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## INTRODUCTION

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# Maxine Greene and Lincoln Center Institute: Setting the Context

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Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education grew out of a fourteen-year history of an evolving educational program, an intensive study of arts institutions and young people, and the deliberations of many artists and educators working with the organization. In 1960, even before the first building at Lincoln Center was completed, the pilot phase of its educational initiative had been launched. Under the title Lincoln Center Student Program, performing artists began bringing their works to secondary schools throughout the city, and the organization worked to bring more students directly to Lincoln Center performances.

As the organization evolved, Lincoln Center became increasingly aware that the program lacked educational depth and continuity, in part because the presentations were not sufficiently oriented to the needs of young people and teachers, and in part because most schools had neither teaching staff nor educational materials for teaching the performing arts as part of the general curriculum. Moreover, despite a genuine interest in the program, many educators regarded activities in the performing arts as additives to what is generally considered "essential" education. To help overcome this difficulty, the Center became increasingly involved in the educational process, recruiting and training young professional composers, choreographers, playwrights, and directors to work with students and teachers before and

after performances in an effort to help young people get at the fundamentals of the artistic experience.

Nationally during this period, the general position of the arts in education began to change. Largely through the impetus of federally funded programs—notably those under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965—performing arts activity in the schools increased. Throughout the country, school districts experimented with ways to integrate the performing arts into the experiences of young people—through humanities programs, interdisciplinary and team-teaching approaches, and a more flexible approach to the curriculum. Furthermore, the political and educational leadership of the nation began to consider a larger role for the arts and the humanities in the educational process.

Though Lincoln Center continued to work closely with school systems, the administration believed that the programs, however successful and deserving, were still not likely to effect significant change in the basic status of the arts and education. On the other hand, it was unclear how the work of the Student Program needed to change.

In 1970, with the assistance of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, Education Director Mark Schubart undertook a one-year study to address issues of how most effectively to reach young people. In addition, issues concerning repertory, the artist-student relationship, the teaching process, and the relationship between Lincoln Center and schools were examined. Two major recommendations emerged from the study. The goals of Lincoln Center's educational programs, the study concluded, had been too narrowly defined in terms of exposure to the arts. Opening students to the aesthetic dimension in human experience, rather than simple exposure, should be the objective. Moreover, in order to attain this objective, it was recommended that the Center establish a new kind of arts institution to be called Lincoln Center Institute, one dedicated solely and specifically to meeting the needs of young people and their teachers. As a result, Lincoln Center began to reorient its existing student program activities, particularly artist-led workshops with students and teachers, toward goals of increased aesthetic awareness.

At the same time, it was decided that, rather than reach out to a limited number of young people who would not be in a position to effect institutional change, the Institute's primary task would be to partner with adults—teachers, school leaders, community leaders, and artists—who would develop programs in aesthetic education for students in their own organizations. In this way, larger numbers of students could be reached. To this day, the design of Lincoln Center Institute reflects that basic policy decision.

To better fulfill the new expectations, in 1975 the Institute established a partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University. A faculty committee worked out the details of the collaboration, and the college president, Lawrence Cremin, appointed one key faculty member, Dr. Maxine Greene, distinguished philosopher and authority in the field of aesthetic education, to serve as liaison with the Institute. When the Institute's Summer Session for teachers and school administrators was established a year later, a series of workshops and lectures by Dr. Greene dealing with the philosophy of aesthetic education and its role within the broader educational experience became an integral part. And so, the role of philosophy within the Institute, led by the esteemed Maxine Greene, was born.

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Imagine, if you will, studios at the Juilliard School in New York City filled with teachers from the metropolitan area. They are dressed informally, many wearing warm-up clothing and running shoes. They are spending three weeks immersing themselves in music, theater, visual art, and dance accompanied by aesthetic education workshops with Lincoln Center Institute teaching artists. Imagine even further: the teachers are dancing a pas de deux in their workshops; they are doing improvisational theater; they are composing a song; they are making silhouettes. They see the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, a performance of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, hear the Emerson String Quartet, and visit The Museum of Modern Art. They go back to studios, reflect with teaching artists about their experiences, and discuss how the experiences relate to their teaching. In the middle of all this, they all assemble to hear Maxine Greene, who, with her poetic cadence, personal asides, and powerful connections to their lives as teachers, holds them in rapt attention.

For the twenty-five years of the existence of Lincoln Center Institute's Summer Session, Maxine Greene has inspired teachers to think in new ways about the aesthetic experiences they have at the Institute, urging them to transform their learning into innovative classroom teaching that recognizes perception, cognition, affect, and the imagination as ways of knowing. In the early years, Dr. Greene prepared a series of six or seven lectures. These lectures outlined and developed the basic themes of aesthetic education as she defined it, and as it continues to be practiced by teaching artists at Lincoln Center Institute. In later years, Dr. Greene gave three lectures, one during each week of Summer Session. These all built on the concepts developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, refining them, and applying them to current educational concerns and issues.

The lectures are not only essential to understanding aesthetic education, but they also serve as rich sources of Dr. Greene's unique style of imaginative thinking that combines references to philosophy, art criticism, literature, and education, and builds on the works of art in the Institute's repertory and the New York City cultural scene. These references are never linear, and for teachers who return to the Institute summer after summer, they become familiar touchstones—John Dewey, Dennis Donoghue, Hannah Arendt, and Wallace Stevens's blue guitar and sombrero hats, among others. Yet, in the context of the different works of art performed, the touchstones are illuminated somewhat differently than they had been when mentioned before. With the added context of pressing educational issues, such as standards, education reform, and cultural diversity, Dr. Greene makes aesthetic experience and the life of the imagination essential to all that goes on in schools.

After listening to these lectures in the context of Lincoln Center Institute's Summer Session, countless teachers have asked new questions, viewed ideas in a different way, and even transformed some part of their life or work. As you enter this world, asking only one question beginning with "What if?" will set you off on the journey Maxine Greene intends.

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PART I

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# DEFINING AESTHETIC EDUCATION

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How are we to understand "aesthetic education"? How does it differ from what is called "art education"? From "art appreciation"? It is important to understand that "aesthetics" is the term used to single out a particular field in philosophy, one concerned about perception, sensation, imagination, and how they relate to knowing, understanding, and feeling about the world. For some, "aesthetics" has primarily to do with the kinds of experiences associated with reflective and conscious encounters with the arts. Or it may focus on the way in which a work of art can become an object of experience and the effect it then has in altering perspectives on nature, human beings, and moment-to-moment existence. "Aesthetic," of course, is an adjective used to describe or single out the mode of experience brought into being by encounters with works of art.

"Education," as I view it, is a process of enabling persons to become different, to enter the multiple provinces of meaning that create perspectives on the works. To enter these provinces (be they those identified with the arts, the social sciences, the natural sciences), the learner must break with the taken-for-granted, what some call the "natural attitude," and look through the lenses of various ways of knowing, seeing, and feeling in a conscious endeavor to impose different orders upon experience. It is important to understand that the concepts and precepts available to the learner stem from the funded meanings or ways of knowing designed over the years by artists, teachers, and philosophers. We enter traditions as we

engage with such perspectives, becoming members of a culture changing on many levels throughout history. Or, to say it differently, we learn to make sense, all kinds of sense, but we make the culture's symbol systems our own, including those associated with the arts.

"Aesthetic education," then, is an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. When this happens, new connections are made in experience: new patterns are formed, new vistas are opened. Persons *see* differently, resonate differently; as Rilke wrote in one of his poems, they are enabled to pay heed when a work of art tells them, "You must change your life" (1940/1974, p. 93).

Art education, it should be clear, focuses upon exploration of the different media. Young people experience what it signifies to give their feelings and perceptions embodiment in paint, clay, movement, sound. It allows for many modes of expression, many modes of learning a craft, many ways of leaving an imprint on the world. Certainly, people who know the joy and strain of working with a medium are in a position to respond to the work of a professional artist in that medium—and in consequence, to pose the questions about their own aesthetic experiences with which aesthetic education begins. Always, we try to encourage more and more connections, so that art educators reach out for the presence of works of art, and aesthetic educators open spaces for explorations of the materials of art.

At the heart of our Institute, of course, are the workshops taught by professionals in the various fields—choreographers, actors, musicians, painters, others more than well-equipped to make accessible the languages, the mysteries, of the various art forms. Teachers begin to internalize new modalities for expression. They explore patterns, rhythms, effort-shape, tonalities, to such an extent that when they attend performances at the Institute or see art exhibitions, they can attend not only cognitively and according to rule, but with their emotions, their nervous system, their body-minds brought new and in startling relation to the world.

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## Notes on Aesthetic Education

(1980)

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### *An Initiation into New Ways of Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, and Moving . . .*

We are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or the quantifiable, not in what is thought of as social control. For us, education signifies an initiation into new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, moving. It signifies the nurture of a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching out for meanings, a learning to learn.

Our core concern, of course, is with aesthetic education; but we do not regard aesthetic education as in any sense a fringe undertaking, a species of "frill." We see it as integral to the development of persons—to their cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and imaginative development. We see it as part of the human effort (so often forgotten today) to seek a greater coherence in the world. We see it as an effort to move individuals (working together, searching together) to seek a grounding for themselves, so that they may break through the "cotton wool" of dailyness and passivity and boredom and come awake to the colored, sounding, problematic world.

Sometimes I think that what we want to make possible is the living of lyrical moments, moments at which human beings (freed to feel, to know, and to imagine) suddenly understand their own lives in relation to all that surrounds. Young people, older people are constantly prevented from doing this. Their lives, even the things they are taught, are broken into fragments, categorized, compartmentalized. I remember Elizabeth Bishop's translation of Octavio Paz's poem on Joseph Cornell's boxes, particularly the following verse:

*Minimal, incoherent fragments:  
the opposite of History, creator of ruins,  
out of your ruins you have made creations.*

(“Objects and Apparitions: For Joseph  
Cornell,” 1997, pp. 275–276)

In some strange way, that describes for me some of what we shall be doing here.

But what is aesthetic education? How *can* it lead to the discovery of new vistas, to the bringing of severed parts together and making things (for a moment) whole? Most simply, most directly, it is education for more discriminating appreciation and understanding of the several arts. The first concern of those of us engaged in aesthetic education is to find ways of developing a more active sensibility and awareness in our students. To bring this about, we believe, we have somehow to initiate them “into what it feels like to live in music, move over and about in a painting, travel round and in between the masses of a sculpture, dwell in a poem.” (Reid, 1969, p. 302). This is the starting point: the ability to feel from the inside what the arts are like and how they mean. Experiences of this sort cannot but become the ground of an illumination of much that lies beyond, and we are preoccupied with allowing such illumination to occur.

We are hardly, however, in a position to develop a heightened sensitivity in others if we ourselves do not know what it is like to live inside, to move around within the range of art forms. And few of us are in a position to communicate what this is like to others if we who are teachers have not reflected upon our own experiences with music, dance, theater, and the rest. I am reminded of the play *Children of a Lesser God*, and of the impassioned, eloquent effort made by the teacher to communicate to his non-hearing wife what it has meant to him to listen to Bach. It is not only that he knew how to listen, how to notice what there was to be noticed: He had lived inside it; he had allowed it to permeate his experience, and what he was trying to express was the manner in which a particular mode of listening, of paying heed, had illuminated his very existence. He did not (as so many do) offer a variation of “Man!” or “Wow!” or “Cool!” He did not say the performance was gorgeous, that he was thrilled, that all presumably sophisticated and right-minded people felt—or ought to have felt—exactly as he did. He made it very clear that the wonder he experienced—and the illumination—were in part due to the way in which he had attended to the music, what he had brought to his listening. The frustration he expressed was due to his

recognition that the non-hearing woman could only feel the beat, and that Bach in his fullness would never be a possibility for her.

Our classroom encounters are not so desperate, but most of us can find an analogy in that scene. We have often found ourselves confronted by young people who have felt something equivalent to the beat, to whatever level of acoustic pitch the non-hearing woman could feel. Like that woman, many students are quite satisfied with what they have heard. They may, in fact, assert that there is something “real” and “cool” about their experience that teachers (caught up in the conventional “hearing” culture) are too remote to understand. Yet most of us know, at least theoretically, that—although we have to be moved in some fashion in order to appreciate what works of music or plays or dance pieces are about—the aesthetic experience is not simply an affair of feeling or sensation or responsiveness to a beat. Even as we welcome declarations that a specific work has been prized and enjoyed, whatever the reason, we nevertheless hope to communicate the notion that heightened understanding might well heighten enjoyment and extend the range of what is prized.

Many of us have had the kinds of experiences that have helped us realize the connection between cognitive understanding and our capacity to hear and to see and to attend. We may be reminded of this every time we are fortunate enough to have a second or third encounter with a complex work, especially if we have made some intervening effort to comprehend it a bit more. Some of us have gone several times to see the Picasso exhibition with precisely this in mind. We have viewed, say, the acrobats, or the portrait of Gertrude Stein, or the *Guernica* on different days, at different moments in our lives. And, if we have pondered at all, read at all, we are likely to have discerned more in each painting, *felt* more in response to it, each time we have been in its presence. It may be that we suddenly began seeing the acrobats as something other than frail, blue figures arranged in a kind of frieze. Perhaps we became more sensitive to the interplay of color and line and form; perhaps (having attended, and continuing to attend to shapes and nuances) we found a new subject matter emerging for us—acrobats as outcasts, on the outskirts of ordinary society, strangely dignified in their isolation, touched by the grace of their craft. Perhaps we saw something else emerging. Who knows? Surely, we were more likely to respond to the symbols in the *Guernica*, the images of suffering and the destructiveness of pain. We were more intent on noticing the electric bulb, the sun, the torch, things we may not have seen before because we did not know quite how to engage in the special sort of noticing that permits a painting to show itself as something other

than a commentary or a topical account or a representation of something "out there," "in the world."

Similar things may be said about the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, *Madame Bovary*, Martha Clarke's *Haiku*, a movie like *Citizen Kane*. Not only is an active and informed perceiving required; an attentiveness to the qualities of the medium is required, and this, in turn, depends upon the kind of understanding many of us are about to gain through our work with teaching artists. I mean an understanding of the elements of perception, of the kinds of qualities that distinguish each of the languages of art: tone, color, sonority, texture, contour, volume, light and shade, rhythm, beat. I mean an understanding brought about, not simply by means of information and explanation, but by means of actual and personal engagements with the several arts.

Our view is that understanding can only be enriched when we actually work with the raw materials of music, dance, and drama: the medium of sound; the medium that is the body in motion; the medium of language or gesture or movement in space. You are going to discover, sometimes with a veritable shock of awareness, the degree to which such understanding enables you to move out toward, to be present at performances and created works, the degree to which knowing can open perceptual possibilities and, indeed, enable us to feel more, to sense more, to be more consciously in the world.

But that is not all. It is not only a matter of discovering something about the qualities of the diverse art forms with which we intend to deal, nor even of realizing that something new is likely to be disclosed every time we encounter a given work of art—something that always lies beyond. There is also the importance of knowing that works of art exist in their own space, what some call an "art world," apart from the mundane and the routinized and the everyday. This being so, they can be achieved and made meaningful only when those who attend are willing to leap out of the ordinary and be present, as authentic and incomplete beings, to the works at hand.

Surely we have to know enough not to apprehend a dance called *Haiku* mainly as a philosophical statement, for all the fact that it deals ostensibly with the life cycle. We have to bracket out, put in parentheses at least for a time, what we *know* about the life cycle, even what we have learned about the haiku in Japanese culture. Otherwise, we may find ourselves unable to attend to the work as a privileged object, made for our delectation and delight. Too involved with summoning up what we have read about the haiku (and about Japan, anthropology, and even Pilobolus and modern dance), we may be unable to attend to the gestures, movements, surfaces, patterns in space, the weaving in of musical sound, the play of light. The recognitions, associations, meanings will come later; and the

richness of them, the depth of them, may well be a function of the intensity of our attending.

So we need to know something about aesthetic space and the significance of distancing or uncoupling, to the end of grasping a work in its integrity and its autonomy. But we need to know something else too, and this brings me back to my beginning. We need to understand what is involved as we move (as we should) from attending to the work in its integrity to moments of presence, of felt relation to the work, when we allow our imagination to play on what we have perceived, when we incarnate it and make it ours. It is at this point that the work may infuse our consciousness, bring new and unexpected patternings into our reflected-on experience, offer us new vantage points on the world.

I was talking, at the start, about a closing of gaps, a making of patterns and effecting of connections. Only we—live, situated human beings—can make such patterns and connections, and the making of them may be thought of as identical with the creation of meanings or, if you like, the making of creations. Not only do new orderings lie ahead for all of us, but an intensified pursuit of meanings. The subjective dimension of our knowing, our awareness, will be brought into play, that part of us which is so discouraged by those intent on making us conform to official descriptions of a so-called objective "reality." We ourselves, unique persons living in a shared world, will be enlisted in the sense-making process, as we must be every time we attend to a play, listen to a quartet, watch a dance. And this is one of the things we will want to learn how to communicate to those we teach. Through the awareness, through the wide-awakeness brought about by aesthetic education (or by authentic teaching conducted to that end), our students will in some sense be free to find their own voices, as they find their eyes and ears. They may even find themselves free for a time to possess their own lived worlds.

## *Multiple Visions: Aesthetic Moments and Experiences*

Think of the whiteness, the tension of a dancer's legs on point under a shining red skirt; think of a lithe black figure leaping and of the sound of wind instruments, flutes, and strings, the sound of Bach. Think of the pale,

crouching, sliding, protrusive shapes of *Haiku* and those diverse images in half-lit space. Recall the melodic line, the transparent textures of the Ravel quartet, the rhythms and charged energies in *Games*.

Experiencing works like these in a particular way, we are very likely to encounter bright examples of what might be called the aesthetic moment—perhaps living through lyrical moments of our own as we do so. Yes, it is possible to have aesthetic experiences with the sight of trees, animals, sunsets, thunderstorms, babies' hands, the rush of children on a street. But certain kinds of objects and events are particularly suited for aesthetic regard. They are made by living persons for living persons; they offer each of us visions for us—if we are willing to open ourselves to them, to attend.

Each work—the *Brandenburg Concerto*, a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a Picasso painting—is a selection from the appearing world. By that I mean the shaped, colored, sounding world through which we move, day to day, as we live, and to which we so seldom pay heed. I do not mean the world of numbers or electrons or molecules, the Xs and the Ys. Wallace Stevens, in his poem called "The Motive for Metaphor," wrote about the motive for metaphor shrinking from "the A B C of being" (1982, p. 288). He meant that it is in the world as it *appears* to us that we look for resemblances, seek out connections, identify possibilities, go in quest of meanings. The poet is moved to make metaphors when, after exploring and paying imaginative attention to aspects of the phenomenal field (the world as it impinges on his/her consciousness, as it presents itself, as it appears), he/she selects out that which seems to call out to him/her, to hold potential meaning, to give off a kind of light.

Many works of art may be understood to begin with such selecting from the world of sounds and colors and shapes. Then the ordering takes place, the composing of sensuous and formal elements, the embodying of what has been perceived and felt and imagined in musical notes, particular kinds of movements, deliberate actions, words. The work to which this gives rise—the object or the event—must be grasped, perceived, attended to in a certain way if it is to arise in another's experience as a work of art.

Perceiving, it is often said, is the beginning, the ground. It is important to think about what this means, because it is so fundamental to aesthetic grasping and apprehension. We need to recognize that perception involves a direct apprehension of some complex totality as it is given and presented to our viewing or listening consciousness. It enables us to look at *Games*, for instance, not as a shifting arrangement of distinct sensory images (faces at a window, singing voices, yellow and green and pink dresses, blue jeans, angular movements, thrusts, leaps) that we are asked to interpret mentally

and link together into a whole called "dance," but as light, sound, moving shapes, gestures in their particularity and, at once, aspects of a structure, a design. Opening ourselves as perceivers to the work, entering into it kinaesthetically, we free ourselves to grasp it in its vital fullness and complexity. It is not a matter of linking disparate pieces together piece by piece, like beads on a string. Rather, it is a matter of discovering a vision of wholeness in the making, of "incoherent fragments" becoming coherent in dynamic form.

Encountering *Games* again, pondering the problem of awareness, I thought of the approach taken by the choreographer of that piece, Donald McKayle. He wrote:

In my own work, I always demand a certain vibrancy, an inner vitality that communicates through the viscera, not the mind. While the mind is never dormant, it does not hold sway in all areas, and definitely should not in dance. The senses must be reached before the mind. The reflection afterward, which is then basically a process of the mind, should—if the experience has been meaningful—once more awaken this sensory network. (1969, pp. 55–57)

We would be unable to come in touch with such "vibrancy" and "vitality" if we were unable to address ourselves, with our own energy, to what is being enacted on the stage. *Games*, according to McKayle, opens with "songs and dances of play." Beer cans are imaginatively converted into toys, but then the dance becomes a dance of hunger and finally "a sordid dance of terror." If we could not attend to the dance as a whole, we could not have seen or sensed such transmutations. We would not have known the intrinsic gratification that accompanies the recognition of a totality, a completed design. Nor would we have experienced the strange coming together of some of our own memories and feelings—the perception of new meanings in our own lived worlds.

Perceiving a dance, a painting, a quartet means taking it in and going out to it. The action required is at the furthest remove from the passive gaze that is the hallmark of our time: the blank receptivity induced by the television set, the "laid-back" posture of which the young are so proud. Perceiving is an active probing of wholes as they become visible. It involves, as it goes on, a sense of something still to be seen, of thus far undisclosed possibility. It requires a mental and imaginative participation (even when the mind does not "hold sway"), a consciousness of a work as something there to be achieved, depending for its full emergence on the way it is attended to and grasped.

Ernst Gombrich, the art historian, has often written about the ways in which a beholder must collaborate with a visual artist to transform a colored

canvas into a semblance of the visible world (Gombrich, 1965). So it is with other arts, including literature. Georges Poulet, writing about the act of reading, has said:

At the beginning of Mallarmé's unfinished story, *Igitur*, there is the description of an empty room, in the middle of which, on a table there is an open book. This seems to me the situation of every book, until someone comes and begins to read it. Books are objects. On a table, on bookshelves, in store windows, they wait for someone to come and deliver them from their materiality, from their immobility. When I see them on display, I look at them as I would at animals for sale, kept in little cages, and so obviously hoping for a buyer. For—there is no doubting it—animals do know that their fate depends on a human intervention. . . . Isn't the same true of books? Made of paper and ink, they lie where they are put, until the moment some one shows an interest in them. They wait. Are they aware that an act of man might suddenly transform their existence? They appear to be lit up with that hope. Read me, they seem to say. I find it hard to resist their appeal. (1969, pp. 53-68)

This suggests something that applies to many works of art—objects or events that take on aesthetic existence only in transaction with some human consciousness.

It is not just a matter of showing an interest, however. It is, as I have said, a matter of perceiving, noticing in a certain way. The noticing I have in mind also involves an awareness of the medium, the material out of which the particular work of art is made: the textures of Bartók's musical sounds; the forcefulness and pensiveness of the instruments in their virtuosity; the lights and colors and kinetic patterns of the movement that is dance. The qualities of each medium depend for their disclosure upon someone singling them out, identifying them for a particular kind of attention.

We might look at the auditorium we are inhabiting at this moment. Under ordinary observation, there are material things all around, set out in some kind of metrical order in physical space. Also, there are things we understand in terms of their use value and practicality: the seats, the doors, the light. Now it is possible to shift our perspective as we look around, to uncouple the shapes and textures and lights and the rest from the ordinary and the practical. It is possible to focus attention on the redness, the texture of the seats; on the linear forms in the panelling; on the glimmer of faces in the shadows; on the glint of silk on a sleeve or the spurt of green on a shirt; on echoing, whispering sounds; on the dark oblongs at the back of the stage. Doing so, we become sensitive, as we ordinarily are not, to the appearances of things and the sounds and the feel of things against our skin. Attending to, "prehend-

ing" qualities in this fashion, as Aldrich (1963) says, we may discover the shades of red, say, the slope of the seats, or even the feel of carpet on the steps to be interesting for their own sakes, worthy of some kind of contemplation. Once this occurs, we will have located the theater itself in a kind of aesthetic space, a space determined by the intensities or the values of the colors and sounds and shapes of which we may have become suddenly aware.

It is not that the physical room becomes unreal or non-existent. It exists in its configurations and can be restored, once we regain our ordinary perspective on what lies around. I simply want to suggest the dependence of the qualitative aspect of things on a certain sort of noticing. And I want to underline the notion that aesthetic qualities are perceptible attributes of actual objects and events (of chairs, teacups, street-corner meetings), attributes that are made to appear intrinsically interesting and significant when they are allowed to exist in an aesthetic space. Think of the significance of Cézanne's monumental forms, his grays and blues, in one of his renderings of Mount St. Victoire, for instance, when the painting is permitted to exist in aesthetic space. Think of how intrinsically interesting the colors of the costumes were and the movements of the dancers in *Games*, at least for those of us who attended, who paid heed. Recall some of the street scenes in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*: the swirling young bodies; the color contraries; the shine of buckles; the sweep of swords.

The crucial and fascinating point is that works of art are deliberately created for the kind of perceiving we are called on to engage in with respect to the theater. They are, for that reason, conceived of as privileged objects. They are created not solely for the sake of making visible and audible and palpable the stuff out of which they were fashioned, the colors and sounds and shapes, but to communicate something by means of that display—something that can only be grasped by those who attend, something that opens vistas on what lies beyond.

I have been emphasizing the fact that the work or the performance can only emerge as an aesthetic object or event in encounters with some human consciousness. Works of art do not reveal themselves automatically, you see. I have been suggesting that they have to be achieved. And they are most likely to be achieved by those who know how to notice, how to actively perceive. Ordinarily, it takes time, if consciousness is to be informed by what is seen and heard. It occurs in a "vivid present," in which inner and outer time are somehow unified:

Living in the vivid present . . . the working self experiences itself as the originator of the ongoing actions and, thus, as an undivided total self. It experiences

its bodily movements from within; it lives in . . . experiences which are inaccessible to recollection and reflection; its world is a world of open anticipations. (Schutz, 1967, p. 216)

These experiences may be associated with the sense of our personal histories, against the background of which we move into the presence of works of art. They are, for the moment, inaccessible, because we suppress our awareness of them when we move out toward a painting, a sonata, a play. In that moment, similarly, we suspend what we know about art history and the contexts in which the works were made. We do not, of course, erase what we have learned about the arts or about ourselves. It is obvious that such learning, when assimilated, enriches our perception and our pleasure; indeed, whatever relevant knowledge we have amassed provides more points of contact with any given work. It may open channels of aesthetic awareness, blocked, say, by our ignorance of the twelve-tone scale or the meaning of collage or the uses of imagery in poems. The point is that what we have come to know need not be in the forefront of our minds at the moment of our encounter with a work of art. If it is, we are likely to be distracted, preoccupied; our attention is likely to be diffused.

But our lives remain the ground against which we experience works of art. There is a sense in which coming in contact with a work is like meeting another human being. Meetings of this sort can never take place in a vacuum, in isolation from lived biography. But when persons open themselves to one another, there is always a sense of new profiles to be experienced, new aspects to be understood. So it often is in encounters with the arts, if we are open, if we take the time. If we attend from our own centers, if we are present as living, perceiving beings, there is always, always more.

## Imagination Transmutes "Antic Fables" . . .

We have been resonating to performances, one after the other. We have explored the materials out of which the pieces performed were made: the medium of sound; the stuff of language; the body in motion. We have explored the uses of tension and release in creating the qualitative surfaces of what is seen upon a stage; we have discovered how they contribute to

what we feel. We have attended to visible metaphors of various kinds: the stricken gesture at the end of *Games*; the dancer's foot on point in the *Four Temperaments* pas de deux; the two-dimensional cut-outs of human shapes on the walls of one of the art classrooms. We have begun listening differently to the conversation among the instruments in a string quartet. Several of us have heard a vibrato for the first time; some have, for the first time, found themselves able to single out developing and recurring themes; still others have heard, as never before, the beauty of a clarinet's melodic line.

And many of us, somewhat to our surprise, have begun to find our way in the complex work of musical art called *Ancient Voices of Children*. We have done so by relating to the voice at first, or to the Lorca poetry, or to the bolero rhythm pounding below; and gradually, gradually, we have come to see the point of the circular notation with its markings for mandolin, oboe, piano, singer, and with its evocations of Mahler and Bach. Gradually, gradually, we have come to realize that the dialogue between the woman and the boy is an integral part of the developing meaning and of the musical structure as well.

All this signifies that we are experiencing the transformation of increasing numbers of works of art into what may become aesthetic objects for us, objects of *our* aesthetic experiencing. We are breaking through to new horizons of sound and feeling. We are beginning, just beginning, to suspect what still lies beyond.

Consider what William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is becoming—familiar though it may be. We can see it as a play of coruscating fictions, having to do with maskings, pretendings, what Titania calls "forgeries" and Oberon "shaping"—if not "hateful"—fantasies. All of these, we now realize, are direct and indirect ways of talking about the arts. Remember Theseus with his "antic fables," his reminder that:

*. . . as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.*

We may have been reminded now and then of the strange images, the fearful images, the "things unknown" so often released by unbridled fantasy. Shakespeare spoke of the fantasies of the madman and the frenzied lover. Some of us might think of the addict or the seeker after sensory shocks and the thrill of violence. If we do, we might recognize again the special powers of the poet, the artist, who orders and embodies such images, who forms