity: there should be no jarring elements either of form or expression.
6. Drawing is the probity of art.

By 1800 the art style of upper-class European society was that of the academy. Quentin Bell (1970, p.690) comments:

The style of the academies was, or was intended to be, free from the frantic distortions of mannerism, from the striking verisimilitude of the followers of Caravaggio, from the gaudy colors of Venice or, in fact, from any of those artifices whereby a painter might gain favor of the crowd. It was an art for the highly educated, its program being aptly expressed in fine words: "nobility", "decorum", "regularity", "chastity", and "restraint". It forms a coherent part of the age of Racine, which was also the age of Poussin, and of that "regime of status".

The core of the Western artistic legacy was instruction in life drawing, perspective, composition, and a well defined set of poses, ornamental motifs, and themes from Greco-Roman mythology and history. Albert Boime (1971), who has written in detail about the academy system in mid-nineteenth century France, states that the principle evoked by the French academies was "control instruction and you will control style" (p. 4). Several masters were so preoccupied with their students' ability to make an *academie* (drawing from the live model) that, as a way to gain prestige, they would attempt to develop in their students speed of execution in drawing and mastery of paint technique. Mastery of technical procedures, *metier*, was the emphasis in academies. The young art student, upon being presented to his master, was required to show samples of his work. Based on these samples, the student was placed in one of four hierarchal levels.

The most elementary level was the copying of drawings and engravings, the second was drawing from classical casts, the third was drawing the live model, and finally, the most advanced level was painting from the live model. Boime notes that in the painter David's atelier, the most advanced students of this last category were designated as "journeymen", that is, artists who aided the master in his own work.

Although academies of art were established to improve upon the practical instruction of the guild system and to give the artist a professional status more like that of philosophers or literati than of craftsmen, instruction in the academies was organized even more strictly than in the guilds, which also had tenaciously guarded their privileges--control over training by the apprentice system, control over the number of painters practicing in each area of jurisdiction, and quality control of materials used.⁹ As Arnold Hauser wrote (1959, p. 129), art academies turned out to be "nothing but another form of the old strait laced, anti-progressive institution they were supposed to be replacing."

In the German academies of art, patterned after the curriculum of the Academie Royale in the eighteenth century, the spirit of rationalism and political absolutism of the French doctrine of controlling instruction to control style was at odds with the idealism appearing in the writings of Kant, Schiller, and Goethe. These authors portrayed the artist as a creator of the beautiful, as a unique individual of genius. Genius was considered an inherent talent, a process of the mind's self-activity, not a product of

rules impressed on the mind by the authority of the academies. Instruction in art, according to the genius principle, avoided uniform mechanisms and left as much freedom as possible for beginning artists to cultivate, and show their talents.

The institutional separation of education in the fine arts from education in the applied arts

This Romantic conception of the artist as a unique individual of genius with a moral obligation to pursue transcendental aesthetic ideals became most pronounced during the late nineteenth century with the growth of individualism, concomitant with the Industrial Revolution (Wolff, 1981b). The development of photography had weakened the "imitation theory" of art that had for so long been the dominant theory guiding the artist (Benjamin, 1979). Furthermore, the tradition of craft production that had been in existence since the Middle Ages was being replaced by the factory system. To make industrial production more efficient, the work was segmented into a series of repetitive operations, each performed by one person. New roles for workers in design and the decorative arts were developing. A program of training for workers who were to take these positions in industry was required. But neither the students nor the teachers in those academies which had just begun to nurture the Romantic notion of art were about to surrender their new freedom and status for roles in factory production (Efland, 1983). There was a calling to high art for noble purposes, not as servants of an industrial system. Industrial art, as then construed, was a

"lesser calling" (Efland, 1983, p. 151).

The distinction perceived between the high or fine arts and the applied arts was significantly intensified with the development in Germany and England of a dual track system of art instruction. One track was the trade schools (*gewerbeschulen*) for preparing artisans to fill design jobs in industry. The other track was the fine arts education of the academy.¹⁰ Although the curriculum of both types of education was essentially drawing, drawing in applied arts programs consisted mostly of geometric drawing and copying drawings of ornaments and decorative motifs. This was considered a lesser version of the established fine arts sequence of drawing that began with copying other drawings and ended with drawing and painting from the live model. This separate curriculum for trade schools further insulated the fine artist from the concerns of the practical world and served to replicate certain aspects of the social class structure. As Arthur Efland (1983, p. 156) writes, "high academic art was for the art student with upper class aspirations while geometric drawing was for the working class."

In France, other factors were involved in the cultivation of an exclusiveness for pure painting, as White and White explain (1965, p.16-17):

The principal concern of the revolutionary and succeeding nineteenth-century governments was legitimation. Following the royal examples of the past, art was accepted as being an essential exposition of the symbols of power. Nineteenth century France exhibited the most widespread comprehensive government

involvement with art of any state. The culmination was the international exhibitions in 1855 and 1867 at which Louis Napoleon dazzled the sovereigns of Europe with French art.

In return for the legitimization of power that certain high academic art could provide, the state provided the economic and structural support required to sustain the academic ideology of pure painting.

The exclusiveness of fine art was furthered by the highly competitive nature of the system for educating artists. Because the preparation of an artist was long, strict, and competitive, and because fine art appealed to, and represented a higher social class than the applied arts, bourgeois fathers became more willing to send their sons through the official painting system. Painting became a profession in the middle-class sense. Beginning with the entrance competition, the preparation of artists was in essence a series of contests for "weeding-out". Dedication and perseverance would produce for parents a publicly discernible record of advancement (White & White, 1965).

The influence of academies of art upon the social structure of the art world has been profound. According to White and White, the academic system was responsible for our present dealer-critic system. Dealers and critics, once subsidiaries to the academic system, grew in numbers and independence in response to the success of the official system of recruiting painters and in response to the increased public interest which was generated by the publicity and attention given to art by the state.

Although art programs modelled directly after the academies of art declined in the 1950s and 1960s as art training became increasingly a university responsibility,¹¹ many elements of the academy tradition remain in our present system of art instruction. One such inheritance is the basic knowledge categories around which most art departments are structured--the fully legitimated fine art practices of drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking.¹² Resembling the hierarchy of skill levels of the academies, exercises in drawing technique, especially drawing from the nude, are still generally considered to be technical preparation for painting and work with other media. Departments or specializations such as "experimental" or "intermedia" arts are sometimes added to these conventional core categories; however, as they appear in many program outlines, these are add-ons, inserted into an otherwise little changed format of conventional knowledge categories.¹³

"ARTES LIBERALES" OR THE ART OF PRODUCING REFINED AND BROADLY EDUCATED CITIZENS

The shift from the guild workshop to the academy as the institution governing the preparation of artists helped elevate the social status of the painter and sculptor. However, it was not any social belief in the artist as a valued citizen that permitted the eventual acceptance of instruction in the *practice* of art into the curriculum of universities. Much of art practice remained too much of a stigma of technique and craft for that. The practice of art eventually slipped into the university because of a need for

public school teacher preparation courses in art (Ritchie, 1966). Secondary influences came from existing, more utilitarian programs such as architecture, home economics, and engineering, which required drawing and color theory as descriptive and communicative tools (Ritchie, 1966). Gradually, painters and sculptors were accepted on faculty lists to provide expertise in these matters. Studio art courses were increasingly offered within a liberal arts framework to supplement art history courses, and were at first kept at a "cultural enlightening" level. Art history had become a formal part of the university curriculum long before art production because it was considered a permissible academic subject thanks to the heritage of the influential German universities. Art historians had tended towards a greater belief in objectivity and analytic systems for dealing with art, a direction easily accommodated within the academic frame of the university. Studio artists, by contrast, if not working within the commonly defined values of "craft", had been exploring the more controversial world of inner subjective feelings. Neither the subjectivist approach of the studio painter, nor the technical approach of the craftsperson, were likely to be readily endorsed in an academic milieu.

Yet, in the early 1930s, the University of Wisconsin and Dartmouth University located a few important artists within their setting, entitling them "artist-in-residence" and calling attention to both the artists' merits and the universities' progressiveness in supporting artistic production (Chipp, 1968; Larabee, 1970). With some incentive from the Carnegie Foundation, this example was soon widely imitated across the United States (Larabee, 1970)

and eventually in Canada. The role of universities at the time was not to usurp the function of professional specialized art schools. With the post World War II shift in art capitals from Europe to New York, artists were engaged to teach in universities on a part-time basis. Soon, many artists were being accepted as permanent faculty members regardless of the fact that many of them had never attended universities themselves (Chipp, 1968). The hiring of artists as full-time faculty members was a significant step in procuring for art practice a certain legitimacy as an intellectual discipline suitable for the university curriculum.

Liberal arts values as official justification for the study of art in universities

The study of art as it was first taught in universities meant something very different from the study of art in art academies at the same time. In a 1895 lecture, Charles Waldstein, a professor of fine arts, made the distinction very clear to his Cambridge University audience:

Art *production* is taught in the art academy, the studios of masters, the conservatories . . . Art *understanding* ought to be studied and to be thoroughly represented in our universities.
(Waldstein, 1896, pp. 4-5)

"One thing, which I hardly need impress," Waldstein continued, is that

I consider the task which the university student of art has before him as quite distinct from, though it need not be opposed to, that of the artist or that of the amateur. We cannot, we need

not, and we will not compete with art academies and conservatories, to produce second-rate painters, or sculptors, or architects, or musicians. (p. 7)

Rather, the purpose of the study of art in universities, as Waldstein saw it, was to add to a general education. A general education, after all, was thought to make

a truly refined and educated man, who stands on the height of the civilization of his age, and is representative of this in his way, as the man of letters and science, the statesman and legislator are in theirs. (p. 101)

All our acquisition of new knowledge, all the thought we think, must become an "emotional" habit, an ethos; they must transfuse and affect our character--even our intellectual character--before they become efficient as regards our practical conduct, or our mental or moral creativeness. (Waldstein, 1896, p. 102)

To Waldstein and fellow English connoisseurs of art in the "belles-lettres" tradition, North America must have seemed like an aesthetic desert. Charles Eliot Norton, a Harvard professor who felt a need to import the standards of art and life from Europe to America, supplied the original impulse for the growth of art in North American colleges and universities (Logan, 1955; Mahoney, 1970). Norton believed there to be, to quote an historian of art education, Frederick Logan (1955, p.65), "no beauty, no subtlety, no real

craftmanship, literally no true society in America, hence nothing of a refined nature for the arts to express." Perhaps it was Norton's intention that, by educating students to appreciate the great European works of the past, not only might their liberal arts backgrounds be broadened and enriched, but there might be a remote possibility that "art" might again exist at some future time and perhaps even in America.

Norton taught art at Harvard in the form of a course in cultural history. His view of art was essentially literary and historical. His lectures were of the survey-of-history-of-art type, not so different from many art history courses taught today. What Norton was attempting at Harvard at the end of the last century was an imitation of the art history that had gradually become a separate established discipline in Germany, and to some extent in France and Italy, following an influx of recruits to this new field from classical archaeology, theology, literature, and architecture (Panofsky, 1965).¹⁴

Belief in the potential of an understanding of art to lead to "cultural enlightenment" permitted art study to become established in the university curriculum, first as art appreciation and art history, and, much later in the 1950s and 1960s, as art production--to Waldstein's horror, had he known! The ethos contained in Waldstein's 1895 lecture that art study makes for "a truly refined and educated man" (p. 101) has persisted as one of the most frequently used official rationales for the study of fine art in universities. In 1964, Alvin Toffler described the period as one in which American universities and colleges were spending more time and money in culturizing

its population than ever before. This was partly in response to complaints that universities are turning out "'skilled barbarians' that may be studious scientists, mathematicians, and computer whizzes [sic] but who are innocent of culture." Dean Canfield (1965), of the School of Drama at Yale, used the rationale of the fine arts as somehow culturally refining and humanizing in a lecture at York University, Toronto, in celebration of the opening of that university's new large fine arts facility and program. Canfield explained that if the arts are viewed as the product of the intellect and culture, they are "rightly and properly within the purview of the university's interests, and directly associated with its legitimate education objectives" (p. 38).

Once we accept this equation that links the creation of art and the performance of it with intelligence, culture and learning, and I believe there is no difficulty about accepting it once we have freed ourselves from the bonds of prejudice, subjectivism, eastern mysticism, wood-lice, and Zen (that make objective discussions of the subject almost impossible), once we have done this then the responsibility of the university for the nurture and defence of the performing arts becomes, to my mind at least, not only acceptable but inevitable. Every human activity that involves the exercise of the intellect and imagination has a bearing on and relevance to our civilization and our culture. (p. 30)

For Canfield, the primary responsibility of the arts in universities was to contribute to a general liberal arts education. To ensure this was preserved, Canfield suggested that disciplined instruction in studio aspects be delayed

until the student was enrolled in a graduate level M.F.A. program. The production of professionals was, for Canfield, as it was for Waldstein seventy years earlier, a secondary responsibility of the university.

I would no more want a professional resident stock company or repertory company at Yale than I would want Yale to have the Green Bay Packers to represent it in intercollegiate athletics, or the Robert Shaw Chorale to be brought in to take the place of the Glee Club . . . The purposes are education first and entertainment second. (p. 45) ¹⁵

Universities, even those that now have a mandate for preparing professional artists through specialized B.F.A. programs, continue to stress the importance of a broad knowledge background for the artist. This is not surprising given the legitimization and resources that a view of "the study of art as an intellectual discipline" (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1985-1986 brochure) brings. Acquiring skills and techniques in art methods is not considered sufficient preparation for an artist. Program rationales for university studio art programs often explain, as in the example of the University of British Columbia "B.F.A. Programme Rationale" (undated), that although a program is "particularly designed for students who contemplate a career in the Visual Arts and occasionally other students who simply wish for a liberal education via the practice of art," the program should not be considered the final step of preparation for a career as a professional artist. The B.F.A. program is intended to "form a sound foundation for students who wish to undertake further activity in the fine arts, the applied

arts, museum work, film, architecture, art journalism, art history, etc." Hence, students are required to take courses in art history and other departments and faculties. What this means for the university art student is that six years (for a B.F.A. plus an M.F.A.) of tuition fees and essays and exams in academic courses (which are likely to lead them no closer to employment than would fine art courses alone) must be endured, when in fact what many of these students really intended was to "make art". The liberal arts ideal of the intellectual justifies this "hardship" for those who persevere. Many art students also come to recognize a practical, but unannounced, legitimating basis for the liberal arts rationale. Being able to articulate the intention, the meaning, or the cultural significance of one's work to the right people is what it takes to get exhibitions and funding. Fine art students might with advantage seek enough of a liberal arts background to enable them to adopt an intellectual stance in which to ground their own art production (Rosler, 1981), especially conceptual, performance or interdisciplinary art forms. And where better a place to acquire this broad basis of knowledge and "ideas" than the university? The legitimating liberal arts tradition and the ethos of cultural refinement and art-as-cultural-capital that goes along with it may be as significant a factor as the awarding of degrees in explaining why so many students with an interest in becoming professional artists choose to attend universities, in spite of the required essays and exams and the complaints that the norms, structures and bureaucracy of universities stultify "creative" artists.

The liberal arts as the classical educational ideal

The tradition of education which supports the practice of encouraging or requiring art students to take academic courses outside the discipline of art--labeled "general education", "liberal arts education", or simply "liberal education"--is historically linked with a privileged social class distinction. The notion of "cultural refinement" is associated with private liberal arts colleges for those of independent means and assured social positions. Even the term itself, "liberal arts", came into the English language as predominantly a class term. Its ultimate traceable word was the Latin word *liber*, meaning free man (Williams, 1983). The liberal arts (*artes liberales*) were distinguished from the "mechanical" skills and pursuits appropriate to a lower class. The term mechanical was used in a class sense to spurn the arts, crafts, trades, and non agricultural work--"most mechanicall and durty hand" (Williams, 1983, p.201), as Henry IV allegedly said.

The liberal arts is the classical educational ideal that has formed the basis of education in the western world, despite strong opposition on philosophical grounds by John Dewey and the pragmatists (Hirst, 1973). It may be traced to Aristotle's description of liberal studies as those studies appropriate for free men, and in no sense refers to a vocational education or a specialist education (Hirst, 1971, 1973). The subjects or "arts" which Aristotle regarded as liberal are not entirely clear, but somewhat later the Greeks and Romans came to list seven liberal studies or "arts": grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy (Hirst, 1971).

Painting and sculpture were not included because they did not comply with the features of Aristotle's notion of a liberal study. These features are summarized by Hirst (1971) from Aristotle's *Politics*:¹⁶ First, the liberal arts are not "mechanical", but demand the exercise of the individual's higher abilities, an exercise which is a necessary part of the "good life". Second, these studies must not have practical usefulness, the value of their pursuit is intrinsic, not extrinsic. Third, there must be no narrow specialization in them which would occupy the mind so that it misses out on other matters of equal value and importance in the good life. Fourth, the student must pursue the study for its intrinsic value only, not merely to impress others or to earn a living.

From this Greek doctrine came the notion of education as a process concerned simply and directly with the pursuit of knowledge, a notion of education based on what is taken to be true, that is, "man's knowledge of what is the case", as Hirst (1973, p. 88) explains. The development of the mind in this way was thought to lead to the greatest good, to rescue reason from error, illusion and temporary values, and to free the individual's conduct from wrong. Intellectuals observed the heavens and wrote plays and music for the sake of illumination and self-expression.

For centuries this ideal of education was regarded as the finest possible.¹⁷ However, since the Renaissance and especially in the past one hundred years, intellectual interests and techniques of inquiry have been changing because of the importance of science for industry and military reasons. As

highly specialized training assumed priority and the middle-class business culture lost regard for classical ideals, attachment to the inherited tradition of liberal arts values dwindled (Shils, 1972).

The greatest defenders and preservers of the liberal art ideals now are the private liberal arts colleges. Increasing technical, vocational and professional directions in higher education caused fear among these colleges that intellectual standards were diminishing and the transmission of the cultural heritage of western society was becoming an increasingly fragmented and superficial process (Potts, 1971). Consequently, the chief aim of these colleges became the preservation and transmission of cultural capital, with its "refining" influence on morals and manners as well as the intellect.

The private liberal arts college is a distinctly American institution modelled after the residential life and the classical curriculum of Oxford and Cambridge universities. Since most of them are private, fee-collecting institutions, only a select portion of the population can gain access to and benefit from such an education based on liberal arts values. Yet, ironically, the defenders of these colleges see democracy being served. Democracy, they envision, occurs through an emphasis on intellectual quality and selectivity: superior minds should emerge from a rigorous liberal arts education to make outstanding contributions to American society, leaving mass postsecondary education to the public universities and colleges (Potts, 1971).¹⁸

The liberal arts ideal as an ironic proclamation of
democracy

In spite of the historical association of liberal arts tradition with privileged social class distinctions, North American society is committed to the ideals of a general or liberal arts education because it is thought to reflect and promote democratic principles. What is there about the idea of a liberal arts education that suggests that it might work to fulfill democratic principles, and, contingently, that it is worthy to form the basis of education in North America, including the education of artists?

Basic to democratic principles is the belief in the pre-eminent worth of the individual, the freedom of the individual, and the full realization of the individual's unique capacities. In 1946, the influential report of the Harvard University Committee, *General education in a free society*, defined general education as "that part of a student's whole education which looks first of all to his life as a responsible human being and as a citizen" as opposed to specialized education "which looks to the student's competence in some occupation" (p.51). The objectives of a liberal education are defined in the Harvard report as the ability to think effectively, to communicate thought, to make relevant judgments, and to discriminate among values. Others have suggested that a liberal education leads to the development of practical abilities (Nowell-Smith, 1958) and creative imagination (Broudy, 1964). Hirst (1973) argues for the importance of liberal education conceived as initiation into several logistically distinct forms of knowledge or modes of thought.

A liberal education for Hirst is "based fairly and squarely on the nature of knowledge itself, a concept central to the discussion of education at any level" (p. 87). A consistent concept of liberal education must not be equated with mere collections of information. Rather

the distinctions between the various forms of knowledge which will principally govern the scheme of education will now be based entirely on analyses of their particular conceptual, logical and methodological features (p. 99) . . . It is an education concerned directly with the development of the mind in rational knowledge. (p. 101)

This parallels the original Greek concept in that

liberal education was the freeing of the mind to achieve its own good in knowledge . . . it remains basic to the freeing of human conduct from wrong" (p. 101) . . . In each case it is a form of education knowing no limits other than those necessarily imposed by the nature of rational knowledge and thereby itself developing in man the final court of appeal in all human affairs. (p. 101)

This educational notion of democracy and freedom has frequently been used as an official justification for including the study of fine art in the university curriculum. One of the lengthiest and most idealistic articulations of this was a 222 page essay published in 1953 by Ernest Ziegfeld. To conclude the work, Ziegfeld weaves arts education into the rhetoric of patriotism, freedom and democracy:

The free and democratic way of life to which we in America aspire is being threatened from within and without by ideologies which would enslave the human personality and reduce the individual to subservience and anonymity In order to maintain our rights to freedom we must have a spirit of freedom--a deep and abiding faith in the integrity of the individual and in his ability to build a worthy life with his fellow men. And we must have a knowledge of freedom--a true comprehension of the spontaneous and creative way of life which is the mark of the free man (p. 220)

Without the aesthetic factor of experience, the individual can neither live a full life nor can he see his own life in its full relationships to the world in which he lives. Experience in the arts can give him the insights and understandings which will enable him to see himself and the world in their wholeness and fullness, and it provides him the means whereby he can relate himself freely and spontaneously--that is to say, creatively--to the world as it is given to him through his esthetic vision. (p. 221)

There is, of course, a pragmatic aspect that supports the argument of the importance for democratic societies of studying art as part of a liberal arts education. In 1965, John Coolidge, then director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, stated that an "intense concern" of

universities should be the production of a "cultivated body of amateurs" (p. 17) necessary for both the production of great art and the understanding and preservation of the art of the past; "All but a tiny and diminishing minority of our students have much to learn about the fine arts" (p. 17). The pragmatic benefits for art departments which "cultivate" a large body of "amateurs" is particularly pertinent in the current situation of financial restraint in most art departments. Fine art majors are too few to sustain a wide ranging program. Having a large body of non-specialized students enrolling in art courses means that art departments can offer a variety of art courses and in turn secure legitimation and make more visible the function of art departments on campuses--all of this without the expense of increasing the number of full-time faculty. It also means graduate students in art can obtain financial support and work experience when there is an undergraduate student body to teach.

In summary, with education in fine art now institutionally entrenched in universities, art teaching and art knowledge is ultimately shaped by the norms and structures of universities, including the dominant liberal arts tradition with its underlying social class distinctions and art-as-cultural-capital values. It was, in fact, the liberal arts tradition which permitted art to be established in the university in the first place, first as art connoisseurship and art history, and eventually and reluctantly as art production. Liberal arts proclamations of academic competence and the acquisition of democratic values persist as strong legitimating rationales for art in our educational system, in spite of the underlying association of the

liberal arts with the private college tradition and the social class distinctions of economic and cultural capital. North Americans are committed to the idea that a broad liberal arts education works toward fulfilling the democratic values of freedom, respect as an individual, and development of the full capacities of all human beings. For art students, the liberal arts educational ideal of the intellectual has replaced the sixteenth century emphasis on God, nature, and the divine as the motivation for pursuing art as a career. It helps to justify the financial and status disadvantages that art students are faced with, and helps solidify the commitment to art that works to insulate and perpetuate traditional conceptions of art knowledge.

PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETIC THEORY AS AN INTELLECTUAL BASIS OF ART EDUCATION

Aesthetic theory is a codification of the basic principles that support the production and understanding of art and, subsequently, education in art. It is the intellectual basis of art knowledge in the high culture sense. It reflects the prevailing ideas, values, and practices of art that are shared by members of the fine art subculture. It has served as an authority that has sanctioned the insulation and even transcendence of art knowledge over other knowledge domains and from its own social base.

Aesthetic theory functions as much more than an inert body of doctrine. It is part of a complex social network and historical process. Aesthetic

principles, definitions, and judgments about art and the nature of artistic activity make up an important part of the body of conventions by which various participants of various art worlds act together and justify their demands for the resources and advantages previously available for the production of art and for associated activities such as education in art.¹⁹

Aesthetic theory not only follows or is coincident with the development of styles, techniques, and individual works of art, but in many cases the equation is reversed so that theory precedes practice. Aesthetic principles serve for artists to adopt or defy, especially in this century, resulting in the development of new forms and styles in art. Aesthetic theory, by attempting to make sense of or evaluate individual works and art practices, creates reputations not only for certain artists or art styles, but also for entire traditions at the expense of others. The selection process occurs in regard to works which more or less approximate the standard practice of the fine art world; even more crucially, it occurs to the extent that some forms, such as folk art or applied arts, are not even given serious consideration by the fine art world.

Philosophers of art and art critics--those who deal in and have a major effect on shaping aesthetic theory--are often situated in universities. This means that the development of aesthetic theory and the values these philosophers and critics bring to bear in assessing or researching individual works of art, of artists, styles, and even art programs, are bound up with the processes and structures of universities. This cannot help but affect what counts as art knowledge; this art knowledge, in turn, becomes part of

an art student's knowledge, affecting her or his actions.

Artistic activity occurs in light of some conception of what constitutes good art. In educational contexts, certain notions of what constitutes good art and valid artistic activity are adopted by art students to meet the demands of institutional and social forces, often resulting in such phenomena as "the school art style" at the elementary and secondary school level (Efland, 1976) and what Lowry (1962) calls the "new academic art style" at the postsecondary level. Because of the interdependence between aesthetic theory, artistic activity, and the liberal arts values and collection code structures of education, some understanding of aesthetic theory is in order.

As a discipline of study, aesthetics has a long tradition of theory grounded in the nature of art and aesthetic experience, most of which is philosophical in nature and originates particularly in the works of eighteenth century German philosophers (Baumgarten, Kant, Schiller).²⁰ This philosophical tradition has given rise to the dominant modernist aesthetic and its practices that are now the accepted or official culture of art in schools and universities. It illustrates the deeply divided consciousness between art and society and the effect that division has had in insulating certain art knowledge. The very term "aesthetic", with its specialized references to that which is "fine" or "beautiful" reflects this divided consciousness. Concern with the "beautiful" in art, or in art and nature, began at least with Socrates and has engaged the attention of philosophers ever since.

However, the term "aesthetic", as introduced by the German scholar Alexander Baumgarten in the mid-eighteenth century, was not in common use before the mid-nineteenth century. Baumgarten, acknowledged as the father of aesthetics, derived the word from the Greek term *aisthesis* meaning sense perception in reference to all material things perceptible by the senses (Williams, 1983). Baumgarten's use of the word in reference to art emphasized subjective sense activity.²¹ This kind of emphasis on subjective sense activity as the basis of that which is fine or beautiful has isolated art from social or cultural interpretations. "Subjective", according to the philosophical framework that currently exists as a result of positivist science and the associated desire for "impartial" or "neutral" observation and judgment, is based on personal impressions and feelings rather than "facts". Constrasting aesthetic considerations with practical or utilitarian considerations is "understandable but damaging", writes Raymond Williams (1983, p. 32) in his exploration of the historical development of the cultural transformation of actual language. Such a division makes aesthetic considerations appear displaced, marginal, and unreliable.

The noun "aesthete" was once widely used to refer to a person specializing in aesthetics as a discipline of formal study, although often in a derogatory sense (Williams, 1983). The term, especially when associated with Walter Pater, the late nineteenth century English literary and social critic and a central figure of the "aesthetic movement", was a source of ridicule and attack. Eventually the term "aesthete" was replaced by "aesthetician" (a term which in contemporary times has acquired much of

this same stigma). It was Pater who, by channelling all the subject matter he came in contact with (including religion, philosophy, Renaissance studies) into support for his aesthetic view of the world, championed the theme of art for art's sake, culminating in an Epicurean "Aestheticism". Aestheticism refers to the disengagement of art from social and political concerns. It is a point of view in which art is seen as autonomous, self-sufficient, and serving no ulterior purpose; nor should it be judged by moral, political, or nonaesthetic standards. It has been held to represent an overdevelopment of one aspect of romanticism²² : the autonomy of the creative imagination (Graff, 1973). Many writers on aesthetics have since expounded the aestheticist point of view, but Clive Bell's treatise on aesthetics, simply titled *Art* (1958), is particularly illustrative of the attitude that high art transcends the practical, everyday social world. For Bell, "aesthetic rapture" (p. 160) is all that matters in art. "The value of the greatest art," wrote Bell (p. 175), "consists not in its power of becoming a part of common existence but in its power of taking us out of it." "Significant form" transcends what Bell views as the *mundane* world of political and social affairs. Significant form refers to pure physical form somehow independent of questions of representational adequacy, meaning, or applicability outside itself. It is a variant of the physical object hypothesis²³ which focuses only on the particular properties of works of art. According to this view, the work's related meanings, purposes and social and historical coordinates are disregarded. Hence, when contemplating primitive art, Bell (1958, p. 39) announced that "primitives produce art because they must; they have no other motive than a passionate desire to express their sense of form."

Furthermore, those who wish to appreciate any work of art need no knowledge of its ideas, purpose or context, "nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space" (p. 27).

The modern emphasis on aesthetic form meant that perceptions were transformed so that artifacts, dance, and music of various cultures became "visible" as art forms, rather than as cultural forms. Milton Albrecht (1968), an American sociologist, attributes this kind of interpretation of art as a self-sufficient identity detached from specific social and cultural meanings and as responsible for the ransacking of other cultures throughout the world for "art treasures" to take home to protect in pantheons of "Culture".

The masks, kachinas, sculptures, totems, or other cultural products from Australian aborigines, the tribes of new Guinea, West Africa, and elsewhere have been collected as ART and placed in museums, hung on our walls, and displayed on our mantelpieces. (. . . strikingly illustrated at Expo '67). Chac Mools and stone jaguars have been removed from ancient Mayan temples, and "gargoyles" wrenched from cathedrals. Most of the finest examples of totems and other "art" objects native to Alaska are to be found not in Alaska but in the Soviet Union, in European museums, in Canada, New York, Portland, Seattle, Denver and elsewhere. Thus art has now become "universal" with a meaning that is being projected round the world from the fine art tradition of Europe and America. The process represents not a

military or political invasion of the world, but an artistic one. (p.

393)

In other cultures the arts have not always been separate from social and cultural contexts. Anthropologists, unlike many aestheticians, have supported the close relationship of the aesthetic with practical and social contexts and variations from culture to culture. They emphasize, notes Albrecht, cultural relativity rather than the absolutism that takes the form of Western concepts of aesthetic form projected on artifacts of other cultures.²⁴ Few of the more recent writers on aesthetics maintain as extreme a view of art as a separate and self-contained cosmos as Bell's, yet they still insist on aesthetic values as paramount. (This is, of course, a precondition if aesthetics in the traditional sense is to exist as a separate discipline.) Some influential aesthetic viewpoints that center variously on the analysis of the aesthetic and physical properties of works of art are, for example, the emotive aesthetic aspects (Langer), the imaginative (Collingwood), the expressive (Elliott), the cognitive (Goodman), beauty as transcendental (Maritain) and formal or design analysis, known as formalist criticism (Beardsley, Fry). Even though these various positions are frequently counter-posed to one another by their current proponents, they do, whether in their traditional or up-dated forms, tend to isolate aesthetic from social factors (Wolff, 1983).

In spite of the increase within the last two decades of sociological critiques of art and aesthetics, the discipline of aesthetics still continues

on the whole to be conducted without reference to the intervention of these critiques. For evidence, Janet Wolff (1983) directs attention to such sources as the *British Journal of Aesthetics* or the familiar anthologies edited by Osborne (1972) or Hospers (1969).

Mainstream Anglo-American philosophy of art pursues its search for the nature of beauty and of the aesthetic experience without in any way being disturbed by the sociological critique of aesthetics itself as a historically specific development, and of all aesthetic judgments as class-based, gender-linked and in general ideologically produced. (Wolff, 1983, p. 27)

SUMMARY

Knowledge lives in traditions (Bergendal, 1983). Art knowledge, as found in education, is the product of the academy tradition, the universities' liberal arts notion of art as humanizing and "culturally refining", and the philosophical tradition that dominates aesthetic theory. The changes in the education of artists from workshops to universities, and the resultant change in status of art knowledge, are, as demonstrated in this chapter, rooted in a history of the changes in status of the artist's profession from that of a manual trade to the more noble status of an "intellectual calling". The history of art in education is one of emphasizing the intellectual or theoretical base of art, forming alliances with the literati (Hauser, 1959) and the more powerful and affluent classes, and, in this century, moving fine art into universities and eventually to schools of graduate studies. It is a

history of legitimating the fine art discipline and elevating its status in society through a gradual process of academicization, through association with the liberal arts' preservation of cultural capital and its connotations of academic competence and, ironically, democratic values, and through aestheticism's separation of art from society. By supporting the claim for an independence of art from the work roles and practical knowledge conditions of the everyday industrial world, these traditions have provided official justification and authority for the role of art in education. By supporting this claim for independence, the traditions have functioned also to reinforce the notion of art as a specialized, privileged realm of knowledge of little relevance to mainstream pluralistic society. Postmodernism challenges the cultural and social bases of these aesthetic and educational traditions. But because of the authority these traditions hold in society, the task is not an easy one, and, as argued in the next chapter, has so far been largely ineffective.

NOTES

- ¹ The brief histories presented in this chapter may not be fully representative. They are examples that highlight certain widely-recognized historical developments and are limited, as is any history of art and its institutions, in the sense that art and the institutions responsible for the acquisition of art knowledge existed at moments and in places other than those which are typically given attention.
- ² Because sculptors were members of what was considered a "lesser guild" of bricklayers and carpenters, their separation socially from the tradesman was much later in coming.
- ³ Individual artists and their workshop training are discussed in Book III of Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *On painting* written in 1435, in Cennino Cennini's early fifteenth century treatise, *Book of the artist* (cited in Baxandall, 1972, p.117, 121), and in Vasari's *Lives of the*

painters, sculptors and architects (1963)

- 4 Baxandall explains that the relationship between the client and painter was an important part of the lasting classicization of European Renaissance culture. Categories of a system of literary criticism became the subject of study of humanist scholars. Although the language of criticizing art was a skill of the learned, bankers and merchants took to using many of the terms and concepts such as "pure" or "ornate" or "composition".
- 5 The training of a painter within the guild system followed the customary course of medieval craft rules that all guilds held. The master of a *bottega*, as the artists' guild workshops of fifteenth century Italy were called, had full disciplinary power over his apprentices. The apprentice had to learn his trade from the bottom upwards, beginning with the grinding of colors and the preliminary treatment of the painting surface. Acquiring all the technical knowledge and tricks of the trade that would enable the apprentice to paint just like the master took several years. An important part of the later stages of the apprenticeship was copying masterpieces of the master artist as well as other acknowledged masterpieces. As Antal (1970, p.291) suggests, it is in light of this training "that we can understand the tenacious preservation of the traditional heritage in fourteenth-century painting".
- 6 As an artist, Vasari was representative of the age of Mannerism, producing work characterized by a tension between artistic freedom and obligation. This characteristic of Mannerist art was reflected in the artists' workshops in the increasing contradiction between the principles of labor and education, with art instruction striving ever more concertedly for a canon of instruction (Hauser, 1983).
- 7 Forty years later a second academy was opened--the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome. Drawing and painting from plaster casts and from life was accompanied by theoretical discussion. What is particularly significant about this institution is that its evening lectures were opened to art connoisseurs from the public, thus broadening the institution's membership and furthering its aspiration to "leadership in cultural affairs as well as taste and fashion" (Kelly, 1974, p.99). This practice of opening some aspects to a larger public resembles the current practice of university departments to cater to a broader liberal arts population, while at the same time supporting those students seeking careers as professional artists.
- 8 An academy was established even in Canada as early as 1668--the Ecole des Arts et Metiers at St. Joachim, Quebec (McCarthy, 1973). Although the school was discontinued in 1705, its courses in architecture, sculpture and painting had achieved the most remarkable success in establishing the visual arts in Canada. Pevsner's *Academies of art, past and present* misses this academy of art even though it

antedates the establishment of similar academies in European cities.

- ⁹ For example, particular grades of ultramarine blue (the most expensive of the blue pigments) were specified in terms of florins to the ounce. "German blue was just carbonate of copper; it was less splendid in its colour and much more seriously unstable in use (particularly in fresco)" (Baxandall, 1972, p. 11).
- ¹⁰ White and White (1965) do not indicate that both applied and fine art were instructed within the same institutions, although Efland (1983) clearly does.
- ¹¹ There are exceptions. One art school that strives to perpetuate the academy tradition is the National Academy Fine Arts School in New York. To quote from its recent catalog, "Throughout all the years since the School's founding (1825), and throughout all the shifts in taste and fashion, the School of Fine Arts remained true to the standards of excellence as established by the founders." (p. 3). "At the heart of the School program" is studio work "most often from the model but also from antique casts and still life" (p. 5).
- ¹² These and other data regarding the structure and content of art programs in higher education were obtained by reviewing program catalogs and brochures of over 100 fine art programs of both colleges and universities in Canada and the United States.
- ¹³ Several other conventions of our present art instruction model came about in *rebellion* to the officialdom of academies of art. These, however, are addressed in the following chapter (chapter 6).
- ¹⁴ Art history, as we know it today in North America as scholarly historical analysis and interpretation of artifacts, only surfaced from its entanglement with art connoisseurship in 1923 when the *Art Bulletin*, founded in 1913 and now recognized as a leading art historical periodical, carried ten art historical articles and only one on art appreciation. Of related significance was the formation of a competing periodical, the short-lived *Art Studies*.
- ¹⁵ One of Canfield's art historian colleagues at Yale, Vincent Scully, in the same line of argument, defends the arts in universities entirely on grounds that the arts are a way of knowledge

The visual arts are tools towards knowledge, which is after all, I think, the only way in which any subject can be defended in a university. The university's role is the pursuit of knowledge and fundamentally nothing else. (p. 51)

The point of art is the illumination of life, but most art does not come out of life; most art comes out of art. This

is one of the great things that makes art so civilized, because most of civilization as a whole is something that comes out of other civilization. (p. 67)

For Scully, Leonardo Da Vinci was the perfect expression of the idea of art as a path to knowledge: "Leonardo was interested in everything, especially in the truth" (p. 67).

¹⁶ In Book 8 of *Politics* Aristotle wrote (Hirst, 1971, p.505):

All useful knowledge is not suitable for education. There is a distinction between liberal and illiberal subjects, and it is clear that only such knowledge as does not make the learner mechanical should enter into education. By mechanical subjects we must understand all arts and studies that make the body, soul, or intellect of free men unserviceable for the external exercise of goodness. That is why we call such pursuits as produce an inferior condition of body mechanical, and all wage-earning occupations. They allow the mind no leisure, and they drag it down to a lower level. There are even some liberal arts, the acquisition of which up to a certain point is not unworthy of freemen, but which, if studied with excessive devotion or minuteness are open to the charge of being injurious in the manner described. The object with which we engage in or study them, also makes a great difference; if it is for our own sakes or that of our friends, or to produce goodness, they are not illiberal, while a man engaging in the very same pursuits to please strangers would in many cases be regarded as following the occupation of a slave or a serf.

There are subjects which ought to form part of education solely with a view to the right employment of leisure, and that this education and these studies exist for their own sake, while those that have business in view are studied as being necessary and for the sake of something else.

¹⁷ It was not until the medieval spread of Christian doctrine that liberal arts studies were challenged at all. With Christian doctrine the significance of reason was subordinated to revelation, so that the liberal arts became a formal and restricted course of study, secondary to theology. With Renaissance humanism and the rediscovery of classical literature, "the full significance of Aristotelian liberal education was temporarily reaffirmed" (Hirst, 1971, p. 507). But what resulted this time was a distortion of the concept of liberal education so that the study of classical literature itself came to represent the

essence of a liberal education.

- ¹⁸ One of our most significant thinkers on western society and education, the eighteenth century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was a fervent critic of liberal arts ideals. Rousseau, a stormy romantic, inconsistent in many things, with little formal education, and credited with having significantly helped to shape the French Revolution, wrote *A discourse on the arts and sciences* (1749) (--the word "discourse" meaning in its context "prize-essay"). The essay won the contest of the Academy of Dijon in 1749, winning him instant fame. The question posed by the Academy, which the essay addressed, was "Has the restoration of the arts and sciences had a purifying effect upon morals?" Rousseau began his *Discourse* with the point that men are not at birth equal, but as societies develop these natural inequalities are aggravated by artificial politically enforced inequalities which have nothing to do with the natural inequalities. The so-called advance of the arts and sciences parallels an increase in inequalities and corruption. For Rousseau, to live morally one does not require knowledge of art and science. "The mind, as well as the body, has its needs; those of the body are the basis of society, those of the mind its ornaments" (p. 4). But in advanced civilization it is these things that command rewards. Morality, on the other hand, commands no rewards, it is obscure, guided only by instinct, conscience and "heart". Hence we find many scathing passages in the *Discourse* that condemn the study of the arts and sciences as sophistic, leading to polite manners and hence to hypocrisy:

Astronomy was born of superstition, eloquence of ambitions, hatred, falsehood, and flattery; geometry of avarice; physics of an idle curiosity; all, even moral philosophy, of human pride. Thus the arts and sciences owe their birth to our vices; we should be less doubtful of their advantages, if they had sprung from our virtues. (p. 14)

Since the labours of the most enlightened of our learned men and the best of our citizens are of so little utility, tell us what we ought to think of the numerous herd of obscure writers and idle *litterateurs*, who devour without any return the substance of the State.(p. 15)

We have physicists, geometricians, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, and painters in plenty; but we have no longer a citizen among us; or if there be found a few scattered over our abandoned countryside, they are left to perish there unnoticed and neglected. Such is the conditions to which those who give us our daily bread, and our children milk, are reduced, and such are our feelings towards them. (p. 22)

- 19 The way in which an aesthetic principle develops varies: An aesthetic principle may be informally developed by an artist through day to day choices of materials, forms, or subject matter. Or, more formally organized philosophical defensible aesthetic systems may be developed and justified by aestheticians and critics, and studied by philosophers, historians, and, more recently, sociologists and anthropologists.
- 20 However, a broader sense of aesthetics can include not only the philosophical analysis of art, but a second more recent paradigm of critical writing about art that addresses the social and historical coordinates of art and the study of art. It critiques and demystifies the former philosophical position. This latter sociological paradigm brings into focus and makes problematic the categories of the philosophical paradigm, calling it transhistorical and mythical. It is the sociologically-oriented writing on aesthetics which allows one to ask or even to think of asking the kinds of questions of this study--questions about the origins and social functions of higher art education. It is a tradition which, since the early 1970s, has increasingly informed research and theory in art, particularly art history and art education. However, its effect at the level of practice in art education at any level of education appears minimal (Chapman, 1981). This sociological paradigm of aesthetic theory is discussed in further detail in chapter 6.
- 21 In Baumgarten's massive two volume work simply titled *Aesthetics*, a specific theory of beauty makes up only a small part: it was Kant who saw beauty as an essentially and exclusively sensuous phenomenon, in strong association with art. The continuing uncertainty between reference to art and the more general reference to beauty is implicit in the history of aesthetics. For example, Plato believed art to be an imitation of an imitation. Beauty, unlike art, referred to the symmetry and proportion of form, and was found to be primarily in the abstract ideas after which he saw the world patterned. Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and in this century, DeWitt Parker and Jacques Maritain, modified these principles but retained the distinction between art and beauty.
- 22 Equating aestheticism with romanticism, or understanding both as an impulse to escape from the modern world, oversimplifies romanticism. Romantic aesthetics glorified the idea of art as an isolated universe of imaginative truth that far transcends ordinary reality. But it also saw this autonomous aesthetic world as profoundly valuable in providing the values and regulative principles by which individuals and societies are guided--it deliberately emphasized the social, moral, and philosophical meanings of art (Graff, 1973).
- 23 The term "physical object hypothesis" is used by the philosopher Richard Wollheim (1968) and later by Janet Wolff (1983). The attempt to identify the aesthetic in terms of properties of particular objects

as a strategy to discover the nature of art and the aesthetic has long been problematic to philosophers of art. Wollheim systematically raises many of the difficulties associated with such an analysis that involves an investigation of the variety of things we call "art" in order to isolate their common "aesthetic" features. One such problem is that not all works of art are physical objects, as in the case of performance art and music. Bell's work involving "significant form" is a theory of visual art which was not intended to be transferred to music, literature or performance art forms and, if it is transferred, has several limitations.

- ²⁴ Albrecht notes that the Greeks did not detach aesthetic quality from the intellectual, moral, religious, and practical function or content of works of art. They did not conceive of the "fine arts" in the modern sense, for they did not use aesthetic quality as a standard for grouping the fine arts together. Their concept of art was retained in the Middle Ages. Even today in western culture, art continues to serve extra-aesthetic functions by expressing and supporting religious and other general values of society. Albrecht conjectures that if art is to be claimed as universal it is in these respects only that it may be regarded as such.

Albrecht makes reference in the following passage to those who are more inclined to emphasize cultural relativity:

E.R. Leach (1961) for example, points out that "each local group has its own aesthetic traditions which are peculiar to that group and to that group alone." Similarly, Redfield (1959) shows that a "complex world of traditional meanings" is represented by the art of a particular culture, which has its own traditional style perpetuated and confirmed by social usage . . . Among Australian aborigines, as Mountford (1961) states, the "primitive expressions of art, music and drama" are rigidly controlled by the age-old customs of the tribe, and "they play the most vital part in aborigines' lives, for it is by the employment of these art forms, songs, and rituals, that the aborigines keep alive the philosophies, the creation myths and the exploits of the totemic ancestors".

CHAPTER 6

CHALLENGES TO THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURING OF ART KNOWLEDGE BOUNDARIES

Although the institutional shift of instruction in painting and sculpture from workshops to academies and eventually to universities gave art the status of an intellectual discipline and secured its place in education, this academicization process has not gone unchallenged. Challenges to academia as a centre for artistic activity and the preparation of artists have been frequent. This chapter describes some of these challenges that have occurred in relation to art departments and art schools. As will be discussed, these challenges have been largely ineffective in broadening boundaries, and, in the end, may even have functioned to further the very boundaries and hierarchies of art knowledge which they set out to challenge or reform. The ineffectiveness of these challenges has much to do with the structures and norms of universities, with their insulated compartments of knowledge, their allegiances to these compartments, their maintenance and perpetuation of these allegiances through mechanisms of socialization, their highly sanctioned liberal arts tradition, and their promotion of aesthetic autonomy and art-as-capital. That the challenges to traditional conceptions of art knowledge have been impeded by the structures and norms of universities lends further support to the thesis that the university has the monopoly on defining, legitimating, and perpetuating art knowledge.

CHALLENGES TO THE ACADEMY TRADITION

The officialdom of academies of art, with their rigid standards of western high art, has become a symbol that incites rebelliousness, even when there is little of the officialdom of the academy left to sustain it. Whether justified or not,¹ academies have come to represent that which is reprehensible in art and art instruction. The words "academy" and "academic" have a stigma of oppressiveness, rigidity, lack of inspiration, and moribundity. This is evident in the title of one article that surveys contemporary art, "The academy of the bad" (Plaguen, 1981) or in McNeil Lowry's (1962, p. 236) term, the "new academic style", that describes the style of painting prevalent in colleges and universities which "particularly lends itself to intellectual and technical imitation." Dan Flavin (1968, p. 30), an American artist known for his sculpture with fluorescent light tubes, fuels an indictment against the establishment of art practice in universities with several references to the practices of earlier European academies:

nothing more than a precious, obvious and repetitive manhandling of subject matter within set sanctioned media, from their own convenient and sanctimonious misapplications of art history. Often, all that these "superior" types can produce are seemingly endless depictions of decadently daubed fruit preferably fit for 19th century French garbage on brushed out fabric folds that could not survive a contemporary intellectual "dry cleaning". Among certain of the "humanistic" elders, the decrepit evangelizing, egg tempera-izing fundamentalists on the faculty,

those all time standards, the secrets of the old masters are still invoked from ancient tracts and musty memoirs of the likes of Cennino Cennini. Other odd old pedantic structuralists futilely impose figure drawing as an extreme exercise in constrained hard line observational orthodoxy. The faint fractured remains of sketches so rendered are so thoroughly erased and kneaded away as to strain anyone's eyes if not his perception.

Indictments of the academy tradition were expressed frequently during the 1960s and early 1970s by those professing a highly politicized social consciousness. And they were expressed frequently during the heyday of academies when academies maintained the monopoly not only on training artists but on determining what artistic styles and forms were acceptable. The throwing of bread (used for erasing lines in drawing) was one expression of student revolt, resulting in the prohibition of the use of bread for erasing charcoal, which in turn resulted in "a significant effort in the searching of line" (Creedy, 1970, p. 3). Within the academy, liberal factions claimed that the rote copying methods of instruction and the "official" supervision at the academies stifled creativity and the moral independence of students. Conservative factions claimed that the academy style of instruction had degenerated into an undisciplined, superficial training which produced at best "facile copyists and no artists" (White & White, 1965). Academies, like the earlier guilds, had outlived their purpose and were seen as the enemies of genius and of the individual expression that had become the canon in the nineteenth century, classified under such

headings as romanticism, realism, and impressionism. Some colorful academy-bashing of the time is quoted in Nikolaus Pevsner's *Academies of art* (1973). For example, there was Goya's plea of 1872:

Let academies be unrestrictive . . . by banishing all slavish servility, as it is usual in infants' schools . . . There are no rules in painting, and the constraint or obligation for all to study in the same way . . . is a great obstacle for the young.(p. vi)

In 1859, F.G. Stephens said that the academy "has always been the patron of mediocrity and the enemy of genius . . . this great brainless, ruthless body." (Pevsner, 1973, p. viii). And William Morris described academies as "the worst collection of snobs, flunkeys and self-seekers that the world has yet seen." (Pevsner, 1973, p. xii). But perhaps the most spirited criticism was pronounced by Joseph Anton Koch, leader of the heroic school of German Romantic landscape painting. He compared an art academy with, as Pevsner (1973, p. 200) describes, "an infirmary for incurables (*Siechenstall*), a poor house, and, more and more inebriated by his own words, with a 'rotting cheese' from which 'an innumerable host of artists creeps--like a myriad of maggots'."

It was a general opposition to academies and their "Salon-art" (a term which in Germany means picture-painting for drawing rooms, mentions Pevsner, 1973) that provided incentive for the development of the Arts and Craft Movement in England and, later, the Bauhaus School in Germany. Both were attempts to regain the social and artistic virtues of the so-called

"lesser" arts, the arts outside the tightly maintained boundaries of high art. They were attempts to break down insulative boundaries and reintegrate the artist into society. For Walter Morris in England, the ideal was the system of guilds and trade companies of the Middle Ages. Morris maintained that this system alone secures a wholesome social position for art. In the Middle Ages every object was made "by the people for the people as a joy for the maker and the user", wrote Morris, and "the best artist was a workman still, and the humblest workman was an artist" (quoted in Pevsner 1973, p. 260). Morris' revolutionary discovery of the interdependence of social conditions and beauty recognized no fundamental difference between painting and weaving or wallpaper design. Accordingly, Morris would have liked both the artist's and craftsman's education to be like that of the medieval workshop apprenticeships.

As a direct outcome of Morris' ideas, the Arts and Crafts Movement was established in England in the 1880s. With it some new and progressive municipal art schools developed, such as the Guild and School of Handicrafts (a society of craftsmen working in close cooperation with each other and at the same time training apprentices) and later, in 1896, the London Central School of Arts and Crafts (Pevsner, 1973). As a result, a certain amount of craft instruction penetrated into some art schools and was amalgamated with what already existed as trade courses (Pevsner, 1973). But perhaps the most significant steps toward reform of art education and the evolution of a new, broader-based style of art were taken not in England but in Germany, with the Bauhaus School.

The Bauhaus School

In Weimar, Germany, Walter Gropius reorganized and reopened in 1919 both an art school and a school of crafts, industrial and design arts within one building, called *Staatliches Bauhaus* (Pevsner, 1973). During that period, when Germany was rebuilding after World War I, there was a growing need for designers in industry, which only a new kind of art education could meet. The Bauhaus was presented as an alternative to the academies. Its aim, as articulated by Gropius but previously formulated by Morris, was to reunite and flatten the social hierarchy of all art-related activities. The Bauhaus intended to get out from under the romantic social type of the "pure" painter or sculptor as privileged and heroic. It proudly proclaimed to the outside world that it was anti-academic. The terms "professor" and "student" were replaced with the terms "master" and "apprentice" to announce that the school was a part of a real, working world (Whitford, 1984). Gropius (1965) believed that instruction in art, as commonly practiced, produced self-complacent artists estranged from day-to-day matters of life because their education did not link with the realities of matter, technique, and economy. For Gropius, the ideal training for the architect, artist, and craftsman alike was a practical apprenticeship to a master craftsman. Given that the artist was already segregated from a life of practical work, Gropius developed a system that combined the modern school of instruction with some of the advantages of the medieval practice of apprenticeships.

This new school was Utopian, challenging the political and academic divisions in the arts by attempting to relate traditional notions of creativity to the demands of industrial production. The fame and notoriety of the school was based on what appeared as avant-garde teaching methods intended to develop the whole being, the physical and spiritual self, as well as the traditional concern for acuity and craftsmanship:² "At the time we were ridiculed because we did breathing and concentration exercises," wrote Itten (1964, p. 11). The concerns of the Bauhaus were very different from what was going on in most other European and North American art schools at the time, including those which had departments of design, crafts, commercial or decorative art, or architecture alongside conventional departments of painting, sculpture, and engraving (Reid, 1924). A 1924 study of art schools in the western United States and in Europe by G. A. Reid, then principal of the Ontario College of Art, illustrates this difference. The standards of training at the time were still very much those of the earlier academies, and the parameters of art knowledge were still very traditional and tightly defined:

In the Antwerp and Amsterdam Schools the drawings from the Antique were very large, about two-thirds the size of life, this was the regular, but there were some about life size. They were fully finished with a bold technique, the medium being charcoal, and, apparently, requiring several weeks' work of half day poses. In Paris, Scotland and the United States all the Schools were drawing with charcoal on the French Michallet paper, which gives a standing figure about one-third the size of life. This has

always been the practice in the Ontario College of Art, and our work in this section has a close resemblance to the work of the French Schools from which it is, in a large measure, derived The drawings of the same class being made in the English Schools I found to be mostly in lead pencil and of small size, about one-sixth the size of life All three classes of drawings are truly academic in character, making but little attempt at style and showing a keen search for proportion, movement, contour and tone values, and generally treated without backgrounds. I made enquiries in the English Schools for the reason for the almost universal use of lead pencil as a medium, the answer being, in most cases, that they found it surer in the search of form and that charcoal was a tricky and slovenly medium. Others seem to think the use of pencil was because of the Board of Education Examinations requiring it, and that charcoal as a medium was not condemned.

Some of the same kind of variations might be cited in regard to painting and also modelling Painting in oil and water colours from still life is made a very important part of the work in most of the Schools and the classes are usually carefully graded. (Reid, 1924, p. 7)

The Bauhaus curriculum, in contrast to such concerns as whether charcoal was better suited than lead pencil for life drawing, consisted of practical,

broadly-based workshop instruction in the use of stone, wood, metal, glass, clay, textiles, pigments, and in the use of tools. Formal studies included the study of the nature of materials, the study of geometry, construction, model-making, and design according to volume, color and composition (Pevsner, 1973). The student progressed through three stages or "courses". The first was the "Basic Course", a preparatory course of six months in which a whole range of Bauhaus teaching was introduced. After this the student proceeded to the practical course and finally to the formal course. This was a systematic and even quasi-scientific educational theory--one of the last coherent educational theories that art schools and art departments have witnessed.

The Basic Course, developed by Johannes Itten, consisted of the systematic theories that are now standard fare in art curricula in colleges and universities and also in many school art curricula: the color star, contrasts of light/dark, volumes, and so on. In fact, the one curricular convention shared by almost every art program in postsecondary education today is what most program outlines refer to as a "foundation" course in composition, color theory and the other elements of form and expression through form outlined in Itten's course.

Itten (1964) describes his course:

The foundation of my design teaching was the general theory of contrast. Light and dark, material and texture studies, form and color theory, rhythm and expressive forms were discussed and

presented in their contrasting effects. Finding and enumerating the various possibilities of contrast was always one of the most exciting lessons because the students realized that a whole new world was opening up for them. (p. 12)

An "objective grammar of design was thought to obviate the twin dangers of dependence upon past styles on the one hand and merely personal taste on the other," wrote Marcel Francisco (1971, p. 171) in a detailed account of the ideals and artistic theories of the founding years of the Bauhaus.

The design curriculum of the Bauhaus came to be a dominant thrust in art, art theory, and art education. Yet, ironically, instead of broadening the boundaries of legitimate art to include crafts and industrial art, as was an original intention of the Bauhaus, it seems that, in the end, the cultural exclusiveness and the aestheticism of art, art theory, and art education were intensified. In design activity carried out according to principles governing color and composition, later known as formalism, the communication of feelings and ideas is thought to be dependent on the perceivable elements of form and materials, and their interrelationships and relationships to the work as a whole; not on social, economic and other contextual factors that were among the original concerns of the Bauhaus.

The confinement of art to visual experience is what the art critic Clement Greenberg once called the "scientific method", and the kind of consistency that counts is "aesthetic consistency" (Clahassey, 1986). With the existence

of evidence obtainable within the work's form, judgments about the work can be referenced in the work itself. In this way formalism gravitates toward objectivity³ and the positivist notion that objects can be broken down into component parts to be defined. When detached from Bauhaus objectives to broaden definitions of art, art instruction according to design principles and techniques lends itself to the systematic definition, sequencing, scheduling, and evaluation structures of general education.

The conduciveness of formalist principles to educational structures is no doubt a factor in its pervasiveness and longevity in North America.⁴ Art curriculum knowledge in schools has predominantly been structured in a formalist mode with suggested units on line, shape, and color (see, for example, Cornis, Stubbs & Winters, 1976; National Art Education Association, 1972) as derived from Itten's design courses at the Bauhaus. It is this predominance of formalism in the art curriculum in schools that has prompted several concerns by art educators about its lack of relevance and meaning to students of all social and cultural backgrounds:

To be able to manipulate positive and negative space did not seem to speak to the concerns of either secondary or elementary students who intuitively knew that art had to be about something. (Clahassey, 1986, p. 47)

A study a number of years ago by John Michael (1970) of practicing artists demonstrated that art in colleges and universities has also been treated in an essentially formalist manner. Evidence, albeit indirect, of a

formalist approach can be found today in fine art program catalogs. Not in the official stated program philosophies and goals which typically attempt to present an image of an array of the multiple options now open to the student, but in course listings, one finds that almost every art program offers introductory or "foundation" courses based on composition, color theory, and other principles and elements of design. That these courses are considered "foundational" and that successful completion of them is usually required by every student before advancing in their program, suggests the high degree of importance attached to instruction in formalist principles. Even the continued structuring and sequencing of courses according to the conventional knowledge categories of drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture that have prevailed since the early academies of art, is a structuring around the physical or formal properties of art as opposed to the ideational or contextual properties.

MODERNISM AND THE POSTMODERN CHALLENGE

Because of the visibility given to formalist principles by the Bauhaus, by Clement Greenberg and by the Museum of Modern Art especially in the 1930s, formalism as a genre of art activity has often mistakenly been equated in North America with modernism. Yet modernism is a complex phenomenon in which formalism is just one aspect. Like the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and the Bauhaus School in Germany, modernism emerged with a social imperative of changing dominant conceptions of art.

[Modernism] emerged within the business society of the gilded age as scandalous and offensive to the middle-class public--ugly, dissonant, bohemian, sexually shocking. It was something to make fun of (when the police were not called in to seize the books or close the exhibitions); an offense to good taste and to common sense . . . Modernism in general did not go well with overstuffed Victorian furniture, with Victorian moral taboos, or with the conventions of polite society. (Jameson, 1983, pp. 123-24)

In Greenberg's formalist sense of modernism, however, the medium and form of the work of art give the work its particular identity and meaning. Meanings, particularly cultural and social meanings that might be associated with the work, are regarded as "literary" ⁵ and extraneous (Kuspit, 1981). Authentic art, according to Greenberg, must forego interchange with the rest of culture (Crow, 1983). The visual experience of a painting was of the formal elements of color, paint quality, surface or two dimensionality of the canvas. These ideas gave rise to the pure formalism of the fifties and sixties which we associate with the work of American "modernist" artists such as Stella, Newman, and Rothko. Formalist criteria were also frequently used to understand the period of abstract expressionism. Abstract expressionism was boosted and bolstered as "Modernism" by Greenberg as if it was the only valid art (Kuspit, 1981). Of course, there were other equally valid styles and theories of art but what resulted was that modernism became, in Kuspit's words, a "propaganda position, a partisan

position pushing American abstract art" (p. 14). It became the so-called heroic period of American art. It was a time when abstract art in America seemed to have the imperialist mission of preserving high art in general, especially in light of the collapse of European art production with World War II, notes Kuspit. It was assumed that there was a mainstream to art, a unitary way of thinking about art:

Greenberg for example, makes a nice neat movement from Manet through Cezanne through Cubism, arguing that there can be no significant art that does not go through Cubism, arguing that there can be no significant art that does not go through the Cubist idiom, and then finally acknowledging Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko as presenting the first art that presumably doesn't go through the Cubist idiom, yet nonetheless is an important art. (Kuspit, 1981, pp. 15-16)

The formalist version of modernism became the mainstream not only in the art world, but in art education as well, in large part because of its conduciveness to instruction and educational structures. Modernism, in the formalist sense, has become the "official" or dominant aesthetic which has shaped our conceptions of art. It is part of the canon taught in schools and universities (Clahassey, 1986; Jameson, 1983; Muth, 1985). Now it is being challenged from many sides, including from an educational point of view, as being deeply problematic (Foster, 1983). In Habermas' (1983, p. 6) words, "modernism is dominant but dead". Habermas is just one of several writers on contemporary culture who consider modernism passé,

authoritarian, and culturally imperialistic.⁶ This cross-disciplinary body of postmodernist writing of the past fifteen years coming out of art history, criticism, literary theory, social theory, and more recently, art education, has provided a provocative critique of modernism and its authority vested in the culture and institutions deriving from the Italian Renaissance high art tradition. It challenges the older categories of art knowledge and the claim to aesthetic autonomy which lead to the realm of pure formalism associated with Greenberg and others. It instead calls for a pluralistic⁷ situation in which art effaces the key boundaries of high art by incorporating (not merely making reference to) forms from popular culture and mass media.

An abandonment of modernism for its successor, postmodernism, has been far from complete, however. Serge Guilbaut (1983) explained, in introducing a conference on the subjects of modernism and modernity, that we are at a "privileged moment in history, the moment of passage from modernism to Post-Modernism, a moment of equilibrium and tension between a phase we no longer believe in and a new era already considered with distrust" (pp. x-xi). Although considered "dead" by many, modernism cannot simply be buried away and forgotten.

There is, in fact, something yet living within modernism, not least because it continues to provide a basis of reference. Even the very fact of wishing the concept dead shows that it still functions as an anchorage point--or shall we call it a stumbling block?--essential to contemporary consciousness. (Guilbaut, 1983,

p. x)

The use of the labels "modernism" and "postmodernism" implies that a change of some sort has in fact occurred. The prefix "post" denotes something new, something after or beyond modernism. But has this change in labels been large enough to effect a breakthrough from the modernist mainstream to a culturally relevant art and way of thinking about art? There has been little evidence of such a change in art teaching in schools. And postsecondary art programs continue to be based on the same core of courses and knowledge boundaries.

Some writers look at postmodernism as a continuation of and as part of the larger system to which modernism belongs. Lawrence Alloway (1981) poses that there is a sloganistic aspect to the terms modernism and postmodernism that possibly sets up premature boundaries and inflated values. "Despite the appeal of theories of breakthrough and obsolescence the containing concept remains that of art" (Alloway, 1981, p.11). Of course there is always change in the course of time, but dividing the century into periods of modernism and postmodernism may impede the continuity of ideas between the two periods, including their gradual revision and change. Comparing modernism with postmodernism is the latest form of the notorious battle between the Ancients and Moderns in France during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, notes sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1983),

There has been no end of controversies between the partisans of

progress and modernity and the partisans of tradition, or of regression. In the course of these quarrels the terms "modern" and "modernity" take on various meanings and contradictory connotations, sometimes favorable, sometimes not (cf. discussions of Rousseau, of the romantics, etc . . .). and there are paradoxes: Baudelaire, a post-romantic, praises modernity, while Nietzsche presides over the trial of modernity in modern terms, identifying modernity with decadence or even barbarity, but with a view to pushing forward the human toward the superhuman. Certain episodes mark the stages of this long debate: the famous Chaplin film ["Modern Times"] that popularises a certain kind of critique of modernity; the journal, "Les Temps Modernes" that maintains an ambiguous stance, etc..

The absolute sovereignty of modernism is ushered in around 1910 by a rupture with the classical and traditional vocabulary: the divine and the human, the city, history, paternity. The reign is consolidated after World War I: cubism, abstract art, the rise of the Bauhaus, etc That reign lasts until the 60s and 70s; then another reign is ushered in. (pp. 1-2)

Frederic Jameson (1983) marks the break between modernism and postmodernism as the point in time when the modernist aesthetic was first taught in schools and universities on a wide scale. By this he means that an aesthetic such as modernism loses its subversive powers and becomes

the "official" culture as it becomes established as classic or academic, and hence loses some of its appeal to a new generation of artists. Although Jameson suggests that the break between modernism and postmodernism was at some point in the early sixties, he too is cautious about the issue of periodization and how historians ought to distinguish between two distinct periods.⁸ He writes that breaks between periods do not involve complete changes of content, rather a certain number of features are restructured. Features that were dominant in earlier periods become secondary and features that were subordinate now become dominant. He describes how postmodernism retains many of the formal features of the older modernism, but the position of the fine arts within our culture has shifted fundamentally. Commodity production, in particular, clothing, furniture, architecture, and advertising, is now more closely tied with experimentation in the fine arts. Art study in universities has retained many more of the features of the older modernism and has remained rather insulated from the fundamental shift that has occurred in culture generally. This is not to say, however, that the desire to make this shift has not been entertained within art departments. As the history of the semantics of the term indicates, the terms postmodern and modern are not merely neutral historical or cultural labels for classifying purposes; rather they imply value judgments. Whether it is, in actual fact, little more than a change in labels or a fundamental shift toward pluralism, postmodernism is seen as the latest salvation. Matei Calinescu (1977), a historian of modernism, elaborates:

Used at first rather tentatively, and not without a touch of pessimism with regard to the fate of culture in a consumer

society in which older intellectual standards appeared threatened, "postmodernism" was soon to become an honorific word. Interestingly, "postmodernism" was adopted as the battlecry of a new optimism, populist and apocalyptic, sentimental and irresponsible, which is perhaps best synthesized in the notion of a "counterculture". The apparent innocuous prefix "post" . . . magically . . . seemed to do away with old restrictions and prejudices and to free the imagination for new, undefined, but extremely exciting experiences. (p. 136)

"AVANT-GARDISM"

This mission of doing away with old restrictions and prejudices and freeing the imagination for new experiences of postmodernism, or, for that matter, any other challenge to established art knowledge boundaries, has commonly been associated with the mission of the avant-garde.⁹ For art students there is a great deal of glamor in the idea of the avant-garde. Avant-gardism represents for them an opportunity to adopt the "apocalyptic battlecry" of postmodernism and fly on the wings of change rather than be left behind in an out-moded modernist paradigm. It represents for them innovation, to go beyond established boundaries in art. It represents an outlook on life that is in opposition to or on the fringe of corporate and establishment values--a political rebelliousness close to that of punk culture but with few of the risks (Henry, 1984). It could even be described as a form of social climbing in much the same way that T. J. Clark (1973,

p. 14) described the nineteenth century avant-garde:

In such a world [the artistic world of late nineteenth century], being *avant-garde* was just an institutionalized variant of everyone's gambit. It was a kind of initiation rite--a trek out into the bush for a while, then a return to privileged status within the world you had left. It was a finishing-school, an unabashed form of social climbing.

Avant-gardism has been a myth essential to being an artist in the twentieth century. It is promoted in art schools and art departments. It is proposed here, however, that this art school avant-gardism is an essentially aesthetic version, an emptied romantic version of an early political avant-garde, rather than of a sort that can bring about a significant broadening of art's cultural and social base.

The early avant-garde

Very generally, there are two traditions in art that constituted the early avant-garde situation. One tradition, the aesthetic avant-garde, emerged with a view of art as an end in itself, as an autonomous activity. The intellectual roots of this tradition gave rise to modernism in the formalist sense. Considering that art in most earlier societies in previous centuries was used for religion or politics, the concept of pure art for art's sake represented a revolutionary development. This avant-garde view of art for art's sake merged with and began to outweigh the second tradition, which

had emerged in the mid-nineteenth century emphasizing a commitment to political and social goals. The complex process by which the two streams merged can be described in terms of the gradual shift from the earlier patron system to the open market as the major institution for selling art. The practical realities of market competition soon made artists aware of the issues and dilemmas inherent in making a living in fine art.¹⁰ Ridgeway (1975) explains:

The bourgeoisie became the object of their animus: artists began to decry this class which to their minds stood for all that was opposite to art--greed, desire for material possessions, the quest for power for itself, philistine values, lack of integrity--and yet it was a class to which the artists were inextricably bound by their need to sell work. Usually artists were born into this class, which only added fervor to their disdain. When artists thought that the bourgeoisie liked some styles and works of art, they concluded that the art had to be attractive to bourgeois values. Artists who were successful were thus vulnerable to criticism by others and by themselves. Both the political and the aesthetic avant-gardes began to view their art as a means of attacking the bourgeoisie: the former used their art as a direct propaganda against this class, and the latter, committed to "art for art's sake", tried to create works which were unattractive to the bourgeoisie and thereby opposed to their values. To satisfy these requirements, art had to be more than a mere luxury product produced for "elites." The artists resurrected the tradition of

creating work that was purposively ideological and against the bourgeoisie while retaining primary commitment to the aesthetic of "art for art's sake." (p. 96)

What resulted was not an avant-garde with a direct, radical political commentary, but an avant-garde with a implicit political message of subversion relayed through a new aesthetic. "The style was the message" (Ridgeway, 1975, p. 97). Avant-garde artists saw themselves as responsible for undertaking, through a kind of spiritual and aesthetic means, an ethical task of attacking the market values of the bourgeoisie. Both historical traditions merged into a common approach in the sense that the autonomy of aesthetic goals was the intention of both; art could have a dimension that would keep it from being merely a decorative item for the bourgeoisie (Ridgeway, 1975).

Marxist aesthetics, with Marcuse as prophet of the art school avant-garde

Since the time of the early avant-gardes, much of the development of art with a social or political message and much of the theoretical debate about the social base of art has used a Marxist conceptual framework.¹¹ By systematically relating ideas of all sorts to social and economic structures, specifically in terms of ideology and class structure, Marxism provides the basis for much of the study of the relation between the arts and society, and exposes many of the hidden values and assumptions in the study of what we now identify as "the Great Tradition" (Wolff, 1981). Art is understood as an ideological product. A painting is a product which forms

part of an ideology, and that ideology is inseparable from the social class to which it corresponds (Hadjinicolaou, 1978).

There are, of course, many versions of Marxism. Some orthodox Marxist writing reduces art almost completely to historical and ideological explanation, such that there is thought to be no *essence* of art. Werckmeister's (1973) interpretation of Marx represents this pole of Marxist aesthetics in which art (and, it would follow, art education) is accorded very little function and status in contemporary society. According to Werckmeister, to believe there is an essence of art, a universal set of aesthetic qualities set apart from everyday reality, is to be enclosed within the narrow concepts of an ideology which distorts experience by giving it an over-exaggerated value.¹² Herbert Marcuse,¹³ in the other extreme, attributes to art the highest function in the emancipatory and even revolutionary development of society. Marcuse's later work represents the idealist core of Marxist aesthetics. His answer to Marx's question of why certain art of the past still provides enjoyment is that it transforms existing reality into another dimension; that of concrete possibilities, revolution, and liberation. Art appeals, through its aesthetic form, to repressed qualities of human sensibility. In a more recent work, *The aesthetic dimension* (1978) Marcuse explains: ¹⁴

The critical function of art, its contribution to the struggle for liberation, resides in the aesthetic form. A work of art is authentic or true not by virtue of its content (i.e., the "correct" representation of social conditions), nor by its "pure" form, but

by the content having become form. (p. 8)

Marcuse notes that this function, whether regressive or emancipatory, can become a material force. When the subjectivity of individuals is reduced to class consciousness, a major prerequisite of revolution is minimized. The need for radical change, writes Marcuse

must be rooted in the subjectivity of individuals themselves, in their intelligence and their passions, their drives and their goals .

... If historical materialism does not account for this role of subjectivity, it takes on the coloring of vulgar materialism. (p. 3)

Marcuse questions the way in which orthodox Marxists have, in his view, distorted the rather dialectical formulations of Marx and Engels into a rigid schema--a schema which implies a normative notion of the material base as the true reality. Nonmaterial forces, particularly of the individual consciousness and subconsciousness and their political function, are neglected within orthodox Marxism. ¹⁵

To the counterculture of the 1960s, Marcuse was an international symbol of political radicalism. His less systematic interpretation of the social world, and his promotion of art as a model for a freely structured social life and as a source of inspiration for social revolution influenced the fine art culture on American campuses. At a time when the number of fine art programs was increasing, the influential California School of Art hired Marcuse for its School of Critical Studies. Reminiscent of the nineteenth century merging of the two avant-garde strands, the strategy behind this

action was to further the school's project to combine aesthetic and social radicalism as part of the overall effort to create *the* ultimate avant-garde institution. Marcuse became, as Gregory Battcock (1977) wrote, "the major *aesthetic* definer of a new kind of art." His ideas inspired many artists of the period, notably, the composer John Cage. For Cage, the validity of art lies in its socially and psychologically disruptive function, rather than in terms of its form. As Battcock writes, "Marcuse pointed out the basic antagonisms between effective art and capitalism before many artists reached similar conclusions" (p. 37). Marcuse rejected art as commodity and the other organizational features of fine art that serve the established society before many of the earth artists and conceptual political artists did.

16

Marcuse's work originated within the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, known as "The Frankfurt School". The work of the Frankfurt School covers many diverse fields. Its major impact, especially in North America after it moved to New York with Hitler's rise to power, was the revitalization of Western European Marxism and the development of Critical Theory (Jay, 1973). Critical Theory was the vehicle for the analysis of Marx's superstructure/substructure formula--the idea that the spiritual and cultural superstructure, to which art belongs, is determined by the substructure of material and economic conditions. The prime interest of the Frankfurt School after the 1930s lay in an analysis of the cultural superstructure, rather than, as was the focus of earlier orthodox Marxism, the economic substructure. For many members of the Frankfurt School this signalled a

need to attend to the problem of the proliferation of American mass culture, which they believed to be a form of enforced conformity to authority and connected with the persistence of social injustice. Their concern about the social consequences of the proliferation and penetration of mass culture in western society can be translated into a potent imperative to broaden the boundaries of art knowledge in education to include the study of the popular arts, advertising arts, television and other visual forms of mass culture. The emphasis of this study would have to be on the sociological coordinates and consequences of these forms. Being *critically* knowledgeable of the social and ethical meanings of, for example, television commercials for war toys would have to be as important a part of education as being able to identify the color relationships of a Matisse painting. Modernist examples of formalist aesthetics or self-expression that tell that a commercial has a dynamically balanced set design are inadequate ways to relate to images of violence accompanied by the narrative:

He'll fight for freedom, wherever there's trouble,

G. I. Joe is there. G. I. Joe! (cited in Nadaner, n.d.)

Marcuse, as one of the principal architects of Critical Theory, represents a trend within the fields that study art to follow an appealing middle path. On the one hand, Marcuse recognizes the important implications of the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism that views art, like any other cultural form, in the context of prevailing social and economic conditions rather than as the product of subjective, ahistorical impulses, and,

consequently, is disturbed by the materialistic, racist, sexist and other messages that pervade mass culture and also certain derivatives of the fine arts tradition. On the other hand, he attempts to avoid the doctrine's dangers of one-sided economic determinism and the loss of the "aesthetic dimension". For Marcuse, aesthetic autonomy operates as a higher law fit to direct the political and social world. Because he appeals to the principle of aesthetic autonomy, Marcuse views art as able to both protest and at the same time transcend these social conditions. With aestheticism, by way of comparison, the principle of aesthetic autonomy is intended to withdraw the aesthetic dimension as far as possible from the social and political world.

Art students as contemporary inheritors of the avant-garde

A position like Marcuse's contains much that would appeal to art students. It suggests a reconciliation of the glamorous avant-garde sentiment of negation and political/social protest with the supreme and almost transcendental role traditionally given to western art. It suggests a reconciliation of protest with the more traditional romantic view of the artist into which they were socialized and to which they solidified their commitment during art school.

Few of the current inheritors of the early avant-garde still seriously believe that the order of society will change through art, yet they continue to question and challenge mass culture and its dominant ideology. In

interviewing "modern avant-garde artists", Ridgeway found that most suggested that, while the primary concerns of their art were aesthetic, most also felt very strongly that the nature of their work was didactic and political: "My art helps break down the system," stated one respondent. This didactic purpose was expressed in the desire to challenge the attitudes of the public by the very form of the art object. Nearly all the artists subscribed to "left-liberal or left-radical positions" (p. 98). "The most extreme political attitudes centered around Marxist or anarchist positions, and expressed the belief that society should change radically" (p. 98). Yet most of these same artists continued to make art which is highly intellectual and expensive, and thus primarily available to the wealthy or the educated. In an attempt to get around this contradiction, every artist in Ridgeway's study, including those who were most articulate in expressing their commitment to the need for social change, stressed that their art should be viewed as separate from their politics. Justifications of the following sort were provided for the split between the aesthetic and the political:

There is a strong force to make art non-elitist . . . like Andre did some pieces that were very inexpensive to make and Beuys has done pieces that are very cheap for the layman. But it seems kind of trivial, naive, because nobody really cares about Beuys very much other than the elite art structure. Nobody on the street really gives a damn if they can afford to have a piece of felt in their house with his signature on it. He is a dreamer I think. (p. 100)

For Poggioli (1968) the irony inherent in attempts to destroy conventional aesthetic boundaries and instead make "non-elitist" art is inescapable. The two separate communities in an avant-garde movement--the political and the aesthetic--continue to overlap, and this is due to a myth that has persisted since the late-nineteenth century alignment of the aesthetic avant-garde with the political avant-garde. Ridgeway's study of artists illustrates that this myth has been translated into an occupational requirement. That is, to be an avant-garde artist one must maintain an attitude of political rebelliousness but at the same time maintain the priority of the "aesthetic dimension" (to use Marcuse's term). Comments made by artists interviewed in Ridgeway's study indicate an internalization of the political rebelliousness associated with being an artist. For example, one artist, who described himself as a Marxist but who declared that he or any other artist does not necessarily carry a political obligation into his work, wrote:

The reason I became an artist was a way of rebellion. I couldn't exist in the society that I was expected to be in at that time, and I almost decided to become an artist out of thin air . . . I just did it mainly because I really couldn't stand to live the way people were expected to live. So it's a way of being outside society. (p. 102)

These comments by artists suggest that maintaining the subversive values of the early avant-garde has become in itself a convention, such that if artists express beliefs that conform with the values of the establishment

they violate avant-garde sentiments. In other words, the challenge to convention has itself become a convention (Ridgeway, 1975). This is no less the case in art schools and art departments, according to one fine art student's editorial comment on the pervasiveness of political art in his art program and the peer pressure to become a politicized artist:

I want to take this opportunity to express some of my thoughts on the growing politicization of artists. I am sure you are all familiar to some extent with what I mean. A heavy proportion of work being shown in Toronto's parallel and alternate galleries is making some kind of overt political statement. Artists are organising themselves into various political action groups and even an artists union. Here at O.C.A. [Ontario College of Art] it is impossible to go to any concept development class in Ex Arts [the Experimental Arts department] and not end up discussing politics. As a student of Ex Arts myself, I cannot speak for the other departments in this regard, but I think there is a certain amount of political "awakening" going on everywhere in the school, and it is certainly going on in the art community. Not only that, but owing to the current political climate here at OCA (need I say more), many students, myself included are finding it hard to concentrate on their work, as they involve themselves with one OCA debacle or another. Or several.

What scares and angers me is the element of peer pressure and outright browbeating that characterizes this growing concern with

the world's problems, (OCA excluded for reasons which should be self-evident.) Work is now being discussed in terms of its relevance to the "issues". Some of us are being made to feel that if our work is not addressing some social issue or other it is anachronistic, misguided, even irrelevant.

Well, kids, I resent this. I resent being expected to be a political artist like everybody else. It's not that I prefer to remain blissfully unaware and uncaring about the many problems that urgently need solving. I am simply questioning the current obsession with being politically "correct," whatever the hell that means. It's almost a temptation to do work that's deliberately offensive and "incorrect." (Cruickshank, 1986, p. 4)

In the same issue of the college student newspaper, this student satirizes in a cartoon (Figure 1) the art student's struggle between the political/social and the aesthetic.

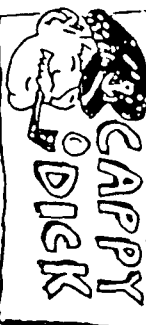
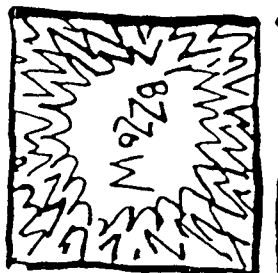
The officialdom of the avant-garde

It was stated that a critical position loses its subversive powers when it becomes institutionalized in education or any other institution. That the avant-garde rhetoric of experimentation (in either a political or aesthetic sense) has become "officialdom" and is institutionalized in education is apparent in, for example, a current Ontario College of Art catalog's stated goal for its "Experimental Arts" department:

ATTACK OF THE STRUCTURALISTS FROM MARKS



Figure 1. By K. G. Cruickshank, 1986, *Fishwrap*, 2(4).



HEY KIDS! DECONSTRUCT THE PRECEDING NARRATIVE!
YOU COULD WIN FABULOUS PRIZES
(BUT DON'T BET THE FARM ON IT.)

NEXT WEEK: CURSE OF
THE POST-NEO-SEMIOTIC
MUTANT HUMMIES

"The word 'gibberish' is thought by some to refer back to Jabir ibn Hayyan, an eighth-century alchemist, who lived in fear of being executed for black magic and worked his doctrines so obscurely that no one knew what he was talking about."

Lewis Thomas

This department's primary concern is to bring the student into contact with contemporary experimental developments in the visual arts and their roots in Modernist and Post Modernist art history--in short, the tradition of the avant-garde. (Ontario College of Art, Toronto, 1985-1987 catalog, p. 55)

Like many art schools and university art departments, the organization of this art school includes specializations in drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking. Added to this traditional format is "Experimental Arts", which includes "perception and concepts", "intermedia studies", and a "New York off-campus study programme". These newer departments or specializations (sometimes called "interdisciplinary", in the case of Emily Carr College of Art and Design, York University, and Simon Fraser University,¹⁷ or "intermedia", in the case of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design,) are added to an otherwise unchanged format and advertised as a forum in which to better nurture innovative activity that, in the tradition of the avant-garde, transcends conventional knowledge boundaries and more closely resembles current developments in art-making outside educational institutions. An example of a rationale for keeping informed and up-to-date about innovation in the art world appears in the catalog of the San Francisco Art Institute, an institution that gained notoriety for its concern with the avant-garde (Adler, 1979; Montalto, 1983):

The curricular aims of the Art Institute's more advanced courses seek to involve students in the forefront activities of their field. This will aid them in acquiring the insight and perspective

necessary for pursuing skills truly appropriate to effectively realizing their most original ideas. Hopefully, students during their years at the Art Institute will develop substance, depth and improvisational flexibility in dealing with the origin of ideas, without predisposition to particular media or forms of art. At the same time, they will become efficient and effective in implementing their best ideas in the context of contemporary society. It is believed that this approach is best for producing successful practitioners of art in a world which is fundamentally evolving and demanding of adaptive skills from all. (San Francisco Art Institute, 1981-1983 catalog, p. 14).

The rationale is that familiarity with the latest innovations, when combined with an ability to think imaginatively, becomes as important and often more important than craftsmanship and skill in achieving success as a professional artist.¹⁸

The notion of artistic experimentation and innovation is a recurring theme also in government funded task forces on artists and their preparation--further evidence of the institutionalization of the avant-garde aesthetic. The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Council on the Arts *Task force on the education, training and development of professional artists and arts educators* (1978), in its commitment to defining and establishing "professional" standards, makes the recommendation that "experimentation should mark all aspects of the training years. With due regard for the fundamental, post-secondary institutions are places for

change." (p. 19). The arts curricula should be far-sighted and should continue to explore new developments in other fields, the report advocates, using the example of what music and visual art have done with electronics, laser beams, and computers. The contribution of the task force's visual arts representative, Allan Kaprow, the "experimental" artist known as the originator of the "Happening", is visible in the report's suggestion that art departments must avoid becoming more insular.

Whole new areas are opening up in visual arts performance and intermedia. There is little development going on within more established programs to accommodate changing modes of expression and investigation. In the near future, a "campus" might include research laboratories, manufacturing plants, ad firms, television stations, mines, farms, forests, city halls, transportation systems, the streets, the home--in addition to the classroom. (National Endowment for the Arts and the National Council on the Arts, 1978; p. 88).

For years prior to this report, Kaprow had challenged traditional art activities and institutions to the extent that education in art, he proposed, should abandon its formal programs in favor of a broader "life education". "The conventions of painting, music, architecture, dance, poetry, theater, and so on, may survive in a marginal capacity as academic researches, like the study of Latin" (Kaprow, 1973, p. 86).

The rhetoric of the importance of artistic experimentation and challenges to

conventional knowledge categories in the preparation of artists predominates in another "official" document, this time by an international organization, UNESCO (1975). The authors of this report selected five of what it considers to be "ideal" programs in North America and Western Europe for the education of painters and sculptors. The selection of the programs was based on the criterion that each program reflects a "notable trend among contemporary artists" (p. 2) to merge visual media in an attempt to produce composite works of greater expressiveness than was possible within the limits of traditional media. "Experimentation and use of a variety of media heightens the creative experience" (p. 2). In this document, like the latter, the need to expand into interdisciplinary and intermedia areas is perceived as crucial to the education of artists because "art is becoming more and more a part of our environment and everyday life" (p. 2). Where this report differs most from the 1978 U. S. task force document is in its foremost emphasis on the "education" of practicing artists rather than "training". The sense of the term "education" used in this document reflects art's institutional move from vocational and specialized schools to academia, to the curriculum of universities. It reflects a shift from skill and the academy tradition to creative process and self-expression of earlier progressive movements in education. The document abounds with the liberal arts rhetoric of individual self-expression and freedom from the restrictions of teacher/student hierarchies: "teachers are free to teach their students what they wish, in any way that they wish"; "the artist's involvement is stressed more than the art object itself"; "old repressive methods discarded"; "self actualizing"; "total freedom of the individual is the order

of the day"; and the notion of a "partnership" relationship between teacher and student. "The learning situation must be one of joint exploration into new situations *with no known end-products*, and where the field of exploration itself has no limit imposed upon it." (p. 2)

These words convey a very different sentiment from the motto of eighteenth century French academies--"control instruction and you will control style". But in spite of the emancipation of instruction in art from the official thinking of the academy, today's fine art students have been discontented enough to challenge, or at least regard with suspicion, their formal training in art. The socialization mechanisms of art programs may have established artistic identities and a commitment to art, however, not all art students have been complacent about their education in art. The avant-garde sentiment embodied in their art programs promotes a certain amount of scepticism of institutions and their restrictions, including their own formal programs of art study. Of the 28 artists Ridgeway (1975) studied, those three who entirely avoided formal art programs did so because they did not want to be taught the styles or techniques of art; they claimed they already knew what they wanted to accomplish. But neither did the other 25 perceive their formal education in art to be the place to advance their artistic abilities. Their initial excitement was soon outweighed by the sense of the limitations of art school experiences. The majority, Ridgeway summarized, expressed the opinion that the program structure and methods of instruction were confining, limiting and stifling to their imagination and creativity. In the words of one respondent:

When you are admitted to a school for a specific purpose you must continue. You can't move out of it. I mean like you could not go from being a painter to being a sculptor. Because they are two different disciplines. Or being a photographer or being a printmaker. It had to stay channelled and it had to be pretty close to what the slides were you sent them when you first came in. It could be three years old. In terms of growth--it's ludicrous--it just keeps everybody up tight and very limited. (p. 174)

In another context, the disillusionment felt by one fine art student, who eventually dropped out with no regrets (he claims), is obvious in a letter he wrote about the fate of idealism in art school:

All that the faculty offered was technical instruction and even that was lackadaisical. My three semesters in art school consisted of a series of assigned projects, each with a deadline a week or so away and followed immediately by another assignment. Each one graded of course. In between the deadlines, the teacher would wander into the room occasionally and make comments on our work--comments such as "Hmmmmm. Interesting." (Winters, pp. 16-17)

"I was kept docile," he admitted, "by a faith that the faculty knew what they were doing, that they would certainly make sure I got whatever one needs to be an artist." This meant not only the techniques of art, but the

"key to satisfaction and purpose as well. For my part, I had only to be a good student and everything would fall into place" (p. 16). Upon being introduced to the "infant new left" (p. 17), he saw that there

were problems in society and that there *were* things to do about them. Neither my private fantasies nor the artists' world I was seeing in art school showed any relations to these problems. "Serious" art seemed to be, in the end, nothing but an esoteric branch of the entertainment industry. (pp. 17-18)

Another fine art student, similarly disillusioned, disowned all his college art at the end of four years and displayed in its place an essay expounding what he believed to be an artist's "institutionally defined status":

Most of the work I have done I now believe to be based upon biased conventions and unchecked assumptions, accepted by me temporarily in an attempt to embrace the role of artist. (Cork, 1979, p. 70)

The idea of the avant-garde that has become part of the art department/art school subculture is caught up with those notions of pluralism and political rebelliousness heralded by postmodernism. But why has this highly touted avant-gardism, under the latest rubric "postmodernism", failed so far to effect significant change in art programs? Although the avant-garde sentiment of defying older categories of art knowledge and educational structures and what they represent is there, once part of the art school culture, it remains just that, a sentiment. The art school avant-garde carries

little of the genuine political/social imperative of the historical avant-garde. One reason is that an avant-garde based on a middle path between Marxist negation and a reverence of the aesthetic, like the path upon which Marcuse gained popularity among the art school culture, permits stopping short of insisting upon the continued critique and disruption of existing elements perceived to be socially or morally unfair. The aesthetic element can too easily be interpreted as a justification for retreat to more familiar insular aestheticist principles.

A second reason is that what remains of the historical avant-garde for its most recent inheritors, art students today, is what they get through their art history courses--that familiar string of aesthetic "isms" bereft of subversive intent: expressionism, symbolism, futurism, constructivism, dadaism. Even the more recent avant-garde waves of environmental art, performance art, punk art, and political art have been absorbed and academicized by universities into courses, variously termed intermedia, experimental or interdisciplinary arts, in order to provide an appearance of providing multiple options and of being on the frontiers of knowledge, unencumbered by historically determined knowledge boundaries. But many art programs *are*, by their very institutionalization within education, bounded within the timetables and departmental ties that separate, especially in times of stiff competition for limited resources. Art programs, even those attempting to incorporate broader, postmodernist forms, are bounded by existing departmental formats of painting, sculpture and printmaking. These conventional specializations are frequently organized into a fine arts

department that is distinct from applied arts and design. The socialization of students into one or the other category, and the resulting sense of competitiveness functions to maintain the boundary that separates them, in much the same way as does the institutional separation of fine art into universities and applied art and design into non-degree granting institutions.

Apart from the effects of the structures and norms of educational institutions, another reason why postmodernism has been unsuccessful in effecting significant change in fine art programs has to do with an inherent problem of pluralism, or what postmodernism in the loose sense is taken to mean.

Pluralism undercuts any specific utopian or moral vision that once was the motivation and task of the early avant-garde. The existence of an avant-garde implies the existence of an identifiable enemy. When there is no single identifiable enemy, but rather a scattered pluralistic situation like that advocated by postmodernists, the avant-garde loses its polemical vitality (Calinescu, 1977; Schechner, 1982). It is the perception of the contradiction between a society with an imposed consistent system of corporate values and a spiritual, moral consciousness that motivates the avant-garde. For example, the turning point from aestheticism to radical social or "avant-garde" conceptions of art was determined by the extent to which the artworld could recognize its own social status (Burger, 1983). When aestheticism's intensification of aesthetic autonomy and the associated notion of aesthetic experience became pronounced, it permitted the

recognition of the social irrelevance and marginality of autonomous art. The logical consequence of this recognition was the avant-garde attempt to turn against institutionalized art and the social structure in which autonomy functions and to bring art back into the social world.

In the modernist culture, according to Suzi Gablik (1984), artist and critic, the avant-garde's dissidence and subversion of the larger culture served as "the consciousness of bourgeois civilization, the only anti-toxin generated within the body of our society to counteract the pernicious spread of secular, bureaucratic consciousness" (p. 55). With postmodernism, by contrast, she sees a lack of "art's moral center" (p. 74); this is one of the most important elements that separates postmodernist/pluralist thinking from modernist avant-garde thinking.¹⁹

What began before World War I as a burning involvement of artists in the future of their societies . . . had subsided by the mid-1970s into acknowledgement that art would never change the world. In the era of postmodernism, heroism and high art are out of style. (Gablik, 1984, p. 74)

But heroism and high art are *not* out of style. There is a renewed heroism of the postmodern artist. This does not, however, help postmodernism's cause. In fact, it points to Alloway's (1981) claim presented earlier that there is no real break between modernism and postmodernism; that postmodernism is part of the same social system to which modernism belongs. There is still postmodernist high art accessible primarily to a

social class as economically and educationally privileged as the modernist high art audience. Gablik herself points to this in her demonstration of the current, decidedly open, alliance between society as a whole and the economic status of art. Once "alienated" works of high art have acquired an investment value "beyond anybody's imagining." "Those archetypes of the artist and the businessman, which previously straddled our culture as adversaries, have now joined hands" (p. 56). She quotes Andy Warhol, the hero of the postmodernist blurring of the fine and popular arts, as having said "being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art" (p. 56). While comments like these may be just amusing, morally ambiguous talk, like much of what Warhol did, they leave nobody flinching anymore. "Rather they are a disconcerting sign of just how far artists have drifted in the direction of cultural conformity" (Gablik, 1984, p. 56). For their models, art students are no doubt looking to such post-modernist heroes as Warhol, complete with statements that "making money is art". That art students may be drifting from one conformity, the modernist way of thinking about art, to another conformity of this sort rather than to a more culturally inclusive, political and socially critical way of thinking about art should be of concern to education and to society, especially in light of the role of the university art department in determining what art knowledge is to serve as cultural knowledge.

The displacement of radical consciousness by forces of professionalism, bureaucracy, commercialism, and the uncritical recuperation of mass culture

has crippled the impact of the avant-garde, and has, as Gablik notes, resulted in a postmodernist situation in which art in general no longer presents a significant alternative to the reigning singular values of high modernism. It seems that to be popular in the postmodern age is to create for and respond to the demands of the market, that most direct manifestation of establishment values. What happened to postmodernism, with its "battlecry of a new optimism, populist and apocalyptic" (Calinescu, 1977, p. 136)? Has the argument been deflated that postmodernism, with its incorporation of popular culture, is not as elitist as was modernism?

The notions of elitism and popularity, it seems, have been overworked to the point that they lose meaning. "As for the truly great artists that represent the spirit of postmodernism--for instance, Beckett or even Pynchon" (Calinescu, 1977, p. 44), they are no more "popular" and accessible to mainstream culture than were the most conceptual or intellectual of the modernist avant-garde artists. The avant-garde artist who renounces worldly ambitions in order to dedicate him or herself to values that cannot easily be realized in our technocratic, corporate society is a nostalgic image, and one to which artists and art students continue to subscribe. Art students still desire to be thought of as non conformist and politically rebellious, but without necessarily matching their lives and actions to their rhetoric. Because our present system has this unacknowledged split between moral obligation and the aesthetic, "talent is so often detached from the personality as a whole and used as a kind of skilled gadget that can be marketed successfully" (Gablik, 1984, p.81). What

now has become of importance is making a reputation as an artist, and this depends on "hustling"--advertising, promotion, good public relations, and, above all, a knowledge of legitimating channels and institutions.

In summary, challenges to the sacred and insular art knowledge boundaries within universities have been frequent but, in effect, less than successful. The earlier challenges by William Morris and by the Bauhaus School to the validity of the dominant, culturally exclusive Renaissance-based categories of the academy became absorbed and systematized into a formalist educational theory that furthered the very aesthetic, with its lack of social relevance in everyday industrial society, that was the original impetus for these challenges. Avant-gardism, including Marxist-derived imperatives and the postmodernist/pluralist challenge, has been absorbed and institutionalized in education and, as such, has lost its original emancipatory intentions. Universities may be invested with the task of advancing knowledge by honoring experimentalism, multiple options, and the individual political freedoms associated with the avant-garde. However, by their very institutional nature, they neutralize these challenges of any subversive elements. The result is that there is little threat to the traditional high art criteria of excellence based on historically legitimated conceptions of style, good design, and mastery of conventional media techniques. It is not difficult to see why fine art remains an insular discipline of knowledge in education, despite the frequent challenges to its boundaries from the fine art world. University structures and norms are such that challenges are adapted and redefined into new categories the university can live with, or

the older categories of knowledge are defended against attackers who can arouse in the public, and, especially in the New Class, new demands and doubts. The resistance that these institutional structures present must be confronted if a broadening of the cultural and disciplinary base of art in schools and universities is to be effected.

NOTES

- ¹ One author who feels that this is unfair is Albert Boime. In his *The academy and French painting in the nineteenth century* (1971), he attempts to give a "fair appraisal" of the historical role of the Academie de Beaux-Arts. "The facile manner in which critics have disposed of Academic and official art--on the basis of an aesthetic frame of reference developed in the twentieth century--is historically unjustified" (p. vii).
- ² This concern to build into teaching design the mysteries of creativity and the development of the whole being, spiritual and physical self included, tends to be forgotten as a result of the institutionalization of the Bauhaus teaching. Although the Bauhaus was intended as a school of design and architecture, it employed "fine" artists to meet the purely practical need for extensive theoretical instruction thought to counter the design inadequacies among the students. Itten (1964) spoke often of the need to build into teaching design scope for "individuality".

In teaching the means of design it seemed important to me to appeal to diverse individual temperaments and talents. This alone makes for a creative atmosphere which encourages original work. The work should be "genuine" People of various talents react quite differently to the elements of design and accordingly develop in different ways I accomplish the unlocking of individual power through a definite way of teaching the means of design.

First, imagination and creative ability must be freed and strengthened. When this is accomplished, technical practical requirements can be brought in and finally also economic considerations of the market

If new ideas are to take the shape of art, it is necessary to prepare and coordinate physical, sensual, spiritual, and intellectual forces and abilities. This insight largely

determined the subject and method of my Bauhaus teaching. The task was to build the whole man as a creative being, a program which I also championed again and again in the faculty council. (p. 10)

Itten also spoke of the need to consider the "whole man as a creative being":

It is not only a religious custom to start instruction with a prayer or a song, but it also serves to concentrate the students' wandering thoughts. At the start of the morning I brought my classes to mental and physical readiness for intensive work through relaxing, breathing, and concentrating exercises. The training of the body as an instrument of the mind is of the greatest importance for creative man. (p. 11)

³ The term "objective" is used here in the most general sense as that which exists outside the mind as an actual object, as opposed to ideas, thoughts, and feelings in the mind. This is different from the positivist sense in which scientists must be objective in their experiments, that is, without bias. It is also different from the sense in which a work of art may be described as either "abstract" or "objective" in its representation of or resemblance to natural objects. The attempt to confine analysis to only the "physical object" at the neglect of social, perceptual, symbolic, and other factors is most obvious in the work of formalist theorists who seem to make an effort to appear philosophically sound, even quasi-scientific. For example, see *The meaning of meaning* (1923), co-authored by I.A. Richards, a prolific writer on the theory and practice of literary judgment, and C.K. Ogden, a psychologist. This is a book with presuppositions that have pervaded, often unintentionally, much of contemporary criticism. It has helped to make theorizing about the arts easier yet falsely systematic and exact. Richards believed that an "objective" determination of experience resulted from our deeper grasp of science; no worthy answers are attainable without the most thorough and far-ranging investigation. For Richards what matters in a poem is what it is formally, not what it says.

⁴ The longevity of formalism in North American higher art education may be in part due to the influences of Hans Hoffman and the art school he opened in New York. Many of the artists who were to become leaders of American modernism were either Hoffman's students or were strongly influenced by his painting or his reputation. Hoffman brought from Munich and Paris certain concerns of the tradition of Cezanne and Cubism, and for nearly fifty years his theories remained essentially unaffected by trends of social

consciousness in art (Chipp, 1968). He taught about color, space, light, technique and imagination. Here is an excerpt from his teaching:

We recognize visual form only by means of light, and light only by means of form, and we further recognize that color is an effect of light in relation to form and its inherent texture When color is richest, form is fullest! This declaration of Cezanne's is a guide for painters Swing and pulsating form and its counterpart, resonating space, originate in color intervals. (Hoffman, 1948, pp.77-78)

- 5 Kuspit (1981) believes that what Greenberg meant by "literary" has been misunderstood. Kuspit refers to an essay by Greenberg (1940) titled "Toward a newer Laocoon" in which Greenberg argued that it was not literature *per se* that was the anathema in art. Rather, anathema was what he called "literary forcing" or the effort to force meanings in other spheres of life onto us through the work of art. Kuspit also notes that Greenberg once said in conversation that he really knew all about the cultural business, but that it had nothing to do with art. Greenberg's book titled *Art and culture* (1973), Kuspit argues, has nothing to do with culture, just art.

Ironically, Greenberg sustained his claim to aesthetic autonomy in reaction to social conditions, in particular the pervasiveness of material glut and product rationality of capitalist production--what he called the world of "kitsch" (1973).

- 6 In a recent anthology of essays on postmodern culture edited in the United States by Hal Foster (1983), an important distinction between two types of postmodernism is made. Both types repudiate modernism but with very different intentions. A postmodernism of resistance seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo. A postmodernism of reaction, on the other hand, also repudiates modernism but with the intention of celebrating the status quo. Foster's book seeks to promote the former. It takes a position on contemporary culture that questions the validity of the older categories of the aesthetic and finds the almost total concentration on our Western tradition and the specific conception of art with which it has been associated since the Renaissance untenable in our culturally pluralistic society.

- 7 The term "pluralism" arose synonymously with that of "postmodernism". With pluralism came a tolerance of conflicting values giving the impression that artists were free to express themselves in whatever way they wish. While art students may be drawn to this for whatever reasons and may see in it exciting prospects, administrators of art schools and universities are more likely to see the negative or

disintegrative character of pluralism. When all modes of art can claim equal status, the integrity and plausibility of art is weakened because distinctions between what is acceptable as art and what is unacceptable are much more difficult to make; contingently, directions for education to take become unclear. Without the authority of at least some tangible criteria of value, a multitude of difficulties arise in promoting professionalism and in justifying and guaranteeing the continued functioning of art programs.

- ⁸ This break has been described in terms of economic and social factors, as well as aesthetic, dating it at some point following the second world war when a different kind of society emerged, variously termed postindustrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, technocratic society, media society. See for example the essays in *The anti-aesthetic* edited by Hal Foster.

The most definitive demarcation of the end of modernism was made by the architect Charles Jencks, who announced that modernism terminated at 3:30 p.m. on July 15th, 1972, when the housing development in St. Louis--a prize-winning piece of modernist architecture turned ghetto--was blown up with dynamite (Guilbaut, 1983).

- ⁹ Just as the term "modernism" has often been confused with the term "formalism", so too has "modernism" been equated by some authors with the term "avant-garde" (Poggioli, 1968, for example).

In much American writing the terms "modernism" and "avant-garde" are used interchangeably. In Renato Poggioli's, *The theory of the avant-garde* (1968), the two terms are taken to be synonymous such that "avant-garde" throughout the text can be read simply as "modernism". In many western European countries, on the other hand, "avant-garde" tends to represent only the most extreme form of artistic negation, with art itself being the first victim (Calinescu, 1977); modernism is taken to be more akin to what was described above as "formalism". Peter Burger's (1984) *Theory of the avant-garde* is a significant successor to Poggioli's book but with the major difference of aligning modernism not with the avant-garde as did Poggioli but with aestheticism. Aspects of modernism, in particular, formalism, share with aestheticism the predominant feature of calling attention to its own material.

Burger (1984), however, is careful to make the distinction between modernism and the avant-garde because he sees both as strategies of negation but with radical differences in terms of their targets and social effect. According to Burger, modernism is an attack on conventions of form and technique, whereas the avant-garde is an attack on the institution "art" in bourgeois society meant to alter or destroy this institution. In other words, the avant-garde, according to Burger, refers to social or political subversion whereas modernism has

more to do with resultant aesthetic concerns such as the intensification of aesthetic autonomy.

- 10 As Ridgeway (1975) adds, the artist was no freer under the new situation than under the system of personal patronage, regardless of any illusions of freedom. It may even be that the newer market system was less free. Under the old system, once a patron was found, an artist had a certain stability in his position, whereas in the new system, the position was never stable and always had to be defended
- 11 Within the field of art history, for example, there has been a growing dissatisfaction with the way in which the thinking of the field's founders, Riegl, Wolfflin, Warburg and others has been reduced to a process of stylistic analysis and iconographic readings (Zerner, 1982). Frederick Antal (1949) and Arnold Hauser (1959) had argued for some time the necessity of situating painting in its original social and economic context in order to attain an adequate understanding and analysis. However, it is only since the early seventies that this perspective developed into a considerable body of social history of art.

The social nature of art has been explored in other fields of writing on art. Gombrich's (1960) important book on art and perception indicates that extrinsic knowledge and interpretations inevitably intrude into aesthetic perception, even in the seemingly straightforward decoding of three dimensions from two. Wollheim (1968) suggests that the inevitable difficult cases (such as, Is film art?) that arise for a theory of art can only be dealt with in the context of a wider understanding. The phenomenological (Husserl, 1965; Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and hermeneutic tradition (Gadamer, 1975) argues that perception and interpretation always involve the existential and historical perception of the viewer as well as the meanings of the work of art itself. The philosopher George Dickie (1973) has attempted to revise traditional aesthetics by developing an institutional theory of aesthetics.

Dickie attempts to develop a conception of the aesthetic object that is free from the "psychologistic and epistemological analyses which philosophers have been giving since the nineteenth century" (p. 178). Rather, it is the "*non-exhibited*" characteristics that works of art have in virtue of being embedded in an institutional matrix which may be called "the artworld". It is the Dadaist development within the domain of painting and sculpture that for Dickie most clearly reveals the institutional essence of art. Prior to the Dadaist development, the process of conferring status largely went unnoticed. Philosophers of art, in their attention to only the properties of the art object, such as representational, expressive, or formal features, failed to provide an adequate account of the virtues of the Dadaist works which take as their matter mundane, commonplace objects. For Dickie, any adequate

definition of art must take account of difficult but influential cases like the Dadaist works which have inspired many more works in reaction to them. That the status of an object can change from non-art to art without undergoing physical mutation is used as crucial evidence in support of institutional theory. Rather than the object itself changing nature, it is the environment in which the object is exhibited and the accompaniment by a "certificate" bearing the name of the work and artist which contributes significantly to the change in status.

A body of secondary literature has since grown up around the institutional theory of art, some to amplify it and some to criticize it (Mitias, 1975; Schlafani, 1973; Silvers, 1976; Wollheim, 1968)

- ¹² Werckmeister represents one specific tradition of Marxist political theory which originated particularly in Marx and Engel's treatise of 1848, *The German Ideology*. Ideology was defined in this document as a set of beliefs and values dependent on conditions of material production. The concept was used critically: ideologies function to obscure or "naturalize" the basic nature of real material conditions and relationships, particularly the struggle between social classes. According to Marx and Engels (quoted in Williams, 1983, p. 155),

The "thinkers" of a ruling class were its active conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood.

This sense of ideology as illusion or false consciousness differs in meaning from the broader and widely used sense of ideology (confusingly, also found in other passages of Marx's writing) as the set of beliefs, values and ideas which arise from a given set of material interests or from a definite class or group. So although there may be general agreement among Marxist writers that art is ideological--a theory of ideology is recognized as one of the most important contributions of Marxism to the study of art--what ideology is has been the source of much debate within both Marxist and non-Marxist traditions. Given the various meanings of the concept of ideology, it is not surprising that a variety of Marxist positions exist in the study of the arts. And, to compound this, Marx left no systematic interpretation of art. Mikhail Lifshitz (1933), a Russian scholar on Marx, explains that it was only later in Marx's life that an interest in art developed as a result of a conflict in his intellectual development "between the urge to write poetry and the stern necessity of finding an answer in the field of science to the problems of life" (p. 13). The outcome was a "complete renunciation of poetry" as the possibility of genuine artistic creativity under the new bourgeois relations seemed increasingly remote to Marx. The few passages where Marx directly comments about art in reference to

historical examples have since been variously interpreted by connecting them in various formulations with his general theoretical development and revolutionary world outlook.

That Marx left only a few fragmentary and scattered statements about art has, itself, been interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, an attempt to fill the gap in Marx's theory of history and society with an account of art was made by official Soviet scholarship. All of the scattered and casual comments on art and literature found in the numerous writings by Marx and Engels were compiled into two large volumes entitled *On art and literature*. With the assumption that it contains elements and guidelines for an aesthetic theory, this text has served as a canon for the development of full-fledged theories of art by scholars in communist states (Werckmeister, 1973). On the other hand, some scholars in capitalist states assume that the fragmentary nature of Marx's statements on art and literature reflect merely a casual intermittent interest in the subject of art on Marx's part. Such a lack of interest is considered an inevitable consequence of concentrating on understanding social production, the division of labor, and the product as commodity. The denial of the importance or relevance of the Marxist challenge, or any sociological challenge for that matter, is a common reaction in the conservative defense of traditional philosophical aesthetics. Even the disproportionate later interest in Marx's few passages on art has not obstructed the development of traditional philosophical aesthetics.

From the few short text passages where Marx directly comments on art, there emerge two seemingly contradictory conceptions of art, one idealist utopian and one historically determinist. The following much quoted passage, not published by Marx, but only posthumously in 1903 from early segments of a manuscript draft ("Einleitung zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie", 1857), clearly represents the "relics of idealism" as Jauss (1975) terms it.

But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It lies rather in understanding why they still constitute for us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard model beyond attainment. (Marx, 1971, p. 45)

The idealist premises in these early passages reflect Marx's high esteem for Greek art. Marx derived his notion of Greek art as "epochal" and "classical" from German idealist philosophy, especially that of Hegel (Lifshitz, 1933; Werckmeister, 1973). The very idea of classical art implies that the ideal of artistic perfection was realized in a historical period of the past. Art of the Greeks is considered perfect (even though their society is considered far from perfect). The

notion of an ideal conflicts with Marx's general materialist principle of the prior economic determination of all artistic production. The recognition of an ideal implies that art of a distant past can provide enjoyment independently of the economic and social conditions of its origin and of its later audiences. If, as Werckmeister (1973, p. 510) states, the principle that art depends on material production is accepted without question in all Marxist views on art, how are Marx's idealist reflections on Greek art dealt with? Hans Jauss (1975) outlines two such reactions; one, the idealist premises are suppressed as an "idealist embarrassment", or two, they are incorporated as part of the Marxian "inheritance"--simply as aspect of a dialectically ambivalent conception which is somehow consistent in the "final analysis".

Werckmeister makes an attempt within the latter explanation to secure a place for the Greek ideal within a materialist framework. For Werckmeister, this text is indeed an exception to the all-embracing historicity of art which Marx envisaged. However, if Greek art is an ideal and hence out of tune with the imperfect society in which it was produced, then the important question, according to Werckmeister is, How did the art of the Greeks come to acquire the status of an ideal in Western European culture? By approaching the problem in this way, Werckmeister intends to reduce the ideal to historical and ideological explanation; the explanation being that the retrospective ideal of perfect art cannot be maintained. Werckmeister (1973) explains:

Marx may have accepted it as an ideal at the moment when he sketched out his preliminary text. But since then it has become doubtful whether ancient Greek art embodies the brand of human perfection that was projected into it by idealist philosophy, with its far-reaching moral, social, and anthropological implications. It has become even more doubtful whether in turn this particular ideal of humanity really expresses the social and political emancipation at which Marx's own political theory was aimed. And almost certainly no one can see it as a meaningful ideal by which contemporary men can live, either under present conditions or under those of any anticipated social change. (p. 518)

When the ideal is considered to be no longer valid, Werckmeister maintains that it is no longer an argument against Marx's historical determinism. Werckmeister's interpretation is an example of an ideology critique which, as he states it, heads toward the end of "the abstract idea of art as a vessel of truth above ideologies, the central issue of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline" (p. 519). In Werckmeister's view, one of the myths of aesthetic theory is the assumption that there is an *essence* of art. To believe there is an essence of art, a universal set of aesthetic qualities, set apart from

everyday reality is to be enclosed within the narrow concepts of an ideology which first distorts experience by reducing it to an isolated aspect, and second, gives it an over-exaggerated value.

And with this idea gone, aesthetics, Marxist or of any other kind, loses its purpose. The notion of the "end of Art" backfires on the science which conceived it: if it has any meaning, it means the end of aesthetics. Marx may have anticipated this when he refrained from writing on aesthetic theory. (Werckmeister, 1973, p. 519)

- 13 Marcuse's writings on aesthetics span a long period from the time of Nazi Germany with the collected essays in *Negations* (1968) to *The aesthetic dimension* (1978), and are characterized by significant shifts in emphasis and sometimes even reversals in central theoretical tenets. *The aesthetic dimension* is the latest of Marcuse's works on aesthetics and is a reformulation of his theory of culture and an exit from the impasse his earlier essays confronted. Marcuse maintains that the richness and wealth of human creative capacities which are denied in our everyday lives gain expression in the great works of art. High art, therefore, contains the desire for happiness in a realm separate from social life, as explained by Johnson (1977). At the same time, it is the work's transcendent position in relation to daily life which gives it its critical indicting capacity: "Art is a negating force" (Marcuse, 1968, p. 51-55) while at the same time "affirmative, sustaining culture" (p. 54). This represents the core of Marcuse's theory of culture, written in 1937 at a time when Marcuse still held the view that revolutionary overthrow of the existing social order was an imminent possibility. Although this core remains throughout his writing, his view on the means by which the progressive aspect of bourgeois art is to be liberated changes over the years. Marcuse admits in *The aesthetic dimension* (1978), p. 1) that we now have "a situation where the miserable reality can be changed only through radical political praxis." "It would be senseless to deny the element of despair inherent in this concern." Hence, he begins this latest aesthetic work with the proposition that the need for radical change must be "rooted in the subjectivity of individuals themselves" (p. 3). Unlike Marcuse's earlier works, *The aesthetic dimension* does not attempt to discover "a political praxis capable of realizing the 'ought' constrained within the humanistic perspective of authentic art," to quote Johnson (1977, p.111-112).
- 14 In this text, Marcuse writes about literature, in particular, literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, his thesis is general enough to apply to the visual arts.
- 15 This extreme development within Marxism of subjectivity becoming

merely an atom of objectivity was furthered by the interpretation of subjectivity as a bourgeois notion: "Romanticism is denigrated as simply reactionary and decadent; realism is preferred as the model of progressive art" (Marcuse, 1978, p. 6).

- ¹⁶ Marcuse claims in his earlier writings that the common denominator has traditionally been, although not as acceptable today, the idea of the beautiful, an idea that is essentially vacant. Battcock (1977, p. 41) explains, based on Sontag (1970):

The concept is traceable to Marcel Duchamp and Dada. The idea of the beautiful is frequently in conflict with art's cognitive function to be true also. Nevertheless, to pursue the point a bit further, once reality, no matter how revolting, is organized in the form of art, it succumbs to the idea of the beautiful.

The suggestion in Marcuse's earlier writings of an artistic rebellion against art, against the very form of art, illustrates a shift in emphasis in Marcuse's writing over time. At one point in time Marcuse (1968) writes: "the commitment of art to the ideal, to the beautiful . . . offend[s] the human condition". Later he writes: "The critical function of art . . . resides in the aesthetic form" (1978). Even in his later writing that views art as "largely autonomous *vis à vis* the given social relations" (1978, p. ix), his intention differs from that of the aestheticism described in chapter 5.

- ¹⁷ The fine arts program at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia was developed as an alternative to the typical organization of art programs according to specialized areas of media and technique and the lack of integration between studio courses and history and theory courses. Its philosophy (according to an unpublished proposal for further development of the Centre for the Arts, 1981), stressed an interdisciplinary perspective as an internal perspective of the program itself, not an addition to an existing set of general definitions of art. However, following a substantive curriculum revision in 1984-1985, its printed program of studies does not indicate a substantial interdisciplinary program, except in the sense that a student *may* take a Fine and Performing Arts Minor degree in any of the arts and in conjunction with any other undergraduate programs throughout the university.

- ¹⁸ This order of priority is reversed in some art schools such as the National Academy School of Art in New York, which retains as its model the early European academies of art. To members of the San Francisco Art Institute, this would seem to involve tedious drawing from master works and from the human form.

- ¹⁹ Gablik's plea in *Has modernism failed* (1984) is for a return of morality in art, almost in a religious sense. To do this, there must be some reintroduction of the kinds of ideals of modernism in order to get back on the road to moral innovation instead of just aesthetic innovation, as required for professional success.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION:

IS A POSTMODERN MODEL OF ART STUDY IN UNIVERSITIES POSSIBLE?

The historical traditions and institutional structures and processes described throughout this study have put postmodernism up against some formidable odds if it is to effect significant change toward a broader, more culturally inclusive and hence more relevant education in art. In rendering problematic the largely singular and insular cultural base of the university and in making explicit its significant, although often disguised, role in shaping art knowledge, the study in no way intends to discourage postmodernist reform within education. The stakes are too high for that. If postmodernism fails to effect genuine change in the university education of artists, it fails on a much broader front, given the significant role of universities in defining, legitimating, and transmitting art knowledge through the school system to all cultural and social groups in western society.

The university is an important institutional basis of art knowledge. It defines a particular cultural reality. Like any educational institution, it is not neutral. It teaches certain values and specialized skills, which in effect, promote certain traditions and cultural groups over others. The traditions and cultural base which it has promoted have been, for the most part, those of an exclusive, western high art tradition deriving from the European Renaissance. Such an education in art, in which only one cultural tradition is generalized and taken to be essential to the nature of all art, is both educationally limited and ethically untenable in a socially and culturally

pluralistic society. Postmodernism has made it possible to readdress this cultural exclusion. It posits that there are more world views operating in current society than those embodied in western fine art and its modernist aesthetic. But postmodernism must also take account of the fact that art knowledge is shaped, generalized, and transmitted to pluralistic society from within institutions that have been invested with the function of preserving the realm of "sacred" culture against the very surrounding environment which postmodernism espouses. From the standpoint of postmodernism, art knowledge is operating in a dysfunctional environment. There is a disjunction between the norms and institutional structures of the university, and the pluralistic culture outside the university. The traditions, institutional structures and cultural norms of the university present significant resistance to postmodernist challenges. This resistance must be confronted. Postmodernists must realize that effecting genuine reform in the cultural and social base of current conceptions of art knowledge held in society requires effecting reform at the institutional basis of such art knowledge, that is, at the university level. The ways in which the university affects art knowledge are reviewed below; there follows some discussion of how a postmodernist approach might best bring about understanding of the social role of the university art department in postmodern culture.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE ART DEPARTMENT: A SUMMARY OF WHAT POSTMODERNISM IS UP AGAINST

One of the most manifest¹ functions of the art department is cultural

production. Knowledge is assumed to be the most important product of the university. The university takes as its responsibility the development of new knowledge and the increase of our cultural heritage. With 32,600 university professors in Canada (in 1979) working to this end (Mifflen & Mifflen, 1982), universities can be thought of as "knowledge factories". This is more than a neat analogue for Horowitz and Friedland (1974):

Many of them [universities] have grown to resemble mass production factories. Undergraduate faculties are expected to produce dutiful, conforming, pragmatic believers in free enterprise, capitalism, and two-party politics, industrial marketers, bureaucratic functionaries, and technological specialists. Freshmen and sophomores increasingly find themselves in classes with several hundred peers, able to catch little more than a glimpse of well-known but distant professors who themselves are protected against overexposure to these "lower" classes by graduate teaching assistants. Advanced students frequently represent the only extended contact younger students have with "faculty". (p. 281)

The knowledge production we are most aware of in western industrial society is technological innovation. Artistic production, however, has seldom been recognized for its contribution to knowledge production largely because of its historical association with manual skill, workshops, leisure activity, self-expression, and the production of objects rather than research and information. However, the relatively recent incorporation of artistic

production into the university curriculum, and the increased use of conceptual modes of working (Madge & Weinberger, 1973), appear to have triggered a more widespread recognition of artistic production as a form of knowledge production. This increased recognition of the function of this art in cultural production, especially because of its alliance with the university, has functioned to advance art's social legitimation, but with this legitimation comes a danger of inertia. To avoid the risk of losing its acquired status as "cultural capital" and as a component of educational knowledge, such art is prepared to have its boundaries and interests protected and maintained by an organization that assigns it an insulated, peripheral position within the total educational frame.

The phenomenon of maintaining an existing order is known as cultural reproduction. Cultural reproduction is a second function of the university art department, or of any educational institution. Unlike cultural production, cultural reproduction is a latent or unrecognized function of education. Art educators take highly specialized art knowledge and the commitment to this knowledge which they acquired through their B.F.A. or equivalent programs, into the school system and the community. The university art department is an important socializing agent through which art students learn to internalize the generalized cultural descriptions of themselves as art students and what is involved in becoming an artist. It transforms students by redefining them in terms of the qualities their new statuses require (Kamens, 1981). It is a modern rite of passage that has supplanted local initiation rituals.² Structures and mechanisms adopted by art departments, such as simulating

the loft environment or sending bus loads of students to New York city, function to intensify "the affective charge of the socialization process" (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 133) and promote among art students a loyalty and respect for the existing conceptual hierarchies inherent in the discipline of art. A subversive avant-garde element built into the discipline serves to promote what seems to be a healthy tension within the existing order, without, however, mounting a serious challenge to a status quo that is presented as just, proper, and inevitable. "Reality-slipping" and subsequent reform or even overthrow of the existing order may well be impeded rather than precipitated by the presence of an avant-garde.

A third function of education, and one that is closely related to, and often debated along with socialization, is the allocation or selection function. Presumably, some individuals are more suited to a given occupational task than others. Hence, for Parsons (1959), a principal function of education is to prepare and select students for particular occupations which are ranked along a continuum of prestige. The assumption is that children begin school with the same opportunity. When treated fairly, those who achieve at a higher rate are selected to advance to a higher level of education and eventually transfer to the more prestigious occupations. Different rates of achievement are thought to be the result of different abilities and motivations. Theorists within the Marxist tradition, however, argue that schools systematically favor more privileged groups. They identify a variety of mechanisms through which this discrimination operates to select a meritocracy: I.Q. testing and counselling direct students into hierarchal

domains of learning based on class interests (Bernstein, 1971; Bourdieu, 1973; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Anyon, 1979).³

Because artists are thought to have special and rare gifts and because they are seen to acquire special freedoms and social privileges such as government support, "people want to make sure", writes Becker (1982, p. 16) "that only those who really have the gift, the talent, and the skill get the position." How artists have been sorted from non-artists has varied with the institution governing the preparation of artists. Guilds and academies could prevent those it did not licence from practicing. In the present situation in North America, however, everyone can, in theory at least, practice art production. (Although formal postsecondary education in art is now the norm for entry into the profession, it is not a required licence.) While much of society holds the belief that artists have a special gift, it also believes that there is no way to tell who has it, except by letting everyone try and then inspecting the results (Becker, 1982). Certain mechanisms of the fine art world are entrusted to "weed out" the not-so-talented from the talented. One such mechanism is the art school or art department. It functions as a "huge sorting device" (Strauss, 1970) whereby recruits who come to it from the initial sorting mechanism of the school system are categorized, trained, and made available for the various artistic roles that are to be enacted in the art world. The first year of a postsecondary art program is designed to be the platform from which the art student can pick and choose majors or specialities. Students sort themselves out (often according to such factors as an instructor's teaching

strategy or artistic style) as painters, sculptors, printmakers, performance artists; or, occasionally, some may even switch into graphic design and other applied arts programs or drop out altogether if the socialization and identity formation process has not been effective enough.

The extent to which identity formation and socialization into a knowledge area occurs depends on the status and legitimation of that knowledge area, as perceived by those being socialized. A fourth function of the art department, then, is to legitimate for art students as well as for the public the knowledge it purports. For example, courses in art history and camaraderie with teachers who are themselves artists demonstrate for students the centrality of art and artists to human life and history, and, in turn, may strengthen the student's identity as artist.

The university is, as Bourdieu (1971) says, "the legitimate legitimator" of art knowledge. Education functions not only to conserve and transmit the "culture handed down to it by the intellectual creators of the past," but to "establish and define systematically the sphere of orthodox culture and the sphere of heretical culture" (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 178), to confer legitimacy to certain culture, to certain knowledge. Education is invested with a function very similar to that of the Church "which, according to Max Weber, must 'establish and systematically define the new victorious doctrine or defend the old one against prophetic attacks, lay down what has and what has not sacred value and make it penetrate the faith of the laity'" (p. 178). Likewise, university education in art functions to conserve and transmit the

culture handed down to it from the intellectual creators of the past: the master artists of the great European academies and the great humanist thinkers of the liberal arts ideal and the art-for-art's-sake ideal. The university has taken over the role of defining and legitimating the sphere of "orthodox" high art and of protecting it from "heretical" or so-called "lesser" arts.

In Berger and Luckmann's (1966, p. 86) writing, legitimation is a process of explaining and justifying: "Legitimation 'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings. Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives." With legitimacy, "institutions may persist even when, to an outside observer, they have lost their original functionality or practicality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 108-9). A strengthening of traditionalism and the inherent tendency of institutionalization toward inertia are, according to Berger and Luckmann (1966), consequences of the development of specialized bodies of knowledge concomitant with an increasing division of labor. Where there is a tendency to carry on as before, and assuming that the institution's reason-for-being does not become problematic, that tendency is strengthened by persuasive reasons or justifications.

Many of these social functions portray education as social control. The metaphors of cultural reproduction, socialization, allocation, class interest, and legitimation depict educational institutions as "transmission belts for society's ruling values" (Gouldner, 1979, p. 44). Although the educational

system largely supports and perpetuates the dominant ideologies and social order of society, it also has a change function. Through continuous human activity, knowledge is produced, re-worked, and made anew. In Wexler's (1982, p. 281) words, it is "a transformative selection, of recoding as knowledge is pushed through the apparatus--the social organization of meaning production." The thesis of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) sociology of knowledge is that knowledge is both a social product and a factor in social change. This change may come about as a result of the university's manifest function to provide a critical analysis of existing institutions, including itself. If the results of this analysis become public, universities may be pressured to re-examine and make changes toward public demand. Changes regarding the rights of women and minority groups, for example, have been instigated in this way.

Students learn, although they are rarely taught, rebellion during their education: "Authority is unwittingly undermined, deviance fostered, the status quo challenged, and dissent systematized" (Gouldner, 1979, p. 44). A notable case of student organization to promote reform was the backbone of support that American university and college students gave to raising awareness of and bringing an end to the Viet Nam War (Anderson, 1974, p. 277). Within institutions for educating artists, there have been frequent challenges to conventional art teaching and the hierarchal definition of art typified in western cultures. For example, the Bauhaus School in Germany, as with the more recent postmodernist challenges, attempted to broaden the definition of art and regain social status for the so-called lesser arts.

However, once absorbed in the social structures of education, these challenges have become detached from their original social contexts, and their potential to effect a significant move toward a culturally pluralistic way of thinking about art has been vitiated. A sentiment of political scepticism and dissent has become part of the art school subculture (Adler, 1979; Madge & Weinberger, 1973; Ridgeway, 1975) to the extent that attacking conventions has itself become a convention, an expectation. A kind of linguistic social philosophy of the political avant-garde may have replaced some of the traditional attitudes embodied in the teaching of painting and sculpture within university art programs; however, the core of the art knowledge of university art programs remains as culturally exclusive and insulated from the everyday world as ever. A resistance to questioning their own beliefs and practices as being socially constructed and representative of certain cultural values often develops in art students during the socialization process. Art students striving to successfully complete their studies learn to be cautious about directing their challenges too much in the direction of their own programs or towards their mentors. Similarly, instructors come to exercise caution in attempting significant departures from prescribed norms of curriculum that might result in removal to peripheral positions, or even dismissal. Hence, it is not surprising to see art programs develop a generation of graduates of similar ideological perspectives or artistic styles (Montalto, 1983).

TOWARD A POSTMODERNIST MODEL OF ART STUDY

In the aftermath of postmodernism, the traditional model of university education in art may seem moribund both ethically and socially, but it is far from a historical relic. The recent organized push of discipline-based art education in elementary and secondary schools in the United States, with effects now in Canada, renews enthusiasm for and even bolsters existing departmental knowledge structures and the cultural insulation of the university model. In the search for social legitimation, art education that is built around disciplines may have become the latest intensification of the academicization of art. Its structured curriculum objectives, classroom exercises, guidelines for evaluation, and textbooks complete with teachers' editions (for example, Chapman, 1985)⁴ may improve a bleak situation by providing practical direction and a signal of art's seriousness as a subject of study. It involves classroom teachers who have little or no expertise or interest in art and who might otherwise neglect art instruction altogether, or (worse yet) resort to vacant, institutionally defined "school art".

But is there not a credible way to both maintain enough social legitimation to bring art into the mainstream *and* equip it with a culturally broader and more meaningful knowledge base? Contrary to some art educators' beliefs, the discipline-based model, in its original form, does *not* enable students to see "the world in all its diversity" (Lovano-Kerr, 1987, p. 14) or "bring with it the ideas similar to those found in the new art world" (Clahassey, 1986, p. 48). But the movement is at least well-timed. If it is able to shift

attitudes from considering art as merely an enjoyable pastime for those few with "talent" to a discipline of knowledge deserving serious study by all, a foothold of legitimacy may be secured and education in art may be better able to weather whatever risks postmodernist reform carries. However, as long as art instructors at any level continue to promote supposed "universals" in the tradition in which Kenneth Clark described the classical Greek sculpture *Venus de Milo* as "one of the most splendid physical ideals of all humanity" (cited in Fuller, 1980, p. 225), or in the way Clement Greenberg refers to a painting's color and texture apart from the work's content, the emergence of an art education vital to the curriculum and central to students of all social and ethnic origins will be hindered. In the *Venus de Milo* case, Clark's attitude would not only elevate a condition of sculpture under Western capitalism into a universal category allegedly valid for all times and places, but it would also elevate one race and one notion of human physical perfection as "ideal". Such an approach not only isolates art in education; it is socially unjust.

The case has frequently been made by art educators that the cultural base of art instruction in schools must change. Attempts to do so have been diverse and their underpinnings equally broad, but they all seem to arise from two interrelated realizations; one is that society is culturally pluralistic, comprised of various ethnic and racial groups and stratified by economic classes; this suggests that education in art should be sympathetic and even reformatory to all these groups. A second is that all art is embedded in a social context and a set of political power systems,

suggesting careful consideration of the subjects of study and research by using sociological models for investigation. This study supports these demands for a sociological model of study, together with a change in the cultural basis for art programs in schools, and argues that if this is to occur so too must the cultural base of art programs in universities be broadened. "Sacred" categories of art knowledge must be made problematic, through the use of concepts and methods consistent with critical, sociological discourse.

Increasingly, there are encouraging signs within postsecondary arts education of a dismantling of traditional conceptual hierarchies in art. Some courses in art history and criticism, architecture, and film (see Nichol, 1981) incorporate a critical socio-cultural approach by considering relationships between the arts and their social, political, economic, or cultural context. But even so, there is cause for some scepticism. Not all that falls under the loose rubric "postmodernism" holds an adequate answer for improving art programs. Often these "contextual" courses are taught in isolated pockets. Or, often their foci remain on the works or styles of one art world rather than on the artists, audiences, and institutions of many worlds and their interrelationships. Or, concerned proponents in the "anti-art" tradition often protest against high art by using forms commanding a mode of experience that remains incomprehensible to those whose backgrounds deny them the difficult intellectual preparation these challenges demand. The challenges are expressed in a dialogue that rarely carries beyond the concerned professors' classroom or the select readership of art journals and

magazines. A similar potential shortcoming surrounds the argument that aesthetic experience should leave the hallowed museums and become an integral part of the lives of all segments of society through mass education in art. Such efforts are bound to have little effect upon the minds of all but those initiated into the fine art subculture (Duncan, 1973). Yet another possible shortcoming lies with developments often assumed to be evidence of the incorporation of the postmodernist paradigm within the study of art in postsecondary education: the confrontational approach and the return to representational and expressive art making. Fuller (1983) noted recently that students were choosing to study anatomy, and many were "flocking out into the fields, hills, and mountains of Britain, once more armed with sketch pads and boxes of watercolors" (p. 6). For Fuller, this is a manifestation of postmodernism's turn away from modernism. Indeed, it may repudiate modernism, but does it help to broaden the concept of art in postsecondary education? Fuller's notion of postmodernism is one of reaction rather than resistance to dominant cultural forms. Rather than critiquing the origins of modernism, Fuller celebrates a return to conventions within the exclusive European fine art tradition as a necessary return to "culture proper" (Foster, 1983, p. xi). According to this position on postmodernism, the definition of art is not being broadened, nor does it represent a change in dominant cultural forms and social relations. Art that is little more than a *re*-presentation of a traditional ideology is a repetition that adds little to the understanding or solution of pressing issues (Nadaner, n.d.). An alternative to this, a confrontational approach that critiques, through explicit politicism, prominent issues such as nuclear

proliferation or environmental destruction, follows in a tradition established by Goya, Grosz, Rivera, and others, and renders it a genre within the traditional conception of art, rather than a comprehensive alternative for artistic activity and study (Nadaner, n.d.).

The struggle for a model of postsecondary education in art that is consistent with the postmodernist vision of critical sociological discourse on art and culture will not be easy. It will have to avoid some of the above potential weaknesses and the melancholia that accompanies pluralism and culture's resulting sense of loss of standards and identifiable "mastery" (Owens, 1983). It is much more than a technical task of curriculum development and implementation. Technical and institutional interests would have to be subordinated to ethical considerations about the validity and fairness of the art knowledge being transmitted through the school system to all cultural and social groups. An alternative model would have to be promoted and implemented that cultivates, in a genuine and comprehensive way, critical theoretical discourse about the quality and purpose of art and artistic activity in education and in society in terms of the on-going development of complex, historically bound social conditions and events. It would have to entail significant changes in the social attitudes of art students. Students would question the manner in which art knowledge has been obtained. They would question the selection criteria and filters involved in the making of "classics" among the groups that study art, and the ideological interests of the institutions involved. Visual forms of all sorts would need to be studied in order to understand why some have

status as "art", and why some have been left out. The value systems underlying a work, the value systems of the work's targetted audience, and the work's role in intensifying cultural misunderstandings or in opening the doors of other cultures previously closed off to us, and the influence of popular culture and mass media on the visual images we have of ourselves and our place in the world: all these are appropriate material for study. An alternative model would have to be developed, using several perspectives to enrich personal experience. The study of art would have to be approached not only from the perspective of the artist or art historian, as is typically the case now. The study of art would also have to include the study of art from the perspectives of the sociologist and anthropologist of art, for example. The motivations of students' own art production and art study would have to be given emphasis in art programs. It is not enough for art students to take up an existing style or perspective on art, even if it is consistent with postmodernist sentiments, without fully understanding its social coordinates, its functions, meanings and implications for current pluralistic society. Any one perspective is not necessarily right or wrong, but students should recognize that it is incomplete and serves ideological and institutional interests. An art program in universities would have to make art knowledge problematic for its students. Art knowledge should never be treated as fixed, predetermined, or value-free.

It may be that the tools needed to effect such a change in art programs would have to come from disciplines *outside* the university fine art department. An art department cannot be a student's primary source of

critical theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics, Marxism, feminism, politics, economics, modern cultural history, semiology, anthropology, as well as art production. A more significant reason has to do with the power of the resistance of existing disciplinary boundaries. Like any other subject specialty in education, art is differentiated, insulated, and blocked into a timetable. It is shaped by the social frameworks of the university. Attempts to break through disciplinary boundaries from within the art discipline are impeded by strong knowledge boundaries maintained through the discipline allegiances of artists and administrators who protect their occupational status. Individuals, as part of institutions, pose resistance. The major stakeholders of the existing model of art study are the artists within art programs who have developed strong commitments to and expertise in the activities of the fine art tradition. Their fine art skills and knowledge have, in the past, provided them with cultural capital. As with economic capital, they are likely to resist change that threatens to alter, devalue, or deplete their stock of capital. Unless patterns of interaction among individuals in the educational community change substantially, there will continue to be little debate about alternative conceptions of art. Within the "visible colleges" promoted by disciplinary boundaries, individuals converse primarily with others who already share much of their basic orientation and values (Apple, 1974). When the activities of artists and art students are not open to challenge by others of different orientations, there is little necessity for these artists and art students to seriously contemplate alternative perspectives. Increased discourse between departments, and the addition to existing art programs of courses in the sociology, economics,

politics and anthropology of the arts offer the best chance of providing art students with the tools needed to effect significant changes in art knowledge, when they in turn assume positions of influence in their art world and in education.

Knowledge is both a social product and a factor in social change. Postmodernist thinking can be a potent factor in social change. It holds the best answer we have now for the well-being of art both in education and in society. In effecting social change, postmodernists would find it very much to their advantage to consider seriously the university art department as the institutional and cultural basis of art knowledge in society, and hence pivotal to change. They would also find it in their interest to hold the university to its self-appointed role of honoring developments in knowledge and of providing a critical analysis of existing institutions, including itself. The development of critical perspectives within the educational community can become a major force in developing alternative art programs; programs that can in turn challenge the institutional structures and assumptions of the existing social order that hinder the emergence of a society which respects and reveres cultural diversity.

NOTES

- ¹ A "manifest function", as Robert Merton (1957) defined it, is overt, intended, and publicly recognized. Manifest functions "are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system" (p. 105). "Latent functions", on the other hand, are "those which are neither intended nor recognized".

The same social structure or institution may produce both manifest

and latent functions at the same time. Both may have aspects which are both positive or negative (dysfunctional). To place the functions outlined in this study in either one or the other category would be, in many cases, somewhat arbitrary and unnecessary.

- ² Frank Young (1964), in his *Initiation ceremonies: A cross-cultural study of status dramatization*, demonstrates that as formal educational institutions penetrate the structure of tribal society, local rituals decline. See also the studies about socialization by Becker (1961) and Olesen and Whittaker (1968).

- ³ Anyon (1979, p. 379) writes this about the qualified school knowledge that reflects class interest:

A whole range of curriculum selections favors the interests of the wealthy and powerful. Although presented as unbiased, the historical interpretations provide ideological justification for the activities and prerogatives of these groups and do not legitimize points of view and priorities of groups that compete with these established interests for social acceptance and support.

- ⁴ Although Chapman, for example, may recognize the ideological underpinnings of the Getty Foundation's discipline-based model of art education and its social and cultural implications for schools and for society, the examples she has chosen for her textbook series (Chapman, 1985) to illustrate concepts of art history and art criticism are mostly works of high art sanctioned by the "Great Tradition". In addition, a large proportion of the art production exercises emphasize formalist, technical, and expressive concerns of the western fine art categories of painting, sculpture, and so on.

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