

WINGLER, SYLVIA ADAMS, Ph.D. Freedom, Imagination and Grace: The Life Stories of Rural Women Art Educators from the Foothills of North Carolina. (2009) Directed by Dr. Kathleen Casey. 120 pp.

This dissertation focuses on the narratives of four rural art educators of the Foothills of Western North Carolina. These women are the first art educators in this area in public education. They are often viewed as the invisible women in art who support community arts, much like the “invisible women in art history.” From the view of the dominant society or the “high art,” they live in an art void, behind-but-trying-to-keep-up, and fall behind in education. In this way they are considered “outsiders.” Through this dissertation, the reader is connected to the success and recognition attained by these women at a time when the obstacles facing women art educators made success extraordinary. I connect the reader to grace, freedom, and a hidden religion as it is experienced in the work of these women. As they create relationships, they are viewed as “insiders.” Through the individual stories these women demonstrated that love is involvement as they imagine and create spaces of possibility.

My methodology is narrative research which is a form of qualitative research. Through interviews and tape recordings I connect “living history” to the past through the use of an open-ended question. I use the theories of Maxine Greene, Lucy Lippard, and John Berger which all stress the using of the arts to promote awareness, freedom, and social justice.

Initially, I reveal how the rural women art educators prepared and studied for an occupation that was not yet in their communities, and then they had to invent the possibility of a job. Through my narratives, I state that their freedom came through

multiple relationships (connectedness). Also, I illustrate just how creatively they used their imaginations to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in uniting community. I conclude that arts provide a reality check for the fear of the “other” is present, such as, racial oppression, gender inequalities, economic class, and religion.

FREEDOM, IMAGINATION AND GRACE: THE LIFE STORIES
OF RURAL WOMEN ART EDUCATORS FROM
THE FOOTHILLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

By

Sylvia Adams Wingler

A Dissertation Submitted to
The Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
2009

Approved by

Committee Chair

©2009 by Sylvia Adams Winger

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of
The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through the journey, I thank God for his guidance. Some of us grow up resisting the calling to become an educator, such as myself. Through the enabling power grace, which is an ability to listen to your own guts and what is going on inside you and divine intervention, the gift of God, I became a teacher. I always had the passion to create from a very young age. The desire to teach and the passion for teaching seemed to grow with time. The true passion is on-going and does not end with retirement or the illness that we may face as life comes to a close.

I thank God daily for strong-willed parents with a vision. My wonderful parents James Harold Adams and Grace Colbert Adams did not come from a family of amateur or professional artists. Yet, they were strong-willed and always offered support.

A special thanks to Dr. Kathleen Casey for advising and encouraging me through my dissertation journey and for taking time to write scholarship recommendations for the journey. I also thank my other committee members, Dr. Glenn Hudak, Dr. Carl Lashley, and Dr. Shiv Shapiro.

In financing this journey, I thank Eta State for honoring me as the recipient of the Sibyl Legget Scholarship in honor of Barbara Day at the 2008 state conference. Support and honor also came from the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International through the Margaret Boyd Scholarship in 2009. I was also very fortunate to have been awarded a Luther Winborne Self Fellowship in 2008 and 2009.

Last and not least, I thank my husband Daniel Wingler for his support and putting up with the journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Those Doing the Caring for Art.....	2
Focus of My Study.....	5
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	10
Art Education Promoting Freedom and Alternative Possibilities.....	10
Defining Freedom through Rural Art Education.....	12
Choice and Possibilities.....	16
Freedom Hidden.....	18
The Cotton Wool of Daily Life.....	19
Telling through the Arts.....	20
Art and Transcendence.....	24
Imagination through Art Education.....	28
Freedom Created Daily.....	30
III. METHODOLOGY.....	32
Subjectivity Awareness.....	33
The Participants / Rural Southern Women Art Educators.....	34
Narrative Research.....	37
The Framing of an Art Teacher / Myself as a Researcher.....	41
From the World View of the Existentialists.....	43
IV. THE RURAL ART EDUCATOR AS OUTSIDER.....	45
Childhood Art Memories.....	46
The Framing of a Rural Art Educator / College Education.....	52
Teaching in the Rural Foothills.....	56
Rural Art Education / Just Something They Decided to Do.....	59
Crossing Boundaries / Past and Present.....	65
V. THE RURAL ART EDUCATOR AS INSIDER.....	66
Strong-Willed Fathers.....	67
The Cotton Wool of Daily Life.....	69
Rural Relationships.....	74

Personal Educational Struggles.....	79
The Joy of Teaching.....	85
Just Weaving / Just Weaving	88
 VI. A HIDDEN RELIGION	 89
Past Art Connections.....	91
Through Grace	92
Love is Involvement	94
Alternative Pathways and the Rural Art Educators	96
Community and Religion Connected.....	101
 VII. CONCLUSION	 102
Possibility through the Narratives.....	102
The Rural Art Educator as Outsider: Imagination Faces Stereotypes	103
The Rural Art Educator as Insider: Freedom through Relationships.....	107
Grace and Love as Involvement: A Hidden Religion.....	109
Freedom, Imagination and Grace: Creating Community.....	112
Implications of Art Creating Community through Rural Art Educators .	113
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 116

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I examine the life stories of four rural women art educators living in the Foothills of Western North Carolina (basically Foothills refers to the lower hills at the base of the North Carolina mountains). These women are the first art educators in this rural area in public education. Their lives, much like the women in the art history books prior to 1974 remain “invisible.” Through the stories of these rural southern women art educators, my own personal stories, and visual arts, I reveal the “invisible” artists, teachers, and those who support community arts.

Through this dissertation, the reader is connected to the success and recognition attained by these women at a time when the obstacles facing women art educators made success extraordinary. I connect the reader to freedom, imagination, and grace, as it is experienced in the work of these women. The reader also experiences the arts incorporated around strong-willed fathers, the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), rural relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching. The final analysis chapter connects community and a hidden religion. It is through the grace of God that these women art educators are “called,” and as they serve, love is involvement for each of them. As they age, God continues to call them to alternative pathways for when one possibility closes down and another opens up.

Those Doing the Caring for Art

Generally, “the people doing the ‘caring’ for art are overwhelmingly White, middle-class, and in the upper echelons, usually male” (Lippard, 1990, p. 7). It is not a secret that fine arts are controlled by the upper class collectors, museum trustees, gallery owners, and art book and magazine publishers who through financing take charge.

For example, George Will (2001), columnist for the *Washington Post* believes that “art” should be a qualifying term that includes only exemplary models. He believes that we should define art to exclude certain forms of art, including art that is produced by most community artists (Ulbricht, 2002, p. 33-4).

Opposite of this belief is that of Bill Ivey, past Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, who supports artists in local communities and the cultural landscape. Yet, often the “high art” does not always value the “other,” in other words the fear of the “other” is out there.

Being the other means feeling different; is awareness of being distinct; is consciousness of being dissimilar. It means being outside the game, outside the circle, outside the set. It means being on the edges, on the margins, on the periphery. Otherness means feeling excluded, closed out, precluded, and even disdained and scorned. It produces a sense of isolation, of apartness, of disconnectedness, of alienation. (Madrid, 1988, p.12).

Maxine Greene speaks of art creating diversity through the use of language which can divide, separate, and sort. This verbal humiliation and demeaning stance states that, “We’ll let you play with the clay but we won’t show you the David. Because after all, the David is for me when I go to Florence” (Greene, 1977. p. 303). Even though the rural art educators can not change the social order, the door of possibility can be opened.

Rural art educators see students who arrive with visual images already in their head that can divide, separate, and sort them. Mrs. Moore, rural arts council leader and one of the four women I interviewed, speaks of this naming in her local community as a child:

It took us a long time to realize why we couldn't just go half a block up the street to school – but we questioned it – just a matter – we just did it – you know not any malice – not any animosity – we just did what we thought was right to do. and I guess we were not aware that - Blacks and Whites were not supposed to go to school together – our parents didn't focus on that.

As a rural educator, community arts leader of the Foothills and former student that has experienced naming in her local community, Mrs. Moore is aware of the variety of visual images that students arrive with in their heads that can divide, separate, and sort them. For, “It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world” (Berger, 1977, p. 7). Before arriving in the classroom, society has visually named a place for each student through family, other caretakers, and schooling. In this process it is clear that “seeing comes before words” (Berger, 1977, p. 7). Through words we explain what we see, but there is a constant struggle between what we see and words, such as, the visual struggle fresh on an eighty year old rural educator's mind that I interviewed. She spoke of a childhood visual image she personally encountered many years ago which was still fresh on her mind:

Another time my Daddy was doing missionary work for the Presbyterian USA, we used to get what you call big barrels from the North with a little bit of everything - cloths, books, shoes - it was for the whole community - what ever the community needed. I found this little book with a ballerina - well, it just broke my heart because I had sense enough to know that little Black girls couldn't be ballerinas - but still when I got to college I said, I am going to take every dance

class I can take - so I joined the dance class - I couldn't do ballet but I did expression - every chance I got - every elective I had.

Seeing this illustration froze in her mind for a life time. The book illustrator reflected their way of seeing which named the way Mrs. Moore established her place in the surrounding world. Through the eyes of the dominant culture she learned to view the world, and the ballerina visual image named her place in society at that moment in time. Because of the power of the visual image,

Art educators should fight for cultural democracy that equates with equality of opportunity for all persons, classes, and groups to create, study, and enjoy all the arts. It is culture as a human right and not as a privilege for select groups and classes (Bersson, 1984, p. 42).

Art education can be used to create an awareness of one's identity and how we are affected and results maybe immediate, which our society demands, or it maybe much later, such as, in Mrs. Moore's case:

And so when my granddaughter came along – you can see her picture in there now – at about four years old she started taking ballet until about six years ago it is possible then – I lived my dreams through my granddaughter when it came to dance.

As in the life of Mrs. Moore, results are not always as immediate as our society demands. Sometimes it is through the next generation that our possibilities often happened. Mrs. Moore lived her dreams through her granddaughter. “Arendt reminds us that we ourselves are the authors of such miracles, because it is we who perform them – and we who have the capacity to establish a reality of our own” (Greene, 1988, p. 56).

The arts provide a reality check for the fear of the “other” is out there (which includes racial, gender class, value and beliefs, religious, and politics). Social changes in rural areas are gradual and can happen slowly.

Focus of My Study

The topic of my dissertation has been a lifetime in formation. The focus of my scholarly and professional interests is to look at the life experiences of four southern rural women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina and their involvement in art as a possible avenue in the creation of community. As a rural art educator of thirty-nine years, I want to look at my story as a rural art educator, as well, as the narratives of four other southern rural women art educators between the ages of 72 and 81. My interests are in the life experiences of these rural women art educators and their involvement in the arts as it is used to create and unite community through race, class, gender, and religion.

Through the stories of these rural southern women art educators (Foothills of Western North Carolina), my own personal stories, and visual stories, my goal is to seek the “invisible” artists, teachers, and those who support community arts. I want to show that women artists / teachers are not absent from art history. The present art standard course of study speaks to understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture and to providing opportunities to research the lives of artists and the role of art in culture. I speak to the understanding of the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Chapter I introduces my professional and scholarly interests and presents the contents of each of the other chapters (Chapters I – VII). I speak of creating spaces of possibility through art education. Generally power is exercised through the structures of

the dominant society, and “high art” does not always value the “other,” in other words the fear of the “other” is out there. I use one of the narratives I collected to illustrate how a single visual image provided through the dominate culture can divide, separate, and sort. I end by stressing that art is out there to provide us with a reality check.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature. I connect with such theorists as Maxine Greene, Lucy Lippard, and John Berger whose works speaks to the understanding of the visual arts in relation to history and culture. Maxine Greene speaks of using the arts to promote awareness, freedom, and social justice. I describe the multiple looks of freedom. Negative freedom for those in control, is defined as looking and being the same with little difference in appearance. I stress that the creation of freedom is a daily journey and requires imagination. There must be imagination to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in our communities. Imagination is the only window of opportunity, and art education provides us a light space for an opening of possibility.

Chapter III discloses my methodology, narrative research which is a form of qualitative research. The area of art tends to be more subjective; therefore, I feel it is necessary in my research to use an open-ended question. In this chapter I explain that the open-ended “information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories and with selectivities, silences, and slippage that are intrinsic to its representation of reality” (Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 228). I state that the lives of the rural art educators of the Foothills are constructed from several common fibers. This refers to intertextuality which is the manner in which a narrative or a work of art always refers to

others texts or pieces of art work (Barthes, 1977; Bal, 1997 in Reece, p. 34). I focus on the fact that the stories are very organized and the rural art educators are in charge of what they include, emphasize, omit, and where they choose to start. As the interviewer I describe being taken to another world through the stories to make or prove a point. I emphasize the narratives of important life events that come complete with comments, flashbacks, reflection, and evaluations. What are they silent about? Where did they choose to start their story? What did they choose to weave together? Chronologically I focus on the common fibers and how they are woven.

Chapter IV centers on the forming of a rural art educator. Through the narratives, I focus on the lives of these rural women art educators of the Foothills as they prepare and study for an occupation that was not yet available in their communities. I state that the process of change for the rural southern woman art educator is not a one time event. It is a life time process from childhood memories, the framing of a rural art educator through college, and the struggles of teaching in the rural North Carolina. I speak of how they wedge their way into art education and live with the fact that rural art education is “just something they decided to do.” Through the narratives and the visual arts there is a drawing of strength from one’s past and then a connection to future generations, and there is the realization that there is a larger whole of which they are apart of.

Chapter V focuses on the creation of freedom through a variety of relationships (connectedness) which is a daily journey for the rural southern women art educators. I note the multiple and diverse pathways of freedom, and point out that art is incorporated around strong-willed fathers, the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging

parents), personal relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching. Throughout their lives the rural women art educators were supported by strong-willed fathers who realized that there must be an involvement in the educational process and not just a verbally shared experience. I focus on the fact that these women were called through the grace of God into a profession that was not available yet. Through everything they do, art is connected to their lives, and they are able to imagine other ways of knowing and can envision other possibilities, which is not possible for others. Through relationships with other rural art educators, students, and the community these educators found beauty, wholeness, and symbolic meaning. Their personal educational struggles continued throughout their lives and are ongoing. I point out that their personal actions clearly demonstrate that they are life-long learners. Multiple times the art educators stressed through their narratives how much they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they are still teachers regardless of their ages.

Chapter VI speaks of community and the arts being connected through a hidden religion in the work of the rural southern art educators. Initially through grace these rural women art educators of the Foothills prepared and studied for an occupation that was not yet available in their communities. Early in their careers they had to imagine the possibility that art education could take place in rural of North Carolina public schools. Likewise for these art educators, God's love was involvement, and they connected community and religion for an entire life time. As they age and continue to be educators, God's calling adds uncertainty to an unforeseeable and absolute future. They follow his direction in pathways they would never dream of going on their own. As the rural art

educators follow God's grace, they seek alternative pathways when one possibility closes down and another opens up.

In the conclusion Chapter VII, I comment on the connection made through narrative research and the arts which makes us unique, irreplaceable, and one with the "other" and which offers a space for possibility to be created. I state that the process is ongoing, and that the visual arts and the narratives provide a view of lives in continuous formation as these rural southern women art educators continue the journey touching others through choice. It is evident that they continue to make themselves visible through the arts. The arts provide a reality check for the fear of the "other" is present.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Art Education Promoting Freedom and Alternative Possibilities

This chapter stresses the value of art and art education. I use the theories of Maxine Greene, Lucy Lippard, and John Berger which all stress using the arts to promote awareness, freedom, social justice, and alternative possibilities. The visual arts classroom provides a space “(through planning and the application of intelligence) in which personal freedoms can be attained in the troubled intersubjective world” (Greene, p. 1988, 50). Daily there are openings for the creation of freedom. I stress that the creation of freedom is a daily journey and requires imagination. There must be imagination to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in our communities. Imagination is the only window of opportunity, and art education provides us a light space for an opening of possibility. Though the arts a reality check is provided for the fear of the “other” is present, which includes racial, gender, class, religious, value and beliefs.

I describe the multiple appearances of freedom. Negative freedom for those in control, is defined as looking and being the same with little difference in appearance. If you reside in the dominant culture you are made to feel that aesthetics (what is beautiful

and what we should love) should be right on track with the dominant culture tastes. Yet, southern and rural groundedness finds a sense of belonging to a place, and a sense of history and culture are important to stress when educating for freedom. This is evident in Mrs. Cooper's (art educator / community leader) rural family farm in which community members united together to reconstruct a village of historical local buildings to connect the arts, culture, and history through a community effort.

Regional or minority artists may be viewed by "high art" as behind and unable to keep up with the urban center of art. By silencing the voices, the memories, and the creative heart of a regional group or cultural group of artists, they may drop out (stop creating) or just accept the values of the dominant group. This is why it is of utter importance to educate for freedom, since "persuasion is often so quiet, so seductive, so disguised that it renders young people acquiescent to power without their realizing it" (Greene, 1988, p. 133). I stress that the dominant culture does not always savor the outside influences. In no area of modern intellectual life has there been more resistance to recognizing and authorizing the "other" than the world of the serious visual art.

Maxine Greene speaks of using the arts to promote awareness, freedom, and social justice and speaks to the understanding of the visual arts in relation to history and culture. She has stated that, "To open people to the arts and what they may (or may not) make possible for them is to make a deliberate effort to combat blankness and passivity and stock responses and conformity" (Greene, 1987, p. 15). For it is through the visual arts that a culture views themselves and others. Also, it is through the visual arts that rural students can focus on identity awareness by coming to terms with self-naming,

being labeled, and the shifting identities into which that they are often forced. Once there is awareness, the stories of history, race, class, gender, family, and religion must be told. It is about drawing strength from one's past culture and being able to connect to future generations.

Through seeing (which comes before the written) and through the narratives of four rural southern women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina there is a realization and connection made that there is a larger whole of which they are a part. "And of course there are risks: we cannot determine where free persons, acting on their freedom, will go" (Greene, 1987, p. 15). In art and art education, there is not an end and the process is ongoing. Art continues to define our society, creates the future, and motivates people to act to create a better society for all to live in.

Defining Freedom through Rural Art Education

The look of freedom may have many different appearances. It varies with one's understanding of freedom, traditions, life experiences, hopes dreams, and imagination to open the doors of possibility. Freedom may be imagined more religious or more counter cultural (against the dominant group of people). The look of freedom may be hidden behind a mask or in a society of strangers who prefer being left alone. "But it is crucial for me to hold in mind the fact that works of art, when faithfully perceived, when attentively read, address themselves to persons in their freedom" (Greene, 1987, p. 15). It is through the visual encounter that a culture's art states who they are, what they stand for, and what boundaries are being crossed.

Industrialization and urbanization create a lack of autonomy, independence, and human relationships which “could not help but eat away at the roots of freedom” (Green, 1988, p. 29). Industrialization separated the owners from the workers creating a division among the classes. There must be a gathering of individuals in order that they can realize that they are not the independent beings they may have envisioned. It is “when the members of a community are forced to attend to public affairs, they are necessarily drawn from the circle of their own interests and snatched at times from self-observation” (Greene, 1988, p. 29). It is when a woman / man is involved in public affairs she / he then realizes how connected they are to the other. There “is the idea of being more, becoming different, experiencing more deeply, overcoming the humdrum, the plain ordinariness and repetitions of everyday life” (Greene, 1987, p. 14). This leads to action and the realization of how the individual is connected to freedom through action.

Freedom is a gift to imagine a space of possibility since there are multiple and competing ideas of freedom, such as, religious, nationalist, economic, political, and moral. Artists provide this space of possibility since, “Artists are for disclosing the extraordinary in the ordinary” (Greene, 1987, p. 14). They use their imaginations and choose to create a space to bring individuals together. Each of us must seek a different way of being in the world and envision a different way of being. “We have to work together for new continuities, new openings, as we move towards our own moments of being, our own shocks of awareness. There is cotton wool all around and there are living beings waiting, hoping to break through” (Greene, 1977, p. 20). Such, negative freedom must be perceived and lightness envisioned.

Multiple cultures of “silence” (Freire, 1970, p. 80) are ever present even today. Fear of the “other” is created through visual images of evil, the Anti-Christ, drab populations, and menacing figures. These visual images reinforce the idea of negative freedom that we are our own person and we have a right for self-reliance and independence. People controlled in this manner naturally would prefer food and some happiness in life over freedom. For those in control, freedom is defined as looking and being the same and freedom can not appear with any difference. With the hope and promise of gaining more goods there is cultural compliance. Yet, many do not take advantage of freedom because they do not want to risk being different. In seeking freedom or being different there is often a loss of connection to the community and family. Most do not want to risk this separation.

The Fascists and the Nazis promised security to their people, therefore the masses willingly gave up their democratic rights (Greene, 1988, p. 25). In their journey somehow they became careless and gained thoughtlessness. Thus displacing freedom without a “sphere of freedom” (Arendt, 1958, p. 30) within which to operate, both men and women can become overwhelmed, a victimized, and manipulated. When one is powerless, freedom has little value. Greene believed “that freedom in itself is meaningless unless it brings changes about in the world” (Greene, 1988, p. 37). People acting as a group create the freedom.

Negative freedom is richly defined by Edward Hopper through his paintings which define “a society of strangers.” The cities, suburbs, and small towns are marked by silences and emptiness. The people, usually one or two at the most two are engaged in

a speechless gaze. “On the most physical level, the environment prompts people to think of the public domain as meaningless” (Sennett, 1979, p. 41). Gathering places are limited and individuals are divided and separated by our public and school environments. There are few public spaces that are created for individuals to come together, speak, and communicate with one another. Our postmodern culture reinforces our rights and entitlements. Power and privilege which comes with negative freedom supports the right to be left alone, my choice, and freedom from other people. Like the people in Hopper’s paintings, loneliness is real and emptiness and silences are felt.

Individuals envision being free when they are linked with the masses through baseball stadiums, rock concerts, talk shows, and advertisements for consumer goods. Capitalism re-enforces the negative freedom by stating that it is all “about me.” Many twentieth-century artists, such as, Edward Hopper capture this disinterest and absence of care. “For many, this means an unreflective consumerism; for others it means a preoccupation with having more rather than being more” (Greene, 1988, p. 7). For many success and freedom are linked to working one’s way up the status ladder. In doing so, there can be a separation as Dewey put it in “the inner from the outer” (Dewey in Greene, 1988, p. 20). There is a tolerance for what they condemn in their outer world.

In their inside world individuals manage to believe all is well and free. With this inner retreat the person abandons social involvement and concern. No longer is it possible to imagine alternative possibilities. The individual withdraws within himself. “It makes it possible to replace social compassion with an insistence on each person’s capacity and responsibility and freedom to ‘make it’ on his or her own” (Greene, 1988, p.

26). It is a negative view of freedom, and individuals are directed and controlled by the system. “They do not know what it is to reach out for freedom as a palpable good, to engage with and resist the compelling and conditioning forces, to open fields when the options unmultiply, where unanticipated possibilities open each day” (Greene, 1988, p. 115). For when oppressed groups come together, they make a space and have a totally different experience as a group than as an individual.

Choice and Possibilities

As moral beings we are granted the freedom to make choices both good and bad choices. “Human beings unlike the cattle must choose what they will do and be” (Schaar in Greene, 1988, p. 46). Daily we are engaged in this decision making process. Each choice is guided by our inner instincts. Only when “the individual, human part” is fully involved in membership, will we see an emergence of what John Dewey once called a “great community.” And it is not accidental that, when Dewey spoke of such a community, he also spoke of art whose function, he said, “has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness” (Dewey in Greene, 1977, p. 15). It is through the visual arts that a power is created to unite diversity and make a turn around or create diversity. Art objects “have the capacities, when authentically attended to, to enable persons to hear and to see what they would not ordinarily hear and see” (Greene, 1988, p. 128-129). Encounters with the arts offer new beginnings, new possibilities, and reveal multiple feelings. Different cultures can understand one another, even though their ways and language are different.

With each action there is no guarantee for “it is taken on the knife edge of the present, and thus both complete a life to that point and projects it into the future” (Schaar in Greene, 1988, p. 46). We are created as beings of choice, not governed by instinct and or private keepers. Our lives may be hidden by ourselves or others; they may be connected or bound, confined by negative freedom, or opened at the table of freedom daily. Hannah Arendt has written that there is not a guarantee of predictability for “foretelling the consequences of an act within a community of equals where everybody has the same capacity to act” (Arendt, 1958, p. 244) are to a large degree unpredictable. Freedom comes with such a risk and price. Hannah Arendt “reminds us that we ourselves are the authors of such miracles, because it is we who perform them, and we who have the capacity to establish a reality of our own” (Arendt in Greene, 1988, p. 56). As human beings we have the choice of what we will do and be, unlike the animals of the field.

Daily there are openings for the creation of freedom. It is a lived process. “Hannah Arendt has written that the Grand Inquisitor’s sin was that he depersonalized the sufferers, lumped them into an aggregate” (Arendt in Greene, 1988, p. 18). In the recognition of freedom we must personalize individual stories. Oral histories help us reflect upon the past so the future maybe impacted for future generation. “At every meal that we eat together freedom is invited to sit down. The chair remains vacant, but the place is set” (Arendt in Greene, 1988, p. 86). The opportunity for caring and concern is out there. It is important to recognize that the chair is “out there” for in our culture we are surrounded by self-sufficiency “choice.” We are “a society of strangers” as illustrated in Edward Hopper’s painting *New York Office*. An individual in New York

City is surrounded by masses of people and buildings yet there is loneliness. Capitalism creates this space for negative freedom, freedom to be left alone, my choice, and freedom from other people.

With new found freedom whether in the past or the present, there has to be a preparedness to live in freedom. “Some kind of reciprocity is required between individuals in quest of freedom and the persons surrounding them” (Greene, 1988, p. 92). There is always a struggle in finding freedom. “For Hannah Arendt, there were crucial connections between power, freedom, and the public space” (Greene, 1988, p. 116). Action and speech must all come together in a public space where equality and distinction are present. Such was the case with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s bold move to establish the nation as a community through the establishment of the Works Progress Administration. During the time, government buildings, train stations, and post office buildings served as public spaces in which (through planning and the application of intelligence) personal freedoms could be attained in the troubled, intersubjective world (Greene, 1988, p. 50). Locally the Civilian Conservation Corps created spaces and provided a support system which made freedom attainable for many who had been excluded. This provided a space to create a national community in which people could imagine, be different, and grow together in a space in which positive freedom could grow.

Freedom Hidden

The teaching profession, by some considered to be the noblest of professions offered a temporary space of freedom for young unmarried women. The profession

offered young women a space to gain dignity rather than immediately being pressured into marriage and child care. As the women educators married, the freedom they found, as opposed to men seemed to have been within the context of connectedness.

Writing women as well as women who were visual artists were also caught up in the mystification of the family. Carol Gould describes “the first mystification of woman as love goddess and Madonna (Gould, 1976, p. 37). There is little freedom to do, to act, to make choices with no power. As the love goddess and Madonna, woman is to be viewed, set aside, and placed on a pedestal for man. There is not a space for human freedom nor is there freedom to dream and create. Carol Gould also states that the first mystification is “complemented by a second, equally pervasive mystification. Here the social and historical exploitation of women is hidden under guise of its being her natural biological inheritance to bear and raise children, to be a housewife” (Gould, 1976, p. 37). This mystification justifies that it is the woman’s place in the world and this makes this fate acceptable to man. It is not that family has to be an obstacle, but men and women both should have a choice in the creation of their own lives. The choice should be an individual one, not a control or the inevitable placed upon one’s life.

The Cotton Wool of Daily Life

Virginia Woolf compared the struggle against confinement and constriction of daily life to “the cotton wool of daily life” (1939 / 1976, p. 72). The daily chores of house work and child care left little space for the creative spirit of women. Their lives were bound by relationships, children, and household duties. There was no Walden Pond or other spaces of freedom to support the creative spirit for women as opposed to men.

Georgia O'Keeffe spoke of hating the household duties and taking care of kin while spending her summers at Lake George. There was no space of freedom to create and paint. A few women carved a tiny space in their schedules to create, to write, and to paint. Because of their upbringing there was an obligation felt to live a life that was "belted" as described by Emily Dickinson (Greene, 1988, p. 61), such as, Judith Leyster, a woman artist whose talent equaled that of Frans Hal at age twenty. She put all of her efforts into supporting her husband's art. "Women are just more prone to think in terms of responsibility" (Greene, 1988, p. 84). It was Judith Leyster's responsibility to her husband and family to support her husband's painting career rather than her own. Due to upbringing whatever freedom she could have achieved was conditioned by obligation and relationship (Greene, 1988, p. 59). Women were "belted" to feel a sense of guilt if they did not fulfill house hold tasks, child care, and the expected obligations of the husband and family.

Telling through the Arts

In promoting social awareness and a concern for social justice through the arts, the oral histories / the stories must be told. The telling of one's story comes from within. It is the "process of understanding and drawing strength from one's past, one's cultural history, beliefs, and values" (Lippard, 1990, p. 57), such as, Faith Ringgold's story quilts, which are rich in Harlem history. It is important to connect students to their history through the visual arts when words are often inadequate, for "seeing comes before words" (Berger, 1977, p. 33). The arts are a very valued vehicle in remembering cultural histories. So valued are these narratives, such as, Faith Ringgold's that "they believed

that somehow you could change your present circumstances if only your history were told” (Lippard, 1990, p. 92). The art work is more than art for art’s sake for the viewer becomes involved with the piece; there is conversation, and an exchange of ideas.

The visual narratives are before us. “No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times” (Berger, 1977, p. 10). The exchange may appear from those who have been labeled more invisible by art history, such as, Dutch artist Judith Leyster. Drawing in her culture was only included in the education of boys of a good family or some well-groomed girls as seen in Jan Steen’s *The Drawing Lesson*. Yet, Leyster refused to be named and labeled. In her *Self Portrait* she is dressed not to paint but in attire equal to her patrons. As the only woman master painter in the Haarlem Guild of St. Luke, Leyster crossed boundaries. Her *Self Portrait* with the open mouth speaks to us. She is confident and invites us into her studio. Leyster allows us to see the “other,” for it is through seeing that cultures view themselves and others.

It is important to remember that western civilization has formed the rules to judge art and defined what they considered “fine art” or “high art.” Those rules do not always have to apply. It is important to remember that the western world borrows from non-western people, such as, Picasso’s African themes, as illustrated in “*Desmoiselles d’Avignon*”. Even though Africa and other cultures are used for sources of influence by Western artists, there is still resistance. The dominant culture does not always savor non-western influences. For in no other area of modern intellectual life has been more

resistance to recognizing the “other” than the world of the “serious” visual art. Yet, with the 1980s and 1990s multicultural boom there has been less resistance to artists of color.

Through visual arts, it is important for students to be aware of the story being told. The story may be a narrative, a pictorial emphasis, or as abstract pattern translating rhythm of language (Lippard, 1990, p. 101). Generally history and heritage is actively maintained by women in a culture. Yet, “the real question is: to who does the meaning of the art of the past properly belong? To those who can apply it to their own lives, or to a cultural hierarchy of relic specialists?” (Berger, 1977, p. 32) Initially the art of the past was in a certain preserve, such as, a cave, a sacred or magical place, or a building. The ritual was set apart from everyday life. Later art was set apart for the ruling class in their houses and palaces, but with the modern technology of reproduction, such as, the camera, the art is out there. It surrounds people of all classes, whether they venture to the museums or not.

These art objects have the capacity to “enable persons to hear and see what they would not ordinarily hear or see” (Greene, 1988, p. 128-129). The known can be transformed into the unknown because the imagination is unleashed into the unexpected, such as, in the images of unendurable pain in Picasso’s *Guernica*. Yet few students initially are informed enough to actually “see.” The arts offer a space of possibility. Through *Guernica* students see what they would not ordinarily see. It offers a vision of the familiar and the abnormal. The gray wall connects us to another time, culture, and history. The story awakens and allows those viewing it to know there are multiple perspectives, vantage points, and events may be on-going and incomplete.

The events in a person's life, such as, past, present, and future influence the way we create and see art. N. Scott Momaday said it this way, "the events of one's life take place, take place . . . they have meaning in relation to things around them" (Momaday in Lippard, 1990, p. 105). Yet, if you reside in the dominant culture you are made to fill that aesthetics (what is beautiful and what we should love) should be consistent with the dominant culture tastes. Yet immigrants, Native American or Southern and rural groundedness find a sense of belonging to a place, and a sense of history are important to stress when educating for freedom.

Regional or minority artists may be viewed by "high art" as behind and unable to keep up with the urban center of art. This "Hegemony as explained by the Italian Philosopher Antonio Gramsci, means direction by oral and intellectual persuasion, not by physical coercion" (Greene, 1988, p. 133). This is why it is of utter importance to educate for freedom, since "persuasion is often so quiet, so seductive, so disguised that it renders young people acquiescent to power without their realizing it" (Greene, 1988, p. 133). Awareness of alternatives and a vision of possibilities must be provided, for stories promoting social justice must be told, such as, those by Luis Cruz Azaceta. His theme is exile and the dangerous journey taken not only by himself, but other oppressed people from other parts of the world. He states that fear motivates his work and he paints to kill cruelty, injustice, violence, ignorance, and hypocrisy (Lippard, 1990, p. 122). The interwoven aspects, such as, the narrative, history, culture, religion, and class are all woven into the fabric. This visual story "is a filling-in of the parts needed to become a whole person, part of a culture" (Lippard, 1990, p. 149). For those whose stories have

been oppressed, the arts are a space of freedom for personal and community survival, and provide a space for regeneration.

Art and Transcendence

Daily students arrive in their classrooms with visual images in their heads that could divide, separate, and sort them. “It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world” (Berger, 1977, p. 7). Before arriving in the classroom, society has visually named a place for each student through family, other caretakers, and schooling. In this process it is clear that “seeing comes before words” (Berger, 1977, p. 7). Through words we explain what we see, but there is a constant struggle between what we see and words, such as, the visual struggle fresh on an eighty year old educator I interviewed. She spoke of a childhood visual image she encountered while reading a book. Seeing this illustration froze an image in her mind for a life time. The book illustrator reflected his / her own way of seeing which affected the way Mrs. Moore established her place in the surrounding world. Through the eyes of the dominant culture she had learned to view the world, but when society lies to us we need to keep on searching (Lippard, 1990, p. 19). Art education can be used to create an awareness of one’s identity and how we are affected. Results may be immediate, which our society demands or they may be much later.

Each group that arrives in this country and goes to school in this country must come to the realization that they are part of a whole. With the mixing there are obstacles and possibilities. “The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled” (Berger, 1977, p. 7). Using the visual image and materials to create the visual image

opens up a new space for study. In the creative process there is collaboration and the imagination to overcome obstacles and open up possibilities. For, “the person that center of choice develops in his / her fullness to the degree he / she is a member of a live community,” such as, Rollin’s KOS (Kids of Survival) (Greene, 1988, p. 43). Society labeled them poor, Black, and Latino with little possibility. Through art they became united and valued by society and to one another. They described arts’ impact in the following ways:

I guess our art is one of the only ways we can show our point of view, about how we see the world. We have a chance to make a statement, and for people our age, this is a big chance. We paint about what is, but we also paint about what should be (Lippard, 1990, p. 169).

The Kids of Survival transcended their disabilities and the labels society placed upon them to achieve freedom. They questioned, made a connection between mind and hands, and made an impact on themselves and the community. Their “engagement with the arts made possible moments of being, the exception” (Greene, 1977, p. 15). Their art offered a visual possibility which was not ordinarily seen. They shared freedom in their relationships and the community they created together. Through community art which is concerned with everyday lives, struggles, and triumphs of common people, the Kids of Survival came out of themselves and entered into the lives of the other. They participated in a valued community, and through art they became united and valued by society and to one another.

The arts provide a support system for those who are excluded because of race, gender, class, and religion. Rollins and the KOS took “high art” and made it their own

even though the educational system and society had shut them out, and they connected to the community.

Judy Baca, muralist, director and instigator of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* also integrates social, as well, as physical change in the community. She states through visual symbols, “You can read a wall and learn every thing you needed to know about that community” (Lippard, 1990, p. 170). Through the arts a society can be defined, a future created, and people can attain freedom. A symbolic representation of this can be found in the murals done in post offices, regional theaters, and health clinics during the New Deal period. Much like the Rolling KOS kids, freedom was made possible through the visual art to those who had been previously excluded.

The visual arts have the power to unite a community and create choices and other possibilities. Art objects “have the capacities, when authentically attended to, to enable persons to hear and to see what they would not ordinarily hear and see” (Greene, 1990, p. 128-129). Different cultures can understand one another even though their ways and language are different. Yet, the visual image can be disguised as a mask in which to hide behind. The dominant culture does not always favor the influences, for there is an elitist fear of cultural democracy. Even “the most abstract art bears social messages about the world and place of the artist and viewer in that world” (Bersson, 1984, p. 42). The fear is present when political, economic, and cultural power is placed in the hands of the lower and middle class through the arts.

The lives of the rural women educators of the Foothills of North Carolina that I interviewed are hidden behind a variety of masks. To shed the mask is to reveal one’s

story. Some thought they did not have a story to tell, yet “to articulate a life story in a way that enables a woman to know perhaps for the first time know she has encountered the world and what she desires to do and be” (Greene, 1988, p. 57). Through stories there is unconcealment and the mask is broken. To unconceal is to take a risk for one does not know for sure what will happen. The “not yet” may reveal a hidden agenda working for social justice.

The visual image can be disguised as a mask in which to hide behind. “The persuasion is often so quiet, so seductive, so disguised that it renders young people acquiescent to power without their realizing it” (Greene, 1988, p. 133). No visual image is sacred to the artist in the postmodern era. The trickster has nothing to lose and pushes the visual image over the edge. It incorporates violence, as well, as the possibility of a “rainbow future” (Lippard, 1990, p. 151). The art of change could not be more postmodern with the Trickster strategy. “Nothing is sacred, nothing is safe from the invasion of death-dealing laughter wielded by artists who have so little to lose they’re ready to change the world” (Lippard, 1990, p. 206). Marcel Duchamp has not even risen to this level of trickery. With the nothing to lose attitudes, there is an attempt in “decentering” of the elitism of the art world. Art education can create domains where there are new possibilities of vision and awareness (Greene, 1977, p. 20). Through a more global approach in art education, art redefines society, helps in creating a future, and motivates people.

Imagination through Art Education

Oppression of people, whether by segregation, slavery, or dictatorship, suppresses the imagination. In the past children and adults that worked long hours in harsh conditions in factories had the desire to imagine pressed out of them. In schooling, the Americanizing process, such as, tracking, grouping, and a factory type atmosphere proved not to be fertile ground for the imagination. Ideally, “to be a citizen of a ‘free society’ self controlled, God-fearing, patriotic, hard-working, law-abiding was to have solved the problem of freedom” (Green, 1988, p. 112). There must be more as shown by oppressed groups. Somehow they find a space to come together, yet they struggle to participate in a valued community. It is a moral choice to create freedom or erase freedom.

Freedom is linked with the exchange of ideas in a shared space or community. When this is done then imagination is unleashed and the unexpected may happen. Through the shared experience there is a vision to expand beyond the usual boundaries and reach for the not yet. Oppressed groups do so as they envision the obstacles, and they move towards freedom, as obstacles are overcome and more toward possibility. Hannah Arendt states, “Power corresponds to the human ability to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together” (Arendt, 1972, p.143). Through the power of imagination, fresh ideas flow into the group. It is a process and always space must be created for possibility.

People do not naturally go out using their imaginations to create a space of freedom for dialogue to happen. The power of risk and surprise came together when Martin Luther King Jr. used the power of imagination as he addressed groups and offered a sense of possibility. “He relied on their ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 1988, p. 102). Daily King set the table with possibilities by appealing to the imagination of the groups he spoke to. He envisioned the importance of a public space, a gathering space. Generally Americans “do not perceive the ‘darkness’ Arendt described; nor do they perceive the significance of a public space that might throw light” (Greene, 1988, p. 114). King imagined a difference as he opened up a public space for gathering. There was a coming together of people who were able to imagine what they could do.

One’s imagination must be used daily since obstacles and possibilities are always Present. In educational systems there must be a new regard for the imagination. A concern for the critical and imaginative tends to be at odds with technicist and behaviorist emphasis (Greene, 1988, p. 126). Through the visual arts students describe, analyze, interpret, and judge by connecting past events to the present. The imagination expands and “the mind is drawn to what lies beyond the accustomed boundaries” (Greene, 1988, p. 128). Known and unknown questions of possibilities are placed out there so others can see and hear another possibility.

To use the imagination there must be a discontentment. There must be space created, such as, “a curriculum that allows for the risks of which Dewey spoke and for surprise” (Greene, 1987, p. 22). For, basically we are creatures of habit, and it is a

struggle to be different for we must go out of our comfort zone. “The very existence of obstacles depends on the desire to reach toward wider spaces for fulfillment, to expand options to know alternatives” (Greene, 1988, p. 5). Through the arts, students are offered another pathway when obstacles are placed out there. Even though the walls are in place to make students turn back, the arts offer students another avenue for they can imagine other possibilities and other spaces. N. Scott Momaday has said that “We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined” (Momaday in Lippard, 1990, p. 248). Through the arts we imagine, we see, we create, and then we think and act to make a difference in society.

Freedom Created Daily

The creation of freedom is a daily journey. “Freedom, like love, is created every day in ways small and demanding, tedious, painful, and endured like time itself” (Greene, 1988, p. ix). Freedom is not an endowment, for we are always in a struggle to find it since we are created beings of choice, and we are not controlled like puppets. Yet there is always the struggle of choices of possibilities versus obstacles. Our sense of entitlement and privilege to freedom can be somewhat anesthetic. To this privilege of freedom we become numb and resist reaching out to others. Dewey emphasized the dangers of “recurrence, complete uniformity, the routine and mechanical” (1934, p. 272). There must be imagination to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in our communities. Imagination “is the only gateway through which these meanings can find their way into a present interaction” (Dewey, 1934, p. 272). Constantly there will be

struggles to have choices / possibilities and obstacles. There is always a struggle to find freedom and it changes daily as we and our communities change daily.

We are the creators, the authors of our world, our reality. Art education provides a “light space” as described by Hannah Arendt (Greene, 1988, p. 114). For our culture, we struggle with seeing “the darkness.” Through the visual arts we can become more aware of identities and identity shifts and begin to visually see the “other” and appreciate being in dialogue with the “other.” Denis Donoghue wrote:

The arts are on the margin, and it doesn't bother me to say that they are marginal... I want to say that the margin is the place for those feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn't have a place for, and mostly seem to suppress...It's enough that the arts have a special care for those feelings and intuitions which otherwise are crowded out in our works and days. With the arts, people can make a space for themselves, and fill it with intimations of freedom and presence (1983, p. 129).

The goal of the new more globally inclusive curricula being forged amid heated debate is the perception of Western civilization as one of many worth studying in a multicultural nation, where White students will encouraged to see themselves as simply another other (Lippard, 1990, p. 23).

The arts offer students a vision to work through obstacles and seek possibilities. Art is present for interpretation and to be used by all. It is possible that the visual arts might be able to make a contribution to the intercultural process far greater than literature, since it has not a language barrier. Yet, we must focus on the fact that we are part of a whole that we are all apart of it, and all of the histories have a connection to each other. Also, as the creators and authors of our world we must remember the process is on-going and does not have a definite end.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The focus of my scholarly and professional interests has been a lifetime in forming. My research is more than just another paper; it is a continual effort of thirty-nine years in rural art education on my part. My interests are in the life experiences of southern rural art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina as they connect race, class, gender, and religion through their involvement in art as a possible avenue in the creation of community.

Through the stories of these rural southern women art educators, my own personal stories, and the visual stories, my goal has been to seek the “invisible” artists, teachers, and those who support community arts. I want to show that women artists and teachers are not absent from art history. These women art educators attained success and recognition at a time when obstacles facing women art educators made success extraordinary. Lucy Lippard has suggested that we should learn more about the art, history, and people of the places where we live, work, and travel to overcome our stereotypical conceptions (Ulbricht, 2002, p.33). Likewise, the present art standard course of study speaks to understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture and providing opportunities to research the lives of artists and the role of art in culture. My goal is to use the narratives of these rural art educators to support the fact that through art a strong sense of community is possible.

Subjectivity Awareness

As I study the personal narratives of the rural art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina, I must, as the researcher, be careful to value the way in which the rural art educators chose to construct them as I am doing the evaluations.

Precisely because they are essential meaning-making structures, narratives must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished (Riessman, 1993, p. 4).

Initially up front, I as the narrative researcher should acknowledge my subjectivity. For, "We cannot rid ourselves of subjectivity, nor should we wish to; but we ought, perhaps, to pay it very much more attention" (Cheater, 1987, p. 172). My subjectivity comes from my very being, such as, race, class, gender, religion.

From the very beginning and throughout the research project there must be an effort to be in connection with my own subjectivity. My acknowledgement is as follows: Personally, I did not come from a family of artists, yet I had strong-willed parents. As a young girl, I grew up with the influence of Southern Baptist parents in a White rural middle class farming area with a more traditional 50s style family in which the father worked and the mother stayed at home to care for the young children. I truly experienced integration for the first time as a first year teacher in Gaffney, South Carolina, which I was unprepared for. The majority of my teaching career has been in a predominantly White rural school. In a capsule, this is my very being, my subjectivity, and this is what I must be conscious of in this project to avoid possible problems.

“Researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress” (Peshkin, 1982b, p. 17). If not identified there is a possibility of it forming, blocking, or transforming the written evaluation. To be aware of my subjectivity I must listen to my inner-self. What am I feeling or not feeling? I must look for the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings (Peshkin, 1982b, p. 18). If my subjective feelings are not monitored there is a risk of my written results sounding like an “all about me” project. When tamed, subjectivity avoids negative remarks when overly tempted, and jumping up and down when overly excited. For, “untamed subjectivity mutes the epic voice” (Peshkin, 1982b, p. 21). With a conscious subjectivity, I the researcher can avoid the bias traps that are out there surrounding my subjectivity.

The Participants / Rural Southern Women Art Educators

Through interviews of local people, local art educators, local arts council members, and community newspapers, I verbally sought participants. I looked for rural southern women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina that were 70 plus years of age. They may be viewed as the “invisible” artists, teachers, and supporters of the arts. Their students come from small towns and several small communities which are predominately White. The income levels are lower and middle class. Many of the jobs held by the parents of these women and their students were textile related, furniture manufacturing, and farming, such as, poultry production and tobacco farming. The

communities are limited in cultural resources, and it is usually a long drive to reach a gallery or museum.

I chose to interview the first art teacher in the rural North Carolina county that I teach in, one of the first art educators in the Wilkes County System, the first Black teacher who helped form the local arts council in Surry County, and an art teacher in Ferguson who created a village to support rural community art education and also taught in Caldwell County. The group of three White women art educators and one Black woman art educator is a good representation of the communities of that time period, and presently they all share and continue to share a definite passion for the arts and art education.

In the recruitment call I stated the following:

I am a doctoral student at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a rural art educator working on my dissertation. If you would, I would like for you to share your personal life's story with me. The purpose of my research is to present the oral histories of rural southern art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina who have been in art education more than thirty years. I want to look at the stories as related to gender, class, race, and religion. I will use an open ended question, such as, tell me the story of your life?

I asked them to sign a long consent form before any data was obtained. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes but not more than 2 hours. I asked to interview them once, with an opportunity to request a follow-up interview if needed. They were informed that transcripts of recorded interviews and meetings would not include any identifying names or other identifying aspects. I asked to meet with them at a place and time that was convenient for them.

As I listened to my tapes and read my transcripts, I looked for patterns and common fibers. For those being interviewed the open-ended question offered a time for reflection and opened the door to giving of one's self to the future. I looked at the stories as related to gender, class, race, religion, and their art connection.

Every society is concerned with art, including rural North Carolinians. "No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times" (Berger, 1977, p. 10). The visual arts in relation to history and a peoples' culture provides an opportunity to research the lives of artists, art educators, community art leaders and the role of art in their culture. Therefore, it is through visual stories that I am connected to the past. Just how are the visual stories of the past, such as those of 17th Century Dutch artist Judith Leyster, related to the narratives of rural art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina? Does art and the art history establishments render the educators of the Foothills invisible? It is about drawing strength from one's past and being able to connect to future generations, and through seeing (which comes first) and through narratives there is a realization that there is a larger whole which we are apart of, there is blending with obstacles and possibilities.

Through an open-ended question to the rural southern women art educators of the Foothills of western North Carolina, I am provided with an inside view of these invisible women art educators, for "an especially appealing attribute of oral history is the ease in which it can display the assets of those ordinarily considered to have none" (Casey, 1993, p. 220). For those being interviewed an open-ended question offers a time for reflection and opens the door to giving of one's self to the future. "The real question is to whom

does the meaning of the art of the past properly belong? To those who can apply it to their own lives, or to a cultural hierarchy of relic specialists” (Berger, 1977, p. 32)?

Through interviews and tape recordings I want to connect ‘living history’ to the past by using an open-ended question.

Narrative Research

Narrative research is the collection and analysis of people’s stories. Through this type of research I am able to view what the rural art educators are silent about, where they choose to start their story, what does not match up in their story telling, and what they choose to weave together. The open-ended “information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories and with selectivities, silences, and slippage that are intrinsic to its representation of reality” (Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 228). Through individual stories one’s culture speaks. Therefore, it is possible to examine racial oppression, gender inequalities, class, and religion and that which is taken for granted by the speaker.

In my narratives of the rural art educators, I am able to view selectivities, what they chose to tell. All of them selected to end their narratives where they are now in their lives, and clearly all of them defined themselves as art educators. As Mrs. Moore stated, as she finished her two and a half hour interview, “I didn’t talk about my love life or religion,” and basically this was true of the other two also. The silences of the women or what they chose not to talk about included husbands and integration. Slippage or information that does not seem consistent was present as Mrs. Moore reflected back to her childhood education. As a child Mrs. Moore remembered all as wonderful in a one

room school house with a nineteen year old teacher, but, as the “little teacher” at nineteen, Mrs. Moore does not embrace the one room school as she did as the young student. Also, in the responses from the rural southern women art educators, I looked for patterns that are created. This intertextuality describes the manner in which the text or work of art always refers to other texts (Barthes, 1977; Bal, 1997 in Reece, 2003, p. 34). As I viewed the narratives of these rural southern women art educators, their lives are woven with several common fibers ranging from strong-willed fathers to the joy of teaching.

The stories of those involved in rural southern art education of the Foothills of North Carolina, such as, art teachers, community arts leaders, and arts council leaders are very rich in details. As the interviewer, I am taken to another world through the stories to make or prove a point. Chronologically I focus on the common fibers and how they are woven. I move from the rural women’s childhood through adulthood art education narratives. Common fibers include the rural art educator as the outsider, the rural art educator as the insider, the love of God, strong willed fathers, the “wool of life,” relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching as art reaches out and offers possibility and connects to race, class, gender, and religion.

The stories of these rural southern woman art educators are very organized and they are also in charge of what they include, emphasize, omit, and where they choose to start. “Traditional approaches to qualitative analysis often fracture these texts in the service of interpretation and generalization by taking bits and pieces, snippets of a response edited out of context” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). A simple open-ended question

directed to the rural southern art educators of the Foothills, such as; tell me the story of your life? leads to a forty-five minute to a two and a half hour story. “Respondents (if not interrupted with standardized questions) will hold the floor for lengthy turns and sometimes organize replies into long stories” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). Through the individual stories of the rural southern women art educators their culture speaks.

Narrative research has a way of opening eyes to new possibilities and providing a new direction to experience and make connections. The “narrators speak in terms that seem natural, but we can analyze how culturally and historically contingent these terms are” (Rosenwald & Ochberg in Riessman, 1993, p. 5). These stories are very organized and the story teller is in charge of what they include, emphasize, omit, and where they begin. Through oral histories an element of surprise, suspense, or the unexpected is placed out there when an open-ended question, such as; tell me the story of your life? is asked. Yet, “An especially appealing attribute of oral history is the way in which it can display the assets of those ordinarily considered to have none” (Casey, 1993, p. 220). The narratives I gathered are rich and contained important life’s events which I found to be full of comments, flashbacks, reflection, and evaluations. The stories carried my research to unexpected heights and made space for possibilities that I could never expect to get with question-answer, interview, or observation. I expected to hear a story connected to the arts council, but I was taken to another point in time. This flashback to childhood was complete with reflection and evaluation. For this educator and arts council leader the method of reflection opened the doorway to giving of one’s self to the future.

Limitation of narrative analysis would be the size of studies and viewing language as a transparent medium. Large numbers are not effective in narrative research. Smaller numbers allow for the construction of a relationship between the researcher and the subject of the researcher, such as, the 4 rural art educators I interviewed. With this smaller number, open-ended interviewing tends to be lengthy, yet gives voice to those who tend to remain silenced through question-answer surveys. For, “the stories we tell, like the questions we ask, are all finally about value” (Cronon, 1992, p.1376). As the rural southern women art educators lives change so do their stories. Also, stories may change from one session to the next. Individuals can also construct the same story in varying ways. As the researcher, I must be aware of the competing views, such as, my view and their view. “The principal value of narrative is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories” (Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 228). Yet, to show variation it is felt there must be more than one case study in order to compare if a work is desirable.

The lives these rural women art educators of the foothills of North Carolina are woven with multiples of common fibers. Each of them spent a life time in rural art education in the foothills of North Carolina and all are 70 plus years in age. To each of them it is still important to be identified as still being a teacher and all came from families that valued education, even though education for females was not always highly valued by all at this time period. It is this formation that I looked at. Just what were their choices of action? How did they reach out to the community and make connections to make art happen? What are their common fibers that are woven together?

The Framing of an Art Teacher / Myself as a Researcher

Each of the rural women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina are framed and textured a little differently. As the researcher, just what does my framing look like? Initially I never dreamed of being a teacher pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or elementary school, nor did I join the Future Teacher's Club in high school. After all, I never played school as I saw my niece do as a child. My parents did not have an art background. So as a high school student and female of the sixties, my occupational choices were limited to teacher, nurse, or secretary. My high school curriculum of few elective choices was framing me into becoming a Home Economics major at Appalachian State Teachers College or maybe Women's College in Greensboro. What other possible choices did I have?

I reflected back to Mr. Auth's Art I and Art II classes at East Junior High School in Boise, Idaho. I had enjoyed the hand built pottery, interior design, and mixed media. There were bad days also when someone would throw clay and we all had to stay after school and clean the art room. Mr. Auth would turn red and his cheeks would blowup which is a feeling I can now identify with as an art teacher when clay happenings take place.

Moving from East Junior High School in Boise, Idaho, a city school that was more progressive that embraced and supported the arts, to a rural state 1-A championship basketball school was a rude awaking. During this time period girls' sports were removed from the high school. Integration had not taken place, so the Black kids were bused across county to Lincoln Heights which was the only Black school in the county.

So, I decided not to be framed. I would bring art education to me through mail order. I worked on value, contrast, texture, color, line, and I knew I wanted to do something with art, so I decided to go to Appalachian State Teachers College.

Even as a college art major, I did not envision myself teaching for any period of time. I should have know when Mr. White from Gaffney Senior High School in Gaffney, South Carolina appeared at the art room at Davie High School where I was finishing up my student teaching to interview me that this may not be the place for me, but it was a job opening. I would have a job in November when I finished my student teaching. I needed money since we had just gotten married. My art education courses and student teaching never prepared me for what I was about to encounter. My art room supplies consisted of typing paper, one brayer, three pairs of scissors, and a working kiln. The school had just integrated and of course the Black kids were moved over to the White school, so their identity to school was left on the other side of town. I never imagined teaching art in chaos. Ohio kids whose families had moved down because of the ball bearing plant in South Carolina hated this southern backward school. The Black students had no ties to the school and no wonder they didn't have an art teacher until after Thanksgiving and no wonder Mr. White drove from South Carolina to interview me. My days were spent looking for bombs, and the students were placed in the football field. I didn't know what bombs looked like. I did my best to teach hand built pottery with cops with Billy clubs outside my doorway. We did woodcuts as the Black students marched through town. The march did help to identify problems that needed to be addressed, such as, their sports trophies being brought over to the new school. Art education seemed to

unite the multiple diversities brought to this school. This is my reflection upon this difficult piece of a year.

Much like the other rural women Foothill's art educators of North Carolina, I always had the passion to create from a very young age. The desire to teach and the passion for teaching seemed to grow in time with the realization that there may not be graphic jobs readily available or maybe with the realization that painting may not generate a steady income which could be counted upon. The desire to be the creator came first and then the desire and passion to offer possibilities to others built with time. The true passion for art education is on-going and does not end with retirement or the illness that are to be faced as life comes to a close.

From the World View of the Existentialists

Through the oral histories of rural southern women art educators (70 plus in age) and visual stories, I wanted to listen to the stories of possibility and view the benefits to education in general. Just how have these rural southern women art educators united and formed communities through rural art education? Each of the women art educators expanded beyond the way they existed and defined themselves by finding other possibilities. Much like Dewey, the existentialist thinkers did not believe that the self was ready-made or pre-existent; it was he said, "Something in continuous formation through choice of action" (Dewey, 1916, p. 408). Each of these rural women art educator's narratives illustrate an on-going process, such as, using art as a cancer therapy to the building of a rural village to continue to reach those in a rural area with the arts. Through each of the narratives there is a real commitment, and all of the masks that are

worn are torn away in this form of togetherness. An open-ended question opens a space of possibility for multiple acts of randomness to flow together without reason and the design of the master plan. Where they begin their narrative, what they select to tell, what they leave out, and how they end their narratives may have been due to past happenings, present injustices or to deficits and discomforts associated with being alive at a particular time and place (Greene, 1988, p. 22). At this moment the vision of the responsibility comes forth. This connection made through narrative research makes us unique, irreplaceable, and one with the “other” and offers a space for possibility to be created. There is a view of lives in continuous formation as these rural southern women art educators continue the journey touching others through choice. They continue to make themselves visible through the arts in their communities.

CHAPTER IV

THE RURAL ART EDUCATOR AS OUTSIDER

This chapter, *The Rural Art Educator as Outsider*, centers on the forming of a rural art educator. It was through grace initially that these southern rural women art educators of the Foothills prepared and studied for an occupation that was not yet in their communities. Each of the women art educators expanded beyond the way they existed and defined themselves by finding other possibilities. Much like Dewey, the existentialist thinkers did not believe that the self was ready-made or pre-existent; it was he said, “Something in continuous formation through choice of action” (Dewey in Greene, 1988, p. 21-22). Each of these rural women art educator’s narratives illustrates an on-going process. The process of change for the rural southern art educators is not a one time event. It is a life time process from childhood memories, the framing of a rural art educator through college, and the struggles of teaching in the rural Foothills of North Carolina. They wedge their way into art education and live with the fact rural art education is “just something they decided to do.”

They are the “outsiders” creating multiple avenues of leadership in a predominately White setting. As the “outsiders” they are considered, “outside the circle, outside the set. It means being on the edges, on the margins, on the periphery” (Madrid, 1988, p.12). As there is awareness, they continue to cross boundaries. “Art in this sense is more than personal expression; it is also a means for transforming individual life and

society” (Efland, 1990, p. 203). As they draw strength from the past then there is a connection to future generations, and through the visual arts and through the narratives there is a realization that there is a larger whole of which they are apart of.

Childhood Art Memories

The passion to create emerged early on in the lives of the art educators of the Foothills. There was not an art curriculum in place in the local public schools. They did not come from upper class families that could afford private lessons, yet they had strong willed fathers and mothers that offered direction. Their lives mirrored the life of one of the “invisible” women of art history, Judith Leyster. The fact that Leyster was a woman painter was not all that unusual, but she was an “outsider” much like the educators of the Foothills, and she did not come from a family of amateur or professional painters. “She was the only woman known for certain to have established herself as a master painter in her youth and to have opened her own workshop as a single woman – all with out the help of an artistic family” (Welu/Biesboer, 1993, p. 66). Much like Leyster, the rural art educators of the Foothills were enticed by art at a young age. As Leyster did, they jumped in and got as much hands on experience as possible at an early age and found ways to study for their profession.

The influences to the work of the art educators came from living in rural farm areas. Initially some played with found materials. “There was no insistence on technique, no ordered method of study.... Method, material, subject, purpose, all these are left to the child’s free choice” (Macdonald, 1970, p. 345). Basically they experienced the use of different materials which is the “self-expression” position which is considered

best for children aged 3 to 9 years of age who need a chance to develop their own drawing language and experience different materials. This type of learning experience is described by an eighty year old Black arts council member. Mrs. Moore describes it this way, “What was so lovely about it and we took what we had on hand sponges, clay, and we would go for little art walks.” She reflected upon the “little art walks” in rural Yadkin County that she experienced as a child in school. This is her childhood recollection:

Let me go back a little bit in this little one teacher school we learned art, music, poetry - what was so lovely about and we took what we had on hand - sponges - clay - we would go for little art walks - find sticks - and make Lincoln logs - make maps out of paper mache and flour - make bowls - once a year all the little Black schools - Jonesville, Boonville, East Bend, Yadkinville, Flint Hill - county wide art competition - Oh that was an exciting time - everybody couldn't wait to get to Yadkinville - that was the county seat - some dignitary - superintendent would judge - all kinds of pretty work.

As an elementary student, Mrs. Moore experienced the arts being integrated into public schools by women teachers who had attended private schools. This happened as students schooled in private schools infiltrated the public schools and became teachers. The influences of feminine art education tended to promote the teaching of art as high culture, where as, male influences emphasized a more geometric structure (Efland, 1990, p. 147). Mrs. Moore describes the feminine influence in the rural Black school she attended:

Art work believe it or not - those teachers taught us about the old masters - opera - Shakespeare - believe it or not - Elizabeth Barrette Browning - this was in elementary school - believe it or not and there was some of the best learning - we got a smorgasbord - more when we got to high school because we had those Black teachers who were intense about what you were to learn.

All of the rural women art educators of the Foothills grew up in period that valued Child Art. Prior to the turn the twentieth century Manual Drawing was stressed, and children's artwork was judged by grown-up standards. With Franz Cizek and the "Child Art Movement," children's art was viewed as sacred. Cizek thought it important to cultivate and protect children from the destructive influences of adult art. "Exemplary teachers stimulated children's imagination either by use of word pictures, by helping them recall experiences, or by exposing them to visual or tactile experiences" (Efland, 1990, p. 222). Generally, what adults label as wrong in Child Art is the most beautiful and precious. Cizek, like Henri Matisse, placed value on art work done by small children for it is the first and purest source of artistic creation.

Elementary art education in the rural Foothills was non existent if the elementary teacher was not gifted to do so, with the exception of holiday art. This was an attempt to provide some type of art education, but certainly not quality art education. Mangravite stressed that the teaching of art even at the elementary level is best done by a highly qualified artist-teacher. Peppino Mangravite expressed his view in this manner:

I believe that it is absolutely impossible for anyone who is not an artist to succeed in teaching art. The made-to-order teacher of art depends upon standardized methods rather than his own sensibilities. No one but an artist has the delicate intuition to sense what another person is trying to express (1932, p. 33).

The inclusion of "holiday art," such as, Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, Easter, and Christmas often consisted of coloring hand-outs. Coloring hand-outs were considered great if you stayed within the lines and created a smooth texture. This was "good art." There was little encouragement to be unique or creative and the arts were not

connected to the other disciplines. In these closed-ended art processes, the teacher controlled the activity and the outcome. Students were shown what to make, and told how to make it. The success was determined on how closely it resembled the example that had been shown. There was some learning, such as following directions, but students did not think creatively or provide personal input, therefore, the project was not self-expressive or creative art. In the end all of the projects tended to look the same, much as if they had been mass produced.

When there was not an opportunity offered in public schools for art education students often attempted self education. Mrs. Finney describes her attempt to improve her artistic skills. She stated, “I started out just coping cartoons and such or copying coloring books or whatever, and found I could do that. Of course, it was always looking at something.” Victor Lowenfeld would have frowned upon the coping of coloring books, but the “drawing as learning” advocates feel that copying from pictures can be a “stepping stone” to getting the interest flowing and not a bad thing at all now, more to build confidence and develop techniques. Yet the “self-expression theorists” insist that copying from pictures is not only harmful to expression but unnecessary since learning occurs through the exploration of materials. Moderation is the important key.

Art education in rural areas initially was available to only the privileged through private lessons or after school programs that targeted those who could afford it. In this type of situation art creates diversity, for only certain students are given the privileged tool to work with and others are excluded. Two of the rural educators that are sisters had

an aunt with a vision for the two girls, and she paid for their art lessons. This is one's reflection:

Well my oldest sister Edith – 6 years older than me – could always draw and paint – I've always admired her - still do to this day – she influenced me so much because – I wanted to draw like her – I started out just copying cartoons and such or copying coloring books or what ever, and found I could do that - of course it was always looking at something.

Mrs. Finney used coloring books but her Aunt invested in her and provided a more interesting and creative option which was lessons with a variety of different kinds and colors of paper, sketch books, paints, ect. More value was placed on her original creations than the adult-generated coloring books. Mrs. Finney speaks of the involvement of an aunt and a strong-willed father who made all of this possible:

And when my Aunt, who had already started Ellen on her journey with art lessons saw that I enjoyed it too – she sent us both up to Lenoir to Mrs. Gant who was a private art teacher at that time – Daddy would take us up to the county line to meet the bus – the bus would take us on the Lenoir – we would probably walk two miles from bus station to Mrs. Gwyn's house – and we took art for years and years – I continued even after Edith stopped and she went on to art school at Richmond Professional Institute.

This aunt knew it was important to create a sense of confidence at this developmental stage. Other wise they would not continue as they reached adolescence. They would reach the "Age of Decision" as defined by Lowenfeld. In the Period of Decision (stage six of Lowenfeld's theory of development), the student (age 14 to 16) makes the decision to continue to create art or makes the decision to leave it alone and adopt the attitude of "I can't draw." The natural development in the visual arts will

cease unless a conscious decision is made by the adolescence to reconnect. This crisis is connected to body, emotions, and mind. In the thinking of the adolescent, art must establish a “realist” relationship to the environment and when it does not these students become critically aware of their inabilities and are easily discouraged.

Lowenfeld stated, “A work of art is not a product of nature; it is a product of human spirit, thinking, and emotions, and can only be understood when the driving forces which lead to its creation are understood” (1947, p. 156). Therefore, proper teaching methods can counter act the crisis and get the student “started” who has no confidence in his abilities and his own creative activity. Lowenfeld felt that, “Techniques should be developed, not taught; they must be born of the need for Expression” (1947, p. 154). The student of lower self esteem must be given the means and tools to create in his self the desire to go ahead. For these students, working directly with the materials provides a tremendous satisfaction.

Lowenfeld’s solution was to enlarge their concept of adult art to include non-representational art and other more functional art, such as, pottery, weaving, ect. When the more functional forms of art are offered in an art course, the “I can’t draw” student is drawn into the art program and soon becomes an “I think I can be creative” student. For this success to happen, an exact fit between the learning style of the child and the teaching style must be made. The primary focus is on the student, not the plan, and not the expectation. The creative process stimulates creativeness in general. With improved creativeness of an individual, his greater sensitivity toward experiences, and his increased ability to integrate them, the quality of his aesthetic experience will grow.

Rural public education offered little support of the visual arts as the educators of the Foothills went through high school. “Programs in art, music, and physical education were part of the middle-class ideal, and in the suburban schools these subjects were usually taught by specialists (in fact, the hiring of such specialists had become common in a number of suburban communities prior to World War II)” (Efland, 1990, p. 229). The theory of art for arts sake, the pursuit of beauty for its own sake was replaced with the theory of art as a means of solving the everyday problems of living. Winslow describes this reconstructionist theory as follows, “Art as a service to men loving a common life, art as a means of attaining community goals, is certainly needed in the modern school” (1939, p. viii). In rural areas these theories for visual arts were integrated only if the teacher was talented and capable of doing so for there was not an art curriculum in place in the rural schools of the Foothills.

The Framing of a Rural Art Educator / College Education

At the college level the educators of the Foothills studied art history using text books that were void of women artists. Barbara Ehrlich White (1976) observed, women artists simply did not appear in any of the basic college art history textbooks, such as, Janson, Gardner, or Gombrich prior to 1974. This is one of multiple ways that “art and art history establishments had rendered women artists, great and good, invisible” (1976, p. 340-344). Prior to 1974 few women had managed to get their works in museums and art galleries. With little formal training in art initially, the women of the Foothills were framed to question if there had been any great women artists? Their answers came in revised versions of art history books as they progressed with their teaching careers. This

improvement evolved with women authors who were art historians and those who addressed the high school level rather than the college level.

The art educators of the Foothills spoke of art experiences early in life which were more creative self-expression, and then at the college level, which was more structured around community life and its purposes. There seemed to be a void in art education as far as high school goes. They were the “outsiders.” As they moved on to college, they were influenced by the storm clouds of the Second World War. The political events (take over by the Nazi regime) influenced the pedagogical legacy of the Bauhaus which lives on in our colleges, universities, and public school classrooms. It became firmly entrenched in the art colleges through the institutionalization of foundation design courses which were initiated by Bauhaus teachers who immigrated to the United States. The Bauhaus provided a stylistic bridge between the fine and applied arts. When the Nazi regime came into power in 1932, they closed the Bauhaus. The faculty scattered and several settled in the United States.

The preliminary course (Vorkurs), which was fundamental to the whole Bauhaus program became the Bauhaus’s principal legacy to American art education. As they settled, the group played a large role in our own schools and university art departments in the decades following 1933 by establishing themselves as an intellectual force in American cultural life (Efland, 1990, p. 214-218). Moholy-Nagy taught at Illinois Institute of Design and also attempted the task of transferring the Bauhaus as an educational idea in its entirety to the U.S. and establishing a school at the same time (Neumann, 1970, p. 236). Albers taught at Black Mountain College sixteen years and ten

years at Yale University (Neumann, 1970, p. 170). This made him an influential interpreter of Bauhaus idea. In each area that they settled in they transformed the teaching of the fine arts, industrial design, architecture, and the crafts according to the standards established by Bauhaus (Efland, 1990, p. 255-6). Their goals being to unite the structural and the decorative arts so there were no barriers.

Bauhaus revolution also aided in the feminist advancement. The women of the Bauhaus expanded their traditional cultural roles to devote themselves to their art work. Women like Marianne Brandt (metals shop) expanded their traditional cultural roles to devote themselves to their art work and in the end aided the Bauhaus revolution in feminist advancement.

The connection between two key movements (Froebel's kindergarten and the Bauhaus) and the link to professional art schools and public classrooms throughout the United States altered the mental habits of the general populace. "Painters brought their modernist styles into American studios and classrooms, and art historians richly infused the intellectual scene" (Efland, 1990, p. 223). This is the environment that influenced the rural art educators of the Foothills to reach for that which was not yet in their communities. Mrs. Moore describes her college experience as getting a "real education during this time period." She reflects upon going to the Sarah Lawrence of the South:

I went to an all girls Presbyterian School - I called the Sarah Lawrence of the South at that time. That's where I really ran into the most positive - the most beautiful - my little mind was so wide open - I wanted to join to be in everything - I know that I only had four years because my parents didn't have a lot of money. I didn't fool around five or six years like these kids do now.

but most of the teachers - we had teachers from New York, Penn. - most them White - my music dance teacher was from Boston - my psychology teacher was from France - my philosophy teacher_____ - she was from China - religion from West Indies - so we had a smorgasbord which was beautiful and in the early 40s - I got an education from all sources - North – South - some teacher from Charleston, S. C. - teachers from the U.S. mostly White - some Black - so, I got a real - real education.

As Mrs. Moore experienced getting “a real education,” she was the “outsider” just as the Bauhaus school was the “outsider” that influenced change to the old academies of art. The Bauhaus school aimed to rescue all of the art from the isolation in which each then found itself and to encourage the individual artisans and craftsmen to work cooperatively and combine all of their skills. Also, the school set out to elevate the status of crafts to the same level enjoyed by fine arts. A third aim of the Bauhaus was to maintain contact with the leaders of industry and craft in an attempt to eventually gain independence from government support by selling designs to industry. As this is a basis, the Bauhaus began and influenced our lives immensely in ways that most people probably take for granted much like the rural art educators.

Teaching in the Rural Foothills

Generally these women all had a sense of hope that someday they would be teaching art in a rural area. The desire to teach and the passion for teaching seemed to grow in time with the realization that there may not be graphic jobs readily available or maybe with the realization that painting may not generate a steady income which could be counted upon. Even the master painter 17th Century Dutch painter Judith Leyster provided instruction for students in her studio after becoming a master painter. The

desire to be the creator comes first and then the desire and passion to offer possibilities to others builds with time. This is the framing of Mrs. Finney:

I graduated from college with a teaching certificate in art there were still no jobs in Wilkes County in art - so I taught kindergarten at my church and -then I began my family of six children and what I did after that was to teach privately – I taught privately for years and years - even though I was teaching in the morning kindergarten and preschool – then they finally did start having art in the schools.

With no official art job available, Mrs. Finney used the kindergarten (the seed of the modern era) to begin her teaching profession. This international force for change that never appears in discussions about the roots of modern art and is only rarely mentioned as an influence on the movement’s pioneers is called kindergarten. “It was the seed-pearl of the modern era (German for ‘children’s garden or garden of children’)” (Brosterman, 1997, p. 7). It has been ignored simply because its participants were three to seven years old. Its birth was the seed for cultural advances and surely changed the world. The early history is not obscure in the least. A German crystallographer and pedagogical revolutionary named Friedrich Froebel developed kindergarten and its play gifts in Germany during the 1830s as a teaching system for young children. After his death in 1852, kindergarten was successfully transplanted in the U.S., most of the countries of Europe, and the Far East.

Froebel saw that learning began when consciousness erupts and felt education must also. Froebel recognized mothers as children’s first teacher and women as early childhood professionals, and fostered the concept of teacher training for women in early

childhood education (Moore, 2002, p.15). Froebel wrote about the ideal qualifications for a kindergarten teacher as follows:

Obviously, they must be skilled in those things which are common to both other and child, since they are to play the part of mediators, so that they can take the place of the mother in caring for and instructing her child; they must therefore be able to lend a hand to the mistress of the house in her housewifely cares, upon emergency, as well as able to relieve her of the burden of watching, attending on, and educating her child. Wherefore such women must be trained in all the work of the house, as well as in the education and care of children (1887, p. 30).

Through this female-led kindergarten movement, neglected children were provided education through “play” in this very vital stage of a child’s development. In the use of the “Gifts,” girls were placed at an equal level with boys as they collaborated in using the geometric blocks. Froebel may have not had this as a goal, since *The Education of Man* Froebel speaks only of the development of the boy and only rarely mentions the word girl. I don’t think Froebel envisioned how much his kindergarten movement would be interwoven into the 19th Century feminist movement. He did though have the vision to know that it was imperative to engage children’s nascent faculties as early as possible.

The challenges for rural art education included just having the opportunity, trying to find an open door, and not having a curriculum. Yet these art educators had the vision to prepare for that which was not yet out there. Mrs. Finney describes the challenges of becoming a rural art educator:

I went away to college my first instinct was to major in elementary education but I took a lot of art courses and I went to a small college – Greensboro College and I just dearly loved it and I dearly loved every art class that I took so I decided to

change my major – which did not slow me down as far as graduating because I had to take all of the necessary things anyway, but I did major in art and decided to get a teachers certificate because I knew I was not good enough to make a living painting or drawing and at that time graphic design jobs were not available around here and - actually when I graduated from college with a teaching certificate in art there were still no jobs in Wilkes County in art - so I taught kindergarten at my church.

The beginning of art education in the rural areas was done by wedging a way into the system. Mrs. Finney wedged her way into the public schools through a church kindergarten. Her sister, also an art educator progressed into the public school system through offering private lessons initially and then after school art lessons. This is her reflection:

Then after I finished art school, I came home and married a farmer and - which was fine - loved it being on the farm - grew up on a farm - but somehow needed to do something else - needed to get involved with art so I started some private lessons at my home - on the farm - my first student - I had one art student to start with - he was a delightful young man - he could not afford art lessons - so he was my free art student - I gave him free art lessons and things sort of grew - few more students came in and so we enjoyed being together - painting and drawing and so forth - so just had a few private classes here with just a few students - then later - this was back when you could do music lessons, piano lessons, and art lessons in a public school - you could charge the children for their classes and so forth.

Through multiple avenues, the kindergarten movement, private lessons, and after school lessons, art was incorporated into the rural public school system. Art was also incorporated through multiple disciplines. As the “outsider,” Mrs. Moore describes how she wove art into the curriculum:

Always at that time I knew I couldn’t make a living in dance nor art - but I integrated art into everything I taught - it was art connected - that is just the way I did it because when you had kids hard reading or couldn’t comprehend something

- it was easier to put feeling and knowledge on paper - it was amazing what they could draw.

Through art Mrs. Moore meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Like Greene, she and the other rural art educators believed “that it is possible to make works of art available to all kinds of children” (Greene, 1977, p. 302). They share a pride in the rural even though it maybe described as “a little place, a wide place in the road called Shacktown or this little town is not fancy, but I have lived there all my life.” As the “outsider” they wedged their way into the school systems, they describe how strong willed they must be to make their dreams and possibilities happen. Some art educators grow up knowing they are going to become teachers, such as, Mrs.Cooper:

I have always loved to draw and paint and when I was just a little girl I would draw with crayons and everything - could never get enough drawing and painting and always felt like I would like to be a teacher - an art teacher - or and artist - one didn't especially think about being an art teacher but I wanted somehow to deal with art - so when I finished high school I took some private art lessons when I was just a child and then went off to college and took commercial art - and then I liked that pretty good - it was a little tight for me - then went on to New York City and studied painting in New York City and found that was what I really wanted to do - but I was glad I had the commercial art background - that has helped me as far as work goes.

It was through grace that these women were called and for them teaching remains a passion. It is the vision of limitless possibilities and by divine intervention the gifted art teacher is called, for the work of an educator is a calling / a passion.

Rural Art Education / Just Something They Decided to Do

A quality art program involves essentially three elements, which includes a sufficient number of art teachers, teachers of high quality with the expertise to develop

outstanding art programs, and funds to procure adequate basic supplies and equipment (Wessel, 1978, p. 24). Generally art education in the Foothills was “just something they decided to do.” There was not a curriculum in place, art teachers were spread thin, and supplies and equipment were limited. Mrs. Finney speaks of being the only art educator in a very large rural system and trying to train non-art educators to teach art:

Then they finally did start having art in the schools – but I was the only one – only art teacher – I went to all 18 schools and course you can imagine that all I could do was do workshops for teachers and show them something they could incorporate with what they were teaching – It was not well received – very few teachers would go back and do anything with it – they listened politely - but didn’t do anything with it – and I could understand that – because they were not trained in art.

As Mrs. Finney attempted to train non-art educators, she was quickly reminded that the teaching of art at any level, including the elementary level is best done by a highly qualified artist / teacher. Through schooling and the art curricula taught, students can feel marginalized in their classrooms and unconnected to their school and community when they are not provided quality art educators, facilities, and art materials. Mrs. Cooper speaks of being spread too thin as an art educator:

I taught in five schools - going from school to school - with no place to call a classroom - in the basements to classrooms I carried equipment and everything on a cart - I was teaching at three schools a day, and that was a real challenge - you might say a burn out challenge - it was hard - I was teaching from K-12 grades at that time.

In Mrs. Cooper’s words, “Art had it rough back in those days - you just a - it was simply like that in Wilkes and Caldwell - just could not afford really to have art teachers -

it was not in the curriculum - really it was something they decided to do.” Mrs. Cooper describes the beginning conditions that art was taught in:

I taught in all kinds of situations - The room I had in Lenoir High School was one of the coldest rooms - the heat never got there - you were teaching with your gloves on - you were teaching with your coat on - just to stay warm - my daughter had it worst when she started teaching - she is also an art teacher - she taught at the Granite Falls High School - she taught in the boys bathroom (laugh) and old boys bathroom - so art had it rough back in those days - you just a - it was simply like that in Wilkes and Caldwell - just could not afford really to have art teachers - it was not in the curriculum - really it was something they decided to do.

Initially art education was just added without a curriculum in place, without a means of acquiring supplies, and no thought to equipment that might possibly be needed. It just started happening without a real plan. The two new high schools in Yadkin County were built in the late sixties and art was thrown in the curriculum at the last minute after the construction of the buildings. Needless to say, the art rooms were just regular classrooms with no sinks or tables to accommodate art. One art teacher was expected to meet the needs of two high schools. She taught two periods at one school and then drove to the other one to teach three more periods therefore, the driving took up her planning time. This is Mrs. Hart’s reflection:

I was transferred to Forbush High School and Starmount High School. We had an art department in both schools by then. I was trying to think when the schools were first built - it was 1967 - I think that is right and then they put in an art department..... well, it was sort of like a little old room - 204 B - it was a regular classroom and they put me a sink in there and then some cabinets.

Daily as Mrs. Hart tried to meet the needs of two very different high schools the students saw the conditions that she and they were struggling to work in. In this way rural students begin to label themselves when they arrive in a classroom that is lacking in supplies, a quality art teacher, and equipment. Mrs. Cooper speaks of the lack of supplies and dealing with that problem:

Anyway they didn't give you much money for materials - you just had to scrounge - for what ever you could get - I would use all kinds of junk materials - I used a lot of money out of my own pocket which I couldn't afford - I even bought easels and everything - I think when I first started teaching in the Lenoir High School I think they gave me fifty dollars that year for art materials for three classes - if you can believe that - so I scrounged - I would go any where and every where to find scrap materials to use even in the elementary and middle schools - it was tough to just find materials and - I found such talented students delightful students - they were wonderful and so eager for art - and very, very talented students.

Students, as well, as teachers begin to question their value as an individual when there is little to work with. In a land mark case in Cincinnati, the Board of Education vs. Franklin Walter, the court ruled that neither property valuation nor local mileage should determine educational opportunity (Wessel, 1978, p. 24). Land mark cases are a good influence, but it takes the determination of a quality art educator to make quality art education happen. Mrs. Cooper describes her lengthy struggles to make rural art education happen and success for each student as they got to experience clay and working to create a 3-D piece:

And they finally were able to buy a kiln in the school system and so what I would do - this was back breaker - but I wanted each child to have the experience of being able to work with clay - so I would let all of the kids in the five schools work with clay and I would haul it over the one school and fire it then take it back

- and it was a job - five schools doing clay - but we did it - it was a lot of fun - we enjoyed that.

Mrs. Cooper valued the importance of being able to experience both two-dimensional and three-dimensional art works. Through the art curriculum she recognized that there must be value placed upon multiple ways of knowing and questioned difference and recognized the fact that we are not all the same. Like Bell Hooks she believed that “learning is a place where paradise can be created” (1994, p. 207). In this paradise, Mrs. Cooper had a great vision that her students could not imagine. Yet, her students saw that she believed in them, and they achieved despite all of the odds. When high standards of belief are set, students learn to meet the expectations. It is ultimate to make students believe that the teacher believes in them. For education is a “process that shapes all aspects of our being human (Shapiro, 2006, p. 52).” What we believe as educators is a powerful influence on our students’ achievement. Through the journey students learn to value themselves, their history, and acquire a passion for learning.

The work of a rural art educator is a calling / a passion, and “to teach is to create possibilities,” (Freire, 1998, p. 49) even though in the rural area “it was just something they decided to do.” Eisner states that a, “Curricula in which the arts are absent or inadequately taught rob children of what they might otherwise become” (1991, p. 42). Mrs. Cooper incorporated multiple strategies which were appropriate for all of the students involved. She speaks of exposing students to the visual arts through shows and field trips:

We would have art shows at the schools and at the gallery in Lenoir - and I would try to take the students to the gallery and little field trips and run them over there - they had never been exposed much to art and this was delightful for them.

She provided a learner-centered environment which helped to meet the individual needs and helped unite the diversity of the group. Students were given the opportunity to think, explore, and construct meaning while being given opportunities for social interaction. Mrs. Cooper describes organizing a New York trip with her daughter who was also an art educator:

She and I teamed up on taking my students to New York - some of them had never been on an airplane - out of Caldwell County to them this was a wonderful experience and so I would take a group of students up for the weekend - we would probably leave Friday afternoon late and come back on Sunday night - a very quick trip - we would see as much as possible - we would see a Broadway play and go to all the art galleries we could possibly go to - and just expose them to city life - it was a great experience for them.

As a rural art educator she realized that, “We have to work to move from the “one-size-fits-all” standard of culture and education, to a far more complex view of human ability, talent, creativity, knowledge, and reason” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 143). Different learning styles reduced over-reliance on language as the single means of getting information or making meaning. After all, Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences has made “clear, human ability and intelligence exist in a wide variety of forms (Shapiro, 2006, p. 142). Critical thinking skills develop as students are provided with activities that enhance their capacities for imagination, intuition, reasoning, and evaluation.

Crossing Boundaries / Past and Present

Rural southern art educators and students arrive in the classroom with visual images in their head that can divide, separate, and sort them. Through their world view they have established their place the community and surrounding world. Rural art students may feel that they are the invisible much like rural women art educators and woman artists prior to 1974 in the college art history books. Yet, through art education students begin to understand who they are, what they stand for, and what boundaries are being crossed. Art can be used more as an experience, much as Dewey described it. “Art in this sense is more than personal expression; it is also a means for transforming individual life and society” (Efland, 1990, p. 203). Through the visual arts students can focus on identity awareness by coming to terms with self-naming, being labeled, and the shifting identities that they are often forced into. As there is awareness, their stories of history, race, class, gender, family, and religion can be told. As this happens there is a drawing of strength from one’s past and then a connection to future generations, and through the visual arts and through narratives there is a realization that there is a larger whole which they are apart of, and then there is blending with obstacles and possibilities which is an ongoing process.

.

.

CHAPTER V

THE RURAL ART EDUCATOR AS INSIDER

In this chapter I focus on the creation of freedom through a variety of relationships (connectedness) which is a daily journey for the rural southern women art educators. “Freedom, like love, is created every day in ways small and demanding, tedious, painful, and endured like time itself” (Greene, 1988, p. ix). It is not an endowment, for we are always in a struggle to find freedom since we are created beings of choice, and we are not controlled like puppets. Yet there is always the struggle of choices of possibilities verses obstacles for the rural southern art educators. Through multiple and diverse pathways of freedom, art is incorporated around strong-willed fathers, the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), rural relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching.

I focus on the fact that these women were called through the grace of God into a profession that was not out there yet. Through everything they do, art is connected to their lives, and they are able to imagine other ways of knowing and can envision other possibilities, which is not possible for others. Through relationships with other rural art educators, students, and the community these educators find beauty, wholeness, and symbolic meaning. Their personal educational struggles happened throughout their lives and are on-going. Multiple times the art educators stressed through their narratives how

much they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they are still teachers regardless of their ages.

Strong-Willed Fathers

The freedom women find, as opposed to men seems to have been within the context of connectedness. Collins asserts that people become human and empowered only in the context of a community, and only when they “become seekers of the type of connections, interactions, and meeting that lead to harmony” (1991, p. 185). Through grace early in life the rural southern art educators received an enabling power to progress. This support was initiated early in life through strong-willed fathers. They thought in terms of expansion and new connections. They connected past and present experiences. Mrs. Moore describes her father as “thinker and a doer:”

So, I started to Yadkin High School – let me back up – there were not schools in Yadkin County for Black kids in those days – so what happened - a the parents if they could afford would send their kids somewhere else to school like – Dudley in Greensboro, Dunbar in Lexington, or Wilkesboro.

Out of necessity this strong-willed father collaborated with community leaders to provide a school for the Black students in the county.

So my Dad was always a thinker and a doer – Oh wait, too many kids need an education – so I got four more here – so he worked, and worked, and worked along with a lot of other parents in Yadkin County – till they got one man to go to Raleigh to introduce a bill to empower the board of education and the county commissioners to start a school for Blacks in Yadkin County – so I was one of the first graduates in 1943.

These strong-willed fathers valued education. In order to have an understanding of a different perspective, they realized that there must be an involvement in the educational process and not just a verbally shared experience. This was a time period that higher education for females, which were not upper class, was not always valued. Mrs. Hart speaks of her two sister's lack of value. She remembers them preferring a husband over an education:

I grew up in a little town – a little place – a wide place in the road called Shacktown, and its about four miles from Yadkinville.- all of us went to school – almost all of us went to college. Dad – Daddy wanted us to have an education and he wanted us to go to college. Some of us did and some of us didn't. I had – well one sister that did not go – well two of them didn't go to college. They had rather have a husband than a college education, but we enjoyed each other and had a lot of fun.

These strong-willed fathers valued an education and knew and valued their own world view. Yet, they understood that their way of viewing the world was just one of many different views of the world for others hear and see a different view of the world. They envisioned that, “We have to work to move from the ‘one-size-fits-all’ standard of culture and education, to a far more complex view of human ability, talent, creativity, knowledge, and reason” (Shapiro, 2006, 143). They listened and remained open to the voiceless people, and they learned to hear with their hearts. Mrs. Moore speaks of this enabling power of progression that her father and mother demonstrated in her life:

I grew up just wanting to do as much as I could for everybody and I had a lot of friends, but really it took us along time to realize why we couldn't just go half a block up the street to school – but we questioned it – just a matter – we just did it – you know not any malice – not any animosity – we just did what we thought was right to do.

- and I guess we were not aware that ---Blacks and Whites were not supposed to go to school together – our parents didn't focus on that – they focused on giving us a good background and making us feel like – making us feel like we could do anything we wanted to do regardless of what stumbling blocks were we could overcome that – without being volatile, like these kids are today.

These strong-willed fathers empowered their children to overcome the control of politics, the stereotypes, and the other barriers which prevented them from seeing the “other.” As young people, they learned to value the fact that people are experts on their own lives, and enjoyed learning from and with other cultures through art and not just about them. Through the involvement of parents and other community members cultural, historical, and political roots were discovered. They examine the intersections and interconnections of race, gender, class, religious belief, and ability. They united and connected to their school, families, and communities. Critical pedagogy provided these students with the essential knowledge, experiences, and skills to function, learn, think, and communicate across cultures.

The Cotton Wool of Daily Life

The lives of the rural women art educators of the Foothills are bound by relationships, children, and house hold duties. Virginia Woolf compared this struggle of confinement and constriction of daily life to “the cotton wool of daily life” (1939 / 1976, p. 72). Through this daily struggle there is a connection to the invisible women painters of the past. Through the visual histories and oral histories from the past strength is given to us which enables us to connect to future generations. Before the narrative is the visual. “No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the

world which surrounded other people at other times” (Berger, 1977, p. 10). The visual and oral stories of the invisible women artists, such as, 17th Century Dutch painter Judith Leyster, as well, the women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina speak of the confinement and constriction of daily life. Their art careers are defined by marriage, the birth of children, the schooling of children, and elderly parents. The daily chores of housework and child care leave little space for the creative spirit of rural art educators much like their 17th Century predecessor. They divide their careers by the arrival of each child or when the twins arrived, “I just resigned.” Their lives are bound by relationships, children, and house hold duties. They carve out their own Walden Pond or other spaces of freedom to support the creative spirit. Mrs. Cooper describes her Walden Pond or space of freedom that she needed to add fulfillment to her life in the rural area:

Then after I finished art school, I came home and married a farmer and - which was fine - loved it being on the farm - grew up on a farm - but somehow needed to do something else - needed to get involved with art so I started some private lessons at my home - on the farm - my first student - I had one art student to start with - he was a delightful young man - he could not afford art lessons - so he was my free art student - I gave him free art lessons and things sort of grew - few more students came in and so we enjoyed being together - painting and drawing and so forth - so just had a few private classes here with just a few students.

Connectedness is a form of freedom for these women. Through everything they do, art is connected to their lives, and they are able to imagine other ways of knowing and can envision other possibilities, which is not possible for others. Through the narratives of art educators, 70 plus years old, in the rural Foothills of North Carolina, I saw they have time to reflect and tell stories of where they have been during their lives journey and

where they hope to continue on their journey. Mrs. Hart describes her art connection and just how different it is:

In life art is still a part of it... I am really glad. I can see things and do things that other people can't do or see. They are just not trained as artists are trained. It is just a different feeling - it is completely different and I enjoy it very much.

Mrs. Hart was trained to see differently. Through aesthetic experiences she is able to get into and discover herself and others. "No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times. In this respect images are more precise and richer than literature" (Berger, 1977, p. 10). Through seeing critical skills and awareness are out there to enable the viewer to decide upon different possibilities and other possible meanings to them.

Through seeing the trained artist has the skills to recognize and engage in the aesthetic experience. The visual offers possibility of the connection of us to past people, events, and creates visions of possibilities for the other. With interpretive skills we are able to view connectedness in a culture of the past, such as, images left to us by Judith Leyster. Through the medium of painting, 17th Century Dutch artist Judith Leyster speaks to the viewer concerning the culture of the past. To our culture she speaks through the visual image as she invites us into her studio. It is through painting past people and events that we connect to the present and to future events.

The "wool of life" experienced by the rural art educators (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), seems to mirror that of 17th Century Dutch painter Judith Leyster. I stand in awe as I begin my historical research in the National Gallery standing

before Judith Leyster's original 17th Century *Self Portrait*. This is a primary source and all other prints and reproductions would be a secondary source. Through the visual stories of Judith Leyster (a woman artist whose talent equaled or passed that of Frans Hal at age twenty), there is a struggle with confinement, much like the confinement described by the rural educators as they returned to the rural areas after studying art in New York and other areas. She welcomes us into her studio in her *Self Portrait*, but she is not dressed to paint. As a single woman she laughs and freely places her arm upon the chair as she turns toward the viewer. She is a confident master painter with students studying under her. She had the privilege to sign her works and be recognized as a valued 17th Century Dutch painter. As a married Dutch painter, she may have been created to feel a sense of guilt if she did not fulfill household tasks, child care, and the expected obligations of the husband and family. Her signed works vanish after marriage, and she may have continued to paint under her husband's name. The visual narratives that she painted speak to the individual viewer.

Through painting past people and events connect us to the present and to future events. In this piece of history there is a relationship between the past and the present concerning race, gender class, and religion. Literally the painting's historical moment is there before our eyes (Berger, 1977, p. 31). Yet, I must remember that my view and interpretation may be different than any other researcher of the same event or person. I must always be aware that my subjective is ever present. It is about drawing strength from one's past and being able to connect to future generations.

Judith Leyster gave up her freedom to paint when she married Jan Molenaer, as far as signing her name on a piece of art work. It is thought she may have collaborated with Molenaer in painting to support the family business. In her *Self Portrait* prior to her marriage, she cheerfully invites us into her studio, but in the *Duet* she solemnly fulfills her duties as a wife. Things may not be as perfect as they appear, for an orange, the symbol of paradise is half peeled in the *Duet*. For her there was no space of freedom to create, paint, and be recognized for her work and ability as an artist. Like the art educators of the Foothills, she may have carved a tiny space in her schedule to create and to paint, but because of upbringing there was an obligation felt to live a life that was “belted” as described by Emily Dickinson (Greene, 1988, p. 61). She put all of her efforts into supporting her husband’s art.

“Women are just more prone to think in terms of responsibility” (Greene, 1988, p. 84). It was Judith Leyster’s responsibility to her husband and family to support her husband’s painting career rather than her own. Due to upbringing whatever freedom she could have achieved was conditioned by obligation and relationship (Greene, 1988, p. 59). Women are “belted” to feel a sense of guilt if they did not fulfill house hold tasks, child care, and the expected obligations of the husband and family, such as, Mrs. Finney who gave up art education for a moment in time. She stated, “By this time I had already had three children then I had twins and I decided to resign at this time.” The rural art educators of the Foothills, as well, as 17th Century Dutch painter Judith Leyster were caught up in the mystification of the family. It is not that family has to be an obstacle, but men and women both should have a choice in the creation of their own life, and the

choice should be for each individual to make and not a control which is the inevitable placed upon one's life.

Rural Relationships

Through relationships with other rural art educators, students, and the community these educators found beauty, wholeness, and symbolic meaning. "It is the beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete (Signal vs. Noise, 2005, section 1). It is a beauty of things unconventional. Simplicity is at its core and is best described as the state of grace arrived by sober, modest, heartfelt, intelligence. Pare down to the essence, but don't remove the poetry" (Signal vs. Noise, 2005, section 1). After all by design we are made for relationships, but our postmodern environment in school is constantly into sorting, dividing, separating. "Our understandings are contingent on and forged in relationship" (Anijar & Casey, 1997, p. 383). Rural students must realize their school is but one piece in a much larger puzzle. As rural art educators we must provide our students with the vision that they are but members of a much larger community and help them learn to honor how our lives are different yet are woven together. Difference is respected and does not set off any alarm systems within us.

As a rural educator it is most important to connect with other art educators in different schools and counties. It is important not to be a loner, to reach out and make connections, and to make art happen. Rural art educators can become isolated if a conscious effort is not made to make connections. For it is way too easy to become a loner and become isolated. Always we must remember that as individuals we are made for relationships. Mrs. Hart spoke of the relationship she and I shared as art teachers.

She reflected, “We learned to enjoy each other, go to conferences, and really learned something about art.” Mrs. Cooper spoke of the close relationship she and her daughter shared as art educators in the same county at the same time:

My daughter started teaching - she finished at Appalachian - and she started teaching at South Caldwell High School - that was after she was at Granite Falls High School and was teaching in the boys bathroom - she went to South Caldwell and I was at West Caldwell and a lot of times we would just meet there at the stop light and just exchange materials with each other - it was fun - she was there but she and I teamed up on taking my students to New York.

A quality relationship between teacher and student was sought by the rural educators. There was the realization that the communities that the students came from provided an enormous reserve of resources for developing the student which they needed to tap into, such as, visual arts, dance, music, story telling, ect. For the arts bring people together which in turn creates a greater understanding across communities. The teacher can initiate the relationship, such as, Mrs. Moore. Through grace she had the influence to work towards making her students whole, to be all that they could be. Through art she connected to each student personally:

I integrated art into everything I taught - it was art connected - that is just the way I did it because when you had kids hard reading or couldn't comprehend something - it was easier to put feeling and knowledge on paper - it was amazing what they could draw - and when I was on my Masters Degree we had a subject on reading children's art work - it was amazing - it was amazing - what you could learn from these kids is almost better than these tests we have to give.

By grace Mrs. Moore used art work as a connection to her students. Each drawing revealed much to her as the teacher, so that the inner spirit was impacted in a

positive way. Through grace a space of possibility was created so these children could be the best they could be. Doors were opened and mercy and compassion were shown.

“Moral education is derived not only from the visible curriculum, but from the implicit moral attitudes, concerns, positions, or orientations that teachers demonstrate in everything they do and say” (Lee, 1993, p. 76). The action cannot be predicted and sometimes you just know you have to do something. Mrs. Moore just knew that art had to be integrated:

You could look at what kinds of homes they came out of - that is what I call intense observation - how close the lines go - how close their families were - I would always say - let's draw your self - our likes and dislikes - I would actually have kids draw themselves and I would decode it and I would say, Oh boy I have a happy kid - a child that is having problems at home - most teachers didn't do it - you know I did it to use my art education to the utmost. I would describe this as being in the zone or in the groove.

Through the visual arts Mrs. Moore initiated a personal relationship with each student. Yet, teachers do not always have to be the ones to initiate the flow in the creation of a relationship, for to be mindful is to be aware of your surroundings. Mind, as Dewey saw it, is a verb and not a noun; it is a mode of taking action, of attending; it is a mode of achieving (Greene, 1988, p. 125). It is a desire, a way of seeing and this mindfulness was shown by Mrs. Moore's middle school students as they sought sandstone to carve and shared their learning experience with their teacher. The personal relationship through the visual arts was initiated by the students in this particular case:

One time when I was teaching in middle school or junior schools these Black students kept bringing in these rocks they had carved and they were wonderful heads - just plain old rocks they had carved - I said, where did you get these rocks

- oh, we are not going to tell you - we do not want anyone to know our secret - I finally got it out of them - they had gone up into a bank there at the school and dug out these - they were really sandstone rocks - and they told me if you put them in water and soak them a while they are easier to carve - so they were telling me how to do it - they were using nails or whatever they could to carve these faces - and I've got about five of them that I finally got away from the kids - they were doing that - they were wonderful - I gave them all of the encouragement in the world to keep going and getting more rocks and carving more heads.

In this instance the student / teacher relationship was created through a flow of activities found and created through a carving project which was neither too easy nor too difficult. The relationship occurred as they were able to share their success and demonstrated their newly learned skills. They demonstrated persistence, originality, and imaginativeness and were given encouragement which was the connector in the student / teacher relationship. Mrs. Moore describes connecting with her students in the way Gramsci describes the relationship, "every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher" (Gramsci, 1980, p. 350). The art space was used by both to unit diversity.

There is true beauty when students, teachers, and community members connect and enter into a relationship through the arts rather than just assuming a role. Art education should be relevant to the community and connect a students' environment. "By using familiar folk and popular art and artists, teachers can contextualize learning for students and make it meaningful and relevant to their daily lives" (Ulbricht, (2002), p. 34). This can promote a relationship between the school and the community, helping to build strong environment. There is a beauty shared among community members that is a gift of time, such as, Mrs. Cooper's historical day and village on her family's farm. Daily community members and school children come together to share the visuals arts, dance,

theater, music, and history. Thus through the arts parental and community participation occurs, which is encouraging, fulfilling, and demanding, and is one avenue to address the racial and social intolerance of our society. It is a true gift of time by the community which provides children at all levels of the economic ladder an opportunity for higher educational achievement. Mrs. Cooper describes this community effort on her rural farm in which the arts and history are incorporated:

I retired in 1990 - I've been retired a good while - I am still teaching - I have field trips here with kids - they come here from different schools, and I try to give them as much information about how things were along time ago you know - and so I am still teaching - but anyway I can let them go back with their teachers (laugh) - don't have to grade them - I don't have to discipline them - but when they come here a lot of the time people say aren't you worried about what they can get into - I know - they are just wonderful when they come here - I never have any problems, very few - If there are any problems I don't know about it because the teacher takes care of it - but we bring the kids in - I sit them down over there - I tell them how school used to be long ago, and they think I am that old, really (laugh) - they really do.

Through this village students begin to connect to local history as they are seated in a fully furnished 1880 school. As they move through the other buildings, they see a connection of the crafts, fine arts, and local history and culture. In Thompson's words, "Oral history gives history back to the people in their own words. And giving them a past, it also helps them towards a future of their own making" (1978, p. 226). Through the individual stories one's culture speaks. Mrs. Cooper engages her visiting students with the following historical questions:

Do you remember Tom Dooley? Do you remember Daniel Boone? - I tell them about the school books - the switching - the teachers and how everybody went to school in a one room, and I have a basket of old toys old time toys - folk toys -

how children used to make their toys out of any and everything - sticks - corn cobs - they get to go to everyone of the buildings here - I tell them about Daniel Boone and Tom Dooley and how they washed their clothes and everything - so I am still teaching - I don't know when I'll ever get through - If the good Lord lets me live I'll still be doing it when I am one hundred - It's fun.

Through local history and the arts students are empowered to overcome the stereotypes and the other barriers which prevent us from seeing each other. It is through this art-centered curriculum that students learn to value the fact that people are experts on their own lives, and enjoy learning from and with other cultures and not just about them. Cultural, historical, and political roots are discovered through the involvement of parents and other community members. They examine the intersections and interconnections of race, gender, class, religious belief, and ability. They unit and connect to their school, families, and communities. An art-centered curriculum provides students with the essential knowledge, experiences, and skills to function, learn, think, and communicate across cultures. It is the natural that links individuals together not the manmade materialism.

Personal Educational Struggles

At some point all of the art educators had a sense of hope that someday they would be teaching art in a rural area. They clearly define themselves as art educators. Their personal educational struggles happened throughout their lives and throughout their lives their personal actions clearly demonstrate that they are life-long learners.

Personal public childhood education was mentioned only briefly by the majority of the rural art educators. Yet Mrs. Moore, a Black educator and community arts leader, vividly describes a little one room school down in southern Yadkin County as all

wonderful, but at nineteen when she becomes the “little teacher” in a similar situation her reflection is not all wonderful:

Went to a one teacher school - had to walk across the field - snow, sleet, and rain to school. You know we were always excited about getting to school. We got to school, we had his one little teacher and she had to make the fire and we didn't have any holidays. We went round everybody had a slot which they were taught. If you got through with an assignment you listened - you could make two grades a year, so I finished high school at 15 and, snow, and sleet, and it took us a half a day to warm up - by the time the building got warm, it was time for school to be dismissed, but it was a beautiful learning experience because all grades were taught from 1 through 7.

As a young elementary student Mrs. Moore remembers the learning experience, the excitement, and the organizational skills of the “little teacher” as more positive than any of the negative experiences of the little one room school:

In this one teacher room, but so much learning and excitement and so much wonder - what was coming next? I guess I learned early to listen because my listening skills are pretty good. The teacher was so organized because I started to college, because I had done everything I was supposed to do.

Mrs. Moore returns to Yadkin County after finishing college to take a job her father had found for her. She was now the “little teacher” in the little one room school. Now being the “little teacher” at age nineteen Mrs. Moore does not embrace the one room school as she did at a younger age. She describes doing what her strong willed father wanted her to do:

So after I finished college I came home and my Dad had a job teaching in a one room school down in southern Yadkin County - which I hated - a 19 year old you don't talk back to your Daddy - you did what they wanted you to do.

Much like Mrs. Moore's story, quite often young girls were controlled and not allowed to experience adult life as they would like to. Mrs. Moore describes the control used by her strong-willed father when she wanted to work on her Masters Degree in Pennsylvania:

But in the mean time - you know Dr. Snow in Boonville asked me if I wanted to go to N.J. that summer to work for her daughter - I said yeah! - loved to go - got up there and loved the atmosphere - we are going to Philadelphia and enroll in Pennsylvania to work on my Masters - Daddy said, you better get on that train head home and I did it - (couple of good laughs) - The lady said she knew my family - the lady said I better take you on back Gail. - I don't want anything out of your Dad.

Like marriage, for some like Mrs. Moore, teaching deprived them of their freedom initially because she had wanted to continue her education before starting to teach. At this point she may have viewed teaching as just another prison cell, another mask that hid the being of women in the world which is much like the metaphor of Henry James of "bare little boxes of conventionality" (James in Greene, 1988, p. 77). Her very being was being formed by another.

Mrs. Moore (Black educator and community art leader) added art to the curriculum through elementary education. She stated, "Always at that time I knew I couldn't make a living in dance nor art, but I integrated art into everything I taught. It was art connected." Also through the arts, she and the rural art educators developed spaces for themselves and others to be different and grow together, alternatives that include caring and community. In being the art education teacher, the arts council leader, and a community arts leader nothing was predictable nor were the outcomes

predetermined. Mrs. Moore describes being rejected in the forming of the arts council and not belonging:

We helped organize the first art in Elkin and we were the only two people of color there and some of those people quit before they would let - they would – intensity - let them leave - let them leave - I was there when they were trying to get the house for the Foothills Arts Council - at that time I couldn't hardly belong or be recognized - who cared - I was doing exactly what I wanted to do.

For Mrs. Moore, the space created for the arts created diversity, but through her vision of possibility she did not allow doors to close on her. She stated, “Who cared, I was doing exactly what I wanted to do.” Through her actions she helped create a space at the art council where people could be different and they could grow. The arts council initially conveyed and reinforced the ideas of what appeared to be the most valuable by avoidance (Shapiro, 2006, p. 40). This avoidance created a sense of hostility which led Mrs. Moore to state, “let them leave, let them leave” to gain equal representation. Through the arts council the group learned that they must value multiple ways of knowing and question difference and recognize the fact that they are not all the same.

In order to have an understanding of a different perspective, there must be an involvement in the educational process and not just a verbally shared experience. As individuals we know and value our world view. To know ourselves, we must understand that our way of viewing the world is just one of many different views of the world and that others hear and see a different view of the world. Yet, our ears should be open to the voiceless people and we should learn to hear with our heart. We must realize that when the problems in our communities are multicultural, multiracial, and multieconomic the

answers are not typically found within us, but between us.

At the college level there was an inner struggle to study for a job that was not available yet in the rural areas. Mrs. Finney speaks of changing direction in mid stream of an elementary education major:

but when I went away to college my first instinct was to major in elementary education but I took a lot of art courses and I went to a small college – Greensboro College and I just dearly loved it and I dearly loved every art class that I took so I decided to change my major – which did not slow me down as far as graduating because I had to take all of the necessary things anyway, but I did major in art and decided to get a teachers certificate.

Also during this time period, before consolidation, art was taught after school more as an enrichment program and often for the privileged few. Generally the teacher was talented in art and may have had a two year degree and often the four year degree was over looked. Then, art teachers like other teachers had to be certified with a four year teaching degree, like the other disciplines. Mrs. Cooper describes making this change at age forty eight to keep her job in art education. She describes her struggles:

Oh by the way, I went back to school when I was forty-eight - I still had some classes to get in and - forty-eight and going back to school and have to take math and biology - things I have no idea about - that was hard let me tell you it was hard - I was teaching at the time - going back to school- had a sick mother - an elderly father and my own kids in school - so it was as hard time - but I made it - if anybody - oh I just barely made it by the skin of my teeth - cause math was something.

Mrs. Cooper speaks of connectedness which is a form of freedom. Through diverse pathways of connectedness art is incorporated around the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), relationships, personal educational struggles, and the

joy of teaching. She describes the personal educational struggles at age forty-eight to keep her job:

Oh, my oldest daughter and I were in the same math class at Appalachian - she was so embarrassed that I was in the same math class that she was in - I was so dumb (laugh) - Mom, I just wanted to get down on my hands and knees and crawl out of that class when you made such stupid statements (laugh) - math was hard - biology was even harder - I squeaked through English and a few other things, but I made it so - and I always tell these other people who say I haven't finished school - listen, if I can finish school and go back when I am forty-eight years old, you can do it too - but I did and finished up - and kept my job - I had to do it to keep my job and course you have to go back ever so often to take some more classes, of course - that was a breeze compared to doing math and biology and all that.

By example Mrs. Cooper impacted student learning. As she sought self-renewing experiences, she returned to her classroom better equip to meet the needs of each individual student. This also impacted her students to learn. As a role model her students saw how important it is to be a life-time learner continuously working to strengthen knowledge, skills, and teaching practices through the study of art education. Her course work enabled her to become a co-discoverer along side of her students. As a student, she was better able to understand what students experience in the process of studying and creating works of art. Each course helped her to connect and relate to her students in a better and more meaningful way. Therefore her students received a better quality of instruction.

Through their educational struggles multiple common fibers connected the lives of these rural educators. All selected to define themselves as educators even though they have been retired for a number of years. Over and over these women stressed how much

they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they are still art teachers regardless of their ages. At the end, Mrs. Hart acknowledges the knowledge of her students and yet still expresses the joy of teaching:

I've enjoyed my career in art after 35 years in the classroom - I found out I didn't know near as much as the students did, but I've enjoyed them. I enjoyed my students very much. I enjoyed getting along with them and teaching them the art program.

To value the fact that a student knows more is a personal educational struggle. The wisdom of Mrs. Hart says, "It is ok." Each of the educators is a life-long learner, and they continue to open the doors of possibility by integrating art into everything they do.

The Joy of Teaching

Through grace the rural art educators were called into a profession that was not "out there" yet. This profession which they prepared for, teaching, is a passion. It is a gift of God, it is the vision of limitless possibilities, and by divine intervention the gifted teacher is called. The work of an educator is a calling / a passion, and "to teach is to create possibilities" (Freire, p. 49). Some educators just grow up knowing they are going to become teachers, such as, Mrs. Cooper:

I have always loved to draw and paint and when I was just a little girl I would draw with crayons and everything - could never get enough drawing and painting and always felt like I would like to be a teacher - an art teacher.

All of the rural art educators selected to define themselves as educators even though they have been retired for a number of years. Over and over these women stressed how much they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they

are still art teachers regardless of their ages. For each of them the work of an educator is a calling / a passion, and to teach is to create multiple avenues of possibility. One of the art teachers, Mrs. Cooper declares if God allows her the gift she will continue to teach until she is a hundred. She speaks of using her rural village on her farm as a means to continue to reach out in the arts. She states, “So I am still teaching - I don’t know when I’ll ever get through - If the good Lord lets me live I’ll still be doing it when I am one hundred - It’s fun.”

Other educators like myself did not grow up knowing that they want to become a teacher. In fact some of us grow up resisting the calling to become an educator, such as myself. Through an enabling power, grace there is an “ability to listen to your own guts and what is going on inside you (Maslow, 1971, p. 147-53).” Through divine intervention and the gift of God I became a teacher:

I could have never imagined ever teaching early in my life - much less the length of time I have taught. After all, I didn’t play school as a child, I didn’t join the Future Teacher’s Club, and I didn’t dream of teaching while in elementary or high school. Sometimes the unexpected just happens in our lives - we are framed differently than what we expect.

For those who are given the gift, it is a life time commitment and it can be an aesthetic experience. This aesthetic pleasure is a personal judgment that it is good and holds a particular meaning and significance for the teacher making the judgment (Lee, 1993, p. 76). Multiple times the art educators stressed how much they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they are still teachers regardless of their ages. Mrs. Moore describes the passion in this manner:

What I am saying this about the schools - this is the most memorable - most challenging and most heart warming experiences I had - and it still makes me warm and fuzzy and good when I talk about these kids because - and you know – honey the pay wasn't nothing - you weren't doing because you were getting lots of money.

Mrs. Moore stresses the aesthetic experience versus the monetary. The “gifted” educator responds with openness and uses imagination to respond to the whole person. For there is ethical value in the educational act, for life’s meanings are witnessed and lived in the classroom.

Grace offers an enabling power. When grace calls us to teach, our role as educators is decisive. We look at how we attend to hope as teachers because loss of hope is one of the principal causes of the educational problems that affect our American culture. Through grace creativity is valued, because dull repetitiveness and routinism are evidences of dehumanization (Phenix, 1975, p. 329). Grace teaches and adopts a positive attitude toward all other persons, other cultures, and other social groups. Yet when called to teach, we foster constructive disposition toward doubt and faith. Critical thinking skills are expanded upon. Through grace attitudes of wonder, awe, and reverence are revealed. Grace transcends beyond and creates conditions of possibility. This is neither good nor bad, but how we respond is important and our intentions for the good of man kind.

Thus the educator who is “called” is better able to deliver a curriculum which helps develop critical thinking skills and thus enables students to achieve success. Grace is the given power of God through which one is given the opportunity to progress and “it

concerns how we attend to it rather than what we attend to (Lee, 1993, p. 76).” It requires an openness and imagination to respond of the whole person.

Just Weaving / Just Weaving

The rural art educators’ lives and work are woven with a variety of textures and hidden behind a variety of masks, such as, strong-willed fathers, the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), rural relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching. Their lives are connected. As Mrs. Moore stated well into her narrative, “I am just weaving, just weaving. I hope you understand that.” For it is through the individual stories that one’s culture speaks. Therefore, it is possible to examine racial oppression, gender inequalities, class, and religion which are taken for granted by the speaker.

These rural art educators are the care-takers and the connectors at home, school, and community. Muriel Rukeyser wrote: What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open (1962 / 1973, p. 377). To shed the mask is to reveal one’s story. Some think they have not a story to tell yet, “to articulate a life story in a way that enables a woman to know perhaps for the first time know she has encountered the world and what she desires to do and be” (Greene, 1988, p. 57). Through stories there is unconcealment and the mask is broken. To unconceal is to take a risk and one does not know for sure what will happen. The “not yet” may reveal a hidden agenda working for social justice. “I am just weaving, just weaving. I hope you understand that.”

CHAPTER VI

A HIDDEN RELIGION

Throughout the oral histories of the rural southern women art educators and the visual stories, such as, those of Judith Leyster, I perceived glimpses of what I call a “hidden religion.” I noticed that the way these rural art educators understand their lives coincide with the way I understand my life. All of us share a taken-for-granted interpretation of the world, which includes the influences of being Southern Christian women, growing up in a predominately white rural middle class farming area, and being raised in a more traditional 50s style family. I call these religious allusions “hidden” because they might not be recognized by someone from outside our rural southern Christian cultural community.

This particular version of Christianity is not a religion of absolute doctrine or of reactionary political projects. In my interpretation, and that of the other women art teachers, Christianity is about loving and caring relationships. It means exercising compassion towards everyone. It is like living in the best imaginable family and treating everyone as kin. This is my very being, and this is what the reader must keep in mind when considering these life stories.

In this chapter, I use words that have religious meaning, but can also be understood in a more secular way. For example, grace is not just a Christian word. It can be understood as a gift from God; it can also refer to “ease, refinement of movement,

action, or expression” (Oxford English Dictionary). In its original meaning, a person is called to her profession by God; in current usage the word “calling” has lost its religious connotation. So Phillips remarks: “To Maxine Greene, teaching isn’t just a job, it is a “calling” (VOA news.com, Sept. 25, 2009, Phillips).

The overlap of religious and secular languages is closely connected to the intersection of ethical language and aesthetic language in the writings of Maxine Greene and others. “Even in a world most secular,” Donoghue says, “the arts can make a space for our intuition of mystery, which isn’t at all the same as saying the arts are a substitute for religion” (1983, p. 129). Maxine Greene writes:

Art education, like aesthetic education, can create domains where there are new possibilities of vision and awareness. Art educators can help awareness feed into an expanding life of meaning, can make increasingly available moments of clarity, moments of joy (Greene, Oct. 1977, p. 20).

The “possibilities of vision and awareness” through art encourages these women in the Foothills of North Carolina to prepare and study for an occupation that did not yet exist in their communities. Likewise, through God’s gifts they have been able to pass on these possibilities to their students and their communities. As these women age, God calls them to follow God’s direction in pathways they would never dream of going on their own. They find alternative pathways when one possibility closes down and another opens up. It is through grace that these rural women art educators of the Foothills are “called” (an inner spiritual invitation that is give by God), and their students are given the possibility to fulfill their potential. This process enables thought to grow out of wonder,

which is rooted in the spiritual act of projecting ideal possibilities (Phenix, 1975, p. 332). The thought created is to lure transcendence which allows them to reach beyond the boundaries of every day.

Past Art Connections

The connection of religion and community are also hidden in the art of the past, such as, in 17th century Dutch painter Judith Leyster's *Self Portrait*, and in the narratives of the rural art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina. As there is awareness, the stories of history, race, class, gender, family, and religion must be told, both in visual and written form. It is about drawing strength from one's past and being able to connect to future generations, and through seeing (which comes first) and through the narratives of the rural women art educators in which there is a realization that there is a larger whole which they are apart of that leads to blending with obstacles and possibilities.

Religion is woven in multiple patterns throughout the narratives of the art educators of the Foothills through grace, involvement, and alternate pathways. This is much like the layers of religious symbols that appear in the paintings of the Dutch. Through the visual narratives there is identity awareness by coming to terms with self-naming, being labeled, and the shifting identities that we are often forced into. A hidden connection to religion and community is placed before us in Judith Leyster's *Self Portrait*. Through her merrymaking fiddler on her canvas within a canvas she makes a moral connection to society, foolishness could lead to debauchery. Also, in the same painting she "reiterates a popular Dutch proverb: (Hoe schilder, hoe wilder (The more a painter he becomes, the wilder he gets), which refers to the generally assumed bohemian

nature of the artist” (Welu & Biesboer, 1993, p. 166). Morally the artist is before us just as the merry making fiddler is. Through the visual she pushes to the outer limits until the extreme for the impossible can happen and community and religion are connected, just as the rural art educators push to the edge through God’s given grace, involvement which is love, and alternate pathways.

Through Grace

Through grace which is a given power or an enabling power of God, the rural art educators were given the opportunity to progress in a rural area. Community and religion are successfully connected by the Foothill’s art educators through their life-long effort spent in art education in the rural areas. Initially, they prepared and studied for an occupation that was not yet in their communities. Early in their careers, as they studied art in places, such as, Greensboro, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia, New York, New York, and they had to imagine the possibility that art education could take place in rural public schools of North Carolina. In their communities they had to convince members “that art-making and aesthetic experiencing cannot be treated as merely frivolous, merely “affective,” merely decorative, merely “frills” (Greene, 1986, p. 60). Also, they had to recognize the fact that most likely there would be little fame and fortune as they created spaces for art to happen in these rural areas.

Much like an invisible woman artist of Dutch history, Judith Leyster, these rural educators did not come from a family with an art background or a wealthy family. Early in their careers they had to imagine the possibility that art education could be offered in rural public schools of North Carolina. It is through grace that they were “called” to this

occupation that did not exist yet, and that is a gift of God. Mrs. Cooper describes the “calling” or the opening provided by God in this way, “Always felt like I would like to be a teacher – an art teacher – or and artist – one didn’t especially think about being an art teacher but I wanted somehow to deal with art.” At an early age Mrs. Cooper was “called.” She always felt like she would be a teacher.

Generally, an educator who is “called” and has the passion for teaching is better able to deliver a curriculum which helps develop critical thinking skills and thus enables students to achieve success. Maxine Greene speaks of creating an atmosphere. There “should be spaces in which particular atmospheres are created: atmospheres that foster active exploring rather than passivity, that allow for unpredictable and the unforeseen” (Greene, 1986, p. 57). It is through atmosphere and grace that a teacher is given the opportunity to progress and “it concerns how we attend to it rather than what we attend to (Lee, 1993, p. 76).” It requires an openness and imagination to respond to the whole person, such as, physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Mrs. Moore created an alternate space for her students to progress as the public school system changed policies on prayer. She speaks of really embracing and meeting their individual needs:

One thing stands out in my mind - I told this friend Phyllis - still in Wilkes County - every day I would go to class - Wilkes County is progressive little county - it is the Great State of Wilkes - it really is - I had a lot of learning experiences too, I was on over drive - they sent this little note around one day - no more prayer in school - I said to Phyllis - well, I respect these kids religion - I would let them be quite about three to five minutes every morning - for them to settle down and get in the mood to want to do something - you might not see it and I might not see it but the educational system is going straight to hell - unless they have children teachers that really embrace these children and I have seen some of that and I am sure you have too.

Through an enabling power, grace there is an “ability to listen to your own guts and what is going on inside you” (Maslow, 1971, p. 147-53). Thus, a space of possibility was created so these children could be the best they could be. Doors were opened and mercy and compassion were shown. “Moral education is derived not only from the visible curriculum, but from the implicit moral attitudes, concerns, positions, or orientations that teachers demonstrate in everything they do and say” (Lee, 1993, p. 76). The action cannot be predicted and sometimes you just know you have to do something. It is through grace that much is revealed.

Love is Involvement

For the rural art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina, God’s love is involvement, and through involvement they connected to their communities and religion for an entire life time. They are gifted with the ability to imagine other possibilities. The rural educators’ vision and dreams for their students, schools, and communities continue to be on-going. Mrs. Moore speaks of meeting the needs of the whole student. The involved teacher meets multiple needs, and Mrs. Moore describes making a space of possibility to meet these needs:

What I did I got to know the social workers – what was advantageous in the Black situation – we had to visit the home of every child we taught – then you got a feel of where you needed to start with these children – there was a Baptist minister Rev. A – he was a White Baptist minister – I got to know him – I said, I need to start visiting these homes some of them were deplorable – you now – why is she coming to my house? – It didn’t take long with my voice to let them know – I am here for the interest of your children – I think they just wanted to see what if I was on the ball.

Initially there was doubt as Mrs. Moore began the home visits, and then there was the realization of genuine concern. There was love in the involvement as the multiple needs of the students were met, so that successful learning could follow.

Through involvement and considerable love, Mrs. Moore connected to a learning disabled student through art. She states, “It was amazing, this one kid how through art he created this dinosaur on this book and thus when he created he wanted to learn the words.” Mrs. Moore describes the trauma in the student’s life and the connection of art and the written:

I had the most beautiful blonde - blue-eyed - in the sixth grade - he would slobber - I knew he had some kind of trauma in his life - I knew he was not retarded - he was locked in - so, I went to his parents - what I found out he had seen a brother of his burn up in a brush pile - thus his learning stopped - he would just go around looking up in space - his parents didn’t know what to do about it - they thought he was strange.

Mrs. Moore set high standards for this student. For when high standards of belief are set, students learn to meet the expectations. It is ultimate to make students believe that the teacher believes in them for education is a “process that shapes all aspects of our being human” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 52). What we believe as educators is a powerful influence on our students’ achievement. Mrs. Moore encourages and makes the student feel that she believes in him:

I am an awful library user - they didn’t want me to - I come to the library everyday - I come to the library everyday - so, I take them up to the library - they weren’t retarded - they were educable - it takes a little longer to learn - when they learned it - they learned it - so when they picked out what you would like - go back to the room - the same little boy sixth grader had said nothing - he had some

book on dinosaurs - I said you like dinosaurs? Oh dinosaurs, I wonder would you like to make some paper mache dinosaurs - you could see the light in his eyes all most light up.

Through involvement Mrs. Moore had the influence to work toward making this student whole and all that he could be. By amazing grace this student's situation was revealed to the teacher so that the inner spirit was impacted in a positive way. Grace creates conditions for involvement, and Mrs. Moore used art to create a possible avenue to reach this child:

I am not making this up honey - you can tell by the passion in my voice - the passion in my voice - It almost makes me want to cry - he got a lot of newspapers - we learned the words for dinosaurs - It was amazing this one kid how through art he created this dinosaur on this book - thus when he created he wanted to learn the words - we did that.

Through God's love which is involvement for these women, the rural art educators connected community and religion. Mrs. Moore states, "You can tell by the passion in my voice, the passion in my voice." For without the love of God, life is simply self-love and self-gratification and each dose must top the last to please the self. As involved educators, these women exceeded what is required of them, for they did not hold back in their giving in service. Their love through involvement continues to have meaning, passion, commitment, and possibility.

Alternate Pathways and the Rural Art Educators

As the rural art educators of the Foothills age and come close to the end of life, they seek alternate pathways as they continue to be educators and community leaders in the arts. They are inventive as they seek diverse pathways. For when one possibility

closes down they seek an alternative pathway in order to embrace their students and the communities that they are privileged to serve. It is Maxine Greene's belief that, "We have to work together for new continuities, new openings, as we move towards our own moments of being, our own shocks of awareness" (Greene, Oct. 1977, p. 20).

Continually these women redefine themselves as art educators. They follow God's direction in pathways they would never dream of going on our own. They are extreme when they experience the limits and face the possibility of the impossible. God's "calling" adds uncertainty to an unforeseeable an absolute future. Even toward the end of their lives as they tackle health problems, they use art to unite diversities and connect to their community and religion. They are always art educators and just not in the traditional classroom setting. Mrs. Finney uses her illness as an alternative pathway in using art as a connection:

While I was taking my chemo – I painted – while the chemo was going on because – the chairs would have little tables – and I took small pieces of paper and my little travel watercolor box – and I painted while this went on - just anything that came to my mind - sometimes it was abstract – sometimes it was something I would see out the window or just something that would just come to mind – and I would give them to the doctors and nurses that took care of me.

Initially Mrs. Finney's action of painting, while taking chemo, eased her mind and made a connection to the doctors and nurses. Then, the women surrounding her were connected to her and the art, and in Mrs. Finney's words, "They began to see how art could help." Art was the connection made to unite diversity; this is Mrs. Finney's recollection:

and there were two old ladies sitting on either side of me - and one said “I want one of those” – or actually she said “I oant one of them” – and the “other” one said “I oant one too” – put your name on it – so I began giving them to the patients, as well – that was therapeutic for them to see what it could do for me – because I was happy while I was doing that – I was not sad or scared – because the other patients saw how happy I was and how it took my mind of my problems – they began to see how art could help.

In a nontraditional setting while taking chemo, she followed God’s direction in a direction that she never dreamed of going on our own. Through her watercolors she connected to two rural mountain women, and they relaxed and thought of other things besides their illnesses. The process of watching Mrs. Finney was therapeutic and all that surrounded her. Even a college student from Appalachian State University, a young woman majoring in art therapy and counseling, connected to Mrs. Finney. She was also painting for patients and offering them the chance to paint. Then just as I was doing, the Appalachian State University student interviewed Mrs. Finney for part of her thesis. She describes the happening and how painting was used to unite the diversities of the patients:

They began to see how art could help – fortunately a young woman who was majoring in art at Appalachian State University – I took my therapy at Watauga Hospital by the way – because my daughter works up there – I took my therapy up there so I could come and go with her – the young woman was a senior that was majoring in art therapy and counseling – and she came through with a cart that Miles Jones had loaded it with material and kept that cart loaded with materials and she came through – she would sit there paint for them and give it to them and some them wanted to work and some didn’t, but she saw I was already painting, so she just interviewed me and was going to use that interview in part of her thesis – just as you are doing – you are doing a dissertation – so she didn’t use my name or anything either.

Mrs. Finney talked about painting at home as therapy to the Appalachian State University art student working on her thesis, and to me, as I interviewed her for my

dissertation. She shows me the actual watercolor painting which is an on-going piece of art work that she is working on while going through her cancer diagnosis and treatment. It is not finished and has layers and layers of paint. One day the expression is bright and colorful and the next day dark and expresses turmoil, like she has been thrown into a pit. It is through seeing that this rural southern art educator views herself and others. Her art work, as does her culture's art, states who she is and what she stands for, and what boundaries are being crossed. As I view this piece personally in the comfort of Mrs. Finney's art studio, it is a piece that both unites diversity and creates diversity. The art work is a means of survival for her and others in our world of enormous energy which does not encourage compromise, argue, or discuss. She describes painting when she couldn't sleep:

We talked about when I am home – I painted and if I couldn't sleep at night I would just get up and put paint on paper and I'll show one thing I started out with some little things – and at the same time I was going through my cancer diagnosis and treatment – my sister-in-law was dieing with melanoma – and she actually did while I was going through my therapy but that was hard for me because she and I were very close and this is the painting that – it has layers and layers of paint because I was just – you know – one day I might feel bright and colorful and another day – you know in turmoil or dark like I had been thrown into a pit – laugh – or deep water – this is not a finished painting – you know it is an on going thing – that was very therapeutic to me.

In her time of need she continues serving others through painting and personal interviews to be used for educational purposes. She willingly and very eagerly participates and offers a gift to future generations through her art work and her personal interviews at a time that most would have refused to do so. Through her writing she states, "There were

no real words in this world that I could speak and no shapes I that could actually paint that would express how grateful I was.” She describes how therapeutic art is:

These are some of the things I did while I was going through the therapy and here is one – hey – I feel like – hey – there is light out there – laugh – there is an end to it – and here is one I did and I wrote to various people who had been so helpful to me – one was my pastor – Ben T. - and all of my little paintings were more abstract – I wrote to them saying that there were no real words in this world that I could speak and no shapes I that could actually paint that would express how grateful I was to everybody who had helped me through this cancer journey and his had a little cross hatching on it - he called me and said I know this is a therapeutic thing for you, but I am curious about the cross hatching – what were you feeling? I said, I guess I was feeling a little trapped – you know so all of this has helped me through it so much – I really never thought of art as being so therapeutic until this particular time.

Through the cross hatching in the watercolor Mrs. Finney expressed feeling trapped. It is through divine intervention the lives of art educators of the Foothills are directed and redirected, such as, Mrs. Finney and her cancer journey. Sometimes we are knocked out of our comfort zone and things do not operate according to our knowledge. Maxine Greene stated that, “Most people live in little locked rooms and they never look out at what’s possible” (Greene in AOL, Sept. 25, 2009, Phillips). A controlled life stays within its borders and knows its borders, where as, an extraordinary life opens the door and allows for a more passionate future and life. Our religious way of life is defined by salty and salt less. Religion is pushed up on the mountain top when we are able to draw from ourselves and are able to serve others. Service to others is a gift to the future generations.

Connection of Community and Religion

The rural art educators connected their communities to art and religion for an entire life time, for their vision and their dream for their communities is ongoing.

Through grace, involvement as love, and being inventive educators, using alternate pathways, they served the schools and communities in their area. Their life's religious journey varied from knowing to not knowing. It is and continues to be a balancing act.

Maxine Greene states,

We have to work together for new continuities, new openings, as we move towards our own moments of being our own shocks of awareness. There is cotton wool all around – and there are living beings waiting, hoping to break through (Greene, 1977, p. 20).

As these rural women confess their love for something besides themselves, they are able to connect and serve the “other.” In their vision, the rural art educators know lives can not be transformed in a small amount of time, nor can the future be formed without a lengthy lifetime investment.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Possibility through the Narratives

Through the oral histories of rural southern women art educators of the Foothills of North Carolina (70 plus in age), and the visual stories, such as, Judith Leyster, the reader can recognize stories of possibilities.

Virginia Woolf compared it with being “embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool” in contrast to living “consciously” (1939 / 1976, p. 70). To break with the “cotton wool” of habit, of mere routine, of automatism, is (as we shall see) to seek alternative ways of being, to look for opens. To find such openings is to discover new possibilities – often new ways of achieving freedom in the world (Greene, 1988, p. 2).

Each of the women art educators expanded beyond the way they existed and defined themselves by finding other possibilities through imagination. Freedom for each of these women is a lived process, and as their narratives illustrate an on-going process as they continually imagine other forms of engagement.

As “outsiders” I found that the rural women art educators were challenged with multiple stereotypes. Initially the rural women art educators prepared and studied for an occupation that was not yet in their communities, and then they had to invent the possibility of a job. As “insiders” their freedom came through close and caring

relationships, as they connected the arts and their love of God. Their narratives illustrate just how creatively they used their imaginations to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in creating community.

The Rural Art Educator as Outsider: Imagination Faces Stereotypes

The rural art educators, as “outsiders” faced multiple stereotypes. The label of “outsiders” is used loosely to span art created by all “untrained” artists, usually of the working class, or art by anyone who is not “like us” (Lippard, 1990, p. 78). They are viewed as living in a cultural void, out of the mainstream of the art world, and disconnected from the metropolitan art world. Yet through the arts, they are able to imagine, see, and create, and think and act to make a difference in society.

Throughout their lives these women invented multiple ways of experiencing art. They also experience the fact that the “high art” does not always value the “other.” Even though the rural art educators can not change the social order, the door of possibility can be opened. It is this discontentment that pushes the rural art educators to use their imaginations. It is when the imagination expands, “the mind is drawn to what lies beyond the accustomed boundaries” (Greene, 1988, p. 128). The arts and art education provided these women with a reality check throughout childhood, adulthood, and as they continue to gray.

As the “outsiders” these women art educators are considered, “outside the circle, outside the set. It means being on the edges, on the margin, on the periphery” (Madrid, 1988, p. 12). Initially as children, these women had to invent multiple ways of experiencing art. Mrs. Moore describes this approach as “little art walks.” Through their

rural environment they were surrounded by a wealth of natural materials which allowed the creative energies to flow. As children their involvement with art was more through the expressionist approach, such as, my own first experience with mixed media, as I gathered cattails, scraped, colored with crayons, and then twisted them. I experienced sculpture in the media of mud on the back porch. At this point (five years old) my feelings concerning art were to just jump in and get as much hands on experience as possible. Just as I did, these women invented a way of experiencing art in their rural environments.

Being the creative individuals that they are, the rural women art educators continue to make or invented multiple ways to experience art in their rural communities. As they progressed through elementary school and high school, art was offered more through private lessons. Initially they were empowered by strong-willed fathers to overcome the control of politics, the stereotypes, and the other barriers which prevented them from being artists. Unlike women artists of earlier times, they did not come from a family of amateur or professional painters. The art text books of the time supported the fact that women artists are invisible. Yet, through grace these southern rural women art educators of the Foothills prepared and studied for their desired occupation.

Combating the stereotype of lack of education is an on-going project for these women. They traveled from home to attended colleges and schools in areas, such as, Concord and Greensboro, North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, and New York. Mrs. Moore describes her college experience as getting a “real education during this time period.” She reflects upon going to Barbara-Scotia College by stating, “I went to an all

girls Presbyterian School, I called the “Sarah Lawrence of the South” at that time.” As they ventured to get a “real education,” they were viewed as risk takers, for many did not take advantage of this freedom because they did not want to risk being different. In seeking an education or being different there is potentially a loss of connection to the community and family. They continually go out of their communities to gain knowledge and then returning to give back and share their wealth of knowledge with other community members.

Generally the rural women art educators had a sense of hope that someday they would be teaching art in a rural area. The desire to be the creator came first and then the desire and passion to offer possibilities to others built with time. Initially the rural women art educators prepared and studied for what appeared to be an unattainable occupation. Just as these art educators used expressionism and invented multiple ways of creating art at a young age, they also invented possibilities in order to create an art position. I personally agreed to teach two math classes just to have the privilege to teach three art classes with the hopes that this would lead into a full time art teaching job, and it did. In Mrs. Cooper’s words, “Art had it rough back in those days – you just a – it was simply like that in Wilkes and Caldwell – just could not afford really to have art teachers – it was not in the curriculum – really it was just something they decided to do.” There was not a curriculum in place, art teachers were spread thin, and supplies and equipment were limited.

The beginning of art education in the rural areas was done by wedging one’s way into the system. The challenges for the rural educators included just having the

opportunity, trying to find an open door, and having to invent a curriculum. With no official at job available, Mrs. Finney used the kindergarten (the seed of the modern era) to begin her teaching profession. Her sister, also an art educator progressed into the public school system through offering private lessons initially and then after school art lessons. Through multiple avenues, the kindergarten movement, private lessons, and after school lessons, art was incorporated into the rural public school system. Art was also incorporated through other disciplines.

Mrs. Moore describes weaving art into the curriculum, “Always at that time I knew I couldn’t make a living in dance nor art, but I integrated art into everything I taught. It was art connected.” As the “outsiders” they made their way into the school systems. Like Greene, the rural art educators believed “that it is possible to make works of art available to all kinds of children” (Greene, 1977, p. 302). I saw through their narratives how strong willed they had to be to make their dreams and other possibilities happen.

As these rural art educators of the Foothills age, they follow pathways in a direction they would have never dreamed of going on their own. They develop and create new job descriptions. They continue to be art educators even though God’s calling adds uncertainty to an unforeseeable future. They invent pathways as one possibility closes down and another opens up. Continually they define themselves as art educators, but just not in the traditional classroom setting. One uses the community members to create a rural village to bring the community, the arts, and history together. Another uses her illness as an alternative pathway. In a nontraditional setting while taking chemo, she

follows God's direction in a way that she never dreamed of going on her own. Through her watercolors she connects two rural mountain women, and they relax and connect to thoughts other than their illnesses. Through her painting and personal interviews to graduate students, including myself, she connects to the future through educational research. All of these women continue to reinvent their job descriptions as life continues to change.

At each stage in life, the rural art educators used imagination as they struggled to be different and move out of their of their comfort zones. "At once, the very existence of obstacles depends on the desire to reach toward wider spaces for fulfillment, to expand options to know alternatives" (Greene, 1988, p. 5). Through the arts, the rural art educators continue to seek alternate pathways as obstacles are placed out there. Even though there are walls out there, the arts offer another avenue to imagine. "Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined" (Lippard, 1990, p. 248). Through the arts these rural art educators continue to be able to imagine, see, create, and then think and act to make a difference in society.

The Rural Art Educator as Insider: Freedom through Relationships

As the "insider" the rural art educator focuses on the creation of freedom through a variety of relationships which is a source of strength for these rural southern women art educators. Through my narratives, I saw that their freedom came through multiple relationships with other rural art educators, students, and the community. Freedom for these rural southern art educators is and continues to be through connectedness and their

involvement with the arts. They are the “insiders” rather than the “outsiders” as they create freedom through the visual arts and relationships. As the “insiders,” they are inside the circle and a part of the set. Their freedom as art educators is in continuous formation.

For these women, freedom is through relationships, such as, strong-willed fathers, the “wool of life” (being married, child rearing, and aging parents), personal relationships, personal educational struggles, and the joy of teaching. The creation of freedom through a variety of relationships is a source of strength for these rural women art educators. Collins asserts that people become human and empowered only in the context of a community, and only when they “become seekers of the type of connection, interactions, and meeting that lead to harmony” (1991, p. 185). After all by design, we are made for relationships even though our postmodern environment is constantly sorting, dividing, and separating.

The rural art educators are the care-takers and the connectors at home, school, and community. As artists, they are able to imagine and provide a space of possibility since, “Artists are for disclosing the extraordinary in the ordinary” (Greene, 1887, p. 14). They use their imaginations and choose to create a space to bring individuals together, such as, a rural village created to incorporate the arts and local history. Their art careers are defined by marriage, the birth of children, the schooling of children, and elderly parents. They divide their careers by the arrival of each child or when the twins arrived, “I just resigned.” Their lives are bound by relationships, children, and household duties. They carve out their own Walden Pond or other spaces of freedom to support the creative

spirit. Through everything they do, art is connected to their lives, and they are able to imagine other ways of knowing and can envision other possibilities, which is not possible for others.

Through relationships with other rural art educators, students, and the community these educators find beauty, wholeness, and symbolic meaning. For them the creation of freedom is a daily journey. “Freedom, like love, is created every day in ways small and demanding, tedious, painful, and endured like time itself” (Greene, 1988, p. ix). Their freedom which is found within relationships is not an endowment, for they are always in a struggle to find it since they are created beings of choice and not controlled as puppets.

“Our understandings are contingent on and forged in relationship” (Anijar & Casey, 1997, p. 383). Daily the rural art educators find openings for the creation of freedom through relationships. For them it is a daily journey, for the creation of freedom through relationships requires imagination. It requires imagination to resist negative freedom and adopt positive freedom in our communities. Imagination is the only window of opportunity, and art education and the art educators provide a light space for an opening of possibility.

Grace and Love as Involvement: A Hidden Religion

Religion is woven throughout the narratives of the art educators. It is a partially hidden religion. One of the art educators stated after a two and a half hour interview, “I didn’t talk about my love life or my religion.” Yet, it is woven in multiple patterns throughout the narratives of the art educators of the Foothills. Initially through grace these rural women art educators of the Foothills prepared and studied for an occupation

that was not yet in their communities. Early in their careers they had to imagine the possibility that art education could take place in rural public schools of North Carolina. It is through grace they were called to this occupation that did not exist yet, and that is a gift of God. It is the vision of limitless possibilities and by divine intervention the gifted art teacher is called, for the work of an educator is a calling, a passion, and “to teach is to create possibilities” (Freire, 1998, p. 49). Through grace which is a given power of God the rural art educators were given the opportunity to progress in a rural area.

Likewise for these art educators, God’s love is involvement, and they connect community and religion for an entire life time. Through grace they had the influence to work towards making their students whole, to be all that they could be. Through art they connected to each student personally. Mrs. Moore stated it this way:

I integrated art into everything I taught - it was art connected - that is just the way I did it because when you had kids hard reading or couldn’t comprehend something - it was easier to put feeling and knowledge on paper.

Mrs. Moore used art work as a connection to her students. Each drawing revealed much to her as the teacher, so that the inner spirit was impacted in a positive way. Through grace a space of possibility was created so these children could be the best they could be. Doors are opened and mercy and compassion are shown.

Moral education is derived not only from the visible curriculum, but from the implicit moral attitudes, concerns, positions, or orientations that teachers demonstrate in everything they do and say (Lee, 1993, p. 76).

I saw that the action cannot always be predicted and sometimes you just know you have to do something.

As the rural art educators age, I saw that they are continuing to be educators, in spite of their ages (70s and 80s). Over and over I found these women stressed how much they enjoyed their students, their labor of love, and the fact that they are still are teachers regardless of their ages. For each of them the work of an educator is a calling, a passion, and to teach is to create multiple avenues of possibility. One of the art teachers, Mrs. Cooper declares if God allows her the gift she will continue to teach until she is a hundred. She speaks of using her rural village on her farm as a means to continue to reach out through the arts and history to connect with the community and public schools.

Through my narratives, I saw that God's calling adds strength to uncertainty to as these women age. In nontraditional settings, they continue to educate. While taking chemo, Mrs. Finney followed God's direction in a way that she never dreamed of going on her own. Through her watercolors, she used painting as therapy for herself and the two mountain women on either side of her. The process of watching Mrs. Finney was therapeutic for all that surrounded her. I saw through these women's stories that they are life-long learners and educators. As they age, they seek alternative pathways for when one possibility closes down and another opens up. In their vision, they know lives can not be transformed in a small amount of time, nor can the future be formed without a lengthy lifetime investment.

Freedom, Imagination and Grace: Creating Community

Through rural art education, the women art educators worked daily in the creation of community. Only when “the individual, human part” is fully involved in membership, will we see an emergence of what John Dewey once called a “great community.” And it is not accidental that, when Dewey spoke of such a community, he also spoke of art whose function, he said, “has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness” (Dewey in Greene, 1977 p. 15). It is through the visual arts that a power is created to unite community and make a turn around. Art objects “have the capacities, when authentically attended to, to enable persons to hear and to see what they would not ordinarily hear and see” (Greene, 1988, p. 128-129). Encounters with the arts offer new beginnings, new possibilities, and reveal multiple feelings. Through an arts community different cultures can understand one another even though their ways and language are different.

Through the narratives of the rural art educators, I saw that the community their students came from provides an enormous reserve of resources for developing the individual, as well, as the community. Mrs. Cooper tapped into this resource as she brought the community together to recreate a village using historical buildings from various places in the county on her grandfather’s farm to unite craft and the fine arts in a rural area, such as; the Bauhaus did to unite craft and fine arts. This free rural village connects community members and taps into a wealth of local talent, such as, visual arts, dance, music, story telling and local history. Through this village and Daniel Boone Day, Mrs. Cooper and other community members recognize that the arts have the capacity to

bring people together which in turn creates a greater understanding across the community. It is a beauty shared among community members that is a gift of time for students and other community members as they enter a relationship through the arts rather than just assuming a role. Thus through arts and art education, parental and community participation occurs, which is encouraging, fulfilling, and demanding, and is one avenue to address the racial and social intolerance of our society. Through their actions they demonstrate that the true gift of time by the community offers children at all levels of the economic ladder higher educational achievement by insuring that there is not a cultural void.

In their communities, the rural art educators placed the openings for the creation of freedom out there daily. It is a lived process. Through the grace of God these rural art educators made the choice of what they would do and be. “At every meal that we eat together freedom is invited to sit down. The chair remains vacant, but the place is set” (Arendt in Greene, 1988, p. 86). These women placed the opportunity for caring and concern out there. It is important to recognize that the chair is out there for in our culture, we are surrounded by self-sufficiency “choice.” We are “a society of strangers.” Capitalism creates this space for negative freedom, freedom to be left alone, individual choice, and freedom from other people. Through grace these rural women educators use their imaginations to create possibilities for the creation of freedom in their communities.

Implications of Art Creating Community through Rural Art Educators

Through the arts and art education the rural art educators provide society with a reality check. Regional artists may be viewed by experts as behind and unable to keep up

with the urban center of art. The struggle with multiple stereotypes is on-going. Yet, by divine intervention the gifted art teacher is called, for the work of an educator is a calling, a passion, and “to teach is to create possibilities” (Freire, 1998, p. 49). Through grace which is a given power of God the rural art educators are given the opportunity to continue to progress in these rural areas.

As I conclude this dissertation, the county I work in faces the loss of one elementary art educator, one elementary curriculum specialist who supported the arts and one arts council administrator in a neighboring county due to economic conditions. With the support of the local arts council, the current group of rural educators met and agreed that in the current economic conditions, we must continued to make our presence known and constantly connect to the community. Various strategies were planned. Continually the imagination must be used to reinvent jobs in the rural area and the struggle is ongoing. Even though the walls are out there to make us turn back, through the grace of God we are given the gift to imagine other possibilities and other spaces. Imagination “is the only gateway through which these meanings can find their way into a present interaction” (Dewey, 1934, p. 272). Constantly there will be struggles with choices, possibilities and obstacles. For, basically we are creatures of habit, and it is a struggle to be different for we must go out of our comfort zone. “The very existence of obstacles depends on the desire to reach toward wider spaces for fulfillment, to expand options to know alternatives” (Greene, 1988, p. 5). To use the imagination there must be a discontentment, and through the arts, the rural educators are offered another pathway when obstacles are placed out there.

In the economy that we are presently facing, the rural art educators must continue to use art in a way to unite community by creating public space, such as, Mrs. Cooper's village and Daniel Boone Day, in order to bring diverse groups of people together. Lucy Lippard has suggested that we should learn more about the art, history, and people of the places where we live, work, and travel to overcome our stereotypical conceptions (Lippard in Ulbricht, 2002, p.33). The rural village on a family farm and Daniel Boone Day are a testimony to the importance of southern rural groundedness in stressing a sense of belonging to a place and connecting art to a sense of history in order to educate for freedom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anijar, K. & Casey, K. (1997). Adolescent as Curriculum Theorist. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 3 (4), 381-398.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1972). *Crisis of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of narrative*. 2nd edition. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.
- Barthes, R (1977). From work to text. In *Image-Music-Text* (pp. 155-164). New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bauman, Z. (1995). *Life In Fragments*. Mass. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Berger, J. (1977). *Ways of Seeing*. Great Britain: British Broadcasting Corporation.
- Bersson, R. (1984). For Cultural Democracy in Art Education. *Art Education*, Vol. 37, No. 6, pp. 40-43.
- Brosterman, Norman. (1997). *Inventing Kindergarten*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers.
- Casey, K. (1993). *I answer with my life: Life histories of women teachers working for social change*. New York: Routledge.
- Cheater, A. P. (1987). The anthropologist as citizen: The diffracted self. In A. Jackson (Ed). *Anthropologist as home* (p. 164-179). London: Tavistock.
- Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Cronon, W. (1992). A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative. *Journal of American History*, 78(4), 1347-1376.

- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. New York: Macmillan Co.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as Experience*. New York: Minton, Balch & Co.
- Donoghue, D. (1983). *The Arts without Mystery*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Efland, Arthur D. (1990). *A History of Art Education*. Teachers College Press. p. 214-218.
- Eisner, E. (1991). What the Arts Taught Me about Education. In Willis, George & Shubert, William, (Eds.). *Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry*. (34-48). Albany: SUNY Press.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder and Herder.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom*. Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Froebel, Friedrich. (1887). *Education of Man*. D. Appleton and Company.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. N. Y. Routledge.
- Gould, C. C. (1976). "The Woman Question: Philosophy of Liberation and the Liberation of Philosophy." In *Women and Philosophy*, ed. C. C. Gould & M. W. Wartofsky, pp. 5-44. New York: Capricorn Books.
- Gramsci, A (1980). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- Greene, M. (1977). *Curriculum Inquiry*. Vol. 6. No. 4, Curriculum Theorizing since 1947: Rhetoric or Progress? Pp. 301-309.
- Greene, M. (1977). Imagination and Aesthetic Literacy. *Art Education*, Vol. 30, No. 6, pp. 14-20. National Art Education Association.
- Greene, M. (1984). The Art of Being Present: Educating for Aesthetic Encounters. 166(2), p. 123-135.
- Greene, M. (1987). Creating, Experiencing, Sense-Making: Art Worlds in Schools. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 11-23. University of Illinois Press.

- Greene, M. (1988). *The Dialectic of Freedom*. N. Y. Teachers College.
- Greene, M. (1991). Blue guitars and the search for curriculum. In G. Willis & W. Schubert (Eds.), *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry*. (p. 107-122). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. N. Y. Routledge.
- Lee, K. (1993). Transcendence as an aesthetic concept: Implications for curriculum. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 27, 1, 75-82.
- Lippard, L. (1997). *The lure of the local*. New York: The New Press.
- Lippard, L. (1990). *Mixed Blessings*. N.Y. The New York Press.
- Lowenfeld, Viktor. (1947). *Creative and mental growth*. The Macmillan Company.
- Macdonald, S. (1970). *History and philosophy of art education*. New York: American Elsevier Press.
- Madrid, A. (1988). Missing people and others: Joining together to expand the circle. In M. L. Anderson & P. Hill Collins (Eds.), *Race class and gender: An anthology* (2nd Ed.) (pp.10-15). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Mangravite, P. (1932). The artist and the child. In G. Hartman & A. Shumaker (Eds.), *Creative expression* (pp. 29-33). New York: John Day Co.
- Maslow, A. (1971). Peak Experience in Education and Art. *Theory into Practice*. 10 (3). p. 147-53.
- Moore, Mary Ruth. (2002). An American Journey to Kindergarten's Birthplace. 79(1), p.15.
- Neumann, Eckhard. (1970). *Bauhaus and Bauhaus People..* Reinhold Book Corporation, N.Y.
- Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Peshkin, A. (1982b). The researcher and subjectivity: Reflections on an ethnography of School and community. In G. Spindler (Ed.). *Doing the ethnography of schooling* (p. 20-46). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Phenix, P. (1975). Transcendence and the curriculum. In Pinar, William (Ed.). *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists*. (323-337). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Popular Memory Group. (1982). Popular memory: Theory, politics, method. In R. Johnson, G. McLennan, B. Schwartz, & D. Sutton (Eds.), *Making histories* (pp. 205-252). London: Hutchison.
- Reece, E. (2003). Art Takes Me There: Engaging the Narratives of Community Members through Interpretative Exhibition Processes and Programming. *The Journal of the National Art Education Association*, 56(1), p.33-39.
- Riessman, C. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*; Sage Publications.
- Rosenwald, G., & Ochberg, R. (Eds.). (1992a). *Storied lives: The cultural politics of self-understanding*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Rukeyser, M. (1962). "Kathe Kollwitz." In *by a Woman writt*, ed. Joan Goulianos, pp. 373-378. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1973.
- Sennett, R. (1979). *Fall of the Public Man*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Shapiro, S. (2006). *Losing Heart*. N. J. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Signal vs. Noise, (2005). Wabi-Sabi simplicity. Retrieved August 16, 2009, from <http://37signals.com/syn.archives2/wabisabis-simplicity.php>
- Thompson, P. (1978). *The voice of the past: Oral history*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Ulbricht, J. (2002). Learning about community art behaviors. *The Journal of the National Art Education Association*, 55(5), p.33-38.
- VOA. (2009). Maxine Greene, Master Educator, Philosopher and Humanist. Retrieved September 25, 2009, from <http://www.voanews.com/english/AmericanLife/2009-09-25-voa22.cfm>
- Wel, J. & Bieboer, P. (1993). *Judith Leyster: a Dutch master and her world*. New York: Yale University Press.
- Wessel, H. (1978). Equal Education in Art: A Study of Art Supply Expenditures on the Elementary Level. *Art Education*, Vol. 31, No. 6, pp.24-29.

White, B. A. (1976). A 1974 perspective; Why women's studies in art and art history?
Art Journal, XXXV, pp. 340-344.

Will, G. (2001, January 25). "Art" unburdened by excellence. *The Washington Post*, A19.

Winslow, L. (1939), *The integrated school art program*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Woolf, V. (1939). *Moments of Being*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.