FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY AESTHETIC EDUCATION:
OBJECTIVES - ORIENTATION - METHODOLOGY

BY

Professor H. GRATIOT ALPHANDERY

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INTRODUCTION: AN OUTLINE OF THE SUBJECT

For an interdisciplinary aesthetic education

Despite the importance attached to artistic and cultural questions in the contemporary world, aesthetic education is not always given its rightful place.

It consequently seems particularly difficult today to define the forms and scope of such education.

This is no doubt largely due to the fact that significant developments have occurred in the way in which aesthetics is represented as a science: 'Aesthetics has gradually ceased to be the science of beauty and has become simply the science of art or the study of art.'[1] It has come to be recognized that aesthetics 'always shows us art through a behaviour pattern'.[2] Preparation for this behaviour pattern or, rather, the manifold behaviour patterns engendered by art should be a fundamental consideration in every educational undertaking.

Our thinking is therefore patently underpinned by a necessarily extended conception of the role of art in human life. 'As education through art extends beyond the narrow traditional limits of what is conventionally termed aesthetic education, it should include the training of the whole man, in the types of attitudes and psychological experiences which art introduces into the world of human civilization.

By popularizing knowledge of the most important art forms, and cultivating aesthetic taste, it will also tend to educate men in such a way that art will become a daily necessity for them; contact with it will affect their whole personality and shape their intellectual and spiritual experiences.'[3]

If its objectives are to be fully attained, aesthetic education viewed in these terms must be firmly based on a real knowledge of the conditions and laws governing the development of the personality, and first and foremost the personality of the child.

In schools, it must be directed particularly at bringing into play all the means of expression peculiar to the child and the adolescent and at fostering the discovery and learning of a broad range of creative techniques.

Hence, aesthetic education will take its place among the other subjects on the curriculum and will certainly not be set apart in an unreal world which is meant to be preserved as a separate and specialized field. It will be able to serve as a forum where these subjects meet and converge. It will be enriched by what they each have to contribute in terms of science, history and technology. Thus it may also point the way towards a new approach to the environment, a new outlook.

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1. R. Frances: Psychologie de l'esthétique Paris, PUF, 1968, p.1.
2. Id loc. cit. p.5.
3. B. Suchodonski, A complete man, in Education on the move, Extracts from Background Papers prepared for the Report of the International Commission on the Development of Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, the Unesco Press, Paris, 1975, p. 104.

It is likely that this fresh approach to aesthetic education will be more in keeping with the interests and hopes of young people. It may also give rise to new forms of cultural behaviour that are more authentic and also more stimulating.

Far from prompting young people to derisory hostility against outmoded values, it will be able to offer them other standards by which to judge, other means of changing the environment in which they live.

If our aim is to set new objectives for aesthetic education and enable it to contribute more fully to the development of the individual, we must first of all discuss the procedures of aesthetic education.

It is clear that aesthetic education involves two distinct activities: appreciation and creation. Appreciation implies an enhanced awareness of the work of art, an analysis of one's reactions to it and a desire for information on the conditions in which it was created and, in particular, on the artist himself.

Creation involves learning the techniques needed to practise one or more forms of artistic expression and the use of these techniques for purposes of creation and communication.

Even though these tentative definitions may seem perfunctory and over-simplified, it is clear that very different processes are involved.here. They are different and not necessarily complementary: a person who has received an aesthetic education aimed at training him to appreciate a work of art does not necessarily go on to create a work of art himself or set about learning how to do so.

However, if these are features of aesthetic education that may differentiate it from other forms of education, aesthetic education takes very different forms depending on the age of the particular individuals at whom it is aimed. In this respect, it resembles other forms of education in its need to advance by stages, to tackle difficulties by degrees and draw up a syllabus.

However, like everything connected with culture, it is complemented by a parallel education which is influenced to a considerable extent by living conditions, individual experiences and the value systems of the community. Thus, it might be argued that here, as in many other cultural fields, two types of education are in confrontation if not in competition. On the one hand, there is an explicit education, which has its norms, its guidelines, its managerial personnel and, needless to say, its representatives at different levels of the school system. On the other hand, there is an implicit education, transmitted by the whole environment, in which the mass media play an important but not exclusive role and which is also underpinned by criteria that are, at times, extremely rigorous but far more difficult to define.

The second kind of education, is no less imbued with significance than the first and is all the more subtle as it is not manifested openly in a specific context. Like all education, it creates habits and needs. It is founded on judgements and on choices that vary widely in origin and are presented in an entirely undifferentiated way with the aim of preserving freedom of choice. The value of a choice in which fashions, advertising and commercial requirements are intermingled with a clear concern for cultural information is yet to be determined. While this implicit education is loosely structured and apparently lacks coherence in terms of its aims and the ways it is presented, it nevertheless has considerable consequences. It affects a wider audience than can be reached by the schools at any level. It reaches this audience in its moments of leisure and relaxation when it is more favourably disposed and more receptive. It offers this audience an apparently broader access to art forms, works and artists that are by no means always covered by school curricula. It is

definitely an implicit education, in that it does not rely on the methods generally applied in education, even in the 'new education'. This kind of education has some repercussions on the other kind, whose forms of presentation or analysis, if not objectives it may help to modify.

Aesthetic education is education of the judgement. It leads from the immediate affective response to a reasoned justification, but without necessarily imposing a rejection of the initial response. It proceeds by stages from 'I like it, I don't like it' to the more explicit 'I like it because', 'I don't like it because' which, moreover, in a personalized context becomes 'it is beautiful because' or 'it is ugly because' without excluding the paradoxical 'I like it because it is ugly'. It thus acts as a guide towards greater awareness of. tastes and preferences, and towards their assertion and analysis.

It is in this sense, undoubtedly, that it has its place in personality development and depends upon the processes and stages of this development. It takes as its starting point the emotional spontaneity characteristic of the child and culminates as far as possible, in a mastery of adult reasoning. But it does not reject affective authencity along the way. Thus, it could be argued that it is in the privileged position of being able to bring together the two types of behaviour--affective and cognitive--without subordinating one to the other.

In a good many cultures, aesthetic education does not escape the pressure of ethical or religious constraints. The content of particular art forms is fraught with prohibitions and this inevitably affects what is taught about such art forms. The prohibition on representing the deity or the human countenance, for example, sometimes leads to highly unobjective judgements on those who have had the courage to infringe this prohibition. Thus, the scope of education is restricted by the limits placed upon judgement and information. In this connection, it will be appreciated that it is impossible to conceive of aesthetic education in isolation from the societies and cultures in which it is provided. Moreover, the field of art, even though it is said to be universal, bears the stamp of history, religious faiths and national boundaries.

Any discussion of the role of aesthetic education in personality development should mean giving prominence to the child's needs and abilities to which this aesthetic education attempts to provide a response. One cannot aspire to recreate the history of child development in a manner and according to patterns that are valid for all countries and all environments. However, by referring to the more generally accepted contemporary theories and seeking to bring out their common features, we may hope to succeed in formulating a number of observations on the objectives, orientation and methodology of an interdisciplinary aesthetic education.

Present-day advances in psychology themselves highlight the importance and significance of this interdisciplinary approach. Since this approach is considered fundamental for providing an analysis and explanation of the behaviour of the individual and placing him in his material and social environment, it would be paradoxical if the educational action that is meant to ensure the development of the individual were to be restrictive and, consequently, incomplete.

Accordingly, before turning our minds to the main thrust and methodology of this interdisciplinary aesthetic education, we may ask whether it is reasonable for it to rely upon our current state of knowledge of the conditions and significant stages of the psychological development of the child.

On the subject of the psychological development of the child, Henri Wallon writes: 'In the last analysis, it is the adult world which is imposed on him by the environment. In each period, this gives rise to a degree of uniformity in mental development but

this does not entitle the adult to accept only what he imparts to the child. In the first place, the way in which the child assimilates what is imported may be totally unlike the way in which the adult himself makes use of it. While the adult is ahead of the child, the child, in his own way, is ahead of the adult. He is endowed with psychological potentialities which, in another setting, would be used differently. The fact that many difficulties have been collectively overcome by social groups has already enabled many of these potentialities to come to the fore. Assuming that civilization plays its part, one may ask whether the child is not potentially capable of further advances in reasoning and sensibility'.[1]

It is by no means unreasonable to ask such a sanguine question about the future at the outset of a study on aesthetic education. There are few areas of education in which there is as much concern over our continuing ignorance of the child's real potential.

It may be asked whether the choices required by any educational activity and the determination of priorities are always truly geared to the child.

To preserve all the child's characteristic forms of communication while helping him to develop other forms; to develop his curiosity and at the same time to sharpen his judgement; to make him receptive and critical, open-minded and eager for information and capable of expressing his preferences without refusing to revise his opinions-- these must surely be the objectives of an education which is exposed to constant change.

It remains to be determined at what stage and in what form this type of education should be undertaken so as to keep in step with personal development and make the best of individual abilities without imposing excessive constraints or mindless passivity.

There is today a steadily increasing abundance of literature on the young child. This includes the writings of psychologists whose work follows on from the work of Gesell, Piager, Wallon, Zazzo and Lézine. It also includes works by neurophysiologists such Ajurriaguerra and Paillard; by psychoanalysts such as Spitz and Winnicott and, also, by ethnologists, experimentalists and psycholinguists.

This convergence of interests and specializations does not stem from any particular concern for educational matters. It is not concerned with the practicalities of child rearing but rather, with the origin of behaviour, the earliest sensori-motor manifestations, the establishment of the first relationships, the genesis of the emotions and of affective responses and reactions to the environment.

The state of total dependence of the newborn infant, who is 'incapable of independent survival because his organs are not sufficiently mature, has been likened to a case of prematurity'.[2] The newborn child 'is unable to satisfy any of his desires except with the help of another person'.[3] This explains why 'from the sequences that are established in the first days and the first weeks, there develop the first foundations of the behaviour which will be brought into play in interpersonal relations. The expressive functions come long before the performatory functions'.[4]

However, Wallon and Ajurriaguerra, to cite no others, have shown that movement, by its very nature, potentially embodies the 'different directions which psychological

1. Henri Wallon. L'évolution psychologique de l'enfant. Paris, 1947, Colin. p. 146.
2. Henri Wallon, loc. cit. 46.
3. Id. loc. cit. 46.
4. Id. loc. cit. 47.

activity can take',[1] although the functional apparatus on which it depends is far from being operational at the time of birth. It is during the course of the first year that we see the development of the first stages of motor activity which Ajurriaguerra sets out to study in the guise of the 'kinetic melody'.[2] 'This represents the harmonious aspect of the act in its temporal development'.[2] In this connection, we cannot fail to note the terminology which is borrowed from aesthetics and is used to describe the beginnings of spatio-temporal behaviour in the infant. An exploratory phase, which is limited at first to the hand and is considerably extended by the time the child begins to walk, is followed by the orientation which 'shows that the motor function is inseparable from the first notions of the bodily schema'.[3] Ajurriaguerra likewise emphasizes the part played, from the first year on, by gestural activity. It is more than a motor reaction; it already has narrative content, and the narrative itself is both constituted by and constitutes the earliest forms of spatio-temporal organization. 'Already, in gestural activity, the premises of language are to be discerned. The verbal statements made through gesture are already a form of communication.'[4]

Such communication is established even more firmly if the child finds himself in a genuine 'effective symbiosis' with his surroundings, to use Wallon's term. The intensity and significance of this affective communication are, moreover, clearly identified by psychoanalysts who have given special consideration to some of its manifestations. Thus, Spitz shows that 'from the second month on, the face becomes a key visual percept which the child prefers to all the other "things" around him. He is capable of separating it and distinguishing it from his surroundings and giving it total attention for a considerable period of time....'[5] Leaving aside the fact that the child's eyes follow the human face from the second month on, the smile is the first active manifestation of purposeful behaviour in the child. Spitz also says that: 'One cannot place any reliance on the smiles of babies aged less than two months: they smile at anyone or anything. After the age of six months, these same babies will smile only at their mother or at persons whom they know to be friends and will not smile at strangers; in a word, they will smile at the objects of their love'. This special interest shown by the child in the persons around him extends to the situations in which they appear. Thus, Irène Lézine notes that 'the child stops breast-feeding when he is looking at something he finds interesting and sometimes speeds up his sucking so that the scene will reoccur'.[6] She goes on to write that 'the increase or decrease in the rate of suckling is, therefore, not due only to the milk flow or the variable appetite of the child. Contact, smell and heat play a part in prompting the infant's feeding behaviour'.[7] The need to satisfy hunger is here linked to the pursuit of an immediate pleasure. After several months, however, 'pleasure will play a more important role (for the child) than need: being with his mother becomes more important for him than feeding'.[8]

It should not be thought, however, that the sensori-motor apparatus of the new-born infant always enables him to react in a variety of ways. On the basis of the work of Bruner, E. Vurpillot points out that 'the newborn infant appears above all as a person whose sensory potential for receiving the stimuli around him by far exceeds his capacity for response. (Bruner, 1968). While he can visually distinguish between

1. H. Wallon - Importance du mouvement dans le développement psychologique de l'enfant. ENFANCE No. 2/1966 p.1.
2. Ajurriaguerra: Intégration de la motilité. ENFANCE No. 2/1956 p. 16.
3. id. loc. cit. 16.
4. id. loc. cit.
5. R. Spitz - De la naissance à la parole - PARIS PUF 1974, p. 66.
6. I. Lezine - Propos sur le jeune enfant - Paris, Mame, 1974, p. 153.
7. Id. loc. cit. 153.
8. Id. loc. cit. 157.

sets of situations in terms of several variables, he can only respond to them by means of precise sensori-motor actions such as sucking, looking or clasping, which are not yet attuned to the subtle variations on which he is sensitive, or by means of disordered activity'.[1] What, in certain circumstances, might appear as a preferential adaptation to this or that type of situation is, in reality, no more than a sign of the immaturity of a visual system in which attention focuses primarily on 'the violently contrasted stimuli in motion'. The organic changes due to the advances of cerebral maturation will be reflected by the emergence of new forms of behaviour such as the co-ordination of prehension and vision. Moreover, repeated practice in such behaviour will bring about progress.

Thus, it is found that, in different areas of activity during this sensori-motor period, the child progressively builds up systems of responses to the stimuli in his environment. Needless to say, these responses are limited in so far as the child's physical apparatus is still incomplete. However, such responses are already signs of certain choices made on the bais of a relationship, which proves to be a lasting one, between perceptual and affective behaviour.

The infant's presence in the world thus has to be considered in all its manifestations. We shall no doubt find in these manifestations, diffuse as they may be, the source of more highly developed behaviour patterns which will emerge only much later in life.

Of the two authors of this study, only one is a specialist in aesthetic education; the other is a psychologist. In our view, such partnership is justified in so far as the educator--even when he is an artist--cannot dispense with a close analysis of child behaviour--all aspects of the child's behaviour and not merely his aesthetic behaviour.

An effort has to be made to establish when and in what circumstances the child first takes an interest in what is by common consent termed art. While other people may take the view that some of his work has an aesthetic value, this is not true of him. He does this work simply because he likes doing it--even his scribbles and scrawls. He works hard at them. He takes trouble over them and they give him pleasure. He has no idea how the adult world will look at them. Furthermore, he has a spontaneous, honest reaction to the work of other people, whether that of his school-fellows or the Mona Lisa. He likes it or dislikes it. His affective reaction will be expressed by the words 'its's beautiful' or 'it isn't beautiful'. The concern of the psychologist is, through the child, to discover a new world--a world in which reality and the image repertoire, personal experience and the mental image, the affective and the cognitive are intermingled.

In addition to the different stages of aesthetic education there is the emergence of the discovery of art and its appropriation by the child. The task of the psychologist is to trace the origin and development of this process.

This combined approach by a teacher and a psychologist was not motivated by the desire to present alternative viewpoints or to create an artificial balance. Rather, it represents an attempt to demarcate the respective field of each in a joint effort to achieve a truer understanding of children.

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1. E. Vurpillot - Le monde visuel du jeune enfant. Paris, PUF - 1972 - p. 11.

I - <u>OBJECTIVES</u>

I - 1. THE BEGINNINGS OF CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE CHILD

- EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION

- INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

It is not our intention to choose between contemporary theories that explain and describe the child's psychological development. To do do would entail passing judgements in a manner that could not easily be justified in objective terms.

Rather, we intend to seek, through this multiplicity of theories, readily recognizable features of the child's development. These seem to be the periods which should be studied closely if we are to establish the principles which might form the basis of an aesthetic education seriously concerned with ensuring the full development of the child. In this context, the interdisciplinary approach would play its role all the more effectively as it does not give pride of place to any one form of expression but fosters a wide variety of exchanges and learning experiences.

However, it cannot be denied that the different explanations of childhood are too often grounded today on what has been referred to as a mythicized image of the child. In the contemporary world, which is beset by far-reaching and rapid upheavals, the way in which the child is represented has remained remarkably static. Furthermore, it is the scientific image, rather than the cultural image, that remains faithful to a certain model. All the recent discoveries on the early reactions and exchanges in the young child, on the importance of the environment and on the inequality of learning experiences and modes of behaviour as a result of socio-economic backgrounds only rarely affect the way in which the stages of development and learning patterns are conventionally divided up.

In this context, we can only emphasize the immediate educational consequences of such analyses. There is a risk that science, because of its rigidity, will act as a barrier to reality. Far from reassuring the educator, the diversity of existing theories, and the claims they embody, leave him at a complete loss. We learn child psychology but we do not always learn to look at children. Rather than observe children, we interpret their behaviour in terms of a model. We go beyond individual children in search of a constant element, namely the 'child' and a well-defined period—childhood—where schooling conditions and the age of majority change.

Those who show how the status of the child has changed over the centuries are the first to be surprised and, like Philippe Aries, acknowledge that 'today's adults behave as though they no longer had any idea how to behave towards children or young people; the latter intimidate them'.[1]

The flood of educational nostrums that rely to a greater or lesser extent on interpretations of the child or childhood is evidence of such adult insecurity. Counsellors and their clients are equally on their guard. Neither are sure any more of how to preserve their status as adults, parents or educators while avoiding the pitfalls of over-permissiveness or inflexibility.

If the adult is no longer able, except in very rare cases, to talk with the child, if he can no longer, except in very exceptional cases, understand—despite the mass of advice given to him—the nature of the child's demands, the child has to learn, as early as possible, to be self-sufficient.

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1.   Philippe Aries, in Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse, Paris, Gallimard, No. 19, 1979, p. 23.

In certain aspects of his behaviour, the child exhibits considerable independence at a very early age. Through such behaviour, the child builds and orders his own world very early in life. Through such behaviour the child appropriates reality and incorporates an image-repertoire in keeping with his abilities, without any direct approach to adults. This behaviour is all the more significant as it takes different forms, depending on the children themselves, their ages, their cultures, the period of history in which they live and their way of life. However, all children carry these behavioural patterns with them into adult life. It is, perhaps, in them that the basis and instrument of an aesthetic education may be found.

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1.   H. Wallon, loc. cit. 46.
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5.   Ajurriaguerra, Intégration de la motilité, ENFANCE No.2/1956, p. 16.
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1.   Id. loc. cit.
2.   R. Spitz, De la naissance à la parole, Paris, PUF, 1974, p. 66.
3.   I. Lézine, Propos sur le jeune enfant, Paris, Mame, 1974, p. 153.
4.   Id. loc. cit. 153.
5.   Id. loc. cit. 157.
6.   E. Vurpillot, Le monde visuel du jeune enfant, Paris, PUF, 1972, p. 11.

signs of certain choices made on the basis of a relationship, which proves to be a lasting one, between perceptual and affective behaviour.

The infant's presence in the world thus has to be considered in all its manifestations. We shall no doubt find in these manifestations, diffuse as they may be, the source of more highly developed behaviour patterns which will emerge only much later in life. '

It is not our intention to survey all the behaviour patterns which emerge in the course of the intellectual, affective and social development of the child.

Nor do we wish to dwell on those behaviour patters which may seem to be most characteristic of the emergence of new mechanisms. We would like merely to consider, by way of example, a number of such behaviour patterns which may later shape certain aesthetic attitudes.

Even if we accept Bower's[1] view that 'at the end of infancy, the baby is sociable and co-operative', we cannot overlook certain particularly significant reactions during these first eighteen months.

It is not enough to detail the wealth and diversity of the perceptual universe but it is essential to dwell on the importance of social interactions and their different modes of expression. Smiling--far more than sticking out the tongue, an imitative act which, long after René Zazzo, is now generally recognized as a precocious phenomenon--deserves attention. Bower refers to 'certain types of smiles' or the false smile, to be differentiated from the genuine smile, as a reaction to the voice and to the smile as a reaction to the human face. The point which we would again emphasize in regard to the smile is that Bower sees in it--to a greater degree than Spitz did--a reaction involving an element of choice. 'Smiling is a pleasant form of social behaviour. It is also the most significant aspect of social development during the first half of the first year'.[2]

Account should therefore be taken not only of the baby's increasing ability to handle information but of the twofold process by which he accomplishes this: a quantitative increase together with an increase in differentiation.

In this respect, we must not overlook what has been written about the astonishment manifested by the child by such authors as Preyer, Guillaume, Stern, Charlotte Bühler and Malrieu, and which has been remarkably well summarized by Artemenko.

While in Piaget's analyses of the sensori-motor period, 'notions such as astonishment, surprise, curiosity and stupefaction quite frequently form part of the vocabulary of the observations', hardly any 'definitions or precise distinctions' relating to these terms are found.[3]

Malrieu himself, again closely following Wallon, shows the sequence which leads from astonishment, manifested in the first month by a sudden start, to 'a more complex astonishment, at once akin to fear and to sensorial attention',[4] 'and also akin to surprise and the orientational reaction, in so far as it entails an adjustment and a mobilization of the sensorial apparatus'. It may seem difficult to 'establish criteria for astonishment that are at once descriptive and genetic',[5]

1.   T.G.R. Bower, 'Le développement psychologique de la première enfance', Brussels, Mardaga, 1978.
2.   Id. loc. cit. p.
3.   P. Artemenko, 'L'étonnement chez l'enfant', Paris, Vrin, 1978, p. 40.
4.   Id. loc. cit. p. 45.
5.   Id. loc. cit. p. 46.

but it is impossible to dissociate it from an affective tonality which may in turn take the form of joy, anxiety or fear.

In any event, reactions to sudden events are noted from the third month on by both Piaget and Malrieu. More precisely, 'by the end of the first half-year and at the beginning of the second, different ways of responding to new situations emerge.'[1] But it is difficult to monitor the child's past sufficiently to determine with any degree of accuracy the conditions governing his response to new experiences.

Both psychoanalysts and psychologists have emphasized the ambivalent nature of the response: fear of the stranger, anguish caused by separation but, at the same time, active experimentation which is both repeated and controlled. This is the origin of curiosity which seems to arise from the search for some absent object.

The speed at which the sequence of forms of behaviour occurs in the infant and the interaction with the earliest forms of verbal expression make it difficult to isolate any particular aspect for more detailed analysis. In spite of the variety of forms which these behaviour patterns may take, depending on the motor style of each child as well as on his material and socio-affective environment, we can recognize in them modes of expression which are all the more significant in that they already bear the stamp of early experiences.

To attach importance to astonishment, necessarily implies attaching importance to the significance and presence of the look in the earliest behaviour of the child. The look cast at the other person and the fact of looking at others are indissociable in his adaptive relations with the outside world. Seeing and being seen are twin aspects of looking, just as holding and being held are aspects of prehension, touching and being touched of tactile experience, and speaking and being addressed of verbal expression. It has been noted that among children the first mimetic exchanges in face-to-face situations occur early, between four and seven and a half months[2] and, at the same time, that social interaction based on looking at others is also a precocious phenomenon.

For Piaget, as J. Abecassis[3] has shown, the look, which plays a central part in the early stages of the child's development, is studied merely 'from the epistemological point of view'.

For Wallon--as for Gesell and Zazzo--communication with others through the look is a prelude to self-knowledge and 'prepares the way for the child's recognition of his own image in the mirror.'[4]

Both Lan and Winnicott analyse this dynamic which plays a part in the constitution of the child's ego in that it enables him to achieve self-identification through dissociating himself from others. Freud goes as far as to regard the scopic drive as a component of the affective life. While the look undoubtedly feeds this drive with images, 'it cannot reveal the relations and structures which exist between these images and which order them to form a system that is peculiar to each individual. It is better to have recourse to verbal expression to achieve an understanding of these structures'.[5]

1.   Id. loc. cit. p. 57
2.   J.C. Rouchouse, in Equipe de recherches sur les premiers développements de l'enfant, ENFANCE, Paris.
3.   J. Abecassis, 'A propos du regard de l'enfant' in ENFANCE, Paris, No.3/4 1979.
4.   Id. loc. cit. p. 174.
5.   Id. loc. cit. p. 177.

This intensity and density of the look last throughout infancy and well beyond. The attempt to catch the other's eye is a manifestation of both an interest in and a need for the other. Wallon has highlighted what could easily be substantiated from the behaviour of very young infants, namely the inhibitions created by the intensity of the other's look. He has dwelt in particular on the 'reactions to authority figures', of which shyness is but one of the most easily observable aspects in childhood.

While looking at other people may be an invitation, a source of reciprocity or form of dialogue, the same is not true of looking at things, which is a process of discovery, inquiry and judgement. The child knows, identifies and recognizes. There is the act of seeing and the act of recognizing a familiar sight. As regards the approach to the material environment, the visual approach seems more telling than the approach through sound. However, speech is primarily a response to the approach through sound.

In his discovery of the world, the child makes use of all the means at his disposal. But it can surely be assumed that, already at this stage, the child will prefer certain forms of approach to others according to his personal capacities and the responses received from the outside world. Similarly, one can note that, at a very early age, some children are more responsive to sounds, and others to colours or smells. This surely reflects the predominance of certain interests, the first signs of a choice which lies at the root of an aesthetic sensibility, which is taking shape and becoming individualized.

However, we should not be too hasty or naive in committing ourselves to such hypotheses. As Y. Eyot notes, 'hearing and sight have sometimes been termed aesthetic. But, considered as sensation, there is no basis for setting them apart from smell, taste or touch which also have pleasant and unpleasant effects... On the other hand, there is no doubt at all that such phenomena have been able to serve as a basis for the establishment of forms of aesthetic behaviour'.[1] He goes on to make the point, with which we fully agree, that 'aesthetic experience is not confined to two senses' and Leroi Gourhan rightly recognized that all the senses, including visceral sensibility (coenesthesia) and muscular sensibility (Kinesthesia), will be 'at the disposal of the artistic superstructure'.[2]

It is something of a truism to define art as a form of expression or communication. However, such a definition enables us to understand how art plays a part, together with the other forms of expression, in the development of the child. Above all, it helps us to grasp how what the adult assigns to the category of 'art'--an exceptional category--is still, for the child, nothing other than a language that is more accessible, more natural, and less learnt than the other language.

But when we refer to aesthetic education we cannot lose sight of the fact that the path which leads to art seems different from the path leading to other forms of culture.

Pierre Naville recently showed with remarkable lucidity that 'scribblings which are not altogether arbitrary in their form gradually evolve into what we call writing and drawing'. For him, 'it is clear that this primitive form of graphic

1. Y. Eyot, Genèse des phénomènes esthétiques, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1978, p. 40.
2. Id. loc. cit. p. 42.

expression does not emerge from nowhere; there is even every reason to suppose that its origins are quite deeply rooted in the individual, that they are perhaps "original" in the strict meaning of the word, and that these real origins may be expected to cast some light on the more elevated subsequent forms of expression, such as those encountered in art properly so called, in figurative art in general and in the teaching which is closely associated with it'.[1]

Analysing the development of the child, he compares the sound line and the graphic line whose difference plays a role 'in conditioning the signals produced by the child himself--the graphic line produces a gesture but leaves a "material residue" and sometimes a tangible residue,'"deformation of the support medium". The cry, a sound line, "very quickly becomes a command signal which conditions the appearance and disappearance of presences connected with changes in the child's physical situation"'.[2]

Admittedly, these manifestations of activities occur at different points in the development of the child. To be sure--and Naville recognizes this--, vocal 'prattling' and, even more so, the cry occur much earlier than graphic 'prattling'. But by bringing together vocal expression and graphic expression 'we are able to ask ourselves whether the graphic function, starting with scribbling (the drawing of regular curves) does not emerge from a prior system of line production just a articulate language with a common signification emerges from a prior and more diffuse system of global vocalization'.[3]

We consider that such an analysis is likely to have definite repercussions on the way aesthetic education is viewed in an interdisciplinary context. Indeed, far from appearing as an exercise of the intellect or a desire to broaden the cultural horizons, it appears as a return to the sources. Behind the diversity of approaches, it is an attempt to rediscover the unity of the personality which, even in its earliest manifestations, involves many different forms of expression. The child harnesses all the means at his disposal to express himself, to make himself understood, to initiative and extend his communication with others.

1.   P. Naville, 'Note sur les origines de la fonction graphique' in ENFANCE, Paris, 1950, No. 3-4, p. 15.
2.   Id., p. 192.
3.   Id., p. 193.

I - 2. THE GENESIS OF THE IMAGINARY REGISTER

       - IMITATION AND IMAGINATION

       - PLAY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

       - CREATIVITY

Imitation - The imaginary register - expression

The extremely important behaviour patterns enable the child to appropriate the world around him and make a constant transition from reality to the imaginary register: these are imitation and playing. In both patterns, we might easily discern the origin of aesthetic behaviour. Indeed, they both reflect ways of representing the material and human environment, specific ways of adapting and also ways of bringing about transformation.

The essential point is not to date these behaviour patterns. What is significant is their development rather than their chronology. It makes it possible to follow the stages by which the child organizes himself, according to his abilities, in a world which does not measure up to his expectations and does not always meet his demands. As J.M. Baldwin wrote nearly a century ago, 'The child is pre-eminently a learning animal and, if imitation is the true method of learning, he has certainly chosen well since he is the most imitative of all animals'.[1] However, such imitation is open to a number of widely differing interpretations. According to Piaget, it 'denotes a wish to conquer the external world', but it is automatized as soon as the difficulty is overcome.

Unlike Paul Guillaume who speaks of pseudo-imitation, symbolic imitation and true imitation, Nadine Galifret-Granjon prefers to speak of 'precocious imitation, symbolic imitation and abstract imitation'.[2]

Lastly, Wallon[3] distinguishes two possible forms of imitation. One is imitation of other people leading to representation, to the image; the other is self-imitation which leads to the illusion of action which is also a symbolic activity since it involves 'behaving as though an action were actually being performed'. But it is clear from a careful reading of Wallon that these two forms are complementary and come from the same source. Imitation plays an essential part in behavioural development since it indisputably implies 'relations between movement and representation'.[4] In this connection, what is particularly worthy of attention is the insistence with which Wallon describes this 'fusion with the object before a captivating spectacle'[5] which he considers to be is at the root of all imitation. He even goes so far as to state, on the subject of postural activity, from which imitation may derive, that: 'Everything points to the fact that the attention paid by the child to objects or spectacles which interest him is not only not passive but is not wasted however long it takes to produce its effects. When he watches things, he is in a state of perceptual and motor impregnation'.[6]

This represents a major statement and a fundamental description of the child's reaction to a spectacle--the term being taken in its broadest sense--which holds and mobilizes his attention. Wallon goes on to say that 'Without this initial relation between perception and movement through the agency of the tonic or postural function, the transition from visual or auditory impressions to the corresponding gestures would be inexplicable'.[7]

1. N. Galifret-Granjon, 'Naissance et évolution de la représentation chez l'enfant', Paris, PUF, 1981, p. 21.
2. N. Galifret-Granjon, loc. cit. p. 30.
3. Id. loc. cit. p. 39.
4. Henri Wallon, 'De l'acte à la pensée', Paris, Flammarion, 19- , p. 130.
5. Id. loc. cit. p. 148.
6. Id. loc. cit. p. 149.
7. Henri Wallon, loc. cit., p. 150.

Thus, the child is led through imitation from participation in the model to the copy which it eventually contrasts with the model. This imitative movement which leads from participation to reproduction enables the child to move constantly between reality and the imaginary register and to rely on one so as to construct the other more effectively. As reality becomes more familiar to him, he appropriates it, re-invents it or even caricatures it. The situations that engage his attention and attract him are those which meet his expectations. He assures roles which adults would not dream of assigning to him and which bring him closer to them. He has fun with and makes fun of characters that he transforms at will. It has been said that imitation is never neutral; it is charged with affectivity, that is to say, it is charged by turns, with envy, resentment, admiration and jealousy. Through imitation, the child lives in a world in which he chooses to recontruct forms and faces. Imitation is a form of participation; it leads us to a new image of the spectator who is never indifferent to the spectacle and identifies himself.

It seems likely that such appropriation and identification point to the origin of a form of aesthetic behaviour which cannot be divorced from the emotions and which arises, in the first place, from an affective situation. Thus, from the emotion-fusion stage to the imitation-reproduction stage, it is possible to discern a path in which approaches to reality and approaches to the imaginary register are constant-ly inter-woven.

While imitation is at the root of a good number of learning experiences, it is the origin of language in an altogether special way. Of all the strategies used by the child to acquire and master adult language, imitation is among the more effective and consistently used. The child uses it in relation to verbal language at a time when the other forms of language to which he has resorted--gestural language, mimetic language--prove inadequate for making himself understood. Thus, the child gradually gives ground and relinquishes his own forms of expression to adopt, little by little, those of the adult and, more broadly, those of the environment in which he finds himself. But the choices which he makes are significant and are not devoid of what might be called aesthetic affectivity. He is responsive to the resonance of the words, not to mention their music; he is responsive to the intonation and accents of those who utter the words and he tries to reproduce them faithfully. At a time when speech is a necessity rather than a need, the infant who is beginning to speak no doubt already shows preferences of an aesthetic nature in his imitation and repro-duction of speech.

The words which he learns to use are, for him, increasingly evocative of objects, actions and situations. Behind their meaning, he sets up an image whose tonality is pleasant or unpleasant, beautiful or ugly, according to his immediate memory of the use of the word.

Moreover, the educational attitudes in the family environment play a consider-able part in enhancing or depreciating these attempts at imitation, reproduction and invention to establish a coherent language.

For the child, the frequently invoked categories 'beautiful' and 'ugly', desig-nate not only forms of behaviour but also forms of expression. They require the child to identify what is beautiful, good or clean or, on the contrary, what is ugly, bad or dirty.

These educational equivalences which are so widely used in adult discourse do not facilitate the organization of the child's value system. Aesthetic values and moral values are inter-woven in a kind of functional usage which is largely composed of prohibitions. A rude word is said to be ugly. But why is it said to be ugly, particularly when it is picked up from adult speech? A violent action is also ugly, but it may also be spiteful. While a dirty hand is also ugly, it cannot be said to be something spiteful. A caress can at once be kind, beautiful and good. How is a child

to make sense of such an incoherent distribution of epithets? How can be in his turn use them in a way that distinguishes between the various situations in which they are applied? Given these fundamental cases of confusion--which are by no means the exclusive prerogative of those who only use a 'restricted code' and only have the 'poor man's culture'--how can the infant make a judicious distinction, when the need arises, between moral and aesthetic categories?

So many authors have written about play that there seems to be nothing left to say. Each gives his own particular interpretation of children's play. Different though they may be, these interpretations are not incompatible. It would be more accurate to say that they reflect different viewpoints in that they apply to different periods in children's lives, to different age-groups and even, perhaps, to different children. For Jean Chateau, play is the sign of 'the vigour of childhood'. This view confirms its creative function, whether it is a case of functional games in early childhood or rule-governed games towards the end of childhood. This creative function is actually expressed in personal terms: 'Being oneself is the purpose of play; just as "being oneself" almost always implies being "more than oneself", so, playing as a means of testing oneself also implies self-mastery'.[1]

Jean Chateau returns repeatedly to this ethical value of playing: 'Playing has nothing to do with interest, it has to do with effort; it is not an agreeable activity, it is difficult'.[2]

The pleasure that a child finds in play is therefore a certain kind of pleasure: it is a serious pleasure in so far as the child plays seriously. This is, moreover, an aspect, the existence of which Piaget does not deny in symbolic play which, in his view, is 'the apogee of children's play'.[3] Play is essential to the emotional and intellectual equilibrium of the child and enables him 'to have available to him an area of activity whose motivation is not adaptation to reality but, on the contrary, assimilation of reality to the self, without coercions or sanctions'.[4]

Play symbolism, even if it primarily serves to highlight emotional conflicts, is by no means lacking in cognitive implications. Between the ages of two and six, it represents a means of integration specific to the child, through the use of a 'system of signifiers constructed by him and capable of being bent to his wishes'.[5]

This is far removed from the gratuitous activity which some have for a long time considered to be the distinctive feature of playing. It has a significance, and even a functional, affective or cognitive utility, which make it a particularly important activity of the child.

Winnicott also emphasizes the seriousness of play, when he refers to the 'preoccupation' and 'concentration' that characterize playing. Into this play area the child 'gathers objects or phenomena from external reality and uses these in the service of some sample derived from inner or personal reality'.[6]

1. Jean Chateau, 'Jeux de l'enfant', in Jeux-Jouets, Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, Paris, Gallimard, 1967, p. 61.
2. Id. p. 143.
3. Jean Piaget, Barbël Inhelder, The Psychology of the Child, London and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 57.
4. Id. p. 58.
5. Id. p. 58.
6. D.W. Winnicott, Playing and reality, London, Pelican Books, 1974, p. 60.

The child is constantly in a state of transition between the imaginary register and reality. Winnicott goes on to say that 'In playing, the child manipulates external phenomena in the service of the dream and invests chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling'.[1]

Playing implies trust--trust in oneself and trust in others. Playing involves the body. Playing is satisfying in so far as it broadens the child's experience and the dimensions of the world in which he moves. There is a direct development from playing to cultural experiences. Last but not least, 'in playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative'.[2]

In short, this creative function of playing makes it possible to appraise the importance which playing should have in an aesthetic education, a process of self-discovery which offers the child a means of finding out his own potential. It is a process of discovering others and involves action which impinges on others. It is a constant process of invention: the invention of new ways of grasping and transforming reality; the invention of new modes of expression and communication; even the invention of rules to modify rules that have been learnt. Thus, it may become, in ways that are far more spontaneous than are required by school work, a pretext for and a means of achievement in many different areas of experience.

It has yet to be established what the role of playing would be in a multidisciplinary undertaking. Prior to that, it would he necessary to decide how play could be observed as a means of providing the foundations and successive stages of such education.

It seems clear that such observation of free play at different periods of the child's life is still difficult to carry out with the degree of precision that would be essential for it to have any educational application.

There arise many different questions which are interconnected and overlap. It often seems difficult to dissociate the content of playing from the social activities to which it gives rise (Hurtig). Furthermore, 'any generalization of the findings is fallacious if it fails to specify the sex of the children and the environmental and institutional conditions in which the observations were made.[3]

These very conditions and situations in which play takes place have been the subject of the studies carried out by Josée Chombart de Lauwe and her team, who are trying to prepare a descriptive study of settings in which play occurs followed by a comprehensive list of behaviour patterns in relation to the environment. According to its author, this research study dealing with several different field areas (four in number) should 'open up the field of an anthropology of the child in French society'.[4]

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Accordingly, it is not so much the diversity of play behaviour patterns and their succession in child development as the functions of play in such development which are really of educational and cultural significance.

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1. Id. p. 60.
2. Id. p. 62.
3. Hurtig, Rondal, loc. cit. I. p. 134.
4. M.J. Chombart de Lauwe, P. Bonnin, M. Mayeur, M. Perrot, M. de la Soudière, 'Enfants en jeu', Paris, C.N.R.S., 1976, p. 49.

For Wallon, the psychologist should give special importance in his analysis to 'this transfer from the subjective to the objective and this search for reciprocity which are a constant feature of the psychological development of the child'.[1]

However, according to the different authors writing on the subject, these functions of play are varied (cf. Hurtig, Rondal, 'Introduction à la psychologie de l'enfant'. pp. 571 et seq.). For Piaget, 'playing should first of all be understood as a field of cognitive organization. The child constructs his own ways of adapting to the external world through his activity and the successive forms of his playing are closely linked to this construction'.[2] Seen from a different viewpoint, which does not preclude the one just mentioned, playing is, according to psychoanalysts, an opportunity for children to discharge their tension and 'this discharge takes place' by transferring to surrogates those drives that were originally directed either at their own bodies or at their close relations (parents, brothers and sisters, etc.) who are the true objects and mainstay of their passions. Thus, play enables children actively to effect the substitutions which make possible a considerable saving of energy'.[3]

Lastly, interpretations which for the most part are derived from ethnological studies emphasize the social characteristics of playing. 'In our society, play is defined as the opposite of work. Thus, it reflects a form of social organization that prescribes more or less differentiated productive tasks. Accordingly, children's play should be seen in terms of its relations with these structures and the role systems which derive from them'.[4]

In the view of psychologists, children's playing is action and is thus a specific form of adaptation which helps the child to progress in the discovery of his material and human environment. It is also a means of expression, that is to say, a way of being in the world, a behaviour pattern which already bears the stamp of individuality. This gives us a better knowledge of the use made of play in education and the place--whether acknowledged or otherwise--which is accorded to educational games. But it also enables us to appreciate the therapeutic importance of playing. 'It is good to remember always', writes Winnicott, 'that playing is itself a therapy. To arrange for children to be able to play is itself a psychotherapy that has an immediate and universal application, and it includes the establishment of a positive social attitude towards playing'.[5]

It is no doubt the business of the therapist to establish or re-establish such an attitude. But one cannot avoid looking more closely at the image of playing that it presupposes. It is an image that leads to 'an immediate and universal application'. At a time when a more enlightened approach to cultural diversity highlights the diversity of the situations with which the child is confronted, during the course of his development--at different times and in different countries--it is by no means easy to accept the absoluteness of certain statements. This constant transition between reality and the imaginary register, which appears to be the hallmark of playing, only very rarely refers to comparable imaginary registers and realities.

If one reads the history of games[6] or the ethnological studies that have been made of the subject, it is legitimate to speculate about the present day applicability of certain interpretations of play which are given fundamental importance in the psychology, education and even sociology of the child. It might perhaps be desirable

1.   Henri Wallon, 'L'évolution psychologique de l'enfant', Paris, Armand Colin, p. 73.
2.   Hurtig, Rondal, loc. cit. p. 572.
3.   Hurtig, Rondal, loc. cit. p. 573.
4.   Hurtig, Rondal, loc. cit. p. 575.
5.   D.W. Winnicott, Playing and reality, London, Pelican Books, 1974, p. 58.
6.   Ch. Beart, 'Histoire des jeux', in Roger Caillois, Jeux et sports, Paris, La Pléiade, 1967.

at the present time to consider to what extent certain explanations may be outdated in a century when the child's world has been transformed by the mass media and soon will be again by computer technology. If the child seeks in play a means of expression, a means of action, a means of assuming a role and a means of access to other forms of socialization, can it not be accepted that all these objectives are today served by other experiences?

For the child, playing undoubtedly continues to represent one of the more important ways of grasping reality. But is there not a risk if we remain committed to certain traditionally recognized features of play--gratuitousness, freedom, independence, illusion, and so forth--that we may overlook the genuine evolution of the play behaviour of the children of this century?

Play is clearly a kind of social conditioning. It is the meeting-point of the child's demands and needs and the characteristics of his environment. The child draws into his play all the materials at his disposal, which may be very poor or very sumptuous. It is in this sense that play is a recreation, that is to say, a reording for the purposes of play of an environment that was not specifically meant to serve that end.

For this reason, it is clear that aesthetic behaviour patterns are rooted in play. They are the source of behaviour involving selection or rejection. Like play, they are affective reactions in which pleasure and displeasure figure largely. But unlike play, they are not expressed immediately in the form of action but are initially restricted to the exercise of judgement. Asked why he is attached to an obviously shabby, faded and unattractive looking doll, a child will answer: 'I like it, it's beautiful', which means: 'It's beautiful because I like it'.

The need for love to which psychologists attach such great importance is not, for the child, a one-way need. It is as much a need to love as a need to be loved and the object of his attachment deserves his love. This is seen in children's immediate reactions to their surroundings. It is seen even more so in childhood recollections, where so many objects remain beautiful, in a memory still dazzled by the past.

Creativity

'Creativity is one of those subjects about which too much is written and which do not lead to enough practical effort'. The many varied works on this subject, which have been and are still being published, might easily incline us to agree with this pre-emptory judgement expressed in a quite recent study on child psychology.

The definition of creativity, the analysis of its mechanisms, the monitoring of the ways in which they come into existence and function, and opportunities for learning are all subjects which have featured over the past twenty years in numerous but far from convincing studies and appear, like characterology some years ago, to be founded on assertions that are not easily verifiable.

Authors in the field of educational psychology who are concerned most with these questions and carry out research on them recognize that 'there does not exist (however) a broad enough concept to take in the nature of creativity and the means of increasing creative output'.[2]

1. Hurtig, Rondal, 'Introduction à la psychologie de l'enfant', Brussels, Mardaga, 1981, p. 469.
2. Rachel Desrosiers, 'La productivité verbale chez les enfants', Paris, PUF, 1975, p. 7.

This is no doubt due to the manifold implications of a recently developed concept and the diversity of the fields which it embraces. It claims to provide a valid model, for the artist and for the scholar, for the practitioner and for the researcher, for the child and for the adult. Accordingly, it is necessary to confine oneself to very broad operational characteristics. At the same time, however, one is obliged, for purposes of diagnosis, monitoring and education, to use reliable instruments that are specifically suited to their purpose.

Thus, there is a constant development from the descriptive to the numerical and attempts are made to draw up an inventory of traits without any knowledge of the ways in which they emerge or how they develop.

From a review of the currently available works, it may be seen that creativity is chiefly measured by creative thinking tests a battery of which has been devised (by Torrance) on the basis of the following definition: 'Creativity is a process through which one becomes aware of problems, gaps in knowledge, the absence of certain elements, incongruities, etc. This process makes it possible to identify difficulties, to seek solutions, to make conjectures, to formulate, test and, if necessary, modify hypotheses and, finally, to publish the results'.[1]

This account of creativity is based on the definition of four mechanisms: fluidity or 'the subject's ability to produce a large number of ideas'; flexibility or 'the subject's ability to give extremely varied answers in different fields'; originality or 'the subject's ability to produce ideas that are by no means obvious, commonplace or banal'; elaboration or 'the subject's ability to develop, broaden and embellish his ideas'. There is no assurance that these different characteristics are always associated in any particular individual. Above all, the use of tests designed on the basis of these definitions does not make it possible to establish any significant relationship between creativity and intelligence. As Richelle writes,[2] 'The use of creativity tests, whose validity has yet to be demonstrated, makes it possible to show that a high level of creativity is often associated with social non-conformity. Children who achieve high scores in a creativity test are frequently described by their immediate circle as being freaks or as having weird ideas'.

In a recent study which is extremely interesting in its basic approach but deals with a limited sample (133 children aged 10-11 from three different backgrounds), the author[3] attempted to establish the relationship between creativity (Torrance's tests) and intelligence (Cattell's test 2); creativity and scholastic achievement (mathematics, French grammar and spelling, French composition) as evaluated by the teachers; and creativity and the socio-cultural background defined in terms of the parents' occupation (INSEE categories). He reaches the following conclusions: 'Intelligence as measured by tests and scholastic achievement are closely related to socio-cultural background;... creativity as measured by tests of figurative expression (Torrance) is independent of the child's social background;... creativity as measured by Torrance's tests is independent of intelligence as measured by the tests'.[4]

1. F. Doutriaux, 'Relations entre créativité, intelligence, réussite scolaire et milieu socioculturel chez les enfants' in Revue de Psychologie Appliquée, Paris, 3rd quarter 1980, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 177-183.
2. Rémy Droz et Marc Richelle, 'Manuel de Psychologie', Brussels, Mardaga, 1976, p. 251.
3. F. Doutriaux, op. cit.
4. Idem. op. cit.

Although these findings, which bear out those obtained elsewhere, may make it difficult to establish an educational approach to creativity based exclusively on Torrance's ideas, they are not sufficient to cast doubt on the whole process of creativity itself. This is why reference may here be made to the research carried out by Rachel Desrosiers on 'verbal creativity in the child'. The author set out to study the structure of verbal creativity in children by reference to free compositions. Three criteria (borrowed from the YAMAMOTO test used by Torrance) were adopted: organization, which became integration; imagination, which became the imaginary register; style plus originality, which became opacity. To these criteria, two others (borrowed from Guilford) were added, namely originality and flexibility. Each criterion comprised three categories to which the values 1, 2 and 3 respectively were assigned.

The sample of 160 subjects who produced 320 compositions consisted of both boys and girls from two different socio-cultural backgrounds. The children were asked to write two compositions. For the first free composition they could write about the subject of their choice so long as they began with the words 'it was red...'. The second composition was completely free.

The assessments of four judges were used to determine levels of creativity. However, rather than discuss these levels, we wish to draw attention to the research study's general conclusions.

'Throughout this study (writes Rachel Desrosiers), our aim has been to demonstrate that verbal creativity is an essentially formal quality and that it depends on the way of expressing things and not on the things themselves'.[1] At the end of the study, she identifies what she sees as 'the psychological foundations of the two most typical figures in children's writing:[2] personification, 'which in writing is as natural a device as rabatment is in pictorial expression';[3] it is 'an effort to fathom the mystery of things, an attempt to escape from an approach governed by logic and a means of transposing reality';[4] 'co-ordination aimed at telling the wonder, the unpredictability and confusion that follows the establishment of relationships with other human beings'.[5]

'The concrete world and the affective life--these are the two key themes in the children's compositions', states the author by way of conclusion. It remains to be asked--and no one has yet managed to provide a satisfactory answer--whether verbal creativity functions in a similar way to creativity in the visual arts or in music.

In other words, if observations made in one area of creative activity can be applied ipso facto to another area, this would mean accepting that creation is independent of the resources it employs and of the techniques on which it relies. It would mean accepting a unifying conception of the arts based on an image of art per se which is quite incompatible with artistic diversity and a multiplicity of artistic manifestations. Lastly, it would mean assuming that there is a single and clearly marked pathway leading to creative art and that this pathway, the stages of which have been determined, is the same for every individual from the moment he is recognized as being creative.

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1.   Op. cit. p. 177.
2.   Op. cit. p. 178.
3.   Op. cit. p. 179.
4.   Op. cit. p. 180.
5.   Op. cit. p. 181.

When does that moment occur? Even if one accepts the characteristics that are
identified as being those of creativity, when and how are they manifested? When and
how do they progress? When and how are they in danger of disappearing?

These are questions which an educational approach to creativity can overlook
only at the risk of relapsing into the verbal frenzy exemplified in all too many
writings on creativity. If we cannot rely on convincing experiments, must we let
ourselves, rather be carried away by the lyricism of Winnicott who wants above all
to separate 'the idea of creation from works of art. It is true that a creation
can be a picture or a house or a garden or a custom or a hairstyle or a symphony or
a sculpture; anything from a meal cooked at home. It would perhaps be better to say
that these things could be creations. The creativity that concerns me here is uni-
versal. It belongs to being alive'.[1] He goes on to say: 'The creativity that we
are studying belongs to the approach of the individual to external reality. Assuming
reasonable brain capacity, enough intelligence to enable the individual to become a
person living and taking part in the life of the community, everything that happens
is creative except in so far as the individual is ill, or is hampered by ongoing
environmental factors which stifle his creative processes'.[1]

If we agree with Winnicott in accepting that the important thing is the creative
impulse, 'something that of course is necessary if an artist is to produce a work of
art, but also as something that is present'[2] in anyone, it none the less has to be
asked how to proceed so that everyone, according to his wishes, ensures that his
creative impulse may 'take form and shape, and the world may witness'.[3]

Thus, whether we breakdown creativity into a series of mechanisms, whose precise
nature remains to be determined and whose mode of operation remains to be tested, or
whether we regard it as a statement of life itself, it remains to be established
how it can be manifested and how a person who feels that he is the bearer of a message
will express himself.

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1.   Winnicott, loc. cit. pp. 79-80.
2.   Winnicott, loc. cit. p. 80.
3.   Winnicott, loc. cit. p. 81.

I - 3. <u>ARTISTIC ABILITIES AND THEIR DISCOVERY</u>

- THE GIFTED AND THE UNGIFTED

- BACKGROUND, ENVIRONMENT AND ARTISTIC INTERESTS

The gifted and the ungifted

The current position of aesthetic education in schools, in view of the syllabuses and the limited amount of time set aside for such education on the timetable, inevitably raises the question of gifted and ungifted persons.

All pupils enjoy equal opportunities for art education in the context of this study of general cultural subjects and more generally throughout their elementary and secondary schooling.

However, it must be admitted that the subjects taught as part of aesthetic education--mainly art and music--are classified as ancillary subjects. It is clear that, with rare exceptions, most pupils--particularly those who concentrate on scientific subjects or the humanities--display only a limited interest in these subjects. Pupils who do well in art studies are generally regarded as having special gifts which, no doubt, explain their somewhat unusual curiosity. Or it is argued that their failure in other subjects leads them to seek in the arts an easier means of achieving success and a form of compensation. Unless their gifts are seen as altogether outstanding, often at a very early age, they are not really taken seriously. Otherwise, the kind of art under discussion is simply looked on as an artistic hobby; its function is to provide a support or a refuge.

We have to establish whether early screening for artistic gifts is possible before the age of compulsory schooling. In other words, the question is whether a small child can have gifts which are exceptional enough for them to become apparent even in an environment where people are ill-prepared to recognize them. Secondly, the question arises as to whether these gifts can be detected in conditions that ensure their quality and lasting nature.

In recent years, there has been heated controversy between those who support and those who are against the selection of exceptionally gifted children. Those who are in favour of such selection at the earliest possible age deplore the fact that most exceptionally gifted children work at a level which is below their capacity. They therefore demand that such exceptionally gifted children be placed as early as possible in an environment where they will be able to achieve the performances of which they are capable. The example of the United States in this regard seems one of the most significant.[1] Specialists consider highly gifted children capable of exceptional achievements in a certain number of fields: general intellectual activity, specific school subjects, creativity, the visual arts, leadership and psychomotor skills. Screening takes place on the basis of successful school performance, texts, interviews with parents and discussions with teachers. It is therefore clear what part the school plays in discovering exceptionally gifted children. Moreoever, it can be seen that when an exceptionally gifted child is identified he is taken as early as possible out of the school environment where he is in danger of vegetating and becoming discouraged and is placed in a stimulating environment, that is to say, an environment where competition among pupils and the interest shown by teachers match his potential. This educational policy seems to be based on the notion that school success, professional success and social success follow a regular progression and are interconnected.

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1.   Cf. L'Education, No. 354, Paris, May 1978, 'La nature s'arrange pour préserver les différences'.

Requiring an individual who has been classified as exceptionally gifted to maintain a consistently high level of performance implies a commitment to the quality of the diagnosis made and to the certainty of being able to transform this diagnosis into a prognosis. It implies keeping to a very rigid, deterministic conception of personality development without accepting the important role played by factors outside the environment or by circumstances.

Modern studies on the subject of the exceptionally gifted exemplify emotional commitment rather than exactitude and ideological preferences rather than scientific evidence. Moreoever, the examples of great men that continue to be drawn from the past are not convincing enough to serve as a basis for predicting the future of the children of today. Given the speed of social changes and cultural upheavals, as compared with a school environment which remains remarkably stable in its methods and recruitment, it is impossible to predict how education for the gifted might be developed.

If we accept--on the basis of a particular view of the role of élites in a nation--the need to select the future members of these élites as early as possible, we may speculate about the intellectual and affective as well as social and economic criteria on which successful school performance is founded. The many different studies produced in recent decades on 'good pupils and bad pupils'[1], 'the gifted and the ungifted'[2], 'the inheritors'[3], 'inequality of opportunity'[4] and 'social classes, family background and intelligence'[5] are sufficient evidence of the difficulty of establishing stable determinants of success which are not essentially based on 'favourable' social circumstances.

In conjunction with that difficulty there is another more specifically psychological difficulty that arises in determining gifts and talent. It is the unease and controversy which are expressed and 'the current debates about the concept of ability, its nature and the respective roles of heredity and the environment in determining individual differences'[6].

In this context, we prefer the term 'ability' to 'gift', in so far as it is broader, more widely used in scientific writings and more frequently encountered in the context of education, educational psychology and educational and vocational guidance.

However, a critical analysis of the notion of ability clearly brings out its innatistic origins and its present-day adaptations.[7] The evolution of the idea of ability since the beginning of the century could be summed up as a development from a kind of fatalistic hereditarianism associated with the idea of natural disposition to a kind of fatalistic environmentalism related to the idea of irreversible cultural differences.

This notion of ability which still persists in certain test or guidance procedures has a hold over teachers and parents alike and results in their becoming anxious at a very early stage to justify the choices they make for the children.

1. M. Gilly, Paris, PUF.
2. G.F.E.N., Paris, E.S., 1974.
3. J.C. Passeron, Paris, Editions de Minuit.
4. R. Boudon, Paris, Armand Colin, 1973.
5. M. Lautrey, Paris, PUF, 1980.
6. A. Leon, Introduction à l'histoire des faits éducatifs, Paris, PUF, 1980, p.149.
7. Id. loc. cit. p.168.

Thus, both parents and teachers run the risk of trying very early on to arrive at a decision which they consider to be in keeping with the child's natural potential whereas, in actual fact, it is based on their social outlook and their own value systems.

In this system of socio-educational values, aesthetic education has an altogether insignificant place. It is not a factor in preparing for and ensuring success. If the child himself shows any special interest in this line of study or even has some success in it, no time is wasted in bringing home to him the difference between personal satisfaction and socio-educational success and the need to begin by pursuing and succeeding in serious courses of study if one is later to be entitled to do what one likes--which, by implication, means what one finds entertaining. Artistic pursuits, provided they have the support of a school leaving certificate, may be compatible with the possession of gifts. However, these gifts have to be tested and, above all, be kept to one side so as not to impair the soundness of a general education in which, for a long time to come, art is likely to be included almost surreptitiously.

But, while no sound conclusions can be founded on an image of ability which would compel acceptance whatever the circumstances and obstacles, we may consider more closely the quality of an analysis of the interests manifested by children and pre-adolescents in the course of their schooling.

Bearing in mind the limited role assigned to aesthetic education, it seems particularly surprising that any child takes a spontaneous interest in it. However, the growing interest shown today--in music more than in the visual arts--is attributable to the media rather than to the school. In barely twenty years, the audiovisual media have proved to be particularly powerful and effective in building up a large-scale craze for music and have turned a large number of young listeners into performers, singers or musicians.

This powerful movement has not been reinforced by the school and has, in fact, remained separate from it. It has been furthered by cultural activities organizers and various services, particularly the conservatories, set up by ministries of culture rather than of education. Local communities have made up for the short-comings of schools as they have often done in the case of sport. However, other branches of aesthetic education are still neglected and although some notable experiments have been attempted at the initiative of a number of art colleges, an enormous amount of work has still to be done, not to meet the demand, but to create it and enable it to express itself.

Background, environment and cultural interests

It is from his environment that the child draws, according to his needs, the materials and information on which and through which he acts. This form of exchange, the successive stages of which we have sought to describe, depends largely on the child's own special interests and abilities as much as on the actual features of this environment.

While the mechanisms for appropriating the sensori-motor, intellectual and affective environment are relatively well known, the actual structures of the environment, their characteristics and the reactions which they may bring about mostly remain to be defined.

Methical analyses have still to be made, for example, of the present-day characteristics of rural space as against urban space. It is not that such analyses have never been attempted but rather that, in societies and cultures that are going through a process of change, the descriptive frameworks which were

formerly considered sound today prove to be inadequate. The urbanization of certain rural landscapes and, inversely, the ruralization of certain town dwellers who are obliged to move outside the confines of the town by housing difficulties, make it necessary to redefine certain distinctions which until recently were considered to be firmly established. Families often live in housing conditions of which they are the victims and of which they are never fully in control, and in which children and young people have difficulty in really finding their bearings.

In the spaces which economic constraints and the requirements of their occupational status oblige them to occupy, they are drawn on the one hand to benefit from technological progress as much as possible and, on the other hand, to remain faithful to a certain tradition, certain memories or a certain setting which are a legacy of the past and of their childhood.

The present-day environment, at whatever level, is not hospitable to children, in spite of the claim that it is entirely open to them. A great deal of research remains to be carried out, particularly on the development of spatial behaviour in young people and, more specifically even, on their territorial behaviour (cf. C. Levy-Leboyer--L'espace, dimension social--, in 'Psychologie de l'environnement', Paris, PUF, 1980, p. 145).

In any event, it is clear that cultural interests cannot really be pursued within a rigid framework, defined by the standards of a densely populated area in which the sense of isolation is heightened by the very fact that people cannot avoid meeting each other.

The sound environment, which adults regard as a source of annoyance is, for young people and children, a need and a refuge. Making noise is a way of existing, a means of self-expression and communication. Hearing noise means listening to other people, establishing a relationship, sharing.

What some people see as vandalism or wanton damage may be regarded by others as a way of asserting oneself, expressing one's refusal to conform or making a statement about one's dissent or personal confusion.

In relation to the environment, therefore, perhaps more than to any other circumstance, the anxieties of adults and the insecurity of young people seem to be exaggerated.

Today, the places in which people live are all too often places in which they barely manage to live. They have difficulty in becoming attached to them or in associating them with their hopes for the future.

Today, young people--from whatever background--are, from a very early age, far more receptive to the models presented by the media to which they are exposed as consumers than to the environment offered by family life. They find a glaring if not unbearable disparity between the way they live and what they see.

The school by no means always offers the most propitious environment for the intellectual and social development of these children and young people. The premises are in many cases dilapidated and are occupied by a school population which is too large and which is ill-prepared for the demands of communal living. The most recently built schools often display the imaginative abilities of the architects but show that they know little about school life. The strange shapes and the clashing bright colours show up the featurelessness of the playgrounds; the lack of greenery and the strange way in which it is incorporated in the design prove that there has been no effective consultation between designers and users. The

children, young people and, sometimes, the adults themselves have to put up with
living in such a setting without ever feeling at ease or wishing to become part of
it.

In such a situation they can hardly be expected to play any part in embellishing
or improving such an environment. A passive attitude to a material environment
which one has to tolerate and which one does not relate to is a sign of indifference.
It reflects an indifference and lack of involvement in relation to the place of work
as well as to the work itself. Any generalization on these matters is distinctly
unhelpful and is liable to disregard the many varied efforts made, in both family
and school environments, to create a framework for living which is acceptable to
both children and adults who have to live together in it. While these efforts do
not all have the same aesthetic value or reflect the same cultural practices, they
are none the less attempts to give a role to the arts in their most varied forms.

II - <u>ORIENTATIONS</u>

II - 1.   THE DISCOVERY OF EXPRESSION

- LEARNING THE TECHNIQUES

- AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Everyone concerned with the dissemination and teaching of aesthetic education deplores the limited--and, in some cases, declining--importance being attached to aesthetic education in the schools at a time when the duration of school attendance is generally tending to increase.

It would therefore seem that the opportunity for children and adolescents to diversify their means of expression and to have access to an increasingly varied range of messages is being reduced while, at the same time, their knowledge becomes more detailed and, above all, more specialized.

From the time when the infant discovers through play in preschool education a whole variety of ways of hearing and making himself heard, of understanding and making himself understood and of making and reproducing, up to the time when he is expected only to demonstrate what he has learnt and retained, he has a long road to travel whose successive stages will be precisely determined. Throughout this journey, the role of the practices and also the values of aesthetic education will be increasingly restricted.

In the nursery school, the preschool stage, the child is put in a play situation, to the extent that use is made of the exploratory and manipulative activities involved in play. However, the activities offered to the child are generally few in number. They often leave all too little to the child's inventiveness and imagination. The purpose is to help the child to discover how an object, which, as far as possible, is made to seem attractive, works or how it is used. This is an eminently educational game and is not really 'free' playing. All too often the child's only freedom is in making his choices or expressing his preferences in relation to whatever is made available to him. In the preschool environment, play already conforms to a number of rules: don't break things, don't spoil things, and put things back where they belong.

The repetition of these behaviour patterns, referred to as 'playing', makes them easier to learn and the child thus makes progress in his use of the items that are provided for him. In preschool education, the child is free to play or not to play, to play by himself or to bring other children into his games, to keep to one game or to change games often. In the main point, however, playing affords an opportunity to learn new things, without constraints, no doubt, but in a specially created environment.

It is true that Pauline Kergomard has written that 'playing is the child's work, it's his trade, it's his life',[1] but she is surely emphasizing more the fact that a young child may become passionately absorbed in his chosen activity than the actual content of this activity. Moreover, we read in a work by Maria Montessori that 'in the environment prepared for children everything should not only be kept in order, but also within certain limits and that interest and concentration arise where confusion and superfluity are eliminated'.[2]

By the end of preschool education, one can discern a particular concept of aims and objectives which already reflects a concern for future learning.

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1. Quoted by M. Laurent Belchet, 'Les jeux et les choses', in H. Brule, Les moins de 4 ans à l'école maternelle, Paris, Armand Colin, p. 151.
2. Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, Tr. Barbara Barclay Carter, London Sangam Books Limited, 1983, pp. 129-130.

The child has to be helped to 'act freely and to progress'.

Progressing means 'acquiring a greater sense of precision'. It also means 'transcending the initial poverty of expression'. Thus, all the activities made available to the child reflect a certain concern for coherence and organization. At the risk of curbing spontaneity, it should be recalled that 'our older children reach the age where they recognize rules: when we help these children to discover rules, induce them to apply rules to themselves and teach them to respect them, we are, without any paradox, extending their freedom. Freedom is not a lack of constraint but a choice between certain obligations'.[1]

All too often, preschool establishments are so concerned with protecting the child that they function as a closed environment, at the door of which the child has to relinquish all he has learnt in the course of his everyday family life.

All too often, the child is spoken to in the language of make-believe depicting a traditional wonderland peopled by kings, queens, fairies, giants and dwarfs who dance about in a wild and disconcerting ritual. The child has grown up with the television and is familiar with robots, cosmonauts and other space explorers. He tries as best he can to reconcile these imaginary worlds. While nothing seriously disconcerts him, nothing really helps him either and he often finds, faced by so many different images and worlds of experience, that he no longer knows how to express himself.

It is as well to remember that the concern to develop all forms of expression may at the same time impede the ordering of expression, just as overstimulation has a disordering effect.

It should also be remembered that problems of expression and communication are among the major problems of our time, since the media have given them a new existence and a new dimension. Specialists such as Pierre Oleron and his pupils now speak about 'social communication' rather than language. Such communication makes its own demands: the demands made on the adult who can keep his distance are different from those confronting the child who has a great deal to say and limited means of saying it.

The task of helping the child to express himself does not mean choosing, on his behalf, the subjects on which he is to express himself. While correctness of expression is the responsibility of the teacher, the content of what is expressed is the prerogative of the child. The child has to be able to feel free to speak if we want him to enjoy speaking. He has to feel that adults are interested in what he has to say and that he is not required to seek attentive listeners exclusively among his peers.

Since nursery school, the child has been taught that speech is not the only available means of making himself understood. However, the techniques which he starts to learn should not be introduced as an esoteric discipline but rather as a key to the acquisition of new powers.

Above all, the aesthetic education given to the child, and from which he is likely to benefit only incidentally, should not enclose him in an excessively rigid system of values, otherwise the danger is that he will consciously refuse to give art any place at all in his daily life.

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1. E. Fejerman, 'Activités d'expression, et de création et de représentation' in 'L'enfant de plus de cinq ans à l'école maternelle', Paris, Bourrelier-Armand Colin, p. 69.

Lastly, and most important of all, aesthetic education should not lead him to reject his own values. In our view, certain official guidelines are incompatible with the intellectual and affective security of the child. For example, we read that '... he (the pupil) will recognize that aesthetic sensibility resides in a particular quality of relationship with the world and with oneself. Firstly, one should seek out the humblest sources of such a relationship in the sensory experience of each child. He should be awakened to the beauty of the simple things created around him by nature or by man; he should be put on his guard against the ugliness of the things that may make up his own environment: familiar objects, his home, his place of work, his spheres of interest ...'.[1]

The author of this extract has an extremely confused image of the environment, since at the same time he recognizes the need 'to use the resources of his (the child's) natural and cultural environment to promote his personal development'.[2]

It is now essential for us to state our position with regard to an assumption that underlies a long-standing educational practice which is applied throughout the world. It runs counter to present-day practice which tends to favour the development of the creative imagination even before the individual (child or adult) is offered the chance to learn technical skills. It is almost unanimously accepted that if the child learns artistic 'techniques', he will be able to express himself artistically, the implication being that all that he needs to do to produce artworks is to master the means of artistic expression.

In our view, such an approach is fraught with dangerous contradictions. On the one hand, creativity cannot develop without freedom; furthermore, the mere acquisition of a skill taught according to certain rules is not in itself enough to provide motivation and, on the contrary, can only give rise to inhibitions. On the other hand, the use of concrete situations and personal discovery through trial and error are eminently more positive than merely learning rules and techniques, which involves the passing on of established practices and formulas that do nothing to extend the creative abilities of either teachers or pupils. This approach seems to be totally at variance with the way performers of classical music are trained. However, it is well known that the development of a musical sensibility does not necessarily require the study of music theory or repetitive exercises to develop manual dexterity and instrumental virtuosity. Without denying that study is necessary for any instrumental performer, it may be suggested that 'making music' cannot be limited to the performance of ready-made music.

Accordingly, we have to approach this question by clarifying the different possible situations. The transmission of specific technical skills can only be of value when it is essential for speeding up the learning process to promote higher output in a developing country or, alternatively, to achieve maximum efficiency so as to increse the profits of giant corporations or industrial magnates!

Thus, the purpose of the training given to apprentices may be to turn them into capable skilled workers while ignoring their creativity and powers of imagination which are assumed to be of no value and of no economic significance. But if this same question is considered in terms of education and all-round training, it has to be recognized that the segregation of an élite is awesomely effective, even though the élite that is favoured may not necessarily show any

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1.   'Education artistique. Le cycle d'observation', in L. Leterrier, 'Programmes et instructions', Paris, Hachette, 1981, p. 568.
2.   Id. loc. cit. p. 568.

aesthetic sensibility, particularly when working on behalf of patrons of the arts!
On this point, we only have to recall the errors of judgement, complacent stupidity
and self-satisfaction of the bourgeois élites in the nineteenth century.

The whole question of learning has to be approached along different lines: the
development of individuals involves the use of all their creative abilities by
providing them with a wide variety of means of expression which will enable them to
go beyond the rules, invent new forms and stamp their 'output' with their indivi-
duality.

The question of whether technique is the first thing that ought to be taught
is thus fundamental since technique does not automatically lead to every form of
expression (for example, the ability to write and a knowledge of grammar are not
skills that are sufficient in themselves for the education of writers and poets!).

A knowledge of literary history, of one's own culture, does not radically
affect the creative abilities of those who study it if the conditions required for
the expression of their creative potential are lacking. The transmission of craft
techniques (and the techniques of 'folk' art), results in most cases in meaningless
repetition and the creation of stereotyped objects whose deep-rooted cultural
individuality gradually disappears, leaving nothing but the external form (bogus
Negro art, items made in the Far East for sale to Europeans, and so forth).

The passing on of skills cannot, therefore, be dissociated from an awareness
of materials, the handling of tools, the role of the body and the hand in its
relationship with the material world and the creative potential of each individual.
In aesthetic education, and in any other branch of education, for that matter, the
trial-and-error approach stands in contrast to the prior 'distribution' of facts
by the teacher. 'Knowledge' is what we have 'found out' for outselves by means of
a succession of failures, successes and empirical discoveries. Authoritative or
didactic instructions are no substitute for a sequ nce of practical operations,
which are cumulative in effect and are often assimilated. Furthermore, the
'method', which is initially the result of chance or imitation, becomes a personal
research method which at the same time leads to an authentic form of personal
creative activity. Thus, an awareness of one's own knowledge and potential,
acquired through actual experience, gradually takes shape and, through activity
methods, creates, in the person who has experienced it, a desire for knowledge and
personal fulfilment.

In this way the need for completely spontaneous activity is engendered by
what is learnt through personal experience or from the environment and social
relations, without the imposition of <u>definitive</u> rules on the use of specific
materials or tools as far as the child is concerned.

To sum up, then, it does not seem essential, in music or the visual arts, to
impose a system or establish a primary objective (that is to say, the making of
an object or the production of a superior instrument or a sound). The essential
thing seems to be to relate action and the senses so that a connection is estab-
lished between the use of the tool and the quality of the material and the move-
ments which they require.

In the visual arts, it is necessary to collect readily available materials,
without concentrating on the kind of materials usually found in European schools
(gouache, watercolour, lead pencils, coloured pencils, drawing paper and so forth).
These materials should include: cloth, cardboard, wood, iron and newspapers, but
also materials of animal, vegetable and mineral origin and synthetic or industrial
waste materials. The materials can be provisionally classified and arranged under
these four headings for purposes of tactile and visual contact with the basic

materials. Subsets may subsequently be envisaged: material which is soft, pliable, flexible, semi-pliable, hard, semi-hard and so forth. The choices made for purposes of classification will be guided solely by tactile impressions, the production of an inventory of the senses. When a relationship involving contrast, pleasure or repugnance, for example, is established with the material, the conditions for future activities will be pre-established.

The inventory will be drawn up and will entail discovering the characteristics and possibilities of each material: tactile sensations such as roughness, smoothness, softness, heat, cold, heaviness, lightness; auditory sensations and sensations of tension, resonance and vibration produced by percussion; gustatory and olfactory sensations, sensations of brightness, dullness, transparency and opacity, sensations of bright or faded colours.

According to Piaget, the construction of all knowledge involves a permanent dialectical relationship between a sequence of successive states of equilibrium and a process which ensures the transition from one structure to another. For too long, education has replaced the initial psychobiological laws, which it did not take into account, with historical laws imposed by the social structures. According to the theory of operations, the cognitive structure of the subject integrates knowledge through experience. The interaction between action in its relationship with thought and the thought-action relation is a thesis which has been fully verified by Henri Wallon (who had the initiative in this connection) and his collaborators. We shall let Henri Wallon speak on this point[1]: 'What are the relations between the act and the thought? Which of the two has priority over the other? To reduce knowledge to an effort which overcomes contradictions does not mean contrasting it with reality, as if it were something artificial which must ultimately remain alien to it. On the contrary, it means integrating it more closely with reality and bringing it within the ambit of its laws. For nothing can exist except by reacting to actions that are experienced and nothing subsists which does not represent a triumph of conflict in establishing a new equilibrium, a new state, a new form of existence...'.

The long road from prehistory to the present day is shortened when we study the primitive forms of certain ethnic groups who still use Stone Age techniques.

Man is the craftsman of the world par excellence by virtue of what he does with his hands, the making of tools, the transformation of materials and the refinement of his technology. It is surely true, moreover, that none of us can remain detached from or unresponsive to an object which another man has made or created with his own hands. For higher forms of practical activity, it is necessary to postulate a sequence of events which gives special importance to the development of awareness through work. The first tools enable active hands to create and invent by acting upon and modifying the material by specific creative operations which are aesthetic and not of a uniform kind. It is not our intention to put forward a standard, depersonalized educational theory of learning. It is no doubt true that artistic production and activity play a particularly important role in the sensori-motor, intellectual and psychological development of the child. Without wishing to give priority to aesthetic creation, we have to indicate how it is related to socio-cultural reality. It plays as much a part as scientific subjects in the acquisition of knowledge because it is itself a specific form of knowledge.

It is necessary to give a minimal description of the conditions and forms for which a creative 'apprenticeship' may pave the way: the individual-tool-material

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1. De l'acte à la pensée, Flammarion, Paris, 1942, pp. 1 and 8.

relationship rests on a complex interaction based on action. An infinite variety of combinations show the role of the gesture (of the child or young person) in relation to the use of the tool, the resistance of the material and the motivated goals.

Skill, all too often the primary criterion, is only attained through long practice, whereas manual activity also implies an economy of energy and resources, invention, arrangement, speed and so forth.

We emphasize the activity of expression through manual work and art, because it is essential in the early period of the child's life, even before it is influenced by the school.

If one studies the movements involved in expression through art one can appreciate more fully how important it is, irrespective of aesthetic considerations to engage in such activity at an early stage.

The function of exerting leverage (phalanxes, fingers, hands, forearm, arm, trunk, body) and using a fulcrum (the joints of the fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder and hip) and the load-bearing function of the legs are particularly important.

Holding any drawing or painting instrument (brush, pencil, pen and so forth) involves the use of three fingers to grip it.

For small-scale drawings, the whole of the hand makes short movements and so becomes a lever, with the flexible wrist acting as a fulcrum.

With a shorter movement, the act of writing or of engraving (on wood or on metal for example) call into play the joints of the hand (fulcrum) and the phalanxes (levers).

When the work is on a larger scale, the hand 'carries' the tool, the forearm becomes the lever and the elbow acts as a fixed fulcrum. When a large painting or drawing is produced, the whole body is involved (the arm, wrist and elbow are locked, the shoulder becomes the fulcrum and a sweeping gesture is made--in a standing or sitting position).

When the scale of the medium entails the involvement of the whole person (particularly three-dimensional art-work), the whole body moves; all the levers come into play to extend the gesture, to guide the tool.

Kinesthetic knowledge of this kind is essential to teachers if they are to understand the role and importance of the different manual activities. Some of the points we have suggested are borne out by L. Lurçat, a researcher who is not an artist:[1]

'The aim of graphic activity is to draw lines. These lines may be studied at three levels, depending on whether the study is concerned with movement, form or content.... From the genetic point of view, movement may be studied by examining the way in which the gesture is transferred to the line: this is the motor aspect, the subject of studies in graphic motor skills. Form may be studied by analysing the way in which the line is transferred to the form: this is the perceptual aspect. The convergence of motor skills and perception is also the subject of studies of form. Content may be studied by examining the way in which the form is transposed in the symbolic sense of the word and in the realization of the model. The convergence of language and the style of drawing, on the one hand, and the model and the style of drawing, on the other, is, in turn, the subject of studies on the content of graphic activity...'.

Thus, from the point of view of artistic activity alone, we have to consider behaviour patterns which play a part in the all-round development of the individual and involve such extremely varied areas as motor skills, language and sensibility to form. An inventory of the different means of expression in fields other than drawing and painting gives artistic expression a new dimension. (Particular media require a praxis which leads to the creation of a lasting or ephemeral work, the production of objects or images that necessitate the establishment of a permanent relationship between tools, materials and additives.)

In fact, manual activities in the visual arts call into play different levels of action and representation.

Leaving aside sensori-manual gestures and expressive gestures, there are over thirty-five terms denoting specific gestures of the hand, regardless of whether or not it is extended by tools or objects used as tools:

(a) Everyday gestures: taking, grasping, catching, picking up, gathering, holding, carrying, setting down, placing, putting, sorting.

(b) More specific gestures directly connected with tools and materials: threading, squeezing, piercing, flattening, smoothing, pinching, pulling, pushing, turning, winding, hooking, supporting, juxtaposing, inserting, fitting together, unhooking, raising, striking, compressing, twisting, screwing, unscrewing, forcing.

(c) Movements which arise from the strength of the material or are necessary for changing the appearance or form of the material and are complementary to physical activities which offer more general situations: throwing, testing resistances, movements of force or rhythm, and so forth. All these actions are involved in psychomotor organization without its being necessary to 'programme' them rationally and systematically. The manual work of the craftsman which requires particular tools and materials, entails specific gestures which, in a diversified praxis, are adapted to individual development. Embroidery, needlework, ceramics, batik, cerography, copper enamelling, printing on cloth or other media, puppet-making, mask-making, linocut, modelling, engraving, silk-screen printing, wood-carving, sculpture in metal, polyester or stone, leatherwork, weaving, plasterwork.

Some of these activities require specific gestures for impinging on the material (sudden, linear, oblique, percussive, perpendicular), the use of external energy sources (burning, welding, etc.), combinations of materials (hooping, assembling, joining, spinning, weaving). Given the bleakness of life in the cities where working-class children living in modular housing developments or slum areas have nowhere to play or be themselves and no natural materials, it is essential to create conditions for an all-round approach to education (manual activities, intellectual inquiry, sensory activities, physical and verbal games, creativity).

These examples of a 'manual apprenticeship' are given as a practical instance of creative activities that promote sensori-motor, intellectual and creative development. What has been described is a preparation for, and a means of increasing awareness of, practices which differ from the inducing of 'learning' (teaching craft techniques) or the provision of instruction in the precise handling of a tool for a sterotyped form of production.

This approach to teaching necessarily implies a measure of guidance by the adult, a knowledge of the creative processes and an acceptance of responsibility for directing the child's motivation. It is, therefore, an experimental and innovative venture in all-round education.

It may be thought that the discovery of materials is not in itself enough to bring about the production of works of the aesthetic sensibility; on the other hand, action requires more than schemes and plans and the producer (whether child or adult) must necessarily take into account the physical reality of the materials that he uses.

In considering the role of aesthetic education in a multidisciplinary context, it is essential to specify what form and what type of education is involved.

With regard to these two questions we consider it possible to put forward a point of view which, even if it is not unanimously accepted, may at least serve as a working hypothesis. We are referring to what is probably the main thrust of the present study, even though it makes no claim to impose any particular line of approach.

As we are dealing with aesthetics, it is necessary to specify once more what meaning to be assigned to the word in this context so as to avoid philosophical controversies that are alien to the problems with which we are concerned.

The question becomes complex as soon as the word 'art' is used. The fact that one accepts the use of that word is naturally seen as implying assent to certain theories, the most widely held of which lead us to take the view that the senses play a part in the particular conception of the 'beautiful' in 'art', which implies a certain idea of beauty, man and nature. Everything related to art therefore calls for education; some even go so far as to propose an education for art and through art. The expression 'art education' is therefore, still affected today by the notion of education, which implies an arbitrary separation between the reality of man's daily life and art seen as something which, in some way, transcends this humanity.

The following associations are commonly made: art education or the teaching of the visual arts, which implies a special situation and, at the same time, stigmatizes the isolation, precariousness and uncertain status of this teaching as compared with the cogency, seriousness and demonstrable merits of the other so-called 'fundamental' subjects. The most widely differing fields are, however, covered by the various types of intellectual and material production. They include music, cinema, the fine arts (today the term visual arts is more common), dance and theatre.

Since 1752 the term 'Fine Arts' (linked with the foundation of the Académie des Beaux-Arts) has included architecture, engraving, painting and sculpture. The Academy was supposed to establish and proclaim the criteria of beauty, but in practice, the large degree of control which continued to be exercised by the guilds over apprenticeship and the granting of the status of master craftsman counterbalanced the power of this institution. The creative artist was also a master and the practice of the master provided the pupil with a model for the exercise of his craft as a future artist. The reform of the 'Beaux-Arts', organized under the aegis of Jacques Louis David (at the time a Deputy to the Convention) in 1797, brought about a far-reaching change in the previous order. But, in the middle of the nineteenth century, at a time when the surviving practices of the guilds were dying out, a radical segregation occurred at all levels of the institution. Compulsory schooling was to reinforce the process by introducing a firm distinction between the creative artist who 'makes' something and the drawing teacher (in French 'professeur de dessin'). It is significant that this term (which is rich in connotations today) is still used, even though the art teacher is called upon to employ a large number of media for expression in two or three dimensions such as painting, graphic art, sculpture, modelling (pottery, communication graphics, industrial design, architecture, environmental research, building research or research on the natural environment, design, advertising, art-work, photography or even the cinema (the Seventh Art).

This extension has been necessitated by a growth in awareness, among educational institutions, of the effect which man has on the world of forms which he makes and which constitutes our urbanized environment.

Before even starting to consider the notion of art, it has to be pointed out that the relationship between the object produced, its effects on the spectator and the production process which brought it into being is rarely established.

Several problems arise in this respect. Are recognized 'artists' the only people who produce art-works? Are the only 'works of art' or 'masterpieces' those which have been classified as such and given the stamp of approval? Does not such a definition of 'art' and the 'artist' eliminate from the creative field a whole host of persons and objects not meeting the implicit criteria? Furthermore, is not the word 'artist' applied to persons who perform works created by somebody else, such as musicians, dancers and singers? What is the function of the art galley and the art magazine? Is their role to present masterpieces or research studies, to expound works of the aesthetic sensibility, or to promote the sale of goods?

On this basis, the notion of 'art' is limited in that the major part of what is produced in non-Western cultures is imperialistically excluded! This is in spite of the fact that works produced in Africa, the Far East and other regions are today recognized as art.

Faced with the complexity of the semantic field of the word 'art ^{1}, we are obliged to suggest a number of terms and so avoid the constant ambiguity of the different meanings of this objective reality of every original production, which touches our sensibility and which nevertheless also sometimes has a function. The English language has the term 'aesthetics' which differs from the term 'art' in that the notion of pleasure produced by the work (aesthetics) is dissociated from the functional content (art).

The artistic character of the works of man has varied on the basis of historical evolution and local cultural traditions; some peoples have not even recognized this artistic character. The collection and preservation of the different products (utilitarian, ornamental, religious) in an institution which, for the past century, has been called a 'museum' is practised by several civilizations throughout the world, in the West, the East and the Far East (particularly China and Japan). This practice is positive when it involves keeping artefacts (monuments, images, utilitarian and functional objects, tools and so forth) of vanished or different civilizations, and preserving them in specific places for the purpose either of illuminating the historical past in the same way as written documentation, or of serving as complementary models for creative work. But it is negative when private collections result in the accumulation of wealth in the form of works of art, to the hoarding of works of art to the benefit of a few and the detriment of everyone else and to the preservation of works of art which have become a mere item of merchandise or a form of investment, subject only to the laws of speculation. The 'museum' seems even less justifiable when its collections consist of works which have been illicitly seized by force in time of war or in periods of colonialism, particularly from countries that have thus been robbed of their own creations many of which are of inestimable cultural importance.

In fact, we have certain reservations here about the use of these words which we shall endeavour to define in what follows. We shall accordingly avoid confusing creativity and creation, expression and representation, and aesthetic education and the education of taste, particularly as the idea of beauty is culturally determined and any definition of the beautiful and the ugly would lead us into polemics of doubtful value. In giving our account of the problems involved, we shall consider

what is produced by any individual provided that his personality is freely expressed on the basis of his own motivations, using subject-matter and materials, tools, instruments, his whole body or his hands, whether or not the activity has any ultimate functional purpose. The gap between learning and knowledge (knowledge acquired from personal experience, transmitted knowledge and know-how), and between empirical trial and error and taught techniques, the fact that there is no real criterion for appraising what is achieved or for evaluating the 'beautiful', in short, the subjectivity of the educator, who is the person with the power, are so many barriers between the educator and the subjectivity and sensibility of those engaged in artistic production.

All these factors raise many doubts and lead to a certain imprecision in 'aesthetic' education. Faced by this immense question, which we may not be in a position to answer at the present time, it is nevertheless desirable to make a statement of the problems involved. The objective is not to propose a new conception of creative activity but to reappraise the position of art in our Western society as a fact of reality (any attempt to offer it as an example to other societies would be a dangerous mistake).

There have been creative people in all societies, whether or not they have been associated with specific schools of art, but the ways in which 'skill' has been transmitted or acquired have differed greatly and the motivations, ultimate aims and the very purpose of 'making' have been infinitely variable. Is the present-day concern due to the shortage of creators, spectators or consumers? Why is interest shown today in so many different forms of aesthetic expression? How are we to take into account the different and contradictory forms of expression in contemporary art in the industrialized countries (Western Europe, the United States of America, Japan and so forth) and, at the same time, the cultural situation of countries without advanced technological resources?

Are the only 'works of art' those which have been officially approved as such by institutions (schools, competitions, salons, juries) or by critics who are supposed to be the repositories of knowledge, judgement and 'taste'? May we not make the assumption that the cultural heritage is embodied in the daily experience of each member of society who will be enriched by the discovery of other forms of creative art only if he is made more sensitive (for we do not doubt that he is sensitive)?

Thus, we shall leave aside the question of the function of art, as being outside the scope of this study, and shall put forward our concept of aesthetic education in terms of expression, transmission of influences and information. Aesthetic education is to be imparted through practical work, through the awakening of a sensibility to materials, tools and objects, through the pleasure derived from making things, through the rejection of 'models' and of pure theory, and through a questioning attitude towards the ideology of talent and genius!

This aesthetic education will use music, song, dance, movement, sculpture and painting (the relation to forms and colour); that is to say, it will use everything that facilitates and fosters the development of individuals, beginning with children. Why? How?

Institutional structures differ widely and in some places are non-existent. But it must be true to say that most of the institutional structures that are operative at the present time labour under the burden of earlier theories and models. Moreover, it is within those structures that the distinctive means of expression of certain peoples have been lost or are due to disappear in the near future, because, in the name of progress, theories have been superimposed on art to bolster educational practices, to the neglect of the uniqueness of human societies which stemmed from the facts of their everyday existence, their geographical situation, their mode of social organization, their cultural relations, their economic status and their past and present history.

While art is a human need, it is not essential to have seen a Delacroix or to have listened to Beethoven for the human mind to be enriched.

The Western image of culture is a relative concept; it is a dialectical and historical product of different human groups and cannot be offered indiscriminately as an ultimate goal for other social groups which may have developed along different lines.

The superficial taking-over of cultural forms or the uncritical imitation of another social group is damaging to a culture. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that exchanges have served in the past as a catalyst and as a stimulus in many different societies. Those social groups which have turned in upon themselves have preserved their culture but have ultimately suffered the fate of paralysis, repetition and in some cases, the debasement of the forms of expression.

Having stated these fundamental principles, we are in a better position to turn our minds to the works actually produced; the fields discussed here are expression through music, dance, mime, the visual arts and language in which education lays the foundations for a qualitative transformation. 'Our own' educational practice should take its place among the conditions and resources brought into play to foster creative activity in each child.

To simplify our approach, we shall demonstrate our argument by reference to the visual arts since the educational outlook involved may be applied to other forms of expression such as music and singing, dance and mine and so forth. Is there a body of knowledge to be transmitted, and therefore an essential period of study? Is there an 'innate ability', a culturally determined bent which makes it futile to attempt any form of expression that differs from established forms? Is it the artists who are the repositories of knowledge? Or is it the art theorists? Or the educators? Are there 'gifted' people whose 'talent' is such that it really deserves to be the centre of interest, instead of energy being pointlessly wasted on others (apart from trying to turn them into passive spectators!)?

Such are the questions posed (or imposed) by institutional structures. Liberal though they may be, they have either failed to answer this question or do not even think it necessary to ask it.

We have to educate actors and doers, creative and imaginative people, so that they may escape the influences of fashion and the sterility of propaganda, the insidious temptations of the media and the cultural industries and the recognition of 'élitist' models, and may become fully aware of their own reality and potential.

To conclude what we have to say on this particular subject, it may be useful to recall the various fields which aesthetic education seems to cover at the present time. A study prepared several years ago (1974) would still appear to provide a frame of reference on account of the relevance of its ideas and the quality of the information that it contains. The remarkable paper presented by Dr Edwin Ziegfeld (United States of America), during the course of the Meeting of Experts on the Place and Functions of Aesthetic Education in General Education, held at 'Unesco House' in Paris in December 1974, was entitled 'Trends in aesthetic education: integration and finalities'.[1] The points of view expressed and the approaches adopted confirm the complexity and ambiguity of the problems involved, particularly in regard to terminology.

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1. Meeting of Experts on the Place and Functions of Aesthetic Education in General Education: 'Trends in aesthetic education: integration and finalities', Dr Edwin Ziegfeld (United States of America), ED-74/CONF.644/3. Paris, Unesco, October 1974.

Furthermore, the fields covered by each specific art form (music, visual arts, dance and mime, etc.) are becoming increasingly difficult to define. On the subject of music, for example, DrE. Ziegfeld argues: 'Music includes vocal and instrumental solo, as well as group performance, composing as well as performing. Drama extends from the performance of plays by great playwrights to spontaneous dramatizations of commonplace situations; it also includes the writing as well as the direction of dramatic productions and film,....' (page 1). The use of terms such as 'drama' shows just how unsuitable the words are for referring to the manifold forms of contemporary Western culture as well as those forms stemming from different cultures. He goes on to state (II. page 1) that: 'Dance, too, ranges from the carefully choreographed to the spontaneous and improvised, and includes choreography as well as performance. These areas, therefore, cover a wide spectrum of experiences, and the forms which these experiences take vary from one culture to another, sometimes drastically, sometimes minimally'. These definitions, incomplete though they may be, are positive in that they bring a degree of clarity into an area somewhat neglected by most governments. Accordingly, it must be accepted that artistic activities today cover a much wider field than they did in nineteenth-century Europe when they were limited to the major arts (literature, music, dance) and the fine arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, engraving). The aesthetic domain has been enriched by embracing all those fields with which other civilizations had been concerned for a long time: mime and body art, for example, which the Chinese regarded as distinct from drama; the natural and built environment (to which Japan has always been sensitive) which are not exactly the same as architecture and town planning; and the protection of the natural environment against visual and noise pollution, which does not fall within the immediate scope of ecology. It has also expanded to take in all inventions, all new tools or new technologies capable of offering new means of expression such as photography, cinema, television, video, computer technology and also technologies which are due to come into existence in the near future.

II - 2. CONTENT, MODELS AND VALUES OF AESTHETIC EDUCATION

- SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE CONTENT

- DEMANDS AND LIMITATIONS OF SYLLABUSES

Specific features of the content

It is evident that, in all countries, an undeniable interest is taken in this question and that it is given serious attention. There is no shortage of formulas and definitions, which are, by turns, varied and original or highly disappointing.

There are, to be sure, significant differences between countries with a long tradition of 'art education' and young nations that are striving to promote an awareness of their own identity. The main directions taken are fundamentally concerned with enhancing the status of the individual, particularly in terms of his creativity and initiative; the development of the critical faculty; social action in favour of mass education; better integration based on the discovery of the cultural heritage and the heritage of the national cultures in conjunction with present-day realities.

None the less, relatively few countries as yet concern themselves with the specific content of the arts and the means to be applied to bring about the 'development of creative potential' and create conditions likely to make individuals responsive to the many different art-works of the past, the present and even the future.

What is at stake here, the development of the individual member of society through action, presupposes that artistic expression has several ultimate aims: moral, social and technical.

The task assigned to aesthetic education cannot be reduced to the idealistic objective of satisfying human needs (in the first instance those of the child) and merely feeding his image repertoire. It also has to take into account the fact that the old structures and routine practices of a society no longer fulfil people's expectations. In aesthetic education, as in other branches of education, there is a need for a radical reform of the system, in conjunction with the provision of substantial resources and the high-level training of teachers.

We can attempt to trace, in an educational context, the development of the child and his adaptation to the activities that are offered to him. In doing so, we shall confine ourselves to the example of the visual arts.

Sensori-motor development. Through the use of the hand, whether or not it is extended by instruments or tools; through posture, as determined by subject-matter or materials, their format and their size; through the delicacy or expansiveness of the movements made which engage all or some of the limbs and all or part of the body during the sensori-motor development of the child, these visual art activities will prove to be an irreplaceable formative influence.

The establishment and education of sensorial perception are sharpened and perfected through contacts with materials. Even though manual contact with materials seems to have a special importance, auditory, visual and gustatory contacts are extensively used in the different stages of early art education. Listening to sounds, for example, plays an important part in establishing the density of a material or its spatial relations.

During the course of affective development and the formation of the personality, the child's relationship with persons and objects changes as he develops a firmer control over his creative output and it begins to reflect his desires, feelings, pleasures and displeasures. Artistic activities, which are factors and means of communication, are widely used during the early years by educationalists and teachers and offer psychotherapists a means of investigation and treatment.

The possibility of working with materials and transforming them gives the child a better appreciation of his powers and limitations. Through individual discoveries and co-operative group activities, through imitative actions and mechanized operations in which the successful completion of the project is dependent on group action, through other people's critical approach to his own work and the expression of his views on the creations of his companions, the socialization of the child takes place and reaches a provisional equilibrium. A liberal, pupil-centred education facilitates the child's growth in awareness and his achievement of independence; group creative activities lead him to recognize and accept differences. Art-work that avoids stereotypes promotes and strengthens the individuality of his creations. It also gives them the authenticity and originality which enable the educator to identify them, whether through style, form or colour.

We have long been aware of the part played by the knowledge of objects in cognitive development. 'Knowledge /of an object/ ... consists in operative processes leading to a transformation of reality, either in actions or in thought, in order to grasp the mechanisms of those transformations and thus assimilate the events and the objects into systems of operations (or structures of transformations)'.[1]

Thus, action does not merely stem from the material act but necessarily implies a concrete basis at the stage of the 'concrete operations'.

The educational method which may be inferred from it should meet requirements that define (a) the active school and (b) interest.

(a) An active school is not necessarily a school of manual labour, and, although the child's activity at certain levels necessarily entails the manipulation of objects and even a certain amount of physical exploration through touch, in so far as elementary logico-mathematical notions, for example, are derived, not from the objects manipulated, but from the actions of the child and their co-ordination, at other levels the most authentic research activity may take place in the spheres of reflection, of the most advanced abstraction, and of verbal manipulations (provided they are spontaneous and not imposed on the child at the risk of remaining partially uncomprehended).

(b) Interest in no way excludes effort--quite the contrary in fact--and an education providing a good preparation for life does not consist in replacing spontaneous efforts by dreary chores. Although life does include a by no means negligible amount of imposed labour alongside other more freely accepted tasks, the necessary disciplines are still more efficacious when they are freely accepted than when they are without such inner acceptance. So active methods do not lead in any way to anarchic individualism, but rather, especially if they include a combination of individual work and team work, to a training in self-discipline and voluntary effort.

This point was brought out by Henri Wallon who wrote that 'the emergence and development of mental formations is always governed by motor action'.

1.   Jean Piaget, Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child, Longman Group Limited, London, 1971, p. 72.

This implies not a single form of manipulation or trial-and-error approach but genuine research in the spheres of reflection, abstraction and verbal exchange. The interest generated in no way excludes effort, that is to say, an elaboration and structuring of data.

Thus, in areas ranging from non-logical syncretism to complex mental operations, from concrete experience to abstraction, from intention to realization, the child's sense of reality is modified through play, practice and observation engaged in both on his own and through sharing and communication with others.

The memory--if we may use this questionable term in reference to a multifarious psychological function--has an unquestionable role in aesthetic activity and it may thus prove to be an important factor in the formation of an educational method. Visual memory, which covers numerous specific fields (general form, colours, particular elements and details, the ability to reproduce a model faithfully through an understanding of its structure) should be of especial concern to teachers in whose interest it is to understand the ways in which it functions, records and reconstructs reality. Without taking a knowledge of these mechanisms as the foundation of an education borrowed from the past, they could benefit considerably from information and observations on stimuli likely to induce acquisitive, recollective and recognitive behaviour in the child.

They must also be able to appreciate the different forms of symbolization in the spheres of verbal, visual and musical expression. The decoding of the signs which today represent, in these different fields, the language of a civilization, is essential to any attempt to explain the many varied aspects of this language, to communicate an appreciation of them and to transmit them.

The appeal to the child's imagination will only be successful if account is taken of the affective, intellectual and socio-cultural factors which play a part in the processes and works of the imagination. For far too long, for example, 'imaginative drawing' involved nothing more than portraying from memory an experience or scene recalled from the past. It is hardly necessary to point out the extent to which this inadequate and largely uncreative practice disregarded the reality of the processes involved in the production of works of the imagination.

In the study of children's drawings, the different stages proposed by Luquet in 1925 were for many years used as points of reference. D. Widlocher,[1] however, has shown the discrepancy 'between the accidental representational intention and intellectual realism' when he writes: 'in reality, it is the very term "intellectual realism" which deserves to be criticized. The child is concerned not with representing things as they are but in portraying them in the way that makes them most readily identifiable ... the more meaning there is in the drawing, the more it interests the child. The drawing is therefore the equivalent of a story'.

The field of artistic activity, which the child enters with the help of the teacher and education, places his receptiveness to the world around him and his productive activity in a dialectical relationship. The role and function of teachers is therefore to prepare the child to master the 'use' of materials, forms and colours, not only for aesthetic purposes but also to sharpen and enrich his perception of daily life.

Present-day thinking on ways of providing aesthetic education is connected with the role of art in human life, the discovery of national cultures, and the representation of art in contact with the different forms of artistic production.

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1.   Daniel Widlocher, L'interprétation des dessins d'enfants, Dessart, 1965, p. 54.

It is therefore evident that practices adapted to the fields envisaged, whether they involve sight, speech or hearing, regardless of the 'art' studied, are called upon to play a fundamental role.

In upper secondary education and the universities, the courses generally deal only with aesthetics, the theory of art and creation, the philosophy and history of the arts, and the critical and structured study of works (through formal lectures, discussions and audio-visual presentations). Thus, presentation, discussion and listening alternate to ensure a 'sound artistic culture', that is to say, to put the student in a position to identify, understand and discuss works recognized as essential by the society to which he belongs. At best, he may place both the works and himself in relation to history and the environment and thereby structure his critical faculties and his judgement.

In the case of younger children, however, the treatment of such art education as a subject of minor importance and the derisory place given to it in general education throughout the child's schooling, and the fact that those who are interested in it have to pursue their interests outside school in so-called after-school or extra-curricular activities does nothing to develop either 'abilities' or 'vocations'. A keen interest in artistic activities thus becomes something exceptional and the person concerned needs to be exceptionally successful, whether as a justification or as an excuse for his interest.

In general education, no regard or attention is paid to the technical and scientific contribution which could come, through the often more accessible channels of art education, from a better knowledge of sounds, colours and spaces.

Thus, there is a danger that very early subject selection and arbitrary exclusions from the syllabuses will result in whole sectors of the population receiving no fundamental aesthetic education. They will therefore receive only an incomplete education in essential areas of culture. Accordingly, there is a danger that the products of our educational system will be cultural cripples, who are incapable of examining their own tastes, engaging in discussions or making choices.

Demands and limitations of the syllabuses

If we take as an example the options available on the French syllabuses, in the specific field of aesthetic education, we find that in some cases the ultimate goals addressed have been limiting in their effect and have been dictated by particular crises in fashion within each discipline, in other cases reference was made to ways of thinking which had themselves become outdated, while there was no attempt to call in question trends which were already obsolete; in still other cases, all that was done was to formulate intentions with accompanying slogans without any acknowledgement of the need to provide new projects with resources adapted to the contemporary situation.

In many countries, a concern to preserve certain achievements of the past has all too often led governments and institutions to maintain a form of segregation in their respective countries in relation to the broad masses of the population, thus bolstering an élitist or minority outlook on artistic activities.

This explains both why aesthetic education has not been fully developed and expanded and why teacher training has been neglected.

In this respect, the way in which French art education syllabuses have evolved seems highly significant.

As far back as 1802, the lycée syllabuses required a teacher of writing, drawing and dancing to teach the 'arts d'agrément' (artistic pastimes). Drawing was only introduced into the primary school syllabus as a compulsory subject (for the elementary, junior and senior classes) in 1882; this was the time not only of the introduction of compulsory state primary schooling but, above all, of the large-scale development of industrial technology. This probably accounts for the fact that geometrical drawing was taught in the junior classes (children aged 9-10).

In 1865, freehand drawing became a compulsory subject in classes for apprentices' and adults in the city of Paris. The mainstay of the syllabus was elementary geometry and perspective, and the theory of shadows and modelling.

Between 1865 and 1891, the time allocated for drawing in the schools was halved. However, this reduction did not last and the content, forms and timetables were to vary over the years depending on how much interest was shown in the artistic development of the child and on the importance attached to training in art for industrial purposes. Nevertheless, there was an increasing disparity between the study of basic subjects (mother tongue, mathematics, science, history, geography) and the other subjects. The new features of the syllabuses introduced in 1968 did not succeed in bridging this gap. The teaching time allocated--in elementary and secondary schools--and the time set aside for teacher training--in higher education establishments--were still limited.

Present-day knowledge in the fields of general education studies, experimental education, comparative education and educational psychology has been much expanded. The abundance and diversity of publications which have appeared in these fields bears witness to this. Nevertheless, the status that is accorded to such knowledge is still far lower than its importance would suggest. All too often, certain ideas on 'creativity' or the 'semiotics of the image' continue to be adopted at the level of terminology or theory rather than in practice. These concepts merely become part of the vocabulary. The same is true of certain affirmations of the need to consider the body in its sensory relations with all aspects of the environment. They offer the individual involved no means of evaluating this environment fully, of impinging upon it or of changing it. The educator who is ensnared by these formulas is liable to be inveigled by 'alternative therapies'. If teachers and educators have no system of values to which they can refer and do not have at their disposal any information or high-grade critical analysis, they cannot be expected to find the practical answers that would enable them to move beyond the 'awareness training' stage. The development of an innovative outlook is hampered by the absence of genuine models; hence the often naïve yet reassuring interest in techniques and craftsmanship.

In developing countries, particularly those that have recently thrown off the yoke of colonialism, teaching and education play an important part in enhancing the status of their national culture and the discovery of their artistic heritage.

The period 1973-1978 saw a succession of intergovernmental conferences which asserted with renewed vigour the need to give due prominence to the concept of cultural identity.

Moreover, in a number of developed countries, there has been an increase in people's awareness of long-forgotten regional identities and a return to the values of this regional heritage through art. This trend towards a renewal of nationalistic feeling is probably not without its dangers, but at least it offers a means of protecting a heritage that had been in the process of disappearing or being discarded.

It is not yet clear what educational forms will emerge from these new areas of interest. The need for each country to rediscover its roots cannot be allowed to result in the neglect of the creative activities and achievements of the modern

world. It is therefore desirable to bring about an adjustment in the balance between the different points of view.

In a report to a recent congress, the German Democratic Republic argued that aesthetic education is 'an important factor which enables the younger generation to become more aware of cultural and artistic treasures' and to play an active role in these fields. This aesthetic education should set itself the following objectives:

to provide a basis for the appreciation of art objects;

to afford the opportunity to engage wholly independently in a form of elementary cultural activity;

to create an aesthetic attitude towards knowledge and work in the field of human relations;

to foster an aesthetic attitude in one's private life (in regard to housing, clothing, the organization of leisure) and also to encourage and develop an aesthetic attitude in regard to nature and the environment.

One may well be surprised that such a programme does not have more to say about the personal practice of the arts and about the aesthetic behaviour of persons who, without becoming 'artists', might relate such aesthetic behaviour to their social behaviour. The emphasis is more on a particular image of the socializing role of art than on the knowledge of values inherent in art that are acquired through personal practice.

In some countries there is another tendency which seeks to give folklore a new lease of life through the practice of the crafts, traditional songs and dances and the styles of drawing, engraving, painting and sculpture of the past. However, it must not be overlooked that the breakdown of traditional ways of life is connected with changes in the relations of production. The new art forms as well as the new social relations (like the media) irreversibly alter ways of thinking by creating new needs. The return to the past--even if it is entirely authentic--cannot take the place of creation for the needs of the evolving world of today. Thus, even in rural areas, the new production techniques will give rise to new cultural forms which while they may spring from ancestral folklore, are certainly very different from the cultural forms of earlier times.

Folklore should therefore assume its rightful place without too many illusions being harboured about its revival possibilities. The social structure and contemporary ways of life are additions to the existing culture. The provision of information on the cultural heritage for schools should lead to a better appreciation of the national artistic heritage without confusing it with the varied--and sometimes stereotyped--manifestations of folklore which are merely one aspect of this heritage. Art education syllabuses will have to draw upon the cultural situation in its totality.

The role of out-of-school institutions

In a number of socialist countries, the special place given to bodies concerned with after-school and extra-curricular education and the participation of parents and other adults who are not teachers in educational activities are often quite remarkable. Moreover, there is no shortage of information on this subject.

On the other hand, there is a regrettable lack of state involvement in a large number of countries such as Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Portugal and even Canada or the United States of America. This may be explained variously by a shortage of funds, by the relative lack of interest on the part of parents and,

above all, by the rift between the school and the life of society, particularly in relation to the importance of art and the interest that it arouses. 'Aesthetic education' means very little to communities and elected representatives who have not themselves received even minimal education in this field.

Outside the school, the child's activities are 'free' and the local community does not assume any responsibility for the content of those activities. This serious omission is only slowly being made good subject to the resources at the disposal of the state or its readiness to commit them.

Accordingly, we find few examples--apart from declarations of principle--where educational theory is directed towards establishing an abiding relationship between aesthetic education and general education.

It therefore has to be recognized that, in certain situations, which are still too numerous today, the school does not equip itself with the means needed to fulfil the requirements of an aesthetic education. Lip service is often paid in a general context to the need for an aesthetic education and it is even affirmed in the wording of syllabuses but it does not yet seem to have become part of educational practice.

II - 3. SPECIALISTS IN AESTHETIC EDUCATION

- TEACHER TRAINING

- SHORTCOMINGS IN TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher training

The question of training teachers cannot be considered without drawing attention to the difficulties or even ambiguities inherent in the idea of art education as a . subject that is integrated into general education but retains its specific characteristics:

Such an education has to satisfy many different requirements:

1. It has to adjust to the stages of the child's development so as to provide learning experiences in which at least as much importance is given to interests and motivations as to previous experience and personal inclinations.

2. It has to give to a particular subject--or to subjects whose very time-tables tend to downgrade and diminish them--a status which reflects their educational importance.

3. It has to make it possible to establish with those responsible for other subjects--those which are given priority--relations which safeguard the prestige and role of art education in general and the different specific forms of art education.

4. It has to convince parents concerned about their children's career prospects:

    (a) that art education is indissociable from general education--that it not only complements it but may also have a stimulating and motivating effect;

    (b) that art education enhances general culture by broadening the sources of information and the means of expression;

    (c) that children who show artistic taste or talent are not on that account academically backward and that their artistic gifts are not just a way of compensating for obvious deficiencies in other areas.

It should be remembered that the question to which we are addressing ourselves is a methodological one. Our primary concern should therefore be to work out the best type of teacher training to meet the needs of a multidisciplinary education rather than spend too long on listing the shortcomings and achievements in teacher training.

This training could be divided into three successive stages:

general culture,

information and other artistic and technical specializations,

the selected artistic specialization.

SPECIALISTS IN AESTHETIC EDUCATION

The sketchiness of our treatment of this subject is the result of a deliberate choice as we are concerned not with organizing the training of specialists or even with designing specific training courses but with identifying the knowledge and practical skills which seem essential for every teacher with responsibility for aesthetic education and for art education young children in particular. Unfortunately we have had to omit from this study any reference to music and dance since, as we have already noted, we have no experience in these fields.

We should recall that we have been able to define three types of teacher attitude which are incompatible with each other but equally negative:

aesthetic activity is an opportunity for relaxation; it is regarded as a kind of leisure activity, marked by a misunderstood and inconsistent aimlessness;

aesthetic education is the transmission of 'good taste' (that of the adult and the dominant socio-cultural environment), which is based on outmoded criteria and models drawn from classical and modern art history and rarely from contemporary history. What the humanities have to say about children's knowledge, the demands of creativity and the role of the body in aesthetic behaviour, does not have any effect on the theory of aesthetic education;

it is the learning of techniques based on manual skill, a support which lends a sense of security and results in work analogous to that of the handyman or even the craftsman, but practically never leads to personal creativity.

We take the view that, alongside the knowledge of child psychology essential to every teacher with particular emphasis, in this context, on the representation of space--or spaces--the role of the hand and of movement, and the learning mechanisms, one must also consider the whole field of the semiology of the image, which is today essential to any analysis of visual art.

The intensive development of linguistics has paved the way for research in fields other than that of language and, while we do not wish to regard graphic and pictorial art as being no more than a language, it would seem that the various studies on social communication offer a basis for defining the outlines of a semiology of art. The producer (transmitter) sends out, with a view to communicating with others, a message in terms of his own code and his own culture. The spectator (receiver) is likely to pick up, at best, only a single component of this message unless he has some grasp of a general semiology of visual art.

All visual perception relating to 'artistic production' entails conscious or unconscious decoding and deciphering operations.

This being so, we are in a position to formulate the possible components of this semiology:

1. a manipulative activity;

2. mastery of specific areas of knowledge: the vocabulary of forms, the laws of colour, the development of national and universal art forms, the sociology of art and so forth.

3. The development of personal awareness and critical analysis.

The analysis of the art object may proceed from different functions:

graphic art, painting and sculpture;

representation and imitation following observation of reality and the possibilities of 'photographic' representation, as an essential part of taking possession of reality;

the codification of conventions (the reading of plans, maps, diagrams, dimensioned sketches, perspectives, etc.), and symbols which rule out the element of sensibility since a knowledge of the signs used is of prime importance;

expression which enables the personality of the producer to transform, modify, invent, show orignality and develop his own aesthetic language.

Thus, as the analyses are developed, emphasis is put on certain aspects without detriment to the requirements of personal expression.

The different techniques are discovered, learnt and mastered through activities provided in the framework of teaching that is centred on the individual but is addressed to a large group or to small groups on the basis of one or more projects suggested by the children themselves. This kind of activity will be governed by a limited number of rules which are accepted by all with a view to ensuring an adequate learning experience.

The way the place of work is arranged and its architecture play an important role. The mobility of the equipment--trestle tables and trays--will make it possible to use small individual items of furniture (tables, stolls) to suit particular activities, enabling the pupil to choose where to work. The simplest arrangement is one that provides the child with a means of coping with the constraints imposed by the use of tools and materials which in themselves raise quite a few problems.

While leaving the choice of surfaces (size and material) to the child makes life more difficult for the teacher, it gives the pupil the chance to work freely at his own level and so avoids the assembly-line production of stereotyped or 'standardized' works.

In this way, the sequence applied in education in the last century--representation-organization-invention--is called into question. One has only to refer to the ideas of Piaget to gain a better appreciation of the necessity of alternating between free activities and directed learning activities on the basis of the observations of the adult and in a way that is suited to the needs of each child.

All these modes of action may be included in a variety of forms of artistic production that will not systematically result in a predictable end-product. Kinetic art, for example (involving space--time--movement) is also part of the training, even if only in passing.

The practice of alternating between art workshops and teaching workshops is not intended to simulate real-life situations with the children but, rather, to generate a kind of group dynamics which will at the same time make it possible to study interpersonal behaviour and the relationship between ability and knowledge.

Many specialist teachers take refuge in an élitist conception of art or aesthetics, inflicting on their pupils academic lessons on the history of the arts. They themselves do not engage in any form of creative activity and all too often they have no real contact with the reality of daily life and care little about how much interest the pupils are likely to show in a culture that seems to them like something from another world.

The adult, who possesses a whole world of information, cannot provide a real and qualitatively effective education if he merely expresses his personal tastes and remains oblivious to the arbitrary and conventional models to which the child is exposed both in school and outside.

The essential equation to be solved may be expressed as follows: can a training syllabus be clearly established today on the basis of the personal outlook and socio-cultural origins of the teachers, the training received or courses of study followed, or the place assigned to them by society? What specific skills do these teachers need if their work in a multidisciplinary framework is to be made easier?

It could be envisaged that:

All educators will be in a position to take part in practical art activities.

No specialist teacher will be able to contemplate working alone if he does not have time for co-ordination and discussion with the other educators who are responsible for the group/class.

The spatial arrangements in the classroom and the school will not be fixed or rigid but will be flexible enough to accommodate all kinds of exchanges and meetings.

The selected school environment will not itself be isolated. The children's experiences both in school and outside will be the starting-point for their requests for information and their discovery of the adult world of work.

The teaching profession will not systematically defer to specialists from outside the school environment who may be called in to help it. However, the quality of the teaching provided by adults will gain from these outside contributions and will benefit from the discovery of the children's spontaneous interests.

The reports and evaluations of the children's work will no longer be made in the form of comments based on personal criteria but will involve exchanges of opinion in which the concern to discover the varied aspects of the children's personalities will be seen as more important than the quantification of individual successes and failures in each subject.

Teacher training

Shortcomings in teacher training

A preliminary observation is in order on the subject of the surveys carried out over the past decade: both in countries which already have a highly organized and institutionalized model of aesthetic education and in countries which have only recently begun, sometimes in a rudimentary fashion, to try to tackle the different questions and needs in this field, there is clear evidence that the teachers responsible for aesthetic education are genuinely dissatisfied. They all want and seek far-reaching reforms and changes.

In many cases, no specialized training is provided; in others, refresher training is inadequate; in still others, training is empirical and unsystematic. These are the findings of recent surveys and questionnaires.[1]

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1.   J. Duvignaud, 'L'éducation esthétique à l'école et hors l'école. Enquête internationale', Paris, Unesco, Roneoed doc., 1979.

The requirements concerning such training relate to technical and educational qualification. This is regarded as fundamental and indispensable by the vast majority of cultural officers, educators and teachers. However, it is no longer possible to accept the illusory belief that short training courses can take the place of a basic aesthetic education founded on continuing practical experience. It is almost inconceivable that specialists in aesthetic education should fail to have a practical grounding in cultural activity, whether in music, art, dance, mime or theatre. Similarly, it would be ridiculous not to provide educators with a minimal knowledge of child's psychology, psychomotor development and intellectual growth.

The high level of training required is out of the question in any country, unless there is a fundamental rethinking of the concepts of qualification, the transmission of knowledge and learning experiences.

The shortcomings in such training are brought out in a study on Africa prepared on the basis of surveys conducted among teachers. Most of the replies point to a lack of organization in the teaching profession as far as aesthetic education is concerned: chance is its dominant feature.[1] Those who claim to have a 'vocation' also point out that 'they were trained in European or African academies with a view to pursuing an artistic career', which was subsequently thwarted by the lack of openings. This was how they went into teaching. Most of them 'studied by themselves', were 'self-taught', and so forth. This explains the unanimous call for refresher training courses, study grants and further training in the field of African art.

The teachers call for both general and specialized training in keeping with the continuous mobilization required by aesthetic education: as convinced cultural activities organizers, their demand for training extends to the areas of high-speed, wide-scale mass communication such as photography, radio broadcasting, television and the cinema.

...'Let us also add that, to offset the shortage of qualified teachers, Black Africa has often resorted through bilateral agreements to foreign teachers and instructors who, with the best will in the world, cannot convey through their teaching an identity that is alien to them'.[2]

The first observation emphasizes the lack of genuine training centres (which is the case in France, moreover). The second has bearing upon the content and specific nature of expectations connected with the knowledge of African culture.

To take another example, in Brazil, 88 per cent of the teachers would like to be better trained to 'teach art', particularly as elementary school teachers have to teach all or almost all the classroom subjects.

It is possible to add a long list of expressions of concern such as '... in fact, the art teacher does not feel at ease in rigid working set-ups; he likes new ways of doing things and is not keen on repetitive activities'. Seminars should be organized differently: 'one would bring together teachers directly involved in the visual arts, music, theatre and folklore who can pass on knowledge but, above all, can give teachers experience in creative art...'.

In North Africa, the urgent need to provide schooling for children and to give technical and scientific training has pushed the introduction of specialized courses into second place.

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1. A. Yerodia, 'L'art à l'école africaine', Paris, Unesco, ED-79/WS/33, March 1979, p. 16.
2. Séminaire de Formation en Afrique: 'la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel et artistique national', Paris, Unesco, ED-79/WS/39, May 1979, p. 32.

Teachers in India are left to their own devices with no chance for refresher training and are often great distances apart... Nevertheless, one correspondent proposed that: 'the aesthetic education teacher should always be busy, like the craftsman in his workshop. He should never be without his brushes or his tools, and should always be handling or shaping his materials, reading or writing...'.

In Japan, where there are a good many training schemes in aesthetic education, 'the excessively rigid framework of the university institution is often challenged and criticized. Some of the future specialists complete their studies abroad because the way the courses are organized is sometimes too academic...'.

Turning to Europe, we note that in Denmark teachers receive specialized training but would like to study educational psychology and would prefer refresher training to be accompanied by practical experience.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, as in Italy, such 'specialized training is available and teachers have the opportunity to become familiar with a large number of media of expression'.

The United Kingdom can point to particularly positive achievements, despite the often incomplete and fragmented nature of the training. In drama, for example, four years at drama school are followed by two years practical training in the theatre, with examinations in directing, mime, etc.

In Belgium, 'the training of art teachers is chaotic!'; other respondents refer to 'the potluck aspect of administrative appointments' and state that 'the training generally seems inadequate and unequal to professional requirements'.

In Portugal, there are no 'separate courses or special schemes'.

.The Eastern European countries seem to make the best provision in aesthetic education. The teachers receive a training which enables them to work in several different media. The methods studied are tried out during periods of practical training. Refresher training is provided in specialized postgraduate institutes. The refresher training courses sometimes tend to be multidisciplinary so as to encourage teachers to broaden their training and use their initiative.

All teachers, regardless of their personal training and career history, would like to come out of specialized institutes. Nevertheless, without going into details on content and organization, it would seem that in the United States of America teacher training is provided in specialized schools but the courses involve the study of several media of expression.

'In the United States, there is no systematic training as such on a nationwide basis. The provision of diversified and empirical training is made possible by the fact that many different kinds of privately run centres are scattered throughout the United States'.

In Canada, training in artistic subjects is quite separate from training in other fields.

III - <u>METHODOLOGY OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY</u>
<u>AESTHETIC EDUCATION</u>

III - 1. THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONCEPT

- ITS AMBIGUITIES

- WAYS OF PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

The multidisciplinary concept, which is so frequently invoked today, turns out in practice to be particularly fraught with ambiguity. The way it is applied is more likely to disguise than to dispel this ambiguity.

It cannot be defined as a superimposition, or even as an accumulation, of different subjects: it is more a convergence towards a common goal. Furthermore, this goal has to be clearly defined and the roles assigned to each individual discipline have to be equitably distributed.

It may be relatively easy, when drawing up a research programme, to divide up subjects according to a certain time-scale and to establish the precise time and extent of the different contributions. However, such contributions are generally in fields that are fairly closely related or even complementary and can be arranged within the framework of an overall plan.

The same does not seem to be the case in classroom practice. An approach that was natural, if not essential, in research, becomes something artificial or even spurious. All too often, there seems to be a risk that the pupils' interest will be dissipated rather than widened and that the basic theme around which the information is meant to be centred will be lost sight of.

It is not easy to come to grips with the diversity of approaches to a specific subject, even though it may be based on genuine curiosity. Above all, however much one may wish to meet the demand, it is inevitable that a selection will have to be made and some approaches eliminated. If we wish to consider a piece of literature in its historical and geographical context, bring out its specific linguistic characteristics and emphasize its aesthetic value or its cultural importance, one could do so by referring to items of knowledge actually borrowed from other fields. The purpose of these borrowings would be to awaken curiosity and generate new interests. But this really only happens in fields that are very closely related and whose objectives and methods can, without serious misrepresentations, be correlated.

It is difficult to specify in general terms how to bring various disciplines together into a relationship with each other as the components are likely to appear and remain arbitrary unless there is something in the disciplines concerned which justifies their being brought together. If this multidisciplinary approach is applied on an occasional basis or according to the circumstances, the danger is that it will be based only on very superficial requirements which are only excusable if they are short term. If the approach is to be introduced on an enduring basis, it requires the establishment of facilities, time-scales and administrative arrangements, the cumbersomeness of which can impair their adaptability.

The combination, even on a temporary basis and in a limited context, of extremely heterogeneous disciplines without any obvious common features often seems like an intellectual game which is stimulating but of debatable educational value.

In the teaching of children, such an approach may even be dangerous if it is applied incompetently and without precautions. The truth is that no single teacher can simply decide on the basis of his personal bents to draw on several different disciplines that are temporarily directed towards a common goal. The danger is that his choices will be made for subjective or incidental reasons and that his interests

will be limited by his own lack of knowledge of which he may be unaware. Thus, he may impart to his pupils the illusion of a unity or synthesis which has no solid foundations. He also runs the risk of paying more attention, under the influence of his own ideas or judgements, to certain disciplines or branches of study which would have benefited from being considered with a more open mind.

The multidisciplinary approach, as a collaboration between representatives of different disciplines, comes up against obstacles which are no less serious. The various disciplines tend to be ranked in a hierarchy which has more to do with the personalities of those who represent them than with the nature of the disciplines themselves. The children see these hierarchies as sources of divergence rather than convergence. When a teacher fails to make himself understood, his failure may be regarded as the failure of his particular subject. There is also a danger that, far from bringing about new forms of interchange, the multidisciplinary approach will put an end to discussion on and the raising of questions.

However, such ambiguities in the multidisciplinary approach are not only found in the course of a cursory analysis of the ways in which this approach operates. They are also found in the terminology adopted to refer to this method. Indeed, it may be asked whether the terms, 'multidisciplinary', 'interdisciplinary' and 'transdisciplinary', which are used indiscriminately, are wholly interchangeable. Do they have exactly the same meaning, and what are the reasons for adopting any one of these terms in preference to the others?

The French loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur /¯guidelines on higher education_/, which was promulgated on 7 November 1968 and has since been extensively amended, attaches considerable importance to the multidisciplinary approach, which was a fresh and original, attempt to preserve both the diversity and the unity of each discipline at university level. In this context, we may read that 'the multidisciplinary approach does not immediately imply an interdisciplinary approach' which 'cultivates a synoptic outlook through the discovery of the relations between the different fields of knowledge. The interdisciplinary approach becomes functional when the researcher reaches a point where he feels the need to seek elucidation by drawing on disciplines other than his own field of specialization. The multidisciplinary approach is a necessary stage in the development towards the interdisciplinary approach whose full realization is also dependent on a new outlook and the abolition of the still too numerous barriers that confine the researcher and the teacher to their respective specializations'.[1]

Naturally, this only concerns higher education and scientific research. Hence, it is not really surprising to find references to interdisciplinary studies, particularly in general education and educational research.

The interdisciplinary approach may by turns be instrumental, when it 'involves the classic appeal to another discipline to resolve the problems of a given discipline';[2] multidisciplinary, in the sense that 'it harnesses different disciplines to focus on a single subject with a view to studying the same phenomenon through different complementary approaches';[3] or, lastly, structural or transdisciplinary as

1. M. Debesse, G. Mialaret, 'Traité des Sciences Pédagogiques', Vol. 3, 'Pédagogie comparée', Paris, PUF, 1972, p. 236.
2. L. Legrand, 'L'interdisciplinarité en pédagogie' in Journées d'études des équipes de recherche des collèges expérimentaux, Paris, I.N.R.P., 1978, Roneoed doc., p. 16.
3. Id. loc. cit. p. 16.

'it leads to the creation of new disciplines, either through the transfer of a methodology from one field to another or through the invention and use of a new instrument leading to the definition of a new field of research'.[1]

However, these classifications, which serve to distinguish different fields of research, do not seem immediately applicable in education science. The inter-disciplinary approach has to be considered more in the context of classroom practice if its key implications are to be appreciated.

In this context, it may be 'an answer to the needs of a particular discipline',[2] either through recourse to related disciplines (physics requires mathematics, manual and technical work need physics and mathematics) or to avoid inordinately overloading the syllabuses. Choices are made that involve postponing the study of certain disciplines by deciding to devote only a limited time to them. Or, again, the 'content of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary education' is defined 'through the creation of a new educational discipline'.[3] Surprising though it may seem, such innovation arising out of an attempt to cope with a scarcity or resources is not new in education. It can be justified by reference to Latin which 'for a long time, was nothing other than an academic discipline which, despite appearances, was only remotely connected with Latin as a university discipline'.[4]

The major objectives of the 'multidisciplinary approach to education' is justified by reference to the interests and motivations of the pupils who do not confine themselves to a single discipline. This approach therefore requires new learning situations.

However, the ambiguity of the educational situations created in this connection is clearly shown by the diversity of the terms used to describe them and on which there is no great measure of agreement. Some maintain that the 'transdisciplinary approach' leads to[5] 'a new open space in education, a place where knowledge is exchanged', whereas the 'multidisciplinary approach involves a juxtaposition of work in different disciplines'.[6]

Nevertheless, regardless of the term used to refer to these experiments in combining different disciplines for the joint study of a freely chosen theme, there are a number of difficulties due to the structure of the system, the ways in which it operates and the distribution of roles between pupils and teachers.

As regards the establishment of a structure for the development of communication, creativity and independence, there is recognition of the fact that it must, to some extent, play a marginal role or even a limited experimental one. It is out of the question deliberately to interrupt the momentum of a school system based on a syllabus, timetables, regular progression and evaluations.

The planning of the timetable makes it difficult, for example, to introduce a structure which, from the outset, will disturb the orderliness of its arrangements. The repercussions of the experiment extent far beyond the persons actually involved in it. It has consequences even for those people who keep their distance from it and are forced, not merely to tolerate it, but to further it to some degree by accepting the upheavals which it may bring about in their own activities. The way premises are

1.   Id. loc. cit. p. 17.
2.   Id. loc. cit. p. 18.
3.   Id. loc. cit. p. 18.
4.   Id. loc. cit. p. 20.
5.   H. Leclercq, 'Une expérience de transdisciplinarité', loc. cit. p. 25.
6.   Id. loc. cit. p. 25.

equipped and their normal mode of use do not always permit the establishment of many different working groups operating simultaneously. The participation in these groups of specialists using their specific materials--audio material, art material-- exacerbates these space difficulties.

The break-up of the traditional teacher-pupil groups and the new distribution of roles in the new groups may also come up against obstacles which, even if they are minor ones, nevertheless pose a threat to the stability of the project. If the groups are subject-based, there is a risk that all that will ultimately be achieved is a superimposition of various disciplines. If the groups are based on themes, the distribution of teachers among the different themes solely on the basis of their freely made decision may appear too uneven.

Some teachers suggest a remedy for such drawbacks by drawing attention to two approaches which ultimately have little in common: the multidisciplinary studies of the pupils which are instigated by a teacher who acts as a kind of 'orchestral conductor', setting the study in motion and allocating to his colleagues those projects and themes tackled by the pupils which fall within the scope of their specializations',[1] or the 'multidisciplinary studies of the teachers' which in practice means that a teacher studies a given theme 'with its areas of overlap into related disciplines, but obviously not into the whole of these disciplines'.

Naturally, it remains to be shown wh-t such an approach, if it is not too restrictive in theory, is likely to become in practice, in so far as it depends on the versatility of the teachers and the multifariousness of their intellectual curiosity and interests.

The criticisms made of the different attempts to introduce a genuine multidisciplinary approach into secondary education are liable to lead us to the same disillusionment as is expressed by Roy Wake in the United Kingdom.

Using the term 'interdisciplinarity', like so many others, as a synonym of 'multidisciplinarity', he first of all points out the advantages which can be expected to accrue from the use of these educational methods. In the first place, time is saved in learning new areas of knowledge. Secondly, the transition from primary to secondary education is greatly facilitated: 'much of primary school work is interdisciplinary in a sense. It employs a variety of sources and methods, uses one or at most a few teachers, and keeps pupils together in working groups for large stretches of time'.[2]

On the other hand, in secondary education where a great deal was expected from the use of these methods as a means of doing away with the compartmentalization of subjects and injecting a new lease of life into the syllabuses, there is evident disatisfaction in many European countries. The main criticisms are directed at the descriptive nature and lack of theoretical precision of the work that has been done, at the failure to define short-term and medium-term objectives adequately, and at the fact that there is no methodology. The way teachers are currently trained leaves them badly prepared to carry out work whose 'objectives have never been stated clearly and unequivocably and (whose) methods of assessment and evaluation have never been investigated and are certainly never seen as an essential part of the work'.[3]

1. Louis Bradel, 'Interdisciplinarité... ou polyvalence', in Cahiers Pédagogiques, Paris, Paris, 1978, No.166, p. 30.
2. Roy Wake, 'Interdisciplinarity in the secondary school curriculum', in Education and Culture, Review of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1976, No.31, p. 22.
3. Id. loc. cit. p. 23.

We cannot attempt to establish a feasible multidisciplinary approach to education without:

- posing the question in terms which go beyond the individual teachers and the standard of knowledge of the pupils;

- posing the question of a multidisciplinary course of study rather than an experiment that is limited in time and resources.

In this context, the multidisciplinary approach implies:

(1) The possibility of drawing on extremely varied sources of information.

(2) The possibility of introducing a wide range of expressive and represen- tational techniques (written work, verbal activities, graphic work, audio- visual work, etc.).

(3) The possibility of selecting study themes on the basis of objective criteria with regard to:

(a) their present significance (in the process of historical, economic and social development);

(b) their importance in relation to the diversity of the knowledge required;

(c) their short-term and medium-term usefulness in relation to the theoretical and practical education of the pupils.

This consequently rules out the introduction, at any single level of education, of numerous isolated experiments which dissipate the interest of the teachers and the pupils and, far from bringing about a general striving for co-ordination, cause rivalry and competition which are a distraction from the sought-after objective.

This objective is first and foremost:

- to increase and deepen the knowledge of the teachers and the pupils who, instead of focusing their energies on a single approach to a subject, will seek to discover and analyse all its aspects;

- to raise the level of awareness, on the basis of a subject connected with aesthetic education, of the historical, social, economic and technical dimensions of this subject. An example of this would be the following: starting with a study of the way peasants are depicted in paintings, it is possible, even if the study is limited chronologically to particular centuries and geographically to particular countries, to consider the subject from the different angles discussed above and from many others as well. It is thus possible to compile demographic and statistical infor- mation on contemporary society and cultural information through the media as well as carrying out a research project with ethnological implications and an international dimension.

While it is not our present purpose to specify the details of syllabuses, we wish to draw attention to the ways in which syllabuses can gain from such approaches.

The participation of a large number of teachers--and hence of disciplines--in such a study will give the pupils a new perception of the unity of culture.

The participation of all the pupils in such a study can afford the teachers a true idea of their spontaneous interests and of their abilities, interests and aspirations in the different fields of artistic expression.

If the multidisciplinary approach is to be widely used in aesthetic education, this does not mean that aesthetic education will, in future, be in a privileged position to the detriment of other subjects and that, having been regarded as a secondary or incidental subject, it is due to become the pivot and foundation of all the other disciplines. This would be to replace one imbalance with another, or one inequality with another.

A theme in aesthetic education may serve as the central theme for a multidisciplinary project. However, such a project may equally be centred around a theme taken from geography, biology or physics. The key methodological principle is that, when a multidisciplinary project is being drawn up, the contributions of the different disciplines should be strictly and fairly distributed. This should not depend either on the authority of any particular teacher or on the prestige associated with any particular discipline.

While the broad outlines of such a programme of activity should be clearly defined, its details should be left open and it should be able to respond to the demands of the pupils, according to circumstances, when such demands are justified on grounds of the information at the disposal of pupils and their own research. Concerted group work does not preclude individual initiative, provided only that this is not a passing fancing or fleeting expression of curiosity.

A concern to tackle seriously a joint project in which the individual contribution of each member of the group is a stimulus rather than a piece of rivalry enhances the quality of the work.

This was the guiding principle of the first experimental environmental studies in secondary education that were recently carried out at the instigation of Gustave Monod and his team. Although they relied on the voluntary efforts of the teachers and on choices made by the pupils, they were none the less substantial studies which did much to draw attention to all the possibilities of a balanced multidisciplinary approach.

It seems that today, however, we are still a long way from introducing the multidisciplinary approach other than on an experimental or occasional basis.

It should perhaps be acknowledged that the educational climate and more especially, the social and cultural expectations in regard to the school are not conducive to it. In societies in which technocratic demands lead to extremes of specialization, the multidisciplinary approach can hardly be regarded as anything but a waste of time. It is seen as a matter of priority to make one's choice as early as possible, to opt as early as possible for a definite line of study rather than seek to broaden one's cultural outlook.

This is, after all, the main emphasis of the training of the teachers upon whom any success in multidisciplinary education is dependent. Nothing in their educational training prepares them to take an interest in any subject other than their chosen field of study. If they show any interest of that kind, it is merely an expression of personal curiosity. However, the succession of examinations throughout their period of training as teachers restricts the range of their cultural interests. They are expected to become specialists with a professional qualification.

It is therefore the teacher training syllabuses and the main thrust of that training that need to be reviewed.

The introduction and application of a multidisciplinary approach call for a large measure of cultural tolerance, that is to say, a readiness to accept the differences between different disciplines and a great desire to explore their various fields of application.

It is, therefore, not merely a question of having to provide and maintain a new kind of teacher training; what needs to be fostered is an entirely new attitude.

III - 2. THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONCEPT AND CULTURAL
IDENTITY

- AESTHETIC EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- SOCIAL CULTURE AND SCHOOL CULTURE

- ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURES

Aesthetic education, in the broader, more innovative meaning of the term, is a recent phenomenon and, in practice, exists only on an experimental basis. This is not to say that it did not formerly give rise to metaphysical or philosophical problems resulting from politico-economic factors, but the 'art education' which grew out of the teaching of the 'fine arts' at the beginning of this century in the industrially developed countries cannot be compared with education as it has been perceived and envisaged since the end of the Second World War. It is necessary to consider the developments brought about by several fundamental reassessments in art education (such as that made as early as 1925) which still have a considerable influence on teaching in the art colleges of Europe (P. Klee and Itten are widely available in many languages). It is also necessary to take into account the economic and political development of the peoples colonized up to 1945 and their liberation which took place over the years until quite recently (Algeria, Angola and others). Thus, we are confronted with dissimilar situations which do not make it easy to collect precise information, particularly as the terms used denote concepts that are, in some cases, fundamentally contradictory. Furthermore, many young governments have taken the view that it was wiser to begin by combating the illiteracy which had been maintained by the colonial powers--whereas the notion of interdisciplinarity had not yet been developed--and often put off until later the provision of any specific education in the 'arts', which was not seen to be a matter of priority. Alternatively, they decided to adopt as models and apply the educational practices of the developed countries, which could not logically be transplanted outside the economic and historical conditions in which they developed.

In a recent research survey (beginning in 1974) conducted by Unesco under the direction of Jean Duvignaud, the replies obtained from 29 countries do not cover the same field. Terms such as 'visual arts', 'art', 'creation' and 'aesthetic works' are given completely different meanings and this leads to considerable variation in the way the analyses contained in the report are read. This is not merely a semantic problem but one which also concerns differences between the cultural situation of certain peoples.

In fact, there are clear discrepancies between the stated aims (and, hence, the official intentions) and the practical reality (that is to say, the resources applied and the level of understanding and acceptance among the members of the teaching profession). In France, to take only one example, despite the interesting provisions contained in the official documents, only 51 per cent of the school population attends classes specifically concerned with artistic subjects in state education; one teacher in three has not received appropriate training.

In the main, the reports confirm the existence of such disparities between intentions and achievements. It is, therefore, the social function of aesthetic education that is at issue and it has yet to be established whether its recognition as a subject has been taken into account in practice. This does not mean that the developed countries do not have an undoubted lead both on the theoretical level and in practice. In view, however, of the particular features and differences involved, the developing countries can only make any serious headway in this field on the basis of an analysis that is specific to them, and is founded both on the aesthetic experiences and theories (of the economically developed countries) and the historical, cultural and economic problems with which they are faced.

Without indulging in a systematic generalization or making any attempt to interpret the points of view put forward, it has appeared possible, despite their wise diversity to identify a number of general trends.

It would seem that relations with other people (communication) and with the environment is a dominant feature and that the objective assigned to visual art activities, through a praxis that develops sensibilities (aesthetics) and that brings balance into the life of the individual (therapeutic value), is not creation or individual creativity, but a growth in awareness of the values relating to the cultural heritage and the need to discover or rediscover a national identity. Although there are some reservations to be made with regard to this 'apparent conclusion', it is none the less an astonishing one as far as art activities are concerned, for it does not seem to attach any great importance to the individualized character of the art-work or of the essentially educative function of the act of 'producing' art-work. We should add that operations involving physical movement and all the sensory and psychomotor activities seem not to have been taken into account.

The information gathered on visual art activities may be briefly summarized as follows:

In elementary education (lasting between 4 and 6 years), art education is a compulsory subject and is included in the syllabus although it is not provided by a specialist teacher. Very few elementary school teachers seem to have received any training geared to the children's needs (either in art or in music, drama and dance). The average amount of time allocated for such art activities is no more than one hour a week (four hours in Indonesia!).

On secondary education (lasting 3-4 years), the following information was obtained:

In lower secondary education, the compulsory teaching time for art education in most countries is a maximum of two hours a week, although in most cases the time set aside is one hour. It is most frequently taught by teachers who are semi-specialized or have received an additional course of training.

In upper secondary education, this subject tends to become elective or optional but is taught by specialist teachers.

There is no need, therefore, to call attention to the restricted--and threatened--place accorded to subjects which one feels ought to be compulsory.

Although the value of artistic activities in all-round education is recognized in all the official regulations, there is a glaring discrepancy between avowed aims and the way in which they are actually implemented in the course of studies, particularly as the outmoded notion of 'drawing' is still associated with its traditional content (skill, techniques, manual work!).

Aesthetic activities are, therefore, still far from being placed on the same footing as other disciplines. Several observations that confirm this analysis are in order here.

The fact that there are too many pupils and that the premises are largely unsuitable and the lack of the equipment and materials needed to adapt their teaching to contemporary needs seriously compromise the work of teachers. This lack of materials and of techniques suited to the new requirements in artistic creation has a discouraging effect and prevents the adaptation of educational research to contemporary realities as well as to the task of building the future.

Among the developing countries--leaving aside Indonesia and Malaysia--which attach considerable importance to craft-oriented art education, there are many African and Latin American countries that neglect art education, even though it is considered to be an essential means of securing recognition of the true value of a country's cultural history and national identity, in favour of more urgent problems (which, nevertheless, remain unsolved).

New problems arise today in connection with art education. In the developing countries, it is seen as being of secondary importance in comparison with the major school subjects. In some African countries, the teaching of art is considered to be demeaning in the same way as courses in the local languages.

On the other hand, the example of Japan shows that 'the Japanese population has a deep understanding of aesthetic education and appreciates the important role played by musical and art education in the development of the personality of the individual'.

In fact, artistic activities are still all too frequently regarded as being of little practical use; their value as an unproductive form of work is accentuated by capitalism and their social value is far from being really perceived.

Social culture and school culture

Present-day educational trends still favour the school and seem to be marked by a determination to found most if not all of the cognitive development of the child on learning experiences at school. Extra-curricular and after-school activities are--except in the socialist countries--still far from being accorded their rightful place. What is more, state responsibility for these activities is all too often confined to declarations of principle.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, 'Bund Länder Commissions' support private facilities and bodies that encourage and promote artistic activities among young people. Of the Nordic countries, Sweden and Norway were among the first countries to organize village clubs to meet requests from individuals or small groups in the different spheres of cultural activity. In Finland, the Ministry of Education is advised by a Central Commission for the Arts and cultural policy is directed towards achieving a reduction in the very perceptible regional economic and social differences, in so far as art is seen in that country as an essential feature of people's daily experience.

Generally speaking, however, the material resources available are not equal to the intentions of official bodies which are anxious to promote cultural action both in school and out of school. The result is either that these bodies confine themselves with the best of intentions to ad hoc experiments, whose dissemination and range of influence are extremely limited or that appeals are made to private enterprise, benefactors or voluntary sponsors thereby exposing cultural activities for young people and children to the risk of commercialization or of being enlisted in the service of advertising.

Cultural development is bound up with economic development and, in certain situations, a reduction in hours of work may increase the expectations and entitlement of working people and their families in regard to high-quality cultural leisure pursuits. All this has to be worked out in terms of aims and objectives on the basis of available resources, that is to say, budgetary allocations, timetables and legislation. The answer does not lie in private initiatives which are too likely to call into question the very purpose of any educational undertaking.

The public authorities which are responsible for defending and preserving the cultural heritage of each nation should redefine their role in relation to the extent and the present-day diversity of that heritage. As the traditional institutions are unequal to the task of dealing with the new needs, it is clearly necessary to link national cultural development with the general development of each country.

Because of the extent to which the mass media transform the child's daily experience of reality, there is no way of dissociating social experience from school experience. We cannot, therefore, merely talk about school being connected with life without referring to the need for family involvement. The effects of socio-cultural status and family background on the child's development, which are now universally recognized, confirm--if any confirmation is needed--the importance of pre-school learning. By the same token, it is patently necessary to introduce an educational approach that will avoid widening the gulf between school education, cultural learning experiences and everyday life.

The discovery of contemporary technological and scientific development may well sometimes induce young people in poorly equipped countries to move away from their own environment and their native society, thereby running the risk of becoming out-siders both in their own countries and in industrialized countries. It is, perhaps, in such contexts, that the role and significance of aesthetic education is seen more clearly. It facilitates an authentic relationship with the environment; it enhances the value of traditional ways and fundamental human relations without rejecting or even neglecting contemporary scientific advances which play an essential role in change and progress. 'The assertion of one's own identity cannot be set against par-ticipation in society and the performance of social roles; much less can it be confused with them.'[1]

Role and significance of the traditional cultures

By referring to two continents, we hope to be able to consider the question of the place of the traditional cultures in education and the role of aesthetic values in the recognition--and assertion--of the national identity. We have drawn extensively upon Unesco documentation to analyse the concepts that underlie the different views of art education in the countries belonging to these two continents.

If we begin by considering the African school and the arguments advanced in favour of developing the cultural and artistic heritage of the nation as a medium of education, we note that the same demand is heard in a number of Latin American and Asian countries.

It is to be feared, however, that the desire to 'develop' a particular artistic mentality with the cultural heritage as the starting-point (or foundation) will distort the direction and function of a genuine aesthetic education (as against a form of instruction).

The application of Western educational models has given rise (for example in connection with the vocabulary in former French-speaking colonies) and continues to give rise to formidable contradictions in relation to the real African culture. Thus, study on the basis of 'life drawing, the study of colour, the study of proportions, sketches, decoration' draws on the French syllabuses prior to 1968, that is to say, before the outmoded, sterotyped, élitist education dating from the turn of the century was challenged.

Another part of the syllabus covers 'abstract notions of certain arts' and also training in or information on craft techniques which are mostly of Western origin and involve the use of imported materials that are not produced locally.

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1. Alain Touraine, Les deux faces de l'identité, in Identités collectives et changements sociaux, Toulouse, Privat Editeur, 1980, p. 26.

Thus, it is not merely that aesthetic education appears to be consigned to a peripheral role in education systems owing to a lack of proper teacher training, the severe neglect of the subject at the primary and secondary levels, the incompatibility between the objectives assigned to art education and the resources applied, and even the lack of any definition of aesthetic education in relation to other subjects.

In addition, parents, teachers and, inevitably, children have gradually come round to accepting the idea that some people are 'gifted' and have adopted an attitude that is characteristic of the Western mentality--particularly that of France--recognizing a hierarchy of value between the fundamental or major subjects on the curriculum and the minor subjects which are similar to leisure activities and only play an ancillary or supplementary role.

We should no doubt look to the past if we wish to discover the reality and function of artistic creations and the direction taken by African art since it became a commodity traded in the markets of Europe following the systematic plundering under colonialism.

Today, the school formalizes learning experiences in syllabuses which adulterate the original African mentality and make it more akin to the Western mentality. Some 'art institutes' even encourage the production of pseudo art objects or pseudo folk trinkets which are not genuine folk art in any sense but debased copies produced in order to supply the European market with exotica and 'Negro art'.

Whereas the political options of young states, like their real tradition and culture, should be conducive to the expression of their individuality, the educational systems are seeking their own identity and suffer from ills that have their origin in Europe.

To enrich universal culture means first of all asserting one's national culture; not through 'rediscovery' of the national heritage, but through the use of materials and recognition of the function of artefacts. The culture of the past cannot by itself reproduce and bear witness. Any attempt to impose on it a sacred, mystical or religious function cannot be in keeping with the situation as it is today, characterized as it is by a cultural 'mix'.

It is not a question of turning back the clock but of taking the child in his sociological context and fostering the expression of his creativity and innate sensibility through means which are his own.

The experiments carried out in the Ivory Coast in 1979 prove that tradition is still alive and that it expresses itself so long as a false conception of art is not imposed from outside.

The village techniques (the Baoulé group) are taught to children, whether the child follows his parents or accompanies an elder brother. The child generally learns through observation and imitation. The father will carve a hoe and wooden pestle so that his son can enjoy playing at joining in the work in the fields and his daughter can similarly share in preparing the meals. The children gradually take on responsibility for certain domestic or agricultural tasks. On the other hand, pottery is learnt entirely through play: the young girl takes her place next to her mother and imitates her for fun; all the boys do woodcarving for fun. In most cases, kinship groups will gather in the courtyard of the house and carve wood with the machete as they have seen the village woodcarver or the men of the family do. The children do not have tools of their own. In general, each family has one set of tools which are used by all the members of the family: children are allowed to get used to handling sharp tools from a very early age.

Traditionally, adults and children are able to mix dyes, creating different colours for use on wood, cotton thread or clay. A child of twelve can make objects that are as elaborate as those made by an adult.

What lesson may we draw from this and apply to school education? Is this 'art'? Or is it 'craft work'? But is this a relevant question in any case? Surely the child is receiving a real education in this context, linked as it is to culture and tradition? And does it not point to a possible way forward to the future in so far as educators working in institutions will tap this potential to develop forms of creativity which are increasingly productive and more open without involving a return to the past.

No doubt, this can only be achieved if we temporarily forget the word 'art', which is something that is not taught but lived. In Africa, human activity is the very source of creative art. Terms such as 'art', 'artistic' and 'aesthetic' are highly inappropriate and distort the African vision of a functional art that does not seek 'beauty for beauty's sake' and disregard the 'useful' or the 'good' (in the moral sense).

(Cf.- Cameroon report in reply to the Unesco questionnaire).

As Jean Laude writes, 'African art is a mystique which possesses aesthetic qualities as a bonus'.

Today's African child comes to school 'having already assimilated, just like the adults, a culture coloured by prejudices, conformity and the vicissitudes of history' (A. Yerodia). The school should therefore take possession of this wealth of experience (including poor living conditions) and reveal to the child abilities that are new to him rather than offer an alternative culture which clashes with the child's own experience. New knowledge and more creative forms of behaviour will follow of their own accord and the gain to the community will be irreversible.

CONCLUSION

We have sought to show how it should be possible for a multidisciplinary aesthetic education to take as its starting point a number of behaviour patterns characteristic of the child during the course of his development. It is the successive emergence of different forms of behaviour that enables the means which will be at the disposal of the child in his relationship with various artistic activities to be assessed.

However, it is evident that the school system, which allocates a very limited place to aesthetic education, establishes a clear dichotomy between aesthetic education--or teaching--and the other subjects which it offers to the child in such abundance.

Such an aesthetic education will therefore have to flourish and expand outside the school. However, in breaking free of the school system and enhancing its independence, aesthetic education is liable to lose status. There is, indeed, a danger that it will have to rely almost exclusively on individual initiatives which will undoubtedly be varied but are likely to be of very uneven quality. It may be feared that the multiplicity of educational demands made on the child at an age when he is particularly vulnerable and easily influenced will have a disturbing and discouraging effect on him.

As aesthetic education is neglected or undervalued in the school system, it may from now on be institutionalized in extra-curricular or after-school activities. But there is no assurance that the ablest specialists in all fields will always be available. The youthful enthusiasm which they may bring to their new work will not necessarily preclude a degree of naïvety and their lack of teaching experience will not always be offset by their more ready availability.

However, children will be all the more demanding in regard to this type of education as they feel frustrated in the school environment. Furthermore, the pressure put on them by the mass media is all the more powerful as it gives them easy access to a universe of sounds, colours and shapes of which they would otherwise be quite unaware.

The appeal of television to the child's eyes and ears is quite different to that of the school. But the information picked up from television is re-used in other spheres of activity more spontaneously and more easily than information acquired in school. The cultural models offered on television, referring not only to different ways of life but also to the setting of people's lives and the choice of their environment, are more readily accepted and more swiftly adopted than those offered at school. None the less, children often give the impression that school and television actually present two different realities rather than two different images of reality. One, which is the image offered by television, is seen as being more accessible but less serious and, in some respects, less useful. The other is more rigid, less topical but more credible.

For quite some time now, there has been talk of alternative schooling. Today, we need to talk about alternative culture and, even, no doubt, about alternative values.

As far as aesthetic education is concerned, television does far more than the school to create fashions and set trends. Today, we find that teachers and educationists in general are, in many circumstances, seeking to benefit from a form of culture which, until recently, they denigrated and belittled.

The concessions made by the school to the mass media particularly concern aesthetic education. Musical culture, a knowledge of the visual arts and opportunities for museum visits are encouraged by the media, which speak about them, give them a hearing and make them known.

Knowledge in the field of aesthetic education often has an international dimension. It also covers historical reconstructions and scientific information. It does not lead to spectator involvement in the short term as it might lead to pupil involvement at school. But, in the longer term, it may provide a stimulus for such involvement and may generate new needs for travel, documentation and visits. The initial success of the Pompidou Centre in Paris was due largely to television coverage.

Should we take the view that the school has proved unequal to its task in aesthetic education and that it has now been supplanted, at one and the same time, and in different ways, by extra-curricular activities and by television?

To do so would no doubt be to write the school off a little too promptly at a time when there is so much to be done to restore the school's drive and vitality.

The school is still unequalled as a place where children and adults can meet and work together. It is, moreover, the only place where a genuinely multidisciplinary education can be provided. Even so, the team of teachers has to be fully committed to this type of education and has to be able to break out of the excessively rigid strait-jacket of syllabuses and timetables.

But the very advances in aesthetic education still have to be re-examined in the light, not of what are assumed to be the specific needs of an abstract and uniform pupil, but of the realities and day-to-day problems connected with a particular type of community, a particular way of life and a particular environment.

The concept of a general and more or less universal artistic sensibility that develops in all children along the same lines, which are those of a unanimous consensus on works of art is now outdated. The same applies to the claim that all education should be seen in terms of art or art history. Some experiments in aesthetic education aimed at adults or children are so bizarre, in relation to the target community, that they not only fail but do so in ways that are particularly damaging as they put people off a particular work of art, period of art history or even art form.

The appetite for culture has to be whetted with tact and discretion, and some communities are slower than others in developing a taste for and appreciating what is offered to them.

On the plane of aesthetic education, culture and the psychology of art seem indissociable. Both are all too often marked--at least as far as the way they are verbally presented is concerned--by a kind of emotional afflatus which makes it very difficult to make an objective analysis of the conditions in which they function and of their mode of production.

Aesthetic education--particularly if it is meant to be multidisciplinary--cannot dispense with a knowledge of the social determinants of culture and their forms of appropriation.

While the psychology of art exists as a field of study in its own right and has a historical dimension, it is no longer sufficient to form the basis of an aesthetic education, let alone to provide it with an adequate methodology. As D.E. Berlyne wrote, 'The aim of the psychology of art is to give the reader a deeper

understanding of art, whether of a particular work of art or of art in general.... Thus, the psychology of art, taking the term in its speculative sense, is generally concerned with improving the reader's capacity for power, emotion and enlightenment through works of art'.[1]

The scientific psychology of art, or, if one prefers the term, experimental aesthetics, has a different aim. 'It should be known that confrontation with works of art or other aesthetic objects has a considerable effect on human behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal (particularly exploratory behaviour) and psychophysiological (with consequent variations in attention, alertness and emotion). More than that, the aspects of the stimulus which seem to play a predominant role in aesthetic activity, which I shall call the 'collative properties', have important effects on motivation which are worthy of our attention.'[2]

It is no longer possible today to reject or disregard those scientific studies which--particularly with regard to the child--may serve as a starting-point for the development of educational models.

Like D.E. Berlyne, we should wish to see an exchange of studies, if not of methods, between the two branches of the psychology of aesthetics.

In a multidisciplinary aesthetic education that rejects value systems imposed a priori and the pernicious effects of 'cultural arrogance',[3] the countless forms in which the demands and hopes of the child, indeed of all children, are expressed, should be preserved and developed to the utmost.

1.   D.E. Berlyne, 'Psychologie spéculative et scientifique de l'esthétique', in Bulletin de Psychologie (Nouvelles perspectives en psychologie de l'art), Paris, PUF, No. 14-16, May-June 1977, p. 619.
2.   D.E. Berlyne, loc. cit., p. 620.
1.   Mahdi Elmandjra, T.F.1., (20 August 1981).