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FOR THE JOY OF IT:
A STUDY OF NON-VOCATIONAL
ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

by

JESSICA R. BLOOM

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1998

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Abstract

For the Joy of It: A Study of Non-Vocational Artistic Activity

by

Jessica Rachel Bloom

Advisor: Professor William Kornblum

A strong work ethic, heir of the founders' Puritan values, continues to characterize American society. Such values tend to be utilitarian, so artistic expression for pleasure is seen as less valuable, yet few can become full-time professionals in the arts. In consequence, many people at various levels of skill and commitment, pursue artistic activities for no economic gain, but simply for the enrichment that it brings. This study explored the motivations of people who have other occupations but who feel strongly about their artistic activities, which they pursue in their free time. Through the use of open-ended life-history interviews, it examined the meanings people attach to these activities at different stages of life, and how these pursuits fit with the

rest of their lives and their sense of themselves. The study considered the influence of family background, education, and membership in informal groups and artistic organizations on their artistic expression.

The main reason cited by the interviewees for their tenacious, lifelong interest in producing art was the pleasure and joy that it gave them. This pleasure was unique and different from the satisfactions received in paid work, even for those who enjoyed their occupations. For those dissatisfied with their paid work, art was the area of life in which they felt they expressed their more authentic selves.

The study found that the richest seed period was childhood, and the period of greatest danger to continued artistic expression was adolescence. Pursuit of the art activity from childhood to the present survived many obstacles and retained its strength and intensity. Interest, ability, and pleasure developed and increased over time. The activities retained their strong personal and essentially noncommercial significance for all subjects interviewed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will examine the role of artistic activity in everyday life by studying people involved in such interests on a non-professional basis. By artistic activity I mean "the various branches of creative activity concerned with the production of images, designs, sounds, or ideas, e.g. painting, music, writing" (Swannell 1992).

A strong work-ethic, heir of the founders' Puritan values, continues to characterize American society. Such values tend to be utilitarian, so artistic expression for pleasure is valued as secondary, yet those who can become full-time professionals in the arts are small in number. In consequence, there remain many people who, at different levels of skill and commitment, pursue artistic activities at no economic gain, but simply for the sheer enrichment that it brings. This study will explore the motivations of those people who have jobs in other occupations but feel strongly about their artistic activities, narrowed down primarily to writing, visual arts, or music, which they pursue in their free time. Through the use of open-ended interviews of adults, it will examine the meanings people attach to these activities at different stages of life, and how these pursuits fit with the rest of their lives and their sense of themselves.

The dissertation will ask the following questions: In

relation to work lives and other responsibilities, does the activity present conflicts for them around issues of time and relationships? Does the activity fill a gap left from experiences of alienation or anomie, or is it rather an added bonus to an otherwise contented life? Do they consider themselves creative when they are involved in these activities, or do they see it some other way? When do people feel creative and under what circumstances? Is there a social component that fuels their interest? How does their activity, a voluntary one not directly valued by society, contribute to their sense of themselves, their identity, and their achievements? Do they find that it is actually valued by society on some level, and if so, how? How do they come to terms with whatever it represents for them in their lives? Does the meaning change over the course of their lives?

Background

Survey data on attitudes toward the arts in the United States show that artistic creation as a leisure activity is popular and widespread. A 1992 survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, called The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), found that 57.9% of the adult American population, representing 107.6 million persons, were engaged in one or more "hands-on arts activity", which it labeled "Personal Arts Participation". Compared to five other types of arts involvement, personal arts participation

was the second most popular, just below "listening/watching media" (65.1%), and above "attending live arts events" (42.5%), and "taking art classes" (8.6%). Of a scale of nineteen other common adult leisure activities, personal arts participation ranked fifth, below: watching TV (96.4%), watching or listening to an arts event through the media (65.1%), exercising (59.7%), and going to the movies (59%). It was above: gardening (54.7%), reading literature (54.2%), and going to amusement parks (50.2%) (Peters and Cherbo 1992:12).

Researchers face difficulties in making very precise categories in the arts arena. Even when art creation is a "leisure" activity, sociologically there are no clear demarcations as to who is or is not an "artist". The sociologist Howard Becker notes that the art world is truly subjective and changeable when it comes to defining "the boundaries of acceptable art" (Becker 1982). For example, the SPPA surveys were done three times: in 1982, 1985, and 1992. During the course of that time period, its arts categories expanded from just the classical arts such as ballet, theater, and opera to such activities as weaving, sculpting, and photography. With respect to the art practitioners, the 1992 SPPA survey divided the category "Personal Arts Participation" (defined as "the creation and performance of art"), into sub-categories "amateur" and "amateur-professional". By "amateur", it meant involvement in any way in the creation of art, while

"amateur-professional" meant public display of the art, such as exhibiting in art galleries or playing in a concert for the public. Both paid and unpaid artists were included in this category and could not be differentiated. The category therefore is situated in some blurry area, neither completely "professional", nor completely "amateur".

The survey found that while significantly more women than men participate in the amateur arts surveyed, (60.1% vs. 39.9%), the difference is not quite as great for amateur-professionals (58.2% vs. 41.8%). Personal arts participants usually are more educated than the general population, as are arts attendees. For attendees of arts performances, 77% of adults with postgraduate degrees attend at least one arts event a year, as opposed to less than 10% of those with no high school education (Robinson 1997:180). While they tend to match the general population in age, baby boomers (25-44) are the largest percentage of amateurs (45.1%). However, in terms of painters, writers, and actors, there is a higher percentage of young adults (18-24) than in the general population, perhaps because at that age, people are still exploring professional possibilities and more hope to become successful in these fields. While there is an overrepresentation of whites among amateur arts participants in general, blacks are overrepresented in acting, choir singing, jazz performing and music composing than their numbers in the general population. Hispanics and Native-Americans are underrepresented in all the

arts, while Asians are overrepresented in classical music playing and creative writing (Peters and Cherbo 1992).

Considering that artistic creation is such a popular leisure activity, little qualitative research has focussed on it as it applies to leisure. Research has been done around artists, and attempts made to categorize them by level (Finney 1993; Freeman 1993). Research on the subject of creativity usually considers only successful, famous people as subjects of study. Within the broad category of leisure, creativity, expressive activity, or artistic activity is occasionally mentioned. For example, Gordon, Gaitz, and Scott (1976) use Parson's action-theory perspective in their analysis of the life-cycle. In Parson's action-theory perspective, instrumental activity, such as work, is a means toward an end, in the service of some future reward, a delayed gratification, while expressive activity, such as satisfaction of sensual needs, or expression of emotions, is for immediate gratification. The authors consider expressive activity to be dominant in leisure. Subdividing expressive activity into broad subcategories, they consider the degree of intensity of involvement which the person must be in to engage in them. They create a "continuum of expressive involvement intensity" in the human life-cycle, and place "creative activities (artistic, literary, musical)" on the medium-high intensity end of this continuum.

Relatively few studies of leisure activity examine what

the activities "mean to the people involved". Some classify "leisure activity into meaning clusters", which could be helpful (Wilson 1980:35). For example, Havighurst (1972) "showed the great diversity of relevant social-psychological dimension (autonomy, creativity, sociability, talent-development, services, relaxation, ego-integration)" (Gordon, Gaitz, and Scott:312), David Riesman studied the relationship between instrumental and expressive activity across history and the life-span (Riesman 1964). Riesman also identified goals that people had in their leisure activities, which included self-development, escape, fantasy, and creativity, and also described feelings of inadequacy that could arise when attempting but failing to meet these goals (Riesman 1952). Margaret Mead discussed the distinction between voluntary and non-voluntary leisure activities, and "added explicit consideration of personal creativity, even in everyday matters, by people not labelled 'artists' (Gordon, Gaitz, and Scott 1960)". Joffre Dumazedier also describes several motivations for varied sets of leisure activities, one of which is "creativity" (Dumazedier 1967).

On a more general level, leisure, in contemporary society, is commonly analyzed with reference to occupations. One hypothesis, for example, asserts that, as people feel more alienated from their jobs, including those who work in the professions, they search elsewhere for some type of creative fulfillment and meaning. Robert Stebbins argues that the idea

of "serious leisure" is likely to grow because of the changing nature of the economy and changing attitudes toward paid employment (Stebbins 1979). More specifically, he is referring to a declining economy, an increased division of labor associated with technological development, and job insecurity due to unemployment and underemployment. If this is true as it affects the major portion of modern life, what are the implications for leisure?

While employment and material success are dominant themes of American ideology, attitudes toward fulfillment and success via paid work alone appear to be changing. There is tension in the current conservative American climate, where even more emphasis is placed on the work ethic and pressure on the individual for sole responsibility for economic survival. Yet some progressive scholars are recommending that the definition of paid work be changed toward a guaranteed annual income with more free time. (Aronowitz and DeFazio 1994).

In Europe, where there is also a clash of ideologies, a shorter workweek has been considered seriously so that more people can have jobs. (Cohen 1993). An important aspect of this discussion has to do with the definition of meaningful use of time. Hannah Arendt's distinction between "labor" and "work", in which "labor" is defined as necessary for survival while "work" is the real meaningful activity of human development, is an important theme in literature on leisure, work, and work alienation. (Aronowitz and DeFazio 1994).

Meaningful "work" can just as naturally occur, some argue more naturally, in the leisure sphere as it can in the employment structure.

On the other hand, it has been noted that, with industrialization, leisure can be just as alienating and commoditized as work. DeGrazia's classic book, Of Time, Work and Leisure (1962), laments the loss of the Greek idea of leisure, Aristotle's "sense of freedom, superiority, and learning for its own sake." He relates the coming of industrialism and the changed conception of time with the dominance of the clock over all activity. He argues with the notion of "free time". Time spent recovering from or preparing for an unsatisfying job is not "free". Neither is much other time that is not self-directed or motivated by pure desire or interest instead of social obligation.

In the modern technological world stimuli bombard the individual, through the mass media and other forms. The person at leisure can easily acquire a blase attitude and assume a passive role as a spectator or consumer. In contrast, the artistic activities in this dissertation are voluntary yet active engagements. DeGrazia, Arendt and others assign various meanings for the same types of behavior based on their own broader theories of work and leisure. My purpose is to investigate how the participants themselves experience these pursuits.

An alternative approach to understanding the role of the

mass media needs to be noted. The "uses and gratifications" model, applied to inquiry about the use of the mass media, says the viewer actively uses the media to gratify certain needs. These in turn determine the nature of the effect the media has on people. This view therefore sees people more as actors in their relationship with the media rather than mere passive subjects. The question is raised in what ways people use the media and what needs it fulfills for them. (Rosengren, Wenner, and Palmgreen 1985).

In this dissertation, I take a different view. My assumption is that the art people create during leisure time, requires more active involvement, and a degree of skill, commitment and initiative, that the use of the mass media does not require. Both the "uses and gratifications" approach and my approach, however, are looking at how artistic activity gratifies certain needs.

The Differentiation of Leisure in Post-Industrial Society

In looking at how artistic leisure time has been defined historically, it becomes clear that its social setting and the words used to identify it have changed. In primitive and rural societies, active artistic expression was part of the community, and everyone participated. In contrast, in urban life and modern industrial settings, it is a separate activity that only some people engage in. While there develops a category known as "leisure", in the modern industrial world,

forms of leisure vary and words such as "hobby", "pastime", "dabbler", "dilettante", and "amateur" emerge.

In modernity, participation in all forms of leisure and artistic expression is an individual choice located in one sphere of life. Much of leisure activity is spectatorship. However, most of what are modern "passive" forms of leisure originated as participatory forms of group activity. Artistic activities have moved historically from being intrinsic parts of community life to specialized activities.

In contrast to modern, urban, industrial society, in the "primitive or the rural society... amusements develop in intimate association with other forms of activity" and "there are few forms of amusement which have not originally involved the active participation of every member of a group, whether as contestant in a game or as one of a chorus in a dramatic ritual. Most amusements have been group activities before they became mass spectacles" (Craven 1933). While all societies have had variations on the same theme, the distinction between primitive or close-knit society and the urban model is that amusements in the former are an intrinsic part of everyday life, not an element set distinctly from work. They are inclusive of the community as a whole. For example, "the rhythmic cooperative effort of canoe building takes the nature of play; hunting is not only work but sport; the spring earth festival is a serious duty, but its color and fire afford to participant and spectator a sense of moving drama. Athletic

contests, games or feasts are set apart by a holiday spirit, not by contrast with ordinary forms of activity. All are held together and shot through by religion." In the rural communities there is the quilting bee, the barn raising, a "cluster of amusements about vital community activities...one of the most enduring patterns for their organization." In contrast the urban model "sets apart amusements from the rest of life." It does this in "time, space and function from other activities." (Craven 1933).

With the shift of social relations from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, "leisure" became a distinct category, and began to be evaluated and judged in terms of acceptable versus unacceptable forms of leisure, and acceptable for whom and under what circumstances. For example, in the early twentieth century boys who played the piano for enjoyment were considered sissies engaging in inappropriate "long-hairedness" (Bowen 1935), and in solid middle class homes it was considered appropriate only for young women to play the piano and entertain guests with acceptable forms of music.

Distinctive changes in the norms for leisure appear to be associated with major societal events. For example, the term "hobby" in the sense that it is known today, became popular in the Depression era. After the Civil War "hobbies" referred to virtually any kind of leisure activity, whereas in the Depression era a "hobby" became a specific active form of leisure. Steven Gelber (1991) thinks this happened in the

Depression-era because people were unemployed and underemployed and poor, so they had more spare time, and less money, needing cheaper leisure activities.

Associated with the shift to hobbies was a moral question. Beginning in the 1920's and into the 1930's, the term "was more an ideological construct to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' pastimes, than a natural category of leisure activity". (Gelber 1991:241). Gelber describes how a group of self-professed experts in academia and journalism joined with hobbyists in a lively dialogue about "definitions and merits of hobbies, and established a 'value-loaded' vocabulary." This notion, that free time could be used "immorally", dates to the period immediately after the Civil War. Gelber believed that hobbies were "recommended to learn new skills and attitudes that would fit into the work world and "served to expand the work ethic in a period when work itself was at risk." It "blurred the categories of work and leisure by bringing the best part of the world of work into the world of leisure". Popular literature of the time talked of hobbies' attributes: an eternal challenge, a job you can't lose, free from alienation because it is always freely undertaken. It has the benefits of both work and play without the drawbacks. One magazine said overwork and idleness both could lead to a mental breakdown, seeing hobbies as a means of maintaining mental health. The hobby was viewed as having emotional benefits: as a mental safety valve, from anxiety of

idleness, old age, physical problems, to forget loneliness, by being happy alone, or by joining groups with the same hobby. They were also seen as socially useful, allowing for friendships that transcend class and ethnic differences, as an antidote to crime, juvenile delinquency, and unemployment.

These ideas sound familiar, similar to popular ideas today. Do these ideas about leisure tend to emerge during job crises? Gelber says that hobbies became "deeply embedded in the social structure" - schools, colleges, scout groups, municipal government and business "all got into the hobby craze" (Gelber 1991:749). Hobbies enjoyed grass-roots support as well - from unemployed groups, radio shows, and community groups (Gelber 1991:751).

The hobby "ideology" had inconsistencies. The "hobby professionals" - i.e. the people discussing and studying hobbies couldn't decide what hobbies were supposed to do or why people did them. Gelber thinks the hobby descriptions were of "jobs people wished they had", because they provided the chance for "creativity/personal accomplishment [which were] missing in most occupations ..[to]..reintegrate spheres of work and leisure separated by the industrial revolution." He cites evidence that hobbies compensated for some element missing in both work and leisure in the 1930's. Although this was the interpretation of popular literature, in fact, he says, people's leisure/hobbies more often were similar to their work rather than "compensatory" or different in any

radical way. This question about whether leisure compensates or complements work is a main theme in the studies of leisure.

Stebbins, unlike Gelber, was more interested in the "amateur". While the word is technically defined as "a person who is inexperienced or unskilled" (Random House 1967), the amateur for Stebbins is a more refined type somewhere between the dabbler, or dilettante, and the professional. Although the term is centuries old in some fields, he says, it has only become widespread in the 20th century with the shortening of the work-week, development of modern transportation, and the rise of the standard of living. The amateur, unlike the less serious dabbler, gains "durable benefits" from his activities that are more satisfying in the long-term. They "result in one of the following: self-expression, actualization, enrichment, recreation, renewal of self, self-image, accomplishing, producing tangible results (for example, a painting, or a cabinet). In the leisure sphere of life," he says that those who wrote about leisure disagreed as to how much time, if any, people devoted to tasks fitting those criteria.

In Stebbins' definition, several major qualities distinguish the amateur. They serve the public as part of a linked system. In other words, the amateur, the public, and the professional serve and feed off each other in a functional monetary, social and cultural unit or exchange. Professionals teach, perform for, and sometimes with and get critiqued by amateurs, all of which affects the public and the less serious

dabblers. The amateurs also serve an intellectual role, in that they can have a broader knowledge of the art form while the professionals must be more specialized. These are all "functional relationships". Moreover the professional who retires often assumes amateur status.

The hobby, for Stebbins, is not the same thing. While it is also a "specialized pursuit beyond one's occupation" that one enjoys for its "durable benefits", it is external to the system described for the amateur. Hobbyists are usually working on things that are not professionalized for anyone, and they do not therefore interact with professionals on any structural functional level (Stebbins 1980).

On the idea of "durable benefits", Stebbins refers to "self-actualization and the satisfaction of important needs. He cites Abraham Maslow (1954). Once having achieved a certain level of skill, the activity will continue to provide lasting benefits to the amateur. Here he is citing Csikszentmihalyi and his theory of "flow", describing a form of total absorption, which carries the person away from the mundaneness and anxieties of daily life. (Csikszentmihalyi 1975:36).

But, Stebbins asks, does this activity deserve a leisure classification, since leisure is almost unanimously defined as the "least determined" of our social activities. Yes, he concludes, because it is voluntary and can be given up with a lot less difficulty than it could by a professional. Yet, Stebbins adds, there is usually a "very high breaking point"

before the person gives it up. He cites his research on amateur astronomers (Stebbins 1980).

One question to investigate is the nature of the motivation for people, whether as a reaction or defense against painful experiences or alienation, or as pure enjoyment in an otherwise satisfying life.

There is ample evidence for both. Certainly at times they appear to be ways people keep going in the face of dire circumstances, individual and social. There are accounts of orchestras in Nazi death camps, and a poignant recent example of Susan Sontag's account of commitment in Sarajevo, where she went in the midst of the war to direct actors in the production of Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. She describes how they dodged bullets to get to rehearsals. (MacNeil-Lehrer 1995).

On the other hand, people are not necessarily motivated by a flight from something painful but can just enjoy doing art as a pleasurable activity along with others.

The literature on leisure often looks at the relationship between work and leisure in terms of the choices people make, whether the type of leisure is compensatory or equivalent to the work. In other words, do people more often choose leisure activities that make up for what they are missing in their jobs, or do they tend to replicate their jobs in their leisure activities? How does type of work or work status influence their choice? The social psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi

has made his central focus of study the "flow" activity, a term he uses to mean a state of total absorption in the present task and a loss of awareness of anxiety and boredom, two states of mind that Csikszentmihalyi considers to be most prevalent in the human psyche (1994). While the person forgets himself, he simultaneously fully uses himself in some activity that goes beyond himself. Studies of flow in a wide variety of situations, from daily routines to mountain climbing to music playing, writing, and solitary confinement, are discussed. Its main components are that it be a challenge sufficiently demanding yet not too overreaching as to discourage or cause failure. It should be an opportunity for growth. His work appealed beyond a scholarly community to the general public where his books line the "self-help" sections of bookstores. They appeal to the urge among people to tap into creativity, be self-expressive and achieve some inner satisfaction beyond the meeting of external demands.

Richard G. Mitchell, Jr. suggests how this concept can be applied sociologically. He argues that the "flow" situation occurs rarely for people in work but more in leisure time. He says the state of "non-flow" is equivalent sociologically to the states of "anomie" and "alienation" (Mitchell 1994).

To focus on those who for various reasons are not doing artistic activities as professionals, yet are devoted to them, I will be able to write about these tensions between "flowing", meaningful experience and its opposite.

Against this background, I will investigate the contemporary meaning of artistic leisure activities.

Method of Study

This is an exploratory study which seeks to generate hypotheses about the use of artistic leisure in everyday life following the model of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The source data are drawn from in-depth interviews of men and women from a snowball sample.¹

Men and women from several generations, ranging in age from their thirties through retirement age, who were involved in either music, visual arts, or writing were chosen. In addition I have selected groups organized around artistic leisure activities for participant observation.

Working for a time at a homeless center, I was particularly intrigued when a man obviously in need of basic services insisted that what he mainly wished for was a drumming class. There was also an a cappella singing group

¹Twenty-two people were interviewed, 11 men and 11 women. People were initially picked on the basis of a specific form of art that they were engaged in. There were 8 visual artists, 8 writers, and 6 musicians. However, in the course of many of the interviews, it became clear that the person had been involved in more than one art form. The other arts were given equal value when appropriate. By age, the breakdown was: 4 in their 30's, 9 in their 40's, 3 in their 50's, 4 in their 60's, and 2 in their 70's.

To maintain anonymity, interviewees and participants of the organizations described were given pseudonyms and identifying biographical details were altered. Since the interviews were confidential, there are no references for them. However, for verification purposes, interview references are available in the private files of the author.

formed among the men at the Center. A friend who works as a high school social worker with Special Education children noted that learning disabled students tend as a group to be much more talented and proficient in art than the other students. These observations suggest that a look into the role of these activities as therapeutic mechanisms for those alienated from traditional institutions would be interesting. The study of people who are structurally alienated from traditional institutions was beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, alienation in general is not.

My criteria for choosing all interviewees was that the creativity involved in these three art forms have significance for them in their lives. It is fairly certain that all people who engage in creative artistic activity, whether to earn their living or not, begin to do so for the pleasure of it. To analyze what that pleasure and meaning translates into, I have chosen to study the non-professionals. It is not based on a set amount of time spent doing the art form or on a specific level of advancement. I am interested in looking at how their involvement affects them in terms of the quality of their lives. A beginner in an art form who feels he needs to do it at this point in his life is just as interesting to me as a professionally competent artist who chooses not to sell his paintings because he cannot give them up. I do not preclude either of these categories. The key is that this should be an activity that the person feels is important to his life, and

that there is a felt need to operate in these forms.

The feeling of importance is the key factor. These are activities in which there are no extrinsic rewards. They fall outside of the category of things people in our society must do to be fully accepted members of the society, such as working and earning money, being "productive" or reproductive. Since they are outside this realm, I will investigate the motivations for doing them, why they are felt to be important, and what purposes they serve. In the course of such an investigation, the purposes and limitations of other roles and institutions will also be illuminated in contrast.

What the subjects of the study have in common is the pursuit of an artistic activity on a non-commercial basis. Major areas to be explored are reasons for the non-commercial character of their activities, the relationship between their artistic activity and their paid work, and the nature of the social relationships that are formed.

Format of the Interviews

Interviewees were asked what they remembered about the role of their artistic leisure activity in their childhood, youth, and adulthood. While the premise for the interview was that the person feel significant present-day attachment, it was expected that in the subject's personal life history there would be important precursors. Direct links to the identical art form since childhood were not necessary, but some

expression of artistic activity was more than usually the case. The life course approach was used to illuminate the overall meaning of the art form. Scholars of leisure (Kelly 1983) claim that identity can be studied in terms of a person's leisure-time as well as work. The findings of my preliminary interviews pointed in the same direction, and more interviews were conducted to elaborate on this theme. Through family relationships, school, influences of mentors and key adult figures and cultural institutions, people shaped and developed their identities concerning the art form they were involved with, and made choices about which directions they would take. While my approach was not focused on personality theory, I drew on the work of Robert White (1952) in using the life-history approach. He and others (Perry 1970; Belenky 1986; and Gilligan 1982) in the social sciences have been interested in various aspects of growth, from moral reasoning to intellectual development. White included a section on "interests" in his analysis of personality development, noting that few studies included this aspect of their subjects' lives in their analyses. He said that "interests are of tremendous importance in the personal economy of happiness...(and) ...the loss of opportunities to pursue them can sometimes be an irreparable catastrophe." Citing John Dewey who describes interests in terms of things that totally engage a person's attention, White said the growth of the individual is in this direction: "It is a movement toward fuller engagement with

objects of interest so that...their inherent nature and possibilities for development increasingly guide the person's activity and become part of the satisfaction" (White 1952:349). He went on to say that interests usually begin in childhood, that little is known of their particular origins, (that is, what makes two people interested in different things), and that the deepening of the interest involves, on its mature level, a willingness to become involved in the nitty-gritty mundane details of the task. However, White related "interests" primarily in terms of ultimate career interests, and assumed the deepness of the commitment coincided with the degree to which it became a career.

Another author whom I use is the cognitive psychologist Vera John-Steiner, who in her book Notebooks of the Mind (1985), explores, through interviews and writings of selected highly successful famous artists, authors and scientists, the influences from childhood on their creativity. Some of the commonalities she finds are: childhood "dramas", both positive and negative, childhood and adolescent "immersion in a cultural milieu", fertilizing influences of early years that bear fruit in adulthood with hard work and self-confidence.

Memory, of course, is subjective, and often people remember things in a particular way because of certain preoccupations in the present. But this does not necessarily detract from the value of a personal memory. The interpretations people place on their histories and what they

find significant in them, as far as creativity is concerned, can be very revealing. Themes that have sprung from preliminary interviews include a surprisingly large amount of emotionally significant material, evoked upon recall of events that occurred twenty to forty years earlier.

I asked people to talk about different periods of their lives and how and why they maintained or took breaks from their artistic leisure activities. Attention was paid to feelings of mastery and level of satisfaction at different periods of their lives. Another question was how these activities helped them cope with personal and/or societal-inflicted pain (whether due to work alienation, social class, race, gender, disabilities, illnesses, poverty). Other issues that were explored were: how it influences and organizes their social life, how uniquely urban subcultures have formed around these pursuits, and how they act upon and are formed by the city environment.²

Contribution to the Field

A study of this nature is particularly timely in the present political climate, where budget cuts abound, and the arts are strongly affected. The word of the day is that the arts are not important, and that only those who can pay for

²See Interview Schedule in Appendix for list of interview themes.

them deserve them. By looking at the role of artistic endeavor for the ordinary person, I hope to gain further understanding about this issue. By focusing on people of different generations and considering the place of artistic activities in their lives, I hope to generate hypotheses about societal factors that hinder or encourage artistic development.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LIFE COURSE

A person's artistic interest cannot be explained by looking at a static moment in time. Motivations become clear when observed over time. According to Howard Gardner, "perhaps the chief mystery confronting the student of artistic development is the relationship between the mature adult practitioner - the skilled poet, the painting master, the virtuoso instrumentalist or composer - and the young child playing with words, humming and inventing melodies, effortlessly producing sketches and paintings while engaging in many other activities that have only a tenuous relationship to the arts" (Gardner 1973:vi).

While an individual's development of scientific faculties has clear cognitive developmental stages, such as the scheme by Piaget, (1965) artistic development does not mirror this neat model. Gardner argues that the basic elements of artistic capacity, short of skill and maturity, are all present in childhood. Typical developmental models describe "growth" in each stage, each stage being a series of steps constructed one upon the other to form, metaphorically, a building. In artistic development, the building appears from the outset, and the challenge is whether, with the pressures of time, it can remain standing. This perspective confirms what many in this study said about their own childhoods. Childhood

represented the only time period when their ability to artistically express themselves was a given, rather than a struggle. As they grew older, that capacity was challenged by various pressures. This chapter considers these stages of life and the influences that insert themselves upon the artistic capacity.

The person goes through many stages in the course of his life. In early childhood, the individual is biologically driven. As he moves to adolescence, he is more involved with values and self-image. In adulthood, he is most concerned with norms and behavior in work roles (Mortimer and Simmons 1978).

The context in which this happens is, for the child, in his home and gradually his school, for the adolescent, with his peers, and for the adult with groups at work and with his own family that he creates. Childhood is the idealistic stage, the child is removed from daily pressures, and this is somewhat although less so for adolescence, but as he becomes an adult, these protections are taken away, as he is forced to conform to the norms of society. As a learner, the child is emotionally charged, and malleable; as he grows, he becomes more conflicted, and ambivalent, in adulthood the challenge is conformity to group norms, and this learning process is less emotional, more rational and more formalized.

These stages as described in the literature have coinciding stages for the interviewees, as each stage of the life cycle brings a different form of relating to artistic

expression. For many, childhood is a flourishing period of innocent discovery and productivity, by far the happiest and least conflicted period. With adolescence comes self-consciousness, self-doubt, pain, and the beginnings of comparison with those around them. Adulthood is a time to redefine values, and make compromises and decisions about the place of art in terms of what they see as the social options around them. Retirement years can be the most productive artistically, and can be a return to the freedom and time to explore, as in childhood. Each of these periods bring challenges that either draw people deeper into the arts or pull them away. Nevertheless each person managed, despite the obstacles, to carve a place for the arts outside of a career. This chapter will give an overview of these challenges. Later chapters will go more in-depth into challenges most prevalent in various stages of life.

The different periods of life are each marked by a different set of trials and themes to be worked out and incorporated into the next stage. Like all major interests, the arts become part of one's identity and another facet in the story of how one responds to each stage of life.

Childhood

The child, not yet inhibited by the norms of society, is encouraged to explore the world around him, particularly in a tactile sense. In the first years of life the child develops

his senses and his capacities to regulate his biological functions. First encounters with the arts in childhood are part of the playfulness and enjoyable encounters with the physical world that characterize that time period.

The child first learns of relationships through the mother, or primary caregiver, and through the family. The family socializes the child and introduces him to many aspects of life. For many of the interviewees, family environments encouraged creative activity. Mitchell's parents, for example, fostered experimentation and discovery in him and his brother, who is close to him in age. Their education both at home and at a progressive elementary school combined the arts and sciences instead of making arbitrary distinctions between them. It involved a lot of projects, imitating museum science exhibits or the natural world, which meant the children went out to collect and arrange objects that grabbed their attention. His first memories, (between the ages of four and seven), of what he considers creative activities were of his father helping them make a mini-aquarium out of

"ingredients, the gravel, the sand, the mud, aquatic plants, water, tank, a book, and put everything together and made this natural pond which I kept for 15 years."

There was a sense of wonder and joy in these childhood encounters with the arts. His father, a dentist who sculpted on the side, introduced his children to the pleasures of carving.

"In terms of actual art work, my father gave me a chisel and a mallet, and he put goggles on me and

set a stone in front of me and said, 'carve something.' I was a little kid, and I remember it was a very delightful thing to be able to intrude on the stone and think of the possibility of turning it into something different than what it was. I didn't understand art as a concept maybe but I understood that I had the capacity to transform."

Families provide materials to stimulate the imagination, as is particularly appropriate at this stage in the child's development. Sybil said:

"I can't remember exactly when I started. I've always drawn and doodled on my papers...but I know that my mother took art classes when I was seven years old, and she let me play with her oil paints and things like that. So I was fooling around with them then. And as a kid I was always given gifts for Christmas that were things that encouraged me to do creative activities. I remember I got a knitting machine when I was a kid -lots of little arts and crafts gadgets. As far back as I can remember. So I guess it was always - kind of encouraged in me. I know it's in some way because my mother was kind of an artist and had not been able to do that for most of her life. So she kind of encouraged those tendencies in me."

The young child is guided by parents, but as he gets older, his important relationships expand to include siblings and friends, who provide for the development of new social skills. As Erikson describes, the mother and child develop a bond that stimulates the development of trust in the child. With his siblings and peers the child takes on new roles of more authority. Beth, for example, describes how she played with her sisters:

"I always loved to draw, and I was always drawing. I used to make up little books of activities for my sisters to do. I would draw pictures for them to color and make little stories and crossword puzzles. You know those little kid's activities books? I used to make those.

One sister was older and one was younger. I used to make up stories too. I was pretty creative as a kid, I

guess. I used to tell them stories at night and everything, that I made up."

The above are examples of the family providing the equipment, and in the case of Beth's sisters, being the stimulus and the audience, the first audience, as it were. As children grow older, friends also assume the role of audience.

The beauty of the natural world and the presence of a receptive human audience are two very different but equally powerful stimulants for self-expression. Beth's sisters were her audience, inspiring her to make up stories. She initiated this habit with enthusiasm, saying she was a very creative child. But the telling of bedtime stories is one example of a life situation in which people are called upon to be creative, since it is a standard in the repertoire of parenthood and siblinghood for both the natural storytellers and the awkward ones.

Children particularly need both to be an audience and to have an audience. Imitation and response are how they learn to talk. Infants watch the grownups talking and laughing and will laugh along with them with genuine delight. Understanding what is so funny is genuinely irrelevant to them.

In the earliest years, the reactions of parents appear to be primary and sufficient. With growth into later childhood and early adolescence, however, the scope broadens, and peer-reaction outside of the family becomes important. Adult recognition is also important; they can come in the form of rewards. The importance of rewards begins in childhood.

Children are given gold stars for good behavior, and for good work. In elementary school education this is considered a common technique to reinforce "positive behaviors", or behaviors considered desirable. Enthusiastic audience reactions, recognition in another form, were also remembered as important milestones, helping children obtain a view of themselves as competent creative people. Kate, for example, remembers:

"And then there was a summer in camp, getting back to dancing again. This was a very memorable experience, a peak experience kind of thing. The summer I was ten in camp. We put on a show and I danced. I played the part of a witch, and I really got into it. When it was over, all kinds of people came up to me and said 'You were really good'. People really liked it, and they were really surprised, because I guess I was really quiet that summer in camp...I remember someone saying to me, 'We thought you were just another stick lying around camp. But you were really really good.' It was something that made me feel really good and I'll always remember it. That was like a moment of glory. Recognition that I was a dancer."

This happened for her at the age of ten, but we will see that in adolescence public approval and recognition were accorded even greater significance. Children play with friends and siblings, and these playmates assume roles, either as an audience or co-actors. Two types of play are the "pretend" type and the more organized games with structures and rules (Gordon 1976). There are many examples of famous writers who first exhibited their extensive creative imaginations by playing pretend-games as children. A famous example is Louisa May Alcott, who in her autobiographical novel Little Women, describes how she and her siblings acted out elaborate dramas

which she very often wrote and starred in.

Jenny, a musician in this study who plays the Irish tinwhistle, played similar games as a child with her large troupe of siblings, whom she affectionately refers to as "the Von Trapp family" after the fictional singing German family in the film, "The Sound of Music".

"When we were really little, we performed. That's what we did. We had a basement and it was our playroom. My father painted it red, white, and blue. And we had all our instruments downstairs. We'd have a band. My oldest brother was the leader, various instruments were played, and we'd sing, and we'd put on performances for my parents. They could be puppet plays, whatever..."

These imaginative types of play imitate adult types of productive activity as a form of anticipatory socialization. Children pretend to be adults and try out the adult roles they expect to have to take on some day. For example, beginning as an eight-year-old child, Kate would get together with her friend every New Year's Eve and make several issues of a parody magazine called "Vague".

Kate also kept journals for herself, and wrote little books with another friend:

"When I was about eight years old I had a best friend named Nina, and we would sleep over at each other's houses. One time we both went out and bought notebooks, the old black and white. We just had a wonderful time.

First we started out on one page: 'about myself'...Then we wrote, 'My future.' We wrote what we wanted our future to be - it's a scream: 'I will be about such and such tall. I will weigh so-and so. I will have long brown fine hair.' (I'm sure the fine hair came from her, because she had wiry hair. Even though I already had 'long brown fine hair', I liked the sound of it.) 'I will not be buxom.' (That was from her too.) 'I will marry..'and then we wrote whoever we had a crush on in the fifth grade. 'We will have 3 children. Their names

will be...' etc. etc. 'We will do such-and such kind of work. We will be so tall. We will live in a house that looks like this.' Then on another page we wrote, 'My boyfriends' and then we wrote all the men and boys we had crushes on, what they looked like and then we put some little saying like, 'ain't he cute' or 'what a doll', or 'hubbah hubbah'.

Then we wrote stories and poems. I wrote a bunch of poems after reading an Archie Comic, in which Jughead was paid to write love poems. The idea intrigued me so I wrote about 10 love poems. Boom. One after the other at the age of 8 or 9. And put 'em all in there. And I sent one to L. (her fiancée) last year as a Valentine. I remember the last line: 'You are so sweet, so kind and cute. And oh, how you and me would suit.'"

Children imagine the future while reveling in the present. Writing little books and pretending to be different people are common ways of indulging in these thoughts for children and are not usually thought of as particularly "artistic", but rather as playing. Were they doing them as adults, they would be thought of as amateur actors and writers. Those who count these games among the more significant and enjoyable aspects of their childhood sometimes wish to continue them beyond those years.

Adolescence

As the above illustrations show, childhood artistic expression is remembered as a joyous free time, more or less as specially enjoyable play. The atmosphere is remembered as encouraging but not controlling. The reminiscences of early childhood seldom include standards of comparison. The individual is allowed to be just that, an individual, and

expression is free, but this changes by the teenage years. For Kate, dancing conjured up very different associations at age twelve or thirteen than it did at age five or six. As a five year-old, her dancing was:

"Just kind of free form. My father had played jazz records all the time - swing music, actually. That's the kind of music he liked. The same kind of music I like so much now. There was one in particular, which I still have a 78 of, called "Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie". And I just loved to dance to that. I would get up and dance and whirl around. He would watch me and smile, and I was embarrassed, laughing."

Kate remembers a shift in her development and thinking, and dates it precisely to a time when she "didn't stop dancing but gave up the idea of being "A Dancer."

"... by the time I was 12 or 13, I realized that my body wasn't a real flexible body. It didn't have, as a later dance teacher told me when I was in my twenties, the instrument for it...Probably if I'd have stuck to it I could have acquired more flexibility, but for some reason I got discouraged...I guess because I couldn't do modern which was more serious, or didn't feel I could do modern, then, I thought, why do modern dance? Because I'll just never be a dancer. Those were professional dancing things. So that was it for dancing, although I just always loved social dancing.

But I always continued to take dancing lessons because I liked the movement. I just gave up on the idea of being "A Dancer", which was one of my early, 'what do you want to be when you grow up? A dancer'."

One can notice the change in tone in the way she describes these two periods of life - at age five or six her dancing for her father was fun and free, compared to her dancing at age twelve or thirteen when she began to think in terms of standards, requirements, and categories of dancing.

With her drawing as well, in her early teens, she began to feel she was not good enough compared to others and stopped

drawing.

"Again when I was twelve or thirteen or so I went to art classes at the Brooklyn Museum. There was a painting class. And I think I had more of a feeling for drawing than painting, maybe. I just didn't feel like I was accomplishing anything, and compared myself to others and didn't think I was good enough and I just stopped drawing."

Many people became more judgmental of themselves as adolescents and more concerned about how others judged them and how they measured up to others. Because of these factors some people withdrew entirely from their artistic activity. Beth, for example, who now in her early fifties is painting profusely on a regular basis, went through a barren period artistically at this stage. She explains:

"Something happens to a girl around twelve or something, and I became really afraid of it. I felt like I wasn't good enough. I didn't want to take an art class in high school."

She stopped drawing on her own, also, but she
"still sort of dreamed about it ..."

This is a common occurrence. It was commented on, for example, by a teacher of a class on "Drawing from the Right Side of the Brain," an adult education class that is offered at various evening schools, using a technique aimed for people who want to learn how to draw. On the first day of class the teacher asked the students to describe their reasons for attending. The overwhelming majority said they had drawn as children but stopped at age twelve and wanted to once again "free" themselves as adults. The teacher in his summation of his little informal survey concluded that the educational

system encourages "left brain" or analytical thinking, and neglects "right brain" creative thinking. Whole art curriculums in adult education are built around this premise, as well as books on creative and artistic potential. What the teacher could have added was that the crisis coming for all the students at the same age indicates that in addition to educational structures developmental influences may also be a factor. At age twelve these students were becoming aware of new demands upon them, which in their case inhibited them artistically.

Others going through the same anxieties of self-comparison, responded by withdrawing from some of their childhood interests yet substituting other arts. For example, Kate withdrew from drawing and painting, and some forms of dance, (due to her own insecurities vis-a-vis external standards of quality), but took up photography and writing more seriously, and continued to pursue them into her adult years. Now in her early fifties, she has also pursued singing and music, and various other arts.

Rebellion

Adolescence is the traditional time for rebellion. In the interviews, one sees examples of both overt and covert forms of rebellion. Covert forms often begin in childhood and blossom in adolescence. Mel, for example, grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family that held no place in its tradition for

secular artistic expression. Mel, nevertheless, knew he had the desire to draw but was not encouraged by his environment:

"I was a victim of a Talmudical academy, known commonly as a Yeshiva. I wasted most of my education in various Yeshivas until I was thrown out of each one, eleven, to be exact. (Which is pretty good since there's only twelve in all of New York.)

At any rate, they didn't encourage anything artistic. In fact, it was even frowned upon from a religious point of view that you don't draw pictures of the human being, because he's in the form or shape of god, or something like that. Some crazy thing.

Where other kids used to sneak away, play hooky, and go to a movie, I would sneak away and go to art classes or to galleries. As a kid. As long as I can remember. And I started to go to the Educational Alliance ... down on Lower Broadway."

Sneaking away to art galleries and art classes was one form of covert rebellion. Another common form of rebellion was mere doodling, which, on the face of it, seems a lot more benign and innocuous, almost hardly worth mentioning. Yet doodling really does seem to mean something significant to many people, who proudly refer to doodling as one of their forms of rebellion. Doodling is a kind of whimsical dialogue with the self. It represented rebellion in several ways. First of all, it was done when they were supposed to be listening to the teacher. Secondly, it would be done often in forbidden places, such as in the margins of books, or even religious books, and on desks. It is graffiti, a sneaky way of leaving your mark.

Mel says the Yeshivas did not have drawing classes,

"But I didn't let that stop me from - there's a couple of hundred gemorahs and siddurim (prayer books) that have pictures of comics and Gibson Girls and all the cowboys of that day. Which I did. Because you couldn't get

drawing paper, like you do now, for peanuts. So the minute I got a book that had 4 or 5 empty pages in there, I always drew pictures of cowboys with guns shooting each other."

Alex, a man now in his sixties, also rebelled against his schooling by doodling, citing it as "his first artistic activity".

"I was a kid and going to school, and of course, like all people who've had art, started drawing and doodling. I would doodle on margins of paper and books when I was supposed to be doing other things. Because class was boring to me. I was one of those bright kids that you always read about who always get into trouble in school because they're bored. And part of my boredom was I used to draw and I used to do cartooney type stuff. Because it was easy and fun. Superman and all these things - they were brand new. Today they're old and they're collector items. But back then it was the latest thing on the stands. It cost a nickel or a dime. If you had one today they would be worth \$3,000. But I threw them away, like everyone else did."

Mitchell identifies the naughty pleasure that a bored student obtains from doodling in class. He also shows how the doodling can take on a life of its own, just as any other art form can:

"In Mr.T.'s class, History, a stocky, crew-cut fellow, there was a psychic distance between him and the children so that nobody could really get to him, and nobody dared. He wasn't a taskmaster. He was just outside of our age. He was a character from the forties, or something, and taught history that way.

I started doodling on the desk, and one day I saw that the doodle was being added to by somebody else. I think it was P. (his brother), in his section. He came in to the same class, had the same seat, at a different time, and we were having this correspondence in doodles. I think the teacher told us to stop but somehow we were able to persist and it really flourished all over the table. That was such a pleasure. In pen. So what did I take from that? Collaboration. A sense that art accrued over time, not all at once, and it gets developed. A sense of deviance, that this is what you do to get out of having to do something else."

Mitchell did not feel connected to the teacher, or to his manner of presentation of history, and he rebelled by endlessly doodling, a trick not unlike reading under the desk or passing notes among classmates. He engaged in another world of his own imagination, in collaboration with his brother.

Both graffiti and many of these examples of doodling are rebellious acts of deviance, art produced on private property. Producing art in this context is associated with adolescent defiance of authority. As art is a means of various kinds of self-expression, it aids the adolescent in his attempts to assert a new authority, as a burgeoning adult.

In a case of more overt rebellion, Mitchell confronted authority more directly. A ceramics teacher in Junior High School gave his class an assignment to make a functional object. Mitchell did not follow the assignment, but instead followed his aesthetic inclinations, making something non-functional but focussing only on how it looked. As a result he got an F on the assignment.

"In ceramics class,...I made a box with a lid. It was flat and rectangular and had four corners. I sliced off one corner so that it was open there and when the lid fitted on there was a hole. The teacher gave me an F and the reason he did it was because it was not functional. In other words, I had created a functional structure, a perfectly usable box that could contain things, and then spoiled it by making it leak, by opening it up so that it was no longer able to store things in that orientation. What he was telling me, in effect, was you have to think of form according to function. Your aesthetic has to be rooted in need, not in play, whimsy, quirkiness. Those things can exist but they have to exist with necessity guiding them, determining the boundaries of your playfulness.

Was he right? Was he wrong? I don't know but I came into conflict there, and if I didn't learn one hard fast piece of information I learned a puzzle. I learned that whole interesting question. Where is necessity, and what constitutes art versus craft? What is my sense of almost moral responsibility to address a need with a functional solution? In the end I put matches in there, and instead of opening the lid to take a match out you could just pull a match out through the corner there. So that was a functional use. That was after I took it home, - he didn't see it. So there I was inventing a need around an aesthetic, not vice versa. So it was a very interesting experience to play with."

By turning the box into a matchbox at home, in the final analysis fulfilling the teacher's assignment, (but never mentioning this to his teacher), Mitchell appears to have been experimenting with his abilities. He was telling himself that he could do both - have his own vision, (which he was willing to fight for by ignoring the teacher's instructions deliberately), and also creating a functional object at the same time. But he was willing to forego the institutional acceptance of a good grade, with all that means and merely do it for himself, proving to himself alone his own capabilities. His adult life is still conducted upon this model. He creates sculptures that are technically and artistically very sophisticated, but refuses to engage in a life of selling the work, displaying the work, or making a name for himself. He has high standards for himself, but doesn't ask for societal acknowledgement, in fact actively avoids it. The matchbox incident handed his teenage self an opportunity to rebel using art as the means of rebellion. In the adolescent search for ways to rebel, artistic expression can serve that important

function.

Besides anger, rebellion, confusion, and self-consciousness, adolescence is a time for increased seriousness. People begin to talk more seriously about themselves and the people around them. Conscious intentionality enters more into the discussion. Mitchell remembers that when he was twelve years old his mother offered him lessons in any instrument he chose. Although he already had many memorable creative experiences as a child, with musical instruments, and with ceramics, among other things, his choice of the violin in response to his mother's offer was seen by him in a different light:

"...you could say that was the first time I was *focussing on intentionally doing a consistent creative act.*"
(italics mine)

Sybil also used similar words to describe her desires at that age:

"I remember in sixth grade...I became *really conscious of myself as wanting to be an artist or being someone for whom art would be a part of my life* (italics mine). I went through a phase where I would design clothing - and do little illustrations of women's clothing. That same year I had a teacher who, I guess, had probably studied art at some point in her life. She taught the class how to do perspective drawing. I was really excited at learning how to make things balance in terms of distance and different perspectives. That's when I became conscious of it..."

For some, the world of music or art served as a haven from turmoil at home in the family. The settings were a welcome escape from arguing parents and domestic unrest. Mitchell says:

"I think that there were many things happening at that time. In the family there was a lot of tumult, instability, shouting - just fights all the time. And the music was, while it was to some extent being pushed by my mother, it was being pushed with my complicity, cooperation. I didn't need to challenge it. In fact I used it as a way of tuning out the "tumeri" ¹

Sybil recounted a similar family situation:

"It was a very unhappy period in my life because my parents' marriage was really troubled and my father was just really disturbed. Life at home was very unbearable in a lot of respects. And also because my father was one of the principals of the high school it was really hard to get away from him and his influence. ...the art room, which was in a separate building from the rest of the school -...I always felt like my father couldn't get to me there. I was away from him. It was the one class where he never bothered me or called me out of class...
... I think the art teacher felt himself in some way as someone who kind of protected me from my father, in a weird way. He created this safe little world. So I think that's why I loved art so much in part because it was a safe space to be, where I felt really good about what I was doing - I felt like I was a talented person. And it was something that was really separate from my father."

In his description of adolescence, Erikson describes the central concern of that stage as "identity versus role confusion" (Erikson 1950:261):

"The growing and developing youths, faced with this physiological revolution within them, and with tangible adult tasks ahead of them, are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day. In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to refight many of the battles of earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the role of adversaries; and they are ever ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity" (Erikson 1950:261).

¹Yiddish for "tumult"

In their adolescence the interviewees assigned these types of good-guy/bad-guy roles to their art teachers. Mitchell, for example, had music teachers in high school with whom he developed intense mentoree relationships. His high school music teacher, Mr.N., represented

"...a European old school very sweet unhip man - Czech. It set a tone of solemnity and propriety. There was something very respectable about playing the instrument and being taught by him. Kids goofed off but I never did. I felt very respectful. It would be wrong to insult him... I connected with him and distinguished myself from the rest of the group. I identified with his sense of composure and firm, honest forthright approach to music. The world outside of that was very threatening to me. It was the world of gaming and gambling and leisure and unstructured play. It was just threatening because it was an invitation to sex, drugs, all of what was coming ahead. I was, in a way, in my conservatism, holding myself back from that whole world."

After some time he added to his violin studies by attending an afternoon music school, where he was placed with a teacher he was sure he would hate:

"took me up to this guy with even longer hair, way out in bushes on his head and because I looked only at the surface, represented everything evil. Not evil, but just everything wrong, threatening. So I had my first lesson with him, and I loved it. Because he did something - I don't know what he did, but he disarmed me, and made me confront my own elitism and present the possibility of some kind of discrimination. You could be a classical musician. You could also be hip. There was some kind of growth, some kind of possibility. He suddenly represented something more and farther than Mr.N. did. And...I realized that and became his best student..."

Adulthood

As Freud so succinctly put it, true emotional health involves the ability to work and to love. In adulthood the

person confronts these dimensions of life in a more purposeful way. He is expected to form commitments and become responsible for himself and, typically, his offspring. The pressure to find work that is financially sustaining usually becomes of paramount consideration. In this respect, people must now either attempt to make their art their work or push it to the side and develop it in their spare time. Time itself becomes a valuable commodity as an adult, in contrast to the earlier stages of life. Instrumentalism and expressivity can become dueling pressures; expressivity becomes something one struggles for, but is no longer a birthright.

Work

To solve these various dilemmas, some in this study chose to turn their artistic interest into a commercial career, while practicing a more personal idiosyncratic expression of that art in their personal time. They work in commercial graphics, freelance educational writing and editing, and business writing.

Some picked jobs primarily to support themselves and their families, without experiencing great love for their work. These include a printing manager, sociology researcher, teacher, salesman/businessman, medical secretary, transit authority worker, insurance actuary, and a paralegal.

Some enjoyed more satisfying careers and kept their art as a separate activity. These include: a doctor, a special

education teacher, an English as a Second Language teacher, a school social worker, and a professional violinist, who was not wholly creatively sustained by her career in music, and considered writing, drawing, ceramics, crafts and gardening her creative sidelines.

Others count among their work history a patchy collection of both unsatisfying and satisfying jobs to make ends meet and to explore different options, and graduate school education to explore new careers. Many, particularly those with consistent, lifelong careers, were always clear about the avocational nature of their artistic interest, but many others, particularly in early adulthood, made tentative explorations beyond that realm. People who explored professional artistic training during this period experienced disappointment and disillusionment. They were rejected by institutions, in many cases, or were disappointed by what they experienced in those institutions. Such experiences reoriented their thinking regarding professional training in the arts.

For example, two women who wanted to major in art in college were told they could not do so because they didn't have a portfolio. For Beth, who had drawn as a child, stopped in her teen years, and then, with low self-confidence, renewed her interest in college, this lack of encouragement was enough to push her away:

"In college, ... I went and talked to an advisor and he talked me out of it. He said you'd have to make up so many credits and you don't have a portfolio...Anybody in the art program had a portfolio from high school. So I

would have had to have something of my work. I didn't have anything. I could have, if I had had more confidence. I could have gotten something together and moved ahead, but I needed a lot of encouragement but I didn't get it so I just didn't do it."

In the arts, a common message is that to be successful professionally one must study it intensively at a very young age. This causes many to disqualify themselves. Mel, for instance, says:

"... my sister, S., god bless her, was appreciative of my artistic inclinations. She begged me to throw everything away and just get into that field, somehow or other. And she said to go to art school and so on. I said, "S., I'm too old to start" (I was twenty years old, or eighteen or whatever). But she persisted and always encouraged me and begged me. So I have to give her a lot of credit. And so did my other sisters. They encouraged me. They liked what I was doing. I still have some pencil sketches that I did in those days.

... I did a lot of work and I brought it down there. (to Cooper Union). Then they wanted to know about my scholastic record. How my math was. I knew nothing about it. Zero. In those days (late '30's, early '40's) those were their standards.

So that was very heartbreaking for me. I'd dreamt about getting into that school."

Sybil, who in High School had spent many happy hours in the art room as a haven from her family problems, who was protected and encouraged by the art teacher there, looked forward to majoring in art in college. But in this new setting she was told she was unprepared.

"I went to college thinking I was going to be an art major, and the school that I picked I chose partially on the advisement of the art teacher I had in H.S. It was probably the one state university in (the state) that had the best art program, which is why I went there. I took a couple of classes in the art department and it was very competitive and I was in many ways unprepared for the environment. When I went to register for classes in the art department I basically was told I couldn't register as an art major, and I couldn't take certain courses

unless I had a portfolio, or unless I'd taken a bunch of other courses. I didn't even know what a portfolio was."

In the case of these women, a new educational environment was encountered in college, but this culture shock does occur regularly at all stages of the educational process - from one school to the next - one where the values are to encourage and support, and the next to compete and ferret out students in a race for the survival of the fittest. College, however, is a crucial time in terms of messages given students as to their career possibilities. The choosing of a career involves choosing a community of like-minded individuals as well. People try to join a group in which they feel welcome and happy. College encounters with these communities were disillusioning. Sybil said:

"When I was in High School and...studying art, I was kind of ...isolated...there were some other students who did art but ...not many were as serious as I was about it. So I was really looking forward to going somewhere where other people were going to be studying art. I expected a community of people like myself. And what I found was that the people who were art majors were very secretive about their projects. They wouldn't talk about their ideas because they were afraid people were going to steal their ideas. So I found myself in a very competitive, isolating environment.

Students who were most open were people who weren't art majors. They were much more willing to talk about their projects, what they were doing."

The new environment forced Sybil and others to confront what the art meant to them, what was most important about the art to them. If the students one can learn from are not art majors, yet deeply into art, one might wonder what the point of the art major is. The latent message of these institutions

was that matters of importance in the academic and professional world did not include their own deepest and most personal feelings. The compromises required ultimately defeated the purpose of publicly and officially pursuing degrees in the arts.

Mitchell, for example, confronted this crisis in a professional music camp that he attended right before college. He described its atmosphere as "very sober, almost martial, and extremely competitive." He sadly contrasted the atmosphere with that of his brother's camp, "run by a man...who had a philosophy that music was a joy, and that the way to discipline a young person was to create in him an appetite to discipline himself...people got together because they relished the prospect of playing..." Mitchell describes his camp as one in which there was no joy, where nothing but work and practice was expected, where people were watched, and where practice was done in poorly insulated cubicles placed side-by-side. He thinks this was done intentionally to foster competition between the campers. People could hear their neighbors practicing. He called the experience "brainwashing", and described how, for him, the symbol for the camp was a story of a former camper, a brilliant violinist who killed himself there, it was thought from the pressure he was placing upon himself. The effects of this camp on Mitchell's vision of the life of the professional musician was devastating:

"So what I came away from the place with was a fear of music. Nobody bridged that for me. Nobody looked at me

and what was happening, read my soul and said, 'You know, this isn't the place for you', which would itself have been such a tremendous help, to affirm what I was feeling myself. Nobody said, on the contrary, 'you're almost there. Just copy a little harder. Do what we're doing. You'll fall into place.' Nobody said that. I was just - really devoid of the stuff of musicianship. *I felt that I couldn't be a professional (italics mine)* because - ... Music to me was my own emotions. It was not something else that I brought my expertise and my mechanical abilities to, and my intellect. All the turmoil that was going on in me as I was growing up was embodied in the music, either the music I played or the music I listened to. But (the camp), I think, externalized it. People loved the music they were playing, no doubt. They loved it on its own terms. They didn't love it as a channel for their own self-expression. I was a shaky kid, and music was very important to me to be able to express that shakiness, and reify it, give it a thingness, make it apparent in the world.

Anyway, at the same time, I did buy the myth to some extent."

Love

The experience of love when accompanied by serious commitment affected every other area of the person's life. Aside from the obvious ones - work, procreation, and geographic mobility, it affected their artistic expression. The importance of approval and encouragement of the lover could either inspire a person or stifle his artistic impulses. Following college, for example, Sybil had a boyfriend who valued only the intellectual side of her. Her sense that he disapproved of artistic expression inhibited her from doing any art for the ten-year period she was with him. Beth tells a similar story, in a slightly different form. She lived with a man who was intensely jealous of anything she did apart from

him, and while she did not completely give up painting, she did make serious artistic sacrifices in order to please him:

"He thought I was talented and should keep it up and everything. But at the same time he was very jealous, so jealous that when I went to drawing classes he would insist on seeing my drawings just in case there was a male model. If there was one, he would really freak out. There wasn't usually a male model, but every once in a while there was, and it got me so nervous, going, (to art classes) saying (to myself), 'please don't let there be a male model.' In fact, one night when there was! I just went home...I didn't have to show (my boyfriend) my drawings but if I didn't he would have known, (that there was a male model) and it was too much."

On the other hand, Florence gives her boyfriend much of the credit for helping her get the courage and the confidence to go for her dreams, giving up a lucrative but miserable job as a paralegal to take on part-time jobs so she could write plays:

"I've really gone all the way. But...I think that really is a function of having someone in my life to support me emotionally, to help me find the courage to make those leaps...it's hard for me to know if I'd have come as far as I've come if I didn't have that kind of intimate support... So I'm so grateful to him for - not that I didn't have that value inside myself. It's just that I didn't have access to it, because it took courage to take that leap. So...."

I didn't meet my partner until I was 36. And I was REALLY lonely, and REALLY on my own, and I had never really had love the way that human beings need to be loved. And now I have that in my life, and it's been going on five years in July, and so that also gives me perspective. If this writing is going to be a career, then I'm going to do it healthy,...having somebody that loves me, who's there, that I can laugh with at these rejection letters....the relationship is a place where I can feel valued for myself, whether I'm a writer or not."

One would expect that secure and happy relationships like Florence's would foster the emotional security to free a

person to take creative risks, as it did for her in her creative writing, and that unhappy relationships would restrict creative development, as it did somewhat for Beth. Yet this was not always the case. Soured, disappointing relationships can also inspire new creative expression. Anger and a desire for revenge can be a catalyst. The creative outlet can nurture such pent-up urges and result in incredible productivity. When Beth and her jealous partner finally parted ways, her imagination produced a whole series of paintings as a response to their problems:

"I've been doing a series of paintings that are a project on Healing, from this relationship. Each painting is a different character, persona, that's a part of me, somewhere inside of me. Some of the subject matter is from dreams and some is from vision-type things. Some of it is from taking words that were used in an abusive way against me - like names that I was called in the relationship in a derogatory way and taking them and transforming them into a beautiful or strong image that is transformative. It's been really powerful. I still have two more paintings in the series to go.

The first one I did was the Ice Queen. He (my ex-boyfriend) used to call me the Ice queen - he was such an asshole. To me that was the most awful one because it seemed so unlike me that if he thinks that of me then he doesn't see who I am. So all of a sudden after we split up I started getting images of this Ice queen who was a really strong beautiful fierce kind of figure."

Generativity

During adulthood, commitments are made that are less revokable than in earlier periods. Particularly irrevocable are such commitments as having children. Especially in the child's early years, parents cannot expect to have much time to spare, and chances are great that artistic expression would

slow down, or revolve in some way around the children. Whatever form the expression had taken prior to the advent of children would shift once the children were there. Children were cited as a definite source of change in mode of expression for mothers, particularly. Beth, for example, contends that her creative outlets revolved around her children when they were young:

"As I was raising my kids, I guess most of my creativity went into activities for them. Which was fine, because we did a lot of fun things. And they were always doing painting and building things, making things from paper mache, - we did everything."

Children involve time and attention, and often make working impossible around them:

For instance, Jenny says her daughter did not like her to play her tinwhistle when they were together:

"he (her husband) had to take her to the park. When she was really little, no problem at all. From the time she was one and a half, that's when it started becoming a problem. Up until then she loved to have me play. It was when she started to realize that it took my attention away from her, and when she realized she could grab it out of my mouth!! or say, "MOMMY. MOMMY. MOMMY. MOMMY." "MOMMY STOP!" Or go into the other room and wreck something."

Jenny compared notes with other Irish musicians and found that this appears to be a larger problem for women than for men:

"She (female Irish musician) asked me, 'can you play when your child is there?' I said no. I said, 'I'm so glad to hear from somebody.' She told B. and a couple other GUYS who have children. She complained about the fact she can't play around her child (who) refuses to let her play. It's impossible to play. And then all the guys said, 'Oh no, I don't have any problems playing'. Then

she asked L. (a female musician) and she said, 'It's impossible to play with my two children in the house, IMPOSSIBLE.'...she said, 'I have to go out, and that's why I go to sessions more often than I would otherwise because that's the only time I get to practice,' she said."

Having a family can influence the amount of available time for art work; time influences form. The mother must grab free time for her art. She may mold the structure and form of her art to fit the time she is allotted to finish it. Maria, for example, writes shorter plays while her husband's off with the kids.

Erikson identifies "generativity" as a major issue in adulthood. Commenting on this, McAdams says:

(the person) "...understands his own work in terms of generativity - in terms of fashioning a gift for the next generation, a generation personified in "my kid." Generativity may be expressed through one's family life, friendships, work life, church or community activities, and even pastimes and hobbies. (McAdams:259)".

While Erikson was referring primarily to procreation in connection with the concept of "generativity", the term has come to include these other possibilities.

As McAdams interprets the concept of generativity, it can be applied to any number of activities besides childrearing. Aware of his mortality, the adult wishes to leave his mark. In furthering this aim, he becomes reflective on the difference between real "work" and just a "job". As Florence grew into her mid-thirties, the contrast between her deadening income-producing jobs and her vibrant (yet seldom paying) playwriting grew stronger:

"I can succeed in a lot of different environments. But I couldn't flourish, because, first of all, I wasn't putting myself in environments that would nurture me and second, I didn't have the commitment. So to find something that I could commit to it was very important for me. I don't feel like I could walk away from this tomorrow, whereas when I walked away from that law firm, I never looked back...

She adds,

....when I see people that have been working in the same things for the last 18-20 years, it's huge if you can build on your experience for 18 years, and you have a community with a context and people and a body of work, whatever the work is. I didn't have that. But now I feel like from 1993 on (when she started writing) I can measure. I already have a small body of work, and I have relationships that I can build on, and this is life. That's what you want, to be able at the end of it to look back and say, this was my community, this was the arch of the work, this is where I started, this is where I finished, and have development and growth, and hopefully some success and recognition along the way, but even without that just to see the growth."

Mature Adulthood and Retirement

The increase in life span has given retirement years new meaning. It can be a full, long and productive period. Studies have suggested that those who maintain strong interests in this period tend to live longer (Cameron and Persinger 1983). People who are retired or semi-retired in this study, having had a lifetime of strong interest in their chosen art form, extended the amount of time devoted to their artistry. George, a cardiologist who is semi-retired, had been meticulous in his practicing schedule for the last forty-five years, while he was established in a practice. After he moved into semi-retirement, he enlarged his music practicing schedule with the

additional free time:

"I essentially work about half-time. I'm a professor at the medical school, here. And I work usually 4 and a half days a week. So I get home relatively early, somewhere between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So I have time usually during the day to practice. I'm not bothered at night, and my weekends are free. So I can play!"

When people retire, they go back to school, and travel. In Mel's case, he combined the two. After he retired he began to paint eight to twelve hours a day. He attended more often an art school in Italy which he had discovered while he had still been working:

"... The only good thing that ever came out of my reading the Village Voice since it was printed, the first issue, was one day there was a modest little ad for a painting school that was opening up in Florence. And I immediately signed up on the spot. I filled out the thing and I was accepted. I didn't even bother telling the company that I worked for that I was going to take off a couple of months. They didn't know the difference.

So I went and I fell in love with Italy and the idea of painting, and I started to do the things I had fantasized all of my life I started to do for real. In colors. And in oils. I tried different mediums - water color. But I like oil best because it's easiest to paint over your mistakes. If you change your mind about a line or a face, no problem.

I enjoyed tremendously, I could have sold my works many times, but I chose not to because I put too much of myself into it. Since I don't need the money, because my wife still has a job...I didn't want to part with them because I put too much of myself into it. And my kids know every painting I ever did. So I better not cheat on them. So ...that's where it's at."

Conclusion

The view of the individual at each stage of life illustrates both the importance of each stage with its challenges and wonders, and continuities across stages. To be able to recapture different periods of life in reminiscence brings out this dualism. Synthesizing the stages provides a means of explaining one's identity, the standard bearers of one's personality throughout one's life history. To this end, many interviewees cite their own strong childhood interest in the arts as evidence of an artistic identity. They considered themselves independently predisposed towards an artistic activity, originating from within themselves. While this interest was often nurtured by the family, those for whom it occurred in spite of non-artistic or disapproving families cite this as even stronger evidence of their own innate artistic dispositions. For example, Beth said:

"I did (draw) as a child, and I was the only one in my family who was really into drawing and painting and that kind of thing."

Mel said,

"I had the inclination and the desire to paint ever since my first moment of consciousness (which some people claim I still haven't reached.) At any rate, I always wanted to. To actively paint it took many many years later."

People attach great power to their childhoods in determining who they have become. Mitchell attributes his unwillingness to become a professional artist, (a path he sees as more restricting than the one he has chosen) to a family that promoted in its children a "Renaissance" attitude,

unimpeded exploration, developing curiosity. The interviewees see their childhood selves as their authentic selves.

When they speak of their adolescence, the troubles begin. They no longer see themselves as explorers, but more as critics, mostly of themselves. The insecurity and uncertainty that accompanies comparison with peers affects their self-expression, and their artistic expression. On the other hand, their critical sense has a positive side, as the questioning of authority, in the form of rebellion. Artistic expression is used in rebellious acts, even if often it is only the adolescent who realizes this.

As they grow into adults, ready to see where the social and work world will accept them, their doubts and tentativeness are mirrored by authorities. They get told in various ways that they are not qualified.

With all these barriers, it is a wonder that these people still do express themselves artistically, but they found ways to keep going, to keep it a part of their life's project. This chapter has outlined some of the challenges, as well as opportunities, of each stage. The following chapters will describe more in-depth how they have come to terms with specific aspects: family and education, still primarily, (though not exclusively), in their childhoods, and work and social encounters in their adulthood.

CHAPTER THREE

INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY ON ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

In American culture, it is common to attribute foibles and problems, as well as strengths, to family upbringing. When asked what was so compelling about playing music in groups, one of the interviewees smiled and responded, "Funny coincidence. I just spent the last therapy session discussing that. I think it has a lot to do with my family."

Attitudes and ways of behaving are traced to our first exposure to the world within our families. The family socializes the child to the society's culture, transmitting that culture from one generation to the next (Bandura 1969). The process is not always direct; the messages are spoken and unspoken. More than it educates intentionally, the family educates through "experiences that pass into and out of awareness on a fleeting, moment-to-moment basis" (Leichter 1985:208).

Just as individuals have unique personalities, families have their own temperaments and their own biases. The variety of family styles among the people in this study is enormous. Somehow out of those different messages and styles each person developed and retained an artistic interest. For some, the interest developed because of their families, for others in spite of their families. Clues can be found in their family's heritage, ancestry and history and social class.

Discussing these families in terms of "variables", such as effects of birth order, or differences between those whose parents were artists and those whose parents were not, is a method which some family researchers believe is not always the most useful (Leichter 1985:207). The significance of these variables depend upon each family's interpretation of what it means to be oldest or youngest, or part of a group of artists. Instead I will describe these families in terms of the overall influencing factors that the interviewees themselves identified as responsible for their own attitudes and behavior regarding their artistic development. These family cases illustrate how vastly different backgrounds can lead to a similar outcome. For the purposes of explanation, families are categorized by type. They should not be seen as clear-cut classifications, but rather emphasizes and overriding factors in each person's family history that he or she identified as influencing his or her development as an amateur artist. It will show those aspects of family relationships, among parents and siblings, that influenced the person the most and helped shape his approach to art and life. The person took those messages and incorporated them into his or her own style of living.

The Eccentric Family

Maria, a 43-year old mother of four, considers herself to have three jobs: she is a mother, teacher, and legal proofreader, in addition to being a playwright. She thinks she inherited this busy way of life from her family. She says that a lot of men tell her they admire her ability to juggle so many things at once, and plan to encourage their wives to do the same. But she doesn't want to set a trend; she acts this way because she cannot help it. Believing her routine to be stressful, she advises them against it.

"I say, 'Don't tell your wife anything. This is not the kind of life you want your wife to be leading.' And it's true.

I do it because that's the way my mother was. My mother had ten children...it's in the blood. And my daughter's the same way as I am..."

She grew up in a large Italian-American Catholic family in a small town. She describes her family as having been religious, yet unconventional.

"My father was ...a schoolteacher, an artist, a chemist, a biologist, a pianist... an all-around type of Renaissance person. So we were very eccentric. We still are..."

And then my father - he was a like a - you know the old wise man. You'd just sit around and he'd tell you all these things. He was interesting. It was just an interesting kind of life. I don't even know if half the things he told us were true. And it doesn't matter! He...had a very fine taste for art and music. He would listen to opera and play the piano. We had a big collection of art books. Our grandparents were Italian, so there's a very artistic bent there too, as far as Art History, and Music History. We had to listen to opera every Saturday on the radio as we were cleaning the house. They had from the Met, broadcasts. So they'd turn the radio up all the way, and we're there cleaning and scrubbing, and listening to the opera! So you're just exposed to that early."

With the large size of their family, money was extremely tight, causing her artistically inclined father to be very resourceful.

"He had no canvas. He painted the dining room wall. So there's murals all around. It's no longer a dining room. We call it a "jungle room" because my mother couldn't refurnish it. She just took lots of plants and put them in the room. So it's called the jungle room! All these weird murals on the walls!

...He had no paint brushes, so he'd take my mother's hair, when she cut her hair, and make them."

There was a lot of singing in her family, which she adored. It is a habit she continues by singing to her own children. She is convinced this is the reason her oldest daughter is now a serious singer in college. For Maria, who sees creative juices as natural phenomena that need to be released, poetry writing soon accompanied singing. Since she was twelve years old Maria knew that she wanted to write. Writing was the active side of reading, and the world of literature was an escape from the pressures of a large family.

" I don't know (why I wanted to write). I guess I read a lot when I was a kid. I read a lot of poetry. Music and poetry are basically the same, and music was a very big part of my life, too, singing, mostly. So I don't know if the poetry came out of the music or what. But it went hand in hand, I think.

Reading was an escape. Because there were so many kids. I was the oldest girl. I had a lot of responsibility for the household, taking care of my little brothers and sisters, and it wasn't easy. So I would just take a book and escape. I would just go somewhere where nobody could find me, and read a lot. And read and read and read."

In college she started out as a journalism major but found it "too impersonal and not artistic enough." She went through a dry writing period, concerned with other things -

studying abroad, marrying, having children and working. To get back to writing she took classes. One particular teacher introduced her to playwriting, which became her main form of creative expression.

Maria has been writing plays for sixteen years, from the time when her two eldest children were little until now, when they are in college but she still has young children in the house. Just as she ran off as a child, to read and obtain privacy in order to escape the responsibilities of being the oldest girl in her large family, she repeats this routine in her present writing habits. Her need for privacy remains as strong:

"(I cannot write) having people around. You know? Which is a horrible thing... for a mother to say. But I found that that was absolutely true, and once I realized that was the problem, and I eliminated that problem, by my husband taking them all away, it was much better. But then I realized that I had to write really fast. I couldn't ask them to go away for a month! It could only be a weekend!

...It's hard, (finding the time) and it gets harder. But when I have a project, I will sit and do it for seven, eight hours at a stretch. I can work when nobody's here. I cannot work with anybody around. I can't...my husband, he's good. He'll take the kids away. I say, 'I need 8 hours of work,' and they'll stay out for the day. They'll either go to my mother's or they'll go somewhere. And I'll be able to work. When I'm working I can really concentrate. Most of my plays - the short plays I've written in a matter of three or two days."

The elements of Maria's life illustrate how she has maintained a continuity with her background. Her family was very religious in a spiritual sense, and this influence appears in her brother's and father's paintings. Like them, she finds a place for religion, by continuing to be very

connected to the church in her community where she has produced many of her plays. (She tried to substitute the plays for the sermon but this did not go over well with some of the parishioners). She sends her children to a private Catholic school and teaches English as a Second Language there in exchange for free tuition. As a teaching tool she has her students produce plays. Her playwriting and songwriting is a new form of the opera music that was played in her home growing up. Her parents' attachments - her father's "Renaissance" approach to life and her mother's political activism, (which included the holding of public office in her town), and multiple roles, reemerge in Maria in an altered and adapted form. Her story illustrates how the various elements of the parents' forms of connection to the world can be a legacy for children as they reach adulthood. The influence of these elements upon the individual cannot be discounted.

The Troubled and Divided Family

The contribution of the family to the artistic development of the person can be both positive and negative. Sometimes it can be a combination of both within the same family. An example is Sybil's family. Sybil, who later became an avid potter, inherited a tradition of craftsmanship through her extended family. They provided her with building-type toys and "there was a whole sense of crafts being an important part of development as a child."

She and her sister were assigned roles.

"My parents did this thing where Sybil is the this - and Donna is the that - Sybil was the artist and Donna was the athlete. Those were the kind of the roles we were assigned. My sister actually did play music as a kid, now that I think about it. She played flute. All through Junior High and High School. In fact she probably played flute longer than I played saxophone. So that aspect was encouraged. But she definitely was not defined as an artist the way I was."

Her parents were very different from each other. Her father had an interest in art but did not do any himself, while her mother was a frustrated artist. The tensions between the parents were great. Sybil sees her father as getting in the way of her mother's artistic development:

"My mother was a nurse, and...she took an art class when I was about seven years old and I think it was kind of a frustrating thing for her because she really loved it. My father was so weird. He ended up getting really friendly with her art teacher and flirting with her art teacher which was so typical of my father. So my mother stopped taking the art class because she was so uncomfortable."

In her adolescent years, Sybil studied in a high school where her own father was the principal. This was unbearable for her, and she sought the art class as a refuge. Describing her father as "disturbed", and her parents' marriage as "troubled", she felt unhappy at home. To have her father, an intrusive person, be the ultimate authority figure at her high school was unbearable, and so the art class, located in a building separate from the high school, with its sympathetic teacher, was an especially important saving grace.

"...At that time in my life I was much more identified with my mother because my father was just such a horrible presence in our family. Studying art was like being more

like my mother, because there was a polarity in my family where my mother liked art and wanted to do art, and my father was always pushing me to be intellectual. He wanted me to be a lawyer or something - his own frustrated ambitions. So I was...choosing my mother over my father, at that period of my life."

This "polarity" in her family, between the intellectual and the artistic temperament, repeated itself as a theme in her continuing development. She seesawed back and forth between these two aspects of herself - the intellectual and the artistic. Relationships sharpened the conflict; in her twenties she was influenced by a boyfriend she lived with to give up the artistic side for an extended period of time.

"During that period of my life I developed a real loss of confidence and the guy I was involved with was really not very supportive of the work I was doing. Looking back on it now I realize that he kind of represented my father in my life - he became a substitute for my father. He was really attracted to me more for what he saw as my intellectual abilities. That was important to him - to be involved with a woman who was intellectual and smart. As a result, I felt again like I was this polarized person and I had to make a choice. I made the choice to study philosophy and work on becoming more of an intellectual, so I would please him more, because...being an artist didn't please him that much. So I didn't do any art at all - I literally even stopped drawing - for about close to ten years."

She only began to draw and make crafts recently, although even in the barren decade:

"I still would do things like doodle. I've always drawn on my papers in classes. People sometimes would look over my shoulder and admire stuff that I'd drawn. Draw pictures of people in class. But other than that I hadn't done anything ..."

Her doodling indicates that the artistic urges were lying dormant, emerging only in a small way.

Sybil eventually ended her relationship with this man and

reawakened the artistic side of herself. While a graduate student in philosophy, she did artistic things for fun, and began to do pottery, finding herself able to become intensely absorbed. The absorption was comforting, since it was a focussed interest which she was losing in her graduate work, which worried her.

"There's the larger experience of doing pottery (which I think I've talked about) which is the sensuality, the physicality, and all that. But I think there is the whole issue of being able to really focus on something in a way that feels timeless. It feels in a way like you've stepped out of your life, and there's just you and there's the piece that you're working on. So much of my life, particularly in the last few years, has felt really fragmented and uncertain, and there's been a lot of anxiety, it's those kind of moments, those hours, that allow me to think about nothing but what's going on at that moment. It's very therapeutic, for one thing, but also it's reassuring to know that I can get that focussed.

... when I was younger that's how I dealt with a lot of difficulties growing up in the family I grew up in, was focussing on art like that, so I didn't get swept up in the anxiety and the fears that I had. And it takes me back to in some ways feeling like I did as a kid where - you don't have to feel responsible for other things. It's just you and this one piece that you're working on."

Sybil's rediscovered ability to focus intensely and pleasurably on a task was first developed as a child in reaction to a difficult family life. Ways of coping with family life continue in adults as ways of coping with life in general. Sybil experienced distress from her family as a child and escaped from it by focussing on visual arts in the comfort of an art class, while Maria, in a happy family but an overwhelming one, needed time away from everyone, and ran off to read to escape. As adults needing to cope with similar

confining situations, they use the adaptive skills they learned as children. Sybil learned to become absorbed. As an adult she sees herself as relearning to focus, through the medium of the art, and discovers the joys once again of release from anxiety. Maria's continued need since childhood for privacy, fantasy, and concentration to write is resolved by every so often sending her husband and kids away.

Sybil's family was divided along several lines. Her parents were divided from each other, and they divided their daughters by categorizing them differently, where, for instance, only one of them could be called the "artist". In Jenny's family, where a different type of troubled situation existed, the divisions were between children and parents. As young children, she and her five siblings, brought up in a rural environment, were overwhelming to their mother, while their father was either at work or night school and rarely home. Jenny's parents were impatient and not very affectionate.

"...my mother was out of her mind with (so many) kids. She had no idea how to raise children. She didn't have good models, and there was no one to help her... My mother is a hot-tempered person, and so is my father...She would be in a rage sometimes, and she would put us all outside, and say, 'don't come back in', so she didn't kill us."

On the other hand, her parents shared a strong love for music. Her mother habitually sang jazz and popular tunes from the forties and fifties, and, before their marriage, her father had played the piano extremely well. Her parents loved

to go out and dance the fox trot, polka, and other dances from that era. Starting when they were very little and throughout their childhood, Jenny and her siblings produced plays and puppet shows, and played band music together in their basement playroom, performing for their parents.

"... ever since I was a little kid this was the thing that I felt good doing, because I got validation and attention from my parents. It really was so pleasurable to be in a group, but also to perform in a group, because my parents would laugh hysterically or they would applaud. That's the only time they really paid attention to us, except to punish us."

Jenny has always gotten the greatest pleasure from playing music in groups, and she realizes this is due to the memories of her family. She associates group activity with the most pleasurable aspect of an otherwise difficult family life. She finds that she still turns to it for emotional comfort from stressful events.

"that (the performance) was really a wonderful experience. So as an adult I certainly didn't recognize on a conscious level that that's what I was trying to do, to recreate something that really was a great feeling. But now I'm very aware of the fact that that's what draws me to playing in a group. I really want a social connection with people, and music is a vehicle for that."

Like Sybil and Maria, Jenny's family story illustrates how stress-reduction measures adopted in childhood continue throughout life. Pleasure obtained from artistic activities, for each of these people, helped them cope with tensions created by stressful family encounters.

The Family That Sends Confused Messages

Sarah is a professional violist in her early forties, whose career has been very successful. Working mostly on a freelance basis, she has never been strapped for jobs, earns a good living, and has a satisfying career. She chose the field against her parent's wishes. On the one hand her parents promoted an intense connection to music, but on the other hand strongly disapproved when their children, as a consequence, wanted to become professional musicians.

Sarah's father, an electrical engineer, had been an excellent pianist whose teachers had wanted him to become professional but whose family told him he would not be able to make a living if he did so. In his engineering profession:

"...He was very unhappy. In the beginning he worked on radio and so he thought that was his connection with music. But he was very unhappy, and he was very depressed as a result.

He loved the cello. For my parents' first anniversary, my mother had saved secretly all year. She saved a hundred dollars and she went out and bought him a cello. He was thrilled to pieces, and he took lessons, and it never amounted to anything of course, but he had a string quartet that he played with once a week."

All four children in Sarah's family were taught by their parents to play the piano on the "beautiful instrument" that was in the house. Their mother, who, Sarah says, cannot play herself but "can teach anything", taught them as well as their father. After a while on the piano, each child took up a string instrument.

"There was a big competition among the brothers and me. That fueled us. My oldest brother took up the violin, my next oldest brother took up the cello, and I started on

violin, but I couldn't stand it, so very shortly, about three years after, - (I started piano when I was 5, violin when I was about 8), at 11, my mother convinced me to switch to viola. So we had a full complement in the house, and we had family music hours. So yes, it was very much a family thing."

Their parents encouraged music to a great degree. In a kind of storybook fashion, it was an important way that their family socialized with one another.

"...They (parents) thought it should be enrichment. It isn't just music. We had our dance classes, and Hebrew school, and all that stuff. We did everything. We were occupied morning, noon, and night."

More than any of the other activities, for Sarah and her brothers, "somehow or other the music became very powerful", and each attempted music on a professional level.

"My oldest brother wanted to be a professional violinist, but was discouraged by the family and by things that happened when he went to school. He plays. He went semi-professional for a while."

Her other older brother became a professional cellist, playing with a symphony, while her two other brothers became very competent musicians on a semi-professional level.

It is extremely common for a family to involve its children in culture but discourage any artistic ambitions as far as a livelihood is concerned. In fact, such a situation is the cliché of the middle-class family. In Sarah's family, while the extent of the children's involvement was greater than the typical family, this rule still held. Yet Sarah decided to become a professional violist for multiple reasons, among them the inspirational influence of her teacher at a well-known college of music. Another reason was social. As a

teenager her friends were primarily musicians who played with her in the Youth orchestras rather than the classmates in her high school. She also partly attributes her decision to rebellion:

"I play music because my family played music. And I ended up as a musician because everybody said no, and in those days if they said no, I said yes."

Her decision was so different from what her parents wished because:

"They had given up their dreams. Practical. But we didn't grow up in the Depression. We grew up in the 1950's and '60's which were very different times. So we thought we didn't have to be practical."

Sarah was both embracing her family's values and rebelling against them; they were telling her that music is wonderful, it's what makes a person happy, fulfilled, satisfied. On the other hand they were telling her, don't try to make a living from it. Taking hold of what for her was the more powerful part of their message, she became a professional violist.

Despite Sarah's successful career as a violist, in other ways she was creatively frustrated, because other arts and interests compelled her as much as the music. Craftsmanship, creating objects, is another hobby that she links to her family:

"But he (the older brother, the professional cellist) also loves to make things. He's channelled it into music, so he makes instruments, cellos. But he also builds houses and other things, from scratch, like plank by plank!

I don't know. Some of us have that urge in our family that we like to make things.

...My father loved to work with wood. He channelled that into home projects, cabinetry, and fixing things. There was always some project on line."

...I think in terms of making things and being really in touch with the need to do that, I have the strongest urges in the family. I always have... I started making things when I was really little, above and beyond the little crafts projects they give little kids to do in school. I think it's just been a really strong need for me.

It seems that the times when I get so busy with my regular work or obligations, family or household, or doing taxes, I get very unhappy, and I take it out on the people around me. I used to forget what the cause of that was, and somewhere along the line I said, 'wait a minute! I didn't used to feel this way. What's different? I know. I'm not making anything.' So I have to make something and then I feel better!"

In an interesting perspective, she attributes the practice of making things to a family trait. Many other interviewees who share this interest say it is a part of their family's traditions. They see a kind of family heritage as an important influence upon their predilections.

The Economically Troubled Family

To the child, the family is a window to the world outside. Experiences of economic hardship can leave a lasting impression. The parents who lived through the Great Depression were permanently affected in their attitudes towards money and economic security, which affected the attitudes of their children.

Frank, a fifty-three year old insurance actuary who paints, grew up in a suburb of Detroit as an only child of artists. His parents earned their living doing commercial

photography and portrait painting, yet they struggled economically and compromised artistically. His father, who wanted to write short stories, began as an editor and then with the Depression was forced to become a copywriter for an advertising company. Writing fiction and ad copy turned out to be a deadening combination:

"...when he was forced to go from editing into advertising/copyrighting...the guy he worked for would say, 'For next Thursday, give us fifty slogans on this kind of refrigerator - how wonderful this refrigerator is'. He hated it so much that he said he lost interest in doing his fiction writing. He said it was too closely related."

He became a professional photographer. Both he and Frank's mother, the portrait painter, involved Frank in their work. From the age of three or four he would watch his mother paint in her studio. His present fascination with color in his own paintings stem from his father's involving him in photographic color print development:

"my father taught color photography...I used to go down and help him make color - dye transfer prints, which is a complicated color technique. He was always trying to get me interested in photography, but I never really did get interested..."

... Both my parents worked in the house - my father doing his photography down in the basement...had these giant enlargers that went up into the attic. For the color photography it was a lot of balancing of color...my father taught color photography as adult education...He would have me come down and be...like a trained monkey. He would show how his nine year old kid could do this - I was just squeejeing the color on.

...He would bring a print up from the basement - a trial print. He would say, 'is it too blue? Is it too red?' (Because there would be an overall cast to the print.) If it was close, it was hard to tell what was off. If it wasn't close, it would be obvious - everything would have a blue cast. So he would ask me what I thought.

The same thing with my mother. When she was painting she would ask me....I actually got pretty good...(not that I could do it myself), but I could tell if something was off on a face. That was really a form of training for me."

In choosing interests and directions for himself, Frank tried to avoid his parents' turf, but his interest in painting eventually won over.

"Even toward the high school. I only took one art course in High School. And I think it was partly also because I was a little afraid of competing with my parents. They didn't have any aptitude for math! I wound up getting a degree in that in college. But toward the end I was really not that interested. So then I started dabbling in painting again as a hobby. I was sort of floundering to find something that would be meaningful to me."

After college he took graduate courses, partly to avoid being drafted into the Vietnam War. A course in the Philosophy of Aesthetics suggested new possibilities for his art beyond portrait painting. He moved to New York and discovered the abstract art movement then in vogue, incorporating the genre into his own paintings. His combined interests in math and color formed the basis of his painting style which developed into modern, abstract, geometric-style paintings. Currently decorating his living room in his New Jersey home, they are cheerful, yellow, huge canvases. His basement studio walls are lined with huge canvases. Stored away in one corner are dozens of huge barrel size rolled up canvases. Over the years Frank has been very prolific.

Besides the discomfort of perceived competition with his parents, Frank had also tried to avoid being an artist because

he abhorred the extreme financial difficulties that his parents experienced because they were artists.

"...my parents...were always on the edge...we never went to a restaurant for dinner...We never took vacations unless someone invited us up to a cottage on a lake...even though I lived in a nice middle class neighborhood, my parents were the oddballs in the neighborhood. As a kid, it was a source of embarrassment. We always had the oldest car, my friends always were going on vacations.

My mother's friends were always saying to me, 'well, isn't that great, having a mother who was an artist?' but to tell you the truth, when I was younger, I was more concerned about being able to afford to do this and that."

Despite the financial difficulties, Frank was drawn to art. He went for a Masters in Fine Arts, became friends with one of his professors, a famous sculptor, and lived in a small house on his grounds for many years, worked at an insurance company part-time only, attempted to teach art, and painted. But eventually the artist died and Frank had to work full-time at the Insurance Company. Yet the roots of all these decisions can perhaps partly be traced to his parents' experiences.

"The thing that is positive about working and not having to support yourself as an artist is that you can really do what you want. You don't have to cater to anybody's taste, or do things that fit over somebody's couch. Whereas my mother was a portrait painter. That's the worst because you're trying to please people."

...But my father...used to tell me that I was doing exactly the right thing, that I should be working for an insurance company and painting on the side...

It was easy for him to say, because he wasn't working for an insurance company, but he thought that you would at least be able to separate the two worlds better and that it wouldn't destroy your enthusiasm for what you were doing. I'm not sure. I think that there's probably some truth to that.

The flip side is that I'm doing a job that I really have almost no interest in and that does cow you down after a while."

He learned from his family that to attempt to make your artistic dreams into your profession makes you poor, financially on edge, and causes you to compromise yourself artistically. The financial burden of his family was a major influence on his key work-related decisions.

There were other influences as well. For example, being an only child was an added factor. The whole burden was on him.

"As an only child your parents expect you to become all the things they never became. That was kind of a burden on me growing up.

I think my parents were happy that I was in some form of art. They wanted me just to be successful in what I was doing. But my father tried to force it on me more. He wanted me to be a writer. He would tell me, even as a kid, your writing is really good. And my writing wasn't very good! It's gotten better since, but it tends to be technical and analytical and not - I don't think I'd be a good fiction writer. But he would keep telling me, 'well, you've got this talent for writing,' and I knew that wasn't true. Then he was always trying to get me to do the photography. I think he was always disappointed that I never took (it) up...

Frank related a story that he felt carried a lot of meaning. His father always felt that Frank was more influenced by his mother because he was a painter as she was. One day Frank was visiting his parents in Detroit, and sparring with his father about this question. Frank tried to convince his father that in some ways his father had influenced him even more than his mother because Frank's paintings were abstract, unlike his mother's, and concerned with color, which probably had their roots in his father's photography lessons of childhood. His father remained unconvinced, insisting it was

his mother he took after. Frank was talking loud, since his father was hard of hearing, and his mother, who was washing the dishes twenty-five feet away, suddenly stopped.

"So obviously I succeeded in putting down my mother without convincing my father of what I was trying to say!"

The story is indicative of the fate of the only child, whose parents invest their own dreams and egos into his choices and abilities.

The Family That Disapproves

When families disapproved of their childrens' artistic inclinations their reasons originated from many sources, including religious or class-based values and personal prejudice. The source of Kate's father's disapproval, for example, was his own professionally based snobbism. He had been a professional drummer, which he had given up to run a music school by the time she was growing up. Using his authority as a professional musician, he had an elitist snobby attitude towards his art. She remembers how, as an adult, when her parents would visit her, they would go to jazz concerts.

"...We'd be sitting in the audience. The audience would clap enthusiastically when it was over and he would say, 'Ah, they don't appreciate it. They're just clapping but they don't know what's going on!' He would also put down very often people who aspired to be artists, especially young people. 'Ah they'll never make it. They'll go into their father's furniture business.' I grew up hearing a lot of that kind of talk and I think that was a real effective discouragement for me seriously pursuing any kind of art, because the message that I got from him was that most people who pursue an art are phonies."

The parents' lack of encouragement contrasted with their attitude toward her older sister. Unlike Kate, her sister was encouraged when she showed an interest at the age of twelve in the clarinet, and she grew up to become a professional clarinetist:

"My sister didn't get that message....their attitude towards her and towards me was real different. Because she was this serious musician, even as a kid, they said, 'Leave her alone. She's practicing. Wash the dishes. She's practicing. Don't knock on her door.'

I think it put a wedge between me and my sister because she was too busy practicing to do more...frivolous everyday sisterly things...But I also feel like she was taken seriously and my father thought I was cute. So that made me jealous."

Kate's father was so involved with music and had such a personal stake in its excellence, as he saw it, that he could not easily allow most others admittance to his private club. On the other hand, there are parents who themselves had no exposure to the arts, and do not incorporate it into their view of what's important in the world. Eric's parents, for example, were rigid in their criteria of what was acceptable behavior, and they could not understand the value of the arts.

" My mother was a housewife. My father was a salesman in manufacturing. He sold children's clothes.

...Once when I was young my mother said she was happy she didn't raise me to be a Picasso. She didn't like his paintings."

Having suffered their own educational deprivation, they wanted their children to become professionals, doctors or teachers. They had not had the opportunity to go to college themselves and had a strong desire to see their children get a higher education and make an adequate living.

"It could have been that my father actually didn't graduate Junior High School - he was thrown out of school. My mother always wanted to go to college but since she was a woman her father said, no, you have to go to business school. She was good in French, and good in school. Therefore I think there was a lot of pressure on us to go to college and do well and pursue educational goals. I think that may be one of the reasons why all three of us became teachers."

Eric's struggles with his mother was the jet propulsion to his writing career.

"...I said, 'If you write you're supposed to write about yourself,' but who would want to read about me? All I was doing was staying at home and reading a lot. My life situation just wasn't that interesting.

I realized I had these really interesting parents. My mother would always give me advice, not to do this, not to do that. So I started writing about my mother, and that made me as a writer. I had this unique voice. I got into her head.

...So if I had ever had writer's block I had an instant cure. I'd just call my mother. Because I wasn't what she wanted me to be. I never became a doctor, or a lawyer. So the poems were all about conflict between me and my mother."

Even though Eric's mother unwittingly played the role of muse, she was never aware of it:

"I never told my mother I was a writer, just kept it a secret from her. Because she was very sensitive. I don't think she would have understood what I was writing about ... now my father knows..."

Eric's first publication for a large publishing company was a complete book of poems about his mother. The poems do not provide a particularly flattering portrait of his mother. The sarcastic, humorous poems continue throughout the book, mostly in his mother's voice, scolding and warning him about his lack of present and future success in the world of marriage and career, and his imperfections as a person and a

son.

"But as I got older she acknowledged me more, got happier, and accepted me more, that I was a teacher. I think she was living through me, partly, and had all these great plans for me, but, as I said, I just couldn't be a doctor or a lawyer. It just wasn't me."

Before the book was published his mother died, never having known of its existence. When he won a National Endowment for the Arts grant for \$20,000, he finally told his father he was writing. He knew that his father would only see writing as a worthwhile activity if he earned money from it; otherwise his father "would think it was some hippie thing".

Jill, another writer, thinks the atmosphere in her family was not one that fostered creativity. A family may not consciously set out to sabotage a child's artistic inclinations, but by not valuing those tendencies, the family can inadvertently discourage them. Jill describes her family as tending towards tight and rigid behavior, which she sees as the opposite of creativity. Her father was a doctor, the first in his family to finish college, and her mother was a housewife. She grew up in New York City. Her mother was an avid reader, and her father was "down-to-earth" and "practical", and influenced her to value the service professions. She sees her extended family as moneymakers "out of John O'Hara novels"; one lone cousin who seemed less straight and narrow, who studied poetry with Robert Frost, gave it up to become a corporation lawyer. Saying that one of the few artistic type activities that her mother and sisters

engage in is knitting, she adds that they do it in the same manner that they do everything else, rigidly and uncreatively:

"My mother and her sisters knit. They never knit creatively. They never did what people did in the '80's - where they made up their own patterns and played with colors! They used patterns and changed sizes but they didn't make anything up. The stitches were even and perfect! That was how they did it. Things were neat and trim. Tight. My mother and her sisters had this thing that their daughters - if your hair was getting a little longer - 'don't you need a trim?' You know, everything very ordered and tight."

She felt socialized by her family into a competitive mindset, which caused her to stop herself from developing creative potential in the visual arts:

"I drew for years and years and years. I sculpted...I did some modeling clay down in Soho,... But there's a lot of competition. When you're in a competitive environment, which is so killing, and you're raised that way."

"In high school I remember going...on the Lexington Avenue subway, and looking for the Village. We had big sketch pads, and we couldn't find it, so we stood near Astor Place, sketching cars. That was the best we could do. That was our first shot at it. She went on to Laguardia, which was Music and Art. I should have gone there, - that's what would have been good for me, but I'd already traveled to a special Junior High school and my mother, the story was, just didn't want me to go so far. So I went to this crummy (high school)."

Jill tended to do a lot of comparing of herself with others, similar to how other people in this study have done.

"I remember wanting to major in art, being in some studio art classes at Brandeis, (we only had about two or three teachers at Brandeis) and watching whoever it was walking around - this girl who was really good. She had a beautiful line - (a drawing of) a model - and I thought, 'I'll never do it like that. I hate mine.' I wasn't gonna be great, but why couldn't I keep going? Maybe that wasn't the place - an art studio class, but still..."

Giving up the drawing because her mind interfered, she was able to avoid the same process with writing. Her approach

changed due to time, to learning from mistakes.

(With painting), "I would have thought that I was gonna make a fool of myself and it would be dreadful. Now I've gotten past that. That's why I didn't like to keep painting. I was gonna be an art major. When you're sitting back as the critic and the spectator you can say, 'I don't like that', but when you're trying to do it, it's much more fun to get real about it. So that's kind of what happened there."

Jill saw competition as a driving force in her family, and incompatible with artistic expression. One cannot be self-conscious, self-judging, or overly competitive, and be able to explore one's artistic intuitions. Jill blamed her internalized struggle between the critic and the creator on her family upbringing.

"My family and relatives are competitive - all these people who are lawyers and judges and things like that."

Families and Heritage: Passing on the Torch

As families have ethnic and religious ties, they may have musical, literary and artistic traditions, all of which can be interconnected segments of a family heritage. Down through generations, a family passes on artistic, musical, or literary connections just as it passes on other features of identity, ethnic or otherwise. Culture and tradition is transmitted through stories and family lore. "Myths and legends as told and retold within a family convey the knowledge, values, and attitudes in a special (and often unique) form, at the same time that they offer explanations as to why particular viewpoints are held (Leichter 1985:215)."

George's childhood home life was filled with music; his parents loved music but did not play instruments. Their story of their immigrant experience emphasized the importance of music in their lives:

"...they both emigrated from Russia - in 1905...I know that of the few belongings that they were able to take with them to the United States, my mother brought with her her violin, which was very interesting. I never heard her play, but anyway, I guess that's a reflection of her interest in music. But there was always music in our home."

Much of verbal exchange is the telling of stories, whether as daily gossip, or exchange of information, but it can also be elevated to an art form.

Vicky, for example, who writes fiction, has a grandmother who is a "born storyteller", and a father and grandfather who told stories as well. In part by their example, she was influenced to consider writing herself because:

"...it legitimized this whole process of telling stories. It became very important when my grandmother...came over she told us these stories. It's still important for me when I go see her that she tells me stories. I ask her to tell me...about growing up in Germany at the turn of the century - she's 89 now. They're very pedestrian, but the way she tells them - crafts them, in a way that I would craft words on paper..but she crafts them orally. She's had many years of crafting them that way: 'ACH, yah!' She can't see anything now, so I went through the photo box, and I was like, 'Well, there's baba (my grandfather), and it looks like his brother Greg, and then there's this large, rather buxom woman. Is that Raisl, his sister?'

'Ach yah, that's RAISL! She was vely beautiful but vely sttuupid!'

And she knows exactly where to drop the 'very stupid'...she plays off of who she is when she tells the story. She has a real sense that she's an 89 year old woman. So she talks about sex, in a salacious manner. She shocks people. But she gets the reaction that she's striving for."

Homes full of books, music, or art objects become natural pieces of the child's universe. The playing of many musical recordings or the mere presence of an instrument in the home, even if not played by the parent, can stimulate the child to engage with them, or stir the child's romantic imagination, as George was by his mother bringing her violin to America.

Any kind of exposure, especially in the family, can be a catalyst. Brian was curious about music as a child because his mother had a large classical music collection and a piano. He rarely, if ever, heard her play, but he played on his own.

...that first piano was a baby Grand. I probably trashed that by the time I was ten, so she got rid of it. When I was a late teenager she bought this other piano, that was really not very good. But she bought it for me, because she knew by that time - late teens - I was interested in guitar. As a matter of fact, she took guitar lessons, and then she dropped it. I just picked up the guitar from her. Then I played that guitar. That was my first guitar - a K guitar.

... It might be that I inherited her talent. My father didn't have any signs of that. Neither does my brother."

Religious tradition affects artistic development. Eric and Mel were both brought up in Jewish homes. While Mel's family was Orthodox and strict, disapproving of the arts for their sacrilegiousity, Eric's family was reform but communicated the same message, so that he interpreted Jewish tradition to be disapproving of creative endeavor.

"I think that in Judaism there's no mediation between you and God. It's like idol worship...like the golden calf. You're not supposed to create something, you're supposed to do other stuff.

... I was Reform. My grandfather was Orthodox, but my mother decided to bring us up reform, which I'm grateful for, because I had less rules to rebel against. I rebelled against Judaism too. I see Judaism as my

identity, but I don't go to temple. I don't believe in a lot of these rules. I think religion is just this inner thing that people have or don't have."

In Mel's Orthodox upbringing, the education he received made explicit its disapproval of the arts.

"So my dad and mom - they did not encourage it as a career because in those days "artist" meant naked models, which of course was sacrilegious. So my dad kept me in a Yeshiva, ... they frowned upon having naked models in the class."

While Mel's family did not approve of the arts as an activity, he thinks they inadvertently helped spark the artistic sensibility in him anyway:

"... even my dad was somewhat artistic in the religious sense. Before the Jewish holidays, certain ones like Succus or Purim or whatever, there were certain symbolic or religious symbols that he always drew. And I used to watch. He'd make a picture of a fish, or whatever the occasion was. And that may have given me the germ of an idea or something."

Religious and ethnic identity can, on the other hand, be a connecting link to an art form. Mitchell felt a deep identification with Judaism and chose his instrument partly on that basis:

(My mother) said, "you could have lessons in some musical instrument - what would you like? I heard some Yiddish freilachs on the violin and Yitzhak Perlman's "Lalo Symphony Espagnol", and for me because he was Jewish, somehow, Lalo was a Jewish piece of music! So I said, "I want to play violin, because it is a nice Jewish instrument."

Familial artistic links can be personally meaningful even if not present in the immediate family. A cousin, aunt, or grandparent, or even someone generations back can provide an affective bond for the amateur artist, who feels linked,

connected, and even a little preordained in this way. Mel, for example, knows that he has an ancestor who was an artist:

"I also learned later on there was a famous artist by the name of Samuel Epstein,¹ in the 18th Century. He's in the Encyclopedia of Jewish Art, and he was a pretty great artist, as far as I'm concerned. And I found out later on that he was a cousin. So who knows about that."

Mel's feeling of connectedness with his distant relative is another example of how fascinated people are by generations of creative people in one family, perhaps because it evokes the mystery of the origins of creative ability. The public is in awe of talent that runs through the generations, such as the seven generations of composers in J.S. Bach's family, for example, spanning over two hundred years (Anderson 1984).

Frederick, who plays viola in string quartets as a hobby, is convinced that chamber music playing runs in families. In his social playing circle, there have been many occasions when he has played with parents and their children. People get interested through parents and siblings and in turn interest their own children.

Phil, a Transit Authority elevator operator who plays vast quantities of music on a CD and tape cassette deck in the subway elevator, was surrounded by music growing up in Brooklyn:

"I dabble-dabble on the piano once in a while, but nothing to say that I'm any good. I can hear something a number of times and play it, you know. But not to read music.

Now flute is something else. I started playing - all

¹pseudonym

my uncles and my father and everybody was into jazz when I was growing up. It was all jazz. That's all I heard. Maybe I heard some blues every now and then - stuff like that, but it was mainly jazz. I have one uncle that played saxophone and he also played flute and a few other wind instruments. I just grabbed a flute one day and I started lessons with him. He kept buying me little tiny flutes and I kept messing with 'em. I think I was about seven or eight then. Then I just grew into it. Every time I had free time I was playing flute. I played in Junior High school and that's about it. I play every now and then. I pick it up and I play it.

And I have children that play. I have one daughter that plays the baritone. She's eleven. That's my last child...I have older children that play instruments too. My brothers play guitar, and one plays bass guitar, another plays piano, also. But me, I'm a strictly jazz man."

Families are not always studied as a complete unit, but in terms of pairs, or dyads (Leichter 1985). The importance of individual relationships within a family are just as meaningful as those between the family as a whole. Often in the case of artistic predilection, two members of a family can share the same interest, for example, a mother and a daughter, who then shares it in turn with her daughter. Marianna as a teenager took an art class with her mother in Philadelphia, an hour from their home. Once a week they drove there together and took the class.

"My mother - my parents are divorced almost 20 years. My mother was always artistic, but she didn't really start to paint until I was in High School. In fact, when I would go to those drawing classes she would go to a painting class. She and I and this 60 year-old friend of hers would get in a car Friday night and drive up to Philadelphia and they would go to this painting class and I would go to this drawing class."

Now, with her older daughter, she shares a talent for art:

"It turns out that Raima, who I never pushed into art,

was recognized by her school as being gifted and talented in art. She's in a special program through her school that, you know, Project Challenge. Some kids are in there for academics. Raima is in there for art. And I probably went out of my way not to push her into it. She just has it herself. So it's something that, as the last five years have been very very stressful for us, it's been something that we've always had in common. That at least there's something that she has special with me."

Pleased that the two of them have this appreciation for art to share between them, she shares this love with her daughter by taking her to art museums in the city.

"I try to take my older daughter to museums. Sometimes she's into it, sometimes she's not. We might spend two hours and there might be one thing that speaks to her. It's important to me. I feel very nice about the fact that she's also going to be some kind of visual artist even if it's just for herself. Whatever else she wants to do with her life."

Her insistence that she "went out of her way not to push" her daughter into it, shows a self-consciousness about parental pressure and influence, yet the outcome still pleases her. The interviewees, as a whole, reveal anxieties about pushing their children. George, even though he is of an older generation, feels even more forcefully about this. He believes that children do not willingly partake of culture when young, but rather have it forced upon them by their parents, an opinion different from most interviewees.

"I think that when a child is exposed to music, unless the child is unusually talented, for most of us who weren't, the experience of taking lessons is really basically not very pleasant. ... as a child when you're 7 or 8 or 9, I don't think you're emotionally or psychologically in a position to ... enjoy the music in an aesthetic sense...it doesn't have the same effect on you as music does when you're an older adult. So you don't have that experience of saying, well, gorgeous

music. I'd love to play it. I want to hear it. It's just a lot of notes and a lot of sounds.

... there are so many conflicting interests that impinge upon the child or even the teenager which compete for the time that it takes to spend on the piano or the violin or whatever it is...going out and playing with your friends or going to the street and playing ball or gym, or whatever it is.

And going off to school is another tremendous hurdle, especially if you're going off to college or away from home, the competing interests are tremendous. I know that happened to my oldest daughter who studied the violin when she was a youngster. She studied for about five years and she was quite good and she really played very well. But she went off to college, took her violin with her, put it under her bed, and never touched it. Because there were so many other things happening to a young girl going off to college. Playing the violin was just not - I think the worst thing that she probably could have thought of - that she stays in and practices the violin. I don't know whether that's probably an exaggeration. But I think in a sense that's really true.

He explains that as a child he practiced and took the lessons because it was "expected" of him.

"Well, my parents - ... they said, do you want to learn how to play the piano? I probably said yes because my sister was playing the piano. I don't know if that's true, but they said, well, you have to practice. So I said ok. I was always very obedient and very compliant as a child. I remember that. So if they said, that's what you're supposed to do, I did it. I don't think I ever enjoyed it. As a child.

So I just put in a minimum amount of time in terms of practicing. But it was later on, as you mature culturally and intellectually, and psychologically that the intrinsic appeal of the music begins to take over and you say, gee, I'd love to do this. And I love to hear other people do it, and I'll try to do it the way so-and-so does it. Then you're motivated to do."

His children flirted with musical instruments but eventually dropped them. He was not disappointed with them. He and his wife wondered whether they should have been stricter with their children about music, but explains that the era encouraged "permissiveness" in upbringing.

"...Whatever the kids wanted, that was ok, and if you didn't want to practice, you didn't say anything. So maybe if we were a little stronger in our relationship with our children in that respect, it would have stuck to them a little bit more. But sometimes you could do a lot of harm if you push the kids."

Conclusion: Family Dynamics Beyond Types

A number of common themes have emerged across the family types described in this chapter; they raise the following questions. To what extent is artistic activity an identification with a family member? Is being typecast as an artist, or the alternative, being denied this identity, part of a family labeling process? Or is it a way of differentiating between siblings? Do divided or non-nurturing families necessarily produce negative consequences as far as artistic expression is concerned, as might be expected, or the opposite? Most of the families encouraged the artistic development of their children through the provision of lessons and other opportunities, but the effects of this is unclear.

The doing of art can be emotionally laden in terms of identifying with one or another parent, which has consequences. Sybil's interest in art represented an identification with her mother over her father in a family with parental friction and turmoil. This arbitrary division of art and intellect caused her to have internal conflicts at various stages of her development. She saw herself as a

divided being; because of this struggle she took a ten-year moratorium in art activity. The problem of identification for those with parents who were artists or frustrated artists themselves took the form of a need to be different, so as not to compete directly with either of the parents. An article in the New York Times about cross-generations of successful artists in three families describes how the children of artists "have to carve out their own identities not only in their chosen medium but also in the context of their parents' careers, especially if the parents and children work in the same discipline (Adamson 1997)." Frank felt this strongly, even trying to leave art aside in high school, but was drawn to it later almost in spite of himself. His choice of abstract painting differentiated him from his parents, who were artists in the realist tradition. Marianna also expressed the need to be different from her mother artistically:

"My mother's paintings are very abstract. And one thing I wanted to do in my work was be realistic, not like photo- realistic. But I wanted to be representational. So I don't know if that was like having to have my own thing separate from my mother."

Rebecca was strongly affected by her parents' being artists and art teachers. Comparing herself to them in terms of talent, she concluded that she had none, and became attracted to ceramics and photography, which was a different medium from her parents'.

The strong sense of social evaluation is present in the family setting, just as it is in other social settings. As one

author describes it, "...virtually every aspect of social life is subject to evaluation (Leichter 1985:216)". At times, different siblings were evaluated or labeled differently. In Sybil's and Kate's families, for example, the pairs of sisters were divided into types where one was called the "artist" and the other carried some other designation.

Sibling relationships often influence artistic expression. Competition among siblings is usually depicted as healthy. In Sarah's family, competition among the children enhanced their music making, and among Jenny's siblings, the same was true. Usually a lack of competition between siblings is due to one being valued over the other, and the other feeling a sense of resignation. Kate was resigned, albeit angry, that her sister was considered the musician, while she was not seen as the creative one, but rather the cute one. There was little she saw that she could do about this. It diminished her confidence in her artistic achievements, yet did not stop her from pursuing them entirely. There are also instances where siblings bind together to cope as a unit with difficult parents, for example, in Jenny's case. Whatever experiences people had as children where they learned to cope with difficult situations, they brought with them into adulthood as methods to continue to cope with such situations when they arose. In Jenny's case, her large group of siblings performing together brought her such pleasure that she sought out such situations in adulthood, and took to playing music

for that purpose.

The family can play an important role in nurturing talent. Nurturing families of talented teenagers, for example, focus their attention on their children and encourage them to achieve. Emotionally, the dependable and safe atmosphere they provide reduces the "need for defensiveness and conflict (Csikszentmihalyi et.al.1997:152)". Contrary to these findings, some people in this study came from non-nurturing families and yet developed creative interests and talents anyway. In fact, their ability to become engrossed in artistic projects occurred in part as a result of their unpleasant family circumstances. This was particularly striking with Sybil, who traces her ability to focus intently, completely and pleasurably on her pottery to an upsetting and disturbing family life, where art became her escape. Ironically, the thing that is for her a source of so much pleasure was invented as an escape valve from a non-nurturing family.

In idiosyncratic forms, some of these stories of family life portray a sense of families united by art which serves as a central medium of communication and expression within the family. This style of family life is not dissimilar to a description of three families of intergenerational well-known artists, described in this manner: "In all three of these families, creativity is a form of communication integral to their sense of home and kinship (Adamson 1997:1)". Susan's family where music was played together, Maria's family where

opera was played during the weekly ritual housecleaning, dining room walls became colorful murals, and mother's hair became paintbrushes, and Jenny's family where plays were performed as a matter of course, are all examples. Professional chamber musicians who came from families that played together explain that the special understanding that family members share is different from colleagues or friends and enhances the musical communication: a "unique understanding", that is "in our blood". This was probably true for Susan, who did become a professional musician. Her childhood experiences of playing music as a family probably contributed to her sense of the powerful communicative combination of kinship and aesthetic expression.

It also represents a type of family. In certain circumstances, the family is honored much as an excellent school might be, for special qualities. Each year since 1970, for example, the American Music Conference selects an Amateur Music Family of the Year to show how important families are in promoting amateur chamber music. They are announced to the public during National Music Week (Stebbins:624). These families tend to be large, and to play music together. Music brings them closer together. The mother of the family that won in 1991 said, "Music has helped the children appreciate each other in their abilities, and has created a healthy competition...while boosting their self-confidence and...a bond between parents and children through three generations

that is very strong (Music Trades 1991:23)".

Finally, it is clear that many of these people were encouraged to enjoy the arts, and provided with many stimuli in order to do so, such as materials at home and many lessons after school. For Brian and George and Phil and many others, instruments and records were an inherent and natural part of the home. Even for Jenny, whose family was economically struggling, lessons were not considered a luxury, but were provided. The next chapter will go deeper into the role that such lessons, and education in all its institutional forms, played in the lives of these amateur artists.

CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION

Although the family and education are both identified as institutional agents of the society playing a major role in the socialization of individuals (Mortimer and Simmons 1978), they are significantly different. The family is intimate and all its relations are primary, face-to-face. The school is a social system, operating as the formal representative of the society, organized and subject to continuous decisions by agencies of the community and government. The rules of conduct are not influenced directly by primary relationships as in the family. They are often based on unseen administrators and lawmakers, unknown to and unknowing of the child. The next question in this discussion, therefore, is how education functions for the desires and ability of individuals to express themselves artistically.

After the family, the school is the second important institution the person must confront. While one has no choice which family one is born into, with schooling the options appear to open up more. Yet limits remain. Fate continues to determine what is offered. How one experiences education is affected by many factors.

Children are exposed to arts education in regular day school and on an extra-curricular level. Many of those interviewed were sent by their parents to afterschool lessons

in music, art, dancing, or crafts. In the general population, exposure to art lessons in childhood and youth increases the likelihood of adult participation in the arts. Those who have frequent music lessons over long periods of their childhood and youth are three times more likely to play music as adults than those who had none, for example (Orend 1989:33). Among all the arts, over 60% of the amateurs compared to 46.7% of the general population had art lessons before the age of eighteen (Peters and Cherbo 1992:55).

The minor role that arts education plays in public education reflects its secondary status in society. There is no uniform standard, the degree to which it is present varies by school, state and locality, and on an average, the older the student gets, the less time is devoted to the arts. Arts educators explain that "ours is a society in which education is viewed as job preparation and skill acquisition in so-called basic subjects" (Wilson 1989:34). To fight these perceptions, many argue that indeed, learning the arts does constitute acquisition of necessary survival skills. "Not only do the arts add spice to our lives, but are actually necessary for participation in modern society, which requires competence in acquiring information both visually and aurally" (Orend 1989:1). Nevertheless, these arguments take place mostly in the arena of the printed word, with little influence on public policy. Moreover, as financial pressure occurs, as in current state and city budgets, education in the arts is among the

first to be cut.

That said, in the course of being educated, a person's creative tendencies will be either encouraged or discouraged. One thinks of such educational opportunities mainly in association with childhood, but formative experiences concerning the creative life can occur at any age. There is a quality to each person's educational exposure that cannot be captured in curriculum reviews or measurements. For those in this study, I was interested in exploring not merely how their education encouraged or discouraged their creative capacities, but how it influenced the career trajectories of their artistic activity.

Education as Facilitator

Mitchell's schooling was contradictory. His first school was progressive, open, stimulating and student-centered. The schooling of his teen years was more traditional, paternalistic, authoritarian.

Mitchell's early schooling had a major influence upon his development. He loved his elementary school, describes it as "formative", and subscribed to its educational philosophy and values long after he left it and the school itself had closed. His approach toward the arts and his attitude toward professionalization was shaped by these early experiences.

He attended a private, progressive elementary school from kindergarten through fifth grade. At the school, the arts were

given equal weight, and the typical hierarchical separation of areas of study did not exist. The school emphasized active learning, utilizing varied resources to inspire curiosity and develop thinking in the children. Many opportunities were provided for immediate, visceral experience. His pleasant memories include making pottery, playing the recorder, dissecting guinea pigs, and creating plays. To write a historical play about life in an old town, the students visited the site and searched for archeological artifacts. This gave students a genuine sense of connection to history, as did many of the other activities. His descriptions show how involved he was emotionally with the subjects he was learning:

"I recall a sense of discovery every time I went up to ...enter his (recorder) classroom...a sense of excitement - what is going to happen with this instrument today? I think that maybe was my first musical love...

I also remember dissecting a squid, and... discovering its eye was so similar to the human eye, with an iris. There was also a book I coveted that they had there that my mother bought for me called Life under the Microscope - such a precious book for me because it was the first time I had seen other worlds, and for a little child, to have the recognition that there are universes outside the universe one lives in takes one outside one's own domesticity, and realize that the world was more than mother and father and brother. That's my interpretation - why it was so exciting...all I know is when I got that book it was like if I were a printing historian, getting my hands on one of the Gutenberg Bibles.

In clay I made a bowl in ceramics, and I was awed by the perfection that I invested it with...I finished making this and I loved the shape and then I added the surface and I didn't have the result right away. The teacher was going to fire it. So it was a matter of a week or something, 3,4 days, until it came back. But every waking moment, from when I woke up in the morning I was dreaming about what that bowl would look like when it came back."

He repeatedly describes a sense of "excitement" and

"discovery". He attributes the success of the school to its progressive orientation, which he embraced as his own.

"If I can appreciate music, art, drama, any of the arts, - and feel myself part of their tradition, it's probably due to that experience and others like it...everything is synthesized...that's a political difference. This school in its whole...orientation, was not necessarily Marxist but liberal, and believed in the general concept of activism. You actively engage with the world, you intentionally transform, you do possibly become transformed.

Not everybody has that experience. People happen upon certain transformative experiences, and in some ways that can be very meaningful because they're a surprise. We planned to do these other things and that's a significant advantage."

Mitchell's school took an activist, non-conformist approach to learning, which emphasized development of curiosity, a spirit of discovery, and the inter-connectedness of various disciplines. The philosophy was similar to that of one of the gurus of progressive education, Paulo Freire, who believed there is no such thing as neutrality in education:

"In its relation to consciousness and world, education as a dominating task assumes that consciousness is and should be merely an empty receptacle to be "filled"; education as a liberating and humanistic task views consciousness as "intention" toward the world." (Freire 1985:114)

Whether or not Mitchell ever read Freire, he evaluates his educational experiences in a similar framework, into the two broad general categories of "dominating" or "humanistic". Grounded in a "humanistic" education, he went on to face a dominating one in public school and also a culture of careerism based on the "domination" model. He saw the public junior high school that he was sent to in this manner:

"Then I went to public school, and I was thrown into an environment...where experiences get bounced off of you and you take it or don't. You get the point or you don't but it wasn't intentional curriculum. That is, if you think of the curriculum not as the stuff that actually gets learned but the messages that are learned underneath - the abstractable, generalizable messages that come from any endeavor- nobody was really focussed on those (I don't believe) in public school."

These contradictory experiences of public school, and later, a rigid music camp, did not alter Mitchell's basic orientation of "intentionality", which became one of the key concepts in his approach to his own creativity. He attributes this approach to the profound influence of his early education. The style of learning absorbed in his first educational encounters was strong, engaging and solid enough to win out over the other orientations that he came into contact with. It allowed him to be equally drawn to a multitude of disciplines, exploring beyond their technical and formal requirements to their traditions and roots. He would make creative connections between interests without limiting himself. As a teenager and young adult, Mitchell was as fascinated by other interests as he was by music, for example, dreaming up inventions, and learning Inskuit, an Alaskan native language.

"The inventing - I went to the patent library and researched various things. And it was always with such a sense of potential. I was almost indifferent to the result - whether anything actually happened. It was the process that was so challenging."

Mitchell felt that this approach did have consequences on his ability to have a career that fit what he saw as society's

normative patterns.. Enchanted more by process than by outcomes, his orientation conflicts with the values he perceived in a society dominated by capitalist values.

"I'm not interested in creating something that can then be marketed, and reinvest itself in me...I recognize that this happens because of privilege and also, an extension of privilege, that milieu that I had growing up. This creative appetite that was intentional rather than anarchic or haphazard. It has gotten me to the point where I feel rewarded by nothing so much as my own thought process. I delight in my mind. It would be pretty absurd for me to feel that, invest all that energy, resources, time, life in recreating myself for something else. Like lying on the couch and watching TV."

His decision to be faithful to those educational lessons is very conscious and deliberate. He says:

"When I think of what I am going to do next, as I said, I don't think of the end- product. - i.e. I can do this and market it for this much money - what I think of is what is righteous. It is anything that affirms my recognition of my past. It sounds self-involved but what I'm saying is I had a good education, I'm very respectful of those years, I embody those years, in a sense. I should uphold them. They were the investment in me. I should live my life now in concordance with the values that I lived then."

It also specifically hindered him from the ability to embrace a career in music:

"I very easily could've gone on to become professional. I think that's what my teacher was trying to have happen. But I pulled away from it for some reason. I haven't figured out quite why..."

(Maybe)...the reason is I felt that I wanted to create and that what I was getting myself into was a milieu which celebrated recreativity, not creativity. There was this purist tenet that allowed that only jazz improvisers could be both performers and creators in the self-same person...I felt that it didn't allow enough room for me. I needed to create in many different ways and I guess it goes back to (the elementary school) - learning to think creatively in so many different realms."

The desire not to be confined to one discipline influenced him, as a music student at the high school of Music and Art, to request courses in art as well:

"It was maybe heard of but not many people had asked. There was certainly no program in place for that...They let us take, "art survey"...I remember...excelling in that class and relishing the format of discourse...we were sitting in the room and Ms. B. showed slides side by side on the wall and the person could comment, if they chose, on the two and compare and contrast. (Of course there was a reason why they were put side by side in the first place.) We could extrapolate what we wanted from them. I loved doing that. That comparative binary method was very appealing to me.

I think in practicing, making music, one does the same. One defines a very small problem in terms of yes or no, on or off, contrast or complement, louder or softer, and is always making a choice on very small levels, and that's the substance of training. You give yourself a little task and then you define it...QUANTITATIVELY, but the quantity becomes quality...You're always making little little micro assessments. And that was very nice to be able to take from one discipline a methodology that could apply to another."

Although public junior high school and even high school were very different environments from the alternative progressive elementary school, Mitchell was able to find a niche and use his creative capacities to find some contentment. However, when he encountered the music camp, and college, where he was a music major, the dissonance between his own values and those of his teachers was so great as to create a major crisis for him. He could not tolerate and was frightened by the level of rigidity and intolerance. It caused him to flounder, and to question his modus operandi. This will be discussed more in the second half of this chapter.

Positive classes

While Mitchell was launched in a creative direction at an early age, Beth's signal experience with a school occurred when she was past fifty. Having had an on-again-off-again relationship with painting for most of her life, in the last three years she has been engaged in her most creative period ever. In her struggle to paint she has wondered whether it is important to be publicly recognized as having talent. With the help of a class she has become able to stop worrying about this aspect of painting, and feels freer to paint unself-consciously.

"It was sort of a gradual thing. It helped that I took a class at a workshop place. The focus was on the process, not the complete product, and it was a very open kind of thing. They had coaches, not teachers. There was a big huge studio, almost a gymnasium size and all kinds of materials available. You could do whatever you wanted, work with clay, paints, wood, whatever, and the coaches would come around and just talk to you about what you were doing. They really encouraged you to look inside and see what it was you wanted to say - what was important to you at that time in your life. And to just - in my case, cause I wanted to paint, just take a piece of paper and some paints and just start putting paint on the paper and see what happened. That was encouraging. The first painting I did in many years I did in that class, and although I wasn't happy with it as a painting, (it's funny because everyone really likes that painting and I don't think it's a good painting at all),... it really got me in touch with painting what I'm feeling inside, so that was really good."

Ironically, this art class provided her with external approval to look internally at her own feelings. Beth's style of painting in recent years centered around an internal dialogue, shaped by a mix of emotions, reactions, images, and stories. In order to engage in such a dialogue, she needed to

feel free to become immersed in a process of discovery. The approach of the class provided her with the official approval that she needed to feel it was acceptable to paint this way.

Whereas for Beth, the structure of a classroom served to release her internal creative energies, already formed but suppressed, other individuals found more directive stimulation. Classes can introduce people to directions they had not considered, can help them to express themselves even though they are uncertain in what form. Maria, who had no notion that she wanted to write plays, took a class where the teacher suggested she try, and it became her primary form of expression.

In college Maria had started out as a journalism major but found it "too impersonal and not artistic enough." She went through a dry writing period, concerned with other activities - studying abroad, getting married, having children and working. To get back into writing she took classes. The teacher:

"... was a TV writer. And his big thing was, 'well, if you want to write, you learn how to write dramatically. And then you can write anything.' So he essentially taught a dramatic writing class.

I had never thought I would write a play - ever... because of the unity and 'cause my mind is not very unified, I thought that it would be absolutely impossible to write a play! And then in his class, he started talking so much about it that I figured, well, I'll give it a try, but it was like an experiment. So I wrote my first play. And he liked it a lot. So I figured, well, this is not that hard! (laughs)

it's - the expression I like - it is human, very human, building characters that are speaking. And I figured I wasn't too good at writing long stuff, like novels, so the size of the plays appealed to me! You

know, it was 90 pages, 110 pages. I could swing that. Writing a novel, a saga, I don't think I could have, at that point, with my kids, and working."

A similar experience is described by Jill. She credits two intensive writing courses with giving her the ability to "feel I could write real personal things." She had a Fellowship to study writing at a college summer program, and she also took a two-week intensive writing course at a college that trained teachers.

"I remember, I wanted to write something about my father. He had died. I thought, I should be able to do that! I never wrote about my family, my past life...I knew my family. What was there to put down? It's not fresh. I didn't want to do it in any way, probably largely in defense against thinking about my family.

So in this class, I brought in my father's wrist watch, which I had in a box, and it was still ticking. I started writing something about: 'the watch is ticking...blah blah', and then thought, 'OH GOD! This is JUST what I don't want to do. I can't write. It's just horrible.' We'd share what we did if we wanted to.

Nobody else was in any way a writer there. (They were mainly teachers who wanted to learn how to teach writing.) But this woman, I remember, was talking about her relatives' recipes, going through the file boxes. I realized she used that as a way to talk about all kinds of other things. Suddenly - *and probably this was the most important thing that ever happened to me in writing (italics mine)*...- it just occurred to me that there was something about my father's life - which was the importance of the candy store in his life. He spent a lot of leisure time in candy stores. So I started writing about my father.

See, when I had to write about him, there was nothing. But when I had something small and concrete and vivid, I could get into all kinds of material. Then I could unify it, and make it into a piece, which I did.

Now there's no end to it. As long as I'm not totally blind and deaf I can continue. And now, one thing I would like to do is to do a collection. If it would be published it would be very thrilling."

All three cases, Beth, Marie and Jill, found in the formal class setting, stimulus toward the release of their

personal choices and artistic proclivities. The class setting provides opportunities to be inspired by others confronted with the same problems of form and expression.

External Validation and Encouragement

One of the functions of a good education is to expand the range of possibilities that a person sees for himself, to make him aware of his capacities and to develop them. This can happen through countless devices. Many of them serve like measuring rods to rate people. While it is doubtless that the main purpose of examinations is to serve this function, there were times when tests of various kinds opened up or gave confirmation to people's estimation of their abilities. For Jill at a competitive private college, a writing placement test for Freshman writing classes gave her the first indication that she had talent as a writer.

"The whole freshman class took a test to write something to see if you were going to go into English class for a year. They probably gave us an assignment to write something historical. I kind of just plunged in with no sense of how I could do it. I wrote about a movie, "From Here to Eternity", about Pearl Harbor. That's how I got the information. Whatever it was, (and this was not a tiny class), there was just a handful of us who did not have to take Freshman English. Which makes me wonder how bad the other students did! And I don't know what I could have written! Isn't that funny? But that was that. ...that gave me some feeling, probably, that I was okay."

Prizes are another form of external validation. Sybil won a prize in High school and experienced other sorts of recognition. She describes the effect this had upon her self-

confidence:

"My high school art teacher, my senior year in High School, nominated me for art student of the year in my high school. It came with a hundred dollar prize, or something like that. There was this doctor - it turned out to be my pediatrician - ironically, - this doctor in town sponsored this. His mother had been an artist, so after she died he had the M. award. He basically would give one student each year a hundred dollars. You got a ribbon - a certificate. My high school art teacher, not knowing that this guy was my pediatrician, nominated me for art student of the year. Basically he selected me. That was definitely a real encouragement. Around that time, there was a county student art show, and three of my pieces were selected to go up in the art show, and I won first prize for textiles, a batik that I did, and second prize for something I did in pencil, I think, and my art teacher's wife had gone to the art show and she really liked the piece I did in pencil. I drew a picture of three children, and she said it reminded her of her grandchildren or something like that. So she asked him to ask me if I would sell it to them. I was so uncomfortable at the thought of selling this thing to my art teacher and his wife. I was really flattered. It's this whole internal dynamic that I have about being embarrassed about the attention on the one hand but also liking it. And I ended up talking to my mother about it, and I decided to just give it to them as a thank you for him being so supportive and all that. But that was incredibly encouraging to be acknowledged in those ways."

In Sybil's small town, the connections between people were close. Her doctor was donating prize money and her teacher was buying her pictures. This should not have diminished her sense of achievement. She received respect and admiration from people she knew, which was important for her as a young person, and some compensation for the strained relationship with her father.

Positive Environments

One of the latent functions of a graduate degree is the granting of legitimacy. It allows the student to feel a sense of authenticity, of belonging to a larger community. Frank, now a full-time employee of an insurance company who paints on the side, had in his earlier years tried to make painting the center of his life. In his late twenties he worked part-time at an insurance company and enrolled in a masters degree program in Fine Arts. By getting a degree he hoped to launch a career as a painter. He describes his feelings before and after joining the graduate program:

"That did become peculiar, working in a midtown office and then also trying to pretend you were part of the art world at the same time.

But later when I was working part-time and also when I went to Graduate School *I felt more like I was doing it for real or something and it wasn't just a hobby.* It's probably an illusion, in a sense...

...it wasn't really that much different than what I had been doing before but it becomes legitimized if you're studying it..."

The graduate program also opened up a social and professional world that helped him to clarify his identity.

"I sort of had an advantage because I didn't immediately go to Graduate School...I was about twenty-eight years old when I started Graduate School. So I was older than most of the other graduate students. Also some of the people I studied with were not much older than I was. So I had more confidence, I think, after being out of school for a few years. As an undergraduate I rarely participated in class. I just listened generally. But at graduate school I spoke out, had opinions about contemporary art. So it gave me somewhat an advantage over the average student, I would say.

As a result I got to know a number of the faculty members, especially T. We became very close friends. He was not young. He was maybe sixty years old when I met him. But I got to know him, his wife, kids...

The artist faculty member, T., offered him a place to live on his property rent-free. With minimal expenses, Frank was able to work part-time and devote the rest of his time to painting. This arrangement extended for ten years, until the artist died.

"That was great, living out there. He was successful to the point where he was on the cover of Time Magazine...some museum directors and people in the arts would come to the house. It gave me fantastic entree. The governor...came to his house.

He was a very highly regarded artist. That did a lot for my confidence also. It was an interesting time. As I said, then I was working part-time and it gave me time to concentrate on my work. I was very fortunate that that turned out the way it did."

The school as such can be a liberating force, as was true for some of my interviewees who found high school to be a place where they could be more freely expressive than in their families; but professional school appears to play a special role. Professional art school and university degrees enable people to be surrounded by other self-defined "artists", and initiate them into that world.

Alex, now in his sixties, was socially isolated before enrolling in a prestigious art school. The school provided him with a social network of friends with whom he could be "Bohemian":

"I thought it was real nice because I had never had much of a social life and...I was a very isolated person. I had a teacher named S... he used to tell us about art, and talked about thinking. He said, 'one thing about art is you have to think about a lot of other things.' So after school at 10 o'clock, we'd all go across the street to the N. Cafeteria and we'd talk about things till 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. Bleary eyed, we'd all leave the cafeteria and go our separate ways and get up in the

morning to go to our jobs with two or three hours of sleep. On weekends, of course, we'd all get together and party. The Bohemian lifestyle.

It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed it. And I learned a lot of things from a lot of people. S. would tell us about thinking and how to get out of the rut of being an average person, because artists have to be open to things. It was good advice."

The professor encouraged them to talk about:

"...semantics - words like this would be thrown at me. Who's he? What's this? You start learning about the lives of the artists and the types of work that they do, and what is inspiration. Anything was grist for the mill. You could talk about anything and everything. I can't tell you what we talked about. It's kind of difficult to say what we didn't talk about. But over the course of a year and a half, a lot of things got talked about."

Even in high school, the special social climate of art or music classes can serve a function similar to that of the professional school. At the High School of Music and Art, which was in a sense like a professional school, Mitchell felt himself part of an elite community. Next to his elementary school, it was his happiest time; he felt full of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment. He was admitted to the highest level orchestra in the school. Aware of the high musical achievement of his fellow students, he felt proud to be part of the community. The music students shared a community that extended beyond the boundaries of school life.

"Those of us who really wanted to make music, the atmosphere that we had there continued out into the day and the weekend. It was very delicious for us to be able to go to Lincoln Center and browse through the stacks of music and see what we might play.

... there were concerts that we'd see each other at - various of us who played the same instrument....PDQ Bach, even, going to his concerts at Christmastime, you'd see somebody else from school and it was very reaffirming, reassuring. It was a community.

There were a bunch of black musicians who came from really hard circumstances and a lot of them ended up with tragic fates. A couple of them went on and did very nicely. But there was also that thing that connected us. That was really the only time in my life that I had a pretty balanced number of black and white friends, and I felt that was also very important for me. It felt wholesome to have that. I guess I was very lonely, as I have been most of my life, but I enjoyed coming out of that loneliness rather than wallowing in it, and I certainly did avail myself of every opportunity to come out."

In each of these examples, testimony is given to the importance of settings where art is the focus of social activities that provide a sense of belonging. Whether in early life experience in public school or later in professional school, the chance to share an intense and total involvement socially with others engaged in artistic activities serves to nurture and encourage.

Mentors and teachers

The examples so far are illustrations of how the process and the structure of education can facilitate positive results. In the cases described, a school's educational outlook could facilitate the creative process. In more traditional, structures, rewards, tests, and a school social life could also facilitate positive results. On the other hand, the role of teachers is a crucial one in determining positive experiences of a school. A good teacher can overcome a faulty educational structure. Going beyond the educational structure, there are also people who are technically not "teachers" in the institutional sense yet serve that role, as

mentors.

Beth considers good mentors to be very important in inspiring creativity, because she credits the importance of encouragement. She thinks closer, more constant mentors in her life would have helped her to flourish sooner. As a child both her parents encouraged her, as did her uncle, who was himself a painter. Her father, who died when she was only eight years old, is described as more interested in the process than the product:

"My father before he died...was a very positive influence. My mother, (who valued what I did, and I love her), was not a good mentor, because she was more interested in what other people thought. If I drew something the first thing she'd say was, 'oh that's nice, we've got to show that to so-and-so.' When people came over she'd say, 'oh, you've got to see Beth draw or write or whatever. She was very interested in showing me off. I found that really intimidating and just embarrassing. I just didn't like it at all.

So she was proud of me but she was never really interested in what I was doing. She never would say, 'tell me about that', or anything like that, whereas my father would look at something and say, 'oh, that's really blue. Why is that so blue?' He would ask questions like he was really interested in what I was doing and it was real helpful. Because it made it feel like I'm doing something interesting, not just like I'm performing. The thing itself was intrinsically interesting or important. ...And my uncle, although, ... I hardly saw much of him, but the fact that he was a successful artist. He was a good role model for me."

I have pointed out earlier how important intrinsic motivation can be for pursuing art as part of one's life. In this illustration, one parent - the father - speaks to the intrinsic drive in Beth, while the other speaks mainly to the opinion of the outside world. Clearly, for Beth, the difference was crucial. She valued the intrinsic.

Sybil had a positive teacher in High School. She describes him in this way:

"I had an art teacher in High School who I absolutely loved. He was a wonderful person, very kind, gentle man, very encouraging and supportive. He created this wonderful environment to do art. Everyone blossomed in his classes. Which is also a similar experience I've had with this woman who taught pottery. She was very non-judgmental in her way of looking at people's work. And this teacher I had in High School was the same way."

She elaborates about what she learned from him:

"I learned so many things from him about how to think about beauty and aesthetics, and how to use inexpensive materials in really creative ways. No one could afford to use acrylic paints. People just didn't have the money in my school. He would buy latex paint and show us how we could use pigments to color the latex paint, which he said was basically like working with acrylics...he would just teach us how to always figure out inexpensive ways to achieve really beautiful things. He just had a wonderful talent for making do with very little and making a lot out of it."

Sybil admired teachers who worked on art alongside the students and showed them new techniques. She admired:

"...the ability to allow for experimentation and not being afraid of taking chances and trying something new...It wasn't like they were lacking in critical ability, but they weren't judgmental. They always looked for what you were trying to do in the piece, ...

From them she learned to see

"...everything as something with potential or something that, even if it didn't come out the way I had envisioned it, I could see where I had overcome a challenge in doing something. I think that was important.

Ironically I had another teacher in High School who emotionally I didn't have a lot in common with. She was a very difficult person, definitely kind of crotchety type. But she had this one expression about how so much of art is serendipity. She defined "serendipity" for us as happy accidents. Even though a lot of students didn't like her and she was a nagging person in certain ways, she also would just get ecstatic over something that truly was a happy accident - when you would do something

that was completely unlike what you thought it was gonna be - and she would just - point out to you how it was even better than what you'd envisioned, because of serendipity, the happenstance of that moment in creating the piece. That's always stuck with me when I feel like something has failed. I really try to see where the happy accident may be in it."

Jenny tells a similar story about her school experience with music:

"Every week I had a tune to learn, and I had guidelines, and I had this really wonderful teacher who was so involved in the music, who did more than just - as I had felt as a child - just give me this music to learn and not really tell me why it was important to play it a certain way. And that really helped me grow to love the music on a much deeper level than I had before."

The teacher who inspires what is inside the student is regarded as the most helpful mentor. Also valued are those teachers who show their own genuine enthusiasm for the arts and who create an atmosphere that can elicit this wonder. Instruction is structured, not completely open-ended. As Jenny said she enjoyed "guidelines". But the structure also helps the students to see more in his own work and his own style and to experience the process of creating as more open-ended, ripe with possibilities, as Sybil describes "serendipity".

Education As A Barrier

Latent versus Overt Educational Messages

Teachers, rather than serving as mentors or neutral arbiters of an educational process, can also serve a negative function. A subject for which we have an aptitude can become distasteful and unappealing if introduced to us in a negative

way. The relationship between student and teacher can be as treacherous as any intimate relationship, particularly in private lessons. The associations of the dissatisfied student toward the teacher can be transferred to the instrument.

It was stated earlier that, among the general population, those who had lessons in childhood and youth were more likely to stay involved with the arts in their adulthood. It is also true that lessons during youth was more an indicator of later involvement than childhood. This may be because people are more likely to go voluntarily for lessons in their youth whereas in childhood their parents could inadvertently send them to inappropriate teachers (Orend 1989). Some of the interviewees remember these teachers with extreme distaste. For some reason, negative experiences with piano teachers are remembered most often, perhaps because the piano is a preferred musical instrument for children in middle-class homes. Experiences with bad piano teachers caused people to turn away from musical expression entirely, or switch to another musical instrument.

The teacher often needs to be appealing as a person. If he has qualities that the student can identify with, the enthusiasm gets transferred towards the instrument. Mitchell's piano teacher did not appeal to him:

"My teacher in piano was a woman...I remember going over to her house in the housing project where we lived - ...and walking into a house that was so dark and quiet and in contrast to the house that I lived in it seemed a house devoid of conflict. She just seemed a different type of human being and not someone I had any possible

contact with outside of Hanon scales and so forth. So I did it as an exercise - I mean -I was supposed to do it. I think it's important to have a milieu for your creative activity and I don't think it was possible there because she was so --parochial? ...traditional...? STABLE. And my family was so unstable."

...there was a maturity and a respectability there that didn't correspond to my world, so piano never symbolized much."

The requirements of learning can frighten a young student. Not yet having worked up an independent enthusiasm for the instrument, he is told he will have to master and display his mastery to others. This happened to Matthew:

"My parents - when I was about eight, they wanted me to be a piano player, I guess. Or they were ambitious. ...So they signed me up to take piano lessons with a guy who was a music professor at the local university in a small town in the Midwest.... this guy was just terribly opinionated. He was like old-school drill instruction on the piano. I still remember the metronome sitting up on the piano just ticking, and it was so scary...I'd never played the piano at all, and he was giving me these classical pieces and I had to try and play them.

He told me there's going to be a recital. You're gonna have to get up in front of people and play. I so dreaded it that I just started skipping the class...I was supposed to ride the bike to the class. I'd take my piano books and I'd ride away, but I'd just ride off somewhere! Go to the park. I was too scared to GO.

I didn't go for several weeks, and finally he called home, and asked where I was, because I just hadn't been showing up. I never told him I wasn't going. I just quit going...I don't think I ever went back. I think they must have realized that maybe they were starting me too fast...

I think I was about eight. I was young. And ...yeah, it was awful. I never learned how to play a musical instrument."

Matthew's creative expression is primarily through writing. For him, music and writing carry different expectations:

"I guess with the writing it was always just something I did. I enjoyed it. It was no structure. Or any except what I made myself. I didn't feel that kind of fear of doing it wrong."

Matthew was introduced to music by a teacher who intimidated him. His chosen form of artistic expression, writing, was something he discovered on his own. Writing was a solitary activity done on his own terms without any arbitrary expectations. The creative group activity, as a result of this negative experience with the piano teacher, had negative associations. Groups in general, including writing groups, had limited value for him. Jenny reached the opposite conclusion. After bad experiences with private teachers, she was drawn to groups:

"I had such bad experiences, basically, with private lessons. With piano, - I took it for four years, and I didn't care for either of my teachers. They were old women. The first one just wanted me to play Bach. She had a smelly overcoat and she smoked and she would come into my house -

(It was) maybe from second to fourth grade...she wouldn't take off her trenchcoat. She would sit next to me, and I would think, 'Ugh', and every once in a while she would yell at me for not practicing! She'd yell at me, and I would burst out in tears because I was such a nervous nelly!

(But I love Bach. She didn't ruin Bach for me!)

... the next teacher - I just didn't really care for her that much, and I didn't have any direction, because I wasn't really invested in that type of music. It wasn't like my parents played classical music all the time at home and it was really a love for me. It was just - if you're gonna learn an instrument, you learn classical music.

So I didn't like the idea so much of private lessons... I started taking the group lessons and that gave me real direction."

Rejection

Educational institutions rate people, even if unintentionally. They provide the student with either a positive or negative image of his abilities. He can compare himself to other students, the teacher, the educational standards of the institution, communicated in examinations, rewards, and prizes, or even to the institution as a whole. The experience of being rejected admission to an institution, or of failing in an institution, can have a profoundly negative effect. This was true for the women, Sybil and Beth, who could not become art majors, and Mel, who was not admitted to Cooper Union. It did not stop them from doing art but it affected their conceptions of themselves as "artists".

Vicky and Brian are temperamentally different, Vicky more self-assured and confident of her abilities. Yet each succumbed at some point in their life to feeling lacking, incapable, unable to "make it", as a result of incidents of rejection by university music and writing programs.

Brian could not get into the music major at his college, having transferred there from a community college. His already low self-confidence was reinforced by this.

"I was trying to get into the music program, but I didn't pass the audition. But the audition was so weird...There were three notes written down on a sheet. I had to figure what the three notes were, and what the next note should be. So I didn't get it.

But on the basis of that, that little nothing test,

I was rejected from the real music program. Now, you could take other music courses, but you couldn't get into the music major.

...they were looking for geniuses or something. They were looking for clones of this one teacher... That music program is very well-respected."

He relates how he could have taken more music courses anyway, but was not as interested.

"In S. Community College I took a musical appreciation class with my second best teacher, A.J. and he was a great teacher, great guy. I learned to appreciate great jazz and to figure out what were good speakers! So that was a good class, but I didn't take any formal training at all in S. So when I got to College in '75, I eventually tried to get into the music program, bombed out. I took another class, only one, music theory. I did okay in that. I don't know why. For some reason I didn't go on with that.

...But working in the music library, seeing all these music books... my job in the music library was just putting all the books back. They were not just books. It was music. And I'd look at these, and say, forget it, I can't even get close to this stuff... So the crux of this whole thing is I never really had a significant amount of training. I had some, a hit and miss every now and then throughout the last twenty years.

Vicky applied to two prestigious college Masters Degree programs in Fine Arts. After two weeks at the campus, the programs would be conducted off-site via correspondence. She sent them the manuscript of her unfinished novel along with a letter.

"the...letter had been...in depth about who I was, why I was on earth, and...about my romance with writing. I believe it's a very romantic thing to do, to write. It's a very romantic experience. "Roman" is "novel" in French. So "roman" and "romantic" are related somehow lingually and linguistically. But romantic in the sense of the word that you and I understand it. It's a very rich, passionate experience. And I was attempting to convey what that was like for me, and why I was doing it, and who I was.

Introducing them to her novel, she explained in the

letter how:

"I felt about the story. (It) had become a big part of my life because the story had become a safe place to come of age, about triumphant lesbians who really didn't give a shit what anybody else thought, and it was funny. At least I thought it was. I think it is."

"...I was rejected at both places, and was so devastated that I called (the) college up and said, 'explain to me, what were you looking for?' She said, 'well, we can't really explain that. But we can say that we look for someone who writes very well in their genre, even if you wrote in the science fiction genre', and I thought, 'Ah. So I write in the lesbian historical aviatrix genre' and -I think they had a problem with the genre. I think that was part of it. They only accepted 10 people and they probably accepted a lesbian two years ago and probably had filled their quota. I think that that was part of it.

So I then decided to retire from writing, and I wrote a letter of retirement...For about six months I couldn't write."

She mulled over the reasons for the rejection, wondering if it was because she was a lesbian, or a businesswoman, or because she did not fit into whatever mold they were looking for. Yet, at the same time, she felt self-doubt.

"I have a very skewed vision of the world. Maybe they thought, 'oh, how soppy. We can't deal with this one. This one's a nut case.'

I don't know. I don't think I presented myself in a way that they found acceptable. I resigned from writing because I felt that I was a good writer, and I'd always been an "A" student. And I was completely successful in the business - well, a competent business person, at least at this point in my life. And that all of those things made me a spectacular candidate for an MFA. And that these guys, after all, were the writing establishment, and I really needed, I think, to have their approval. When I was rejected I guess I must have thought, well, maybe I'm not so great a writer. Maybe I'm not able to be part of the writing establishment...I couldn't figure out why I was rejected...

Having written a very personal letter to these two

schools, sharing an important and real side of herself, the rejection was doubly painful, since her overtures were dismissed and ignored.

After "resigning from writing" for a while, she tried to start again, this time applying to a different kind of writing program that was not a Master's Degree program, but one well-known in adult education. The prior experience caused her to be more cautious, less open.

"So I resigned from writing. I think by the time I applied to the (next school), I think what happened was I said to myself, well look, what the fuck do I have to lose? I've been rejected. I'll probably be rejected again. What the hell? If I'm accepted, that's a surprise. I was shocked. I really truly was shocked. I wrote a very different kind of a letter to them, a very short letter, that basically said, this is what I've done, what my problems are - too many characters? fundamental questions about plot, these are the things I'm struggling with, and this is what I'm gonna get out of your class."

Her analysis of the rejection in hindsight was less personal:

"I later found out that there is a great deal of politics that goes on in getting into those places, a great deal of: well, if you went to this or that writing class that's important. It's sort of its own little closed culture. I was clearly coming in from far outside."

While Mitchell did not fail at the strict music camp, he felt he failed to live up to the standards, and this had a profound effect upon him. It made him feel he couldn't cut it as a professional musician. It also helped him to define his relation to music as different from how he saw it being defined by the other campers.

Stereotyping

Important career decisions are made for students by people in power at educational institutions. Guidance counselors, for example, occupy key roles affecting students' lives. Marianna wanted to go to art school after High School.

"I'm Jewish and I grew up in a town that's really not Jewish. Now it's totally different...the population is much larger, and there's more different kinds of people in it. But at the time, the guidance counselor that I happened to have in high school happened to also be Jewish. So you think, oh! He's gonna give me good advice!

He told me, 'you're too smart to be an artist'. (which is part of the provincial back country kind of thinking). But I thought, here's this educated Jewish man, and this is what he says. So all right.

I was fourth in my high school class of three hundred something kids. So, it's not that I wasn't smart. But I mean there are many different kinds of intelligence, we can now know. And, if he says this thing, I thought, maybe he's right. So I said, give me a University that has a good art program...

But I took these two design classes when I was there, and it just meant the world to me, and I thought, 'this is what I'm looking for!' And I went back to the guidance counselor in August before getting ready to start my second year there, and having realized, this is what I need to do. I went to see him, and he sees me and he goes, "oh. How's your year?" I go, "it was great. It was really wonderful. But I don't want to go back." He goes, "Oh, you're getting married!!!" This is the man who wouldn't let me go to art school because I was too smart but if it was one year of college, and then I would get married and drop out of school????!!!! I was like, the scales fell from my eyes. And I said, 'No, I want to go to art school.' He said, 'ok, ok.' He recovered right away.

After he "recovered", he helped her get into the best possible art school, for which she is grateful. But she was astounded at how stereotypical thinking affected his advice.

Another high school student, Rebecca, was treated

unfairly because her art teacher was aware that her parents were artists, and made assumptions based on that knowledge:

"In High School I didn't really take art, except for my senior year, when I took ceramics. My ceramics teacher thought my parents were doing my projects for me. He didn't believe me. Because they were different from everybody's. I had some ideas about what I wanted to do. He'd never taught ceramics before. So he gave me lousy grades. I got B's."

On the other hand, there were some advantages to having artist parents:

"But then also in high school I took - it was really prestigious to get into this photography class. They had one photography class. There was one enlarger for the whole class - very well equipped! It was very prestigious to get into this class. And my father knew the guy who was the head of the Art Department, who was giving this course. He had been my camp counselor. My father and he were the Arts and Crafts people, so he knew me when I was a little kid. And I hadn't taken any art classes before. They were all art majors, but that's how I got in, cause I knew this guy.

But anyhow, so I had never had any interest in photography. But I got really interested when I did that...I really was into it. I thought about being a photographer. When I looked at colleges I was looking at Social Work and Sociology, but then I was looking at Photography set-ups in all the colleges...."

Clashing agendas - Student versus Institution

A typical school curriculum or program takes precedence over an individual's educational goals. The power lies in the hands of the school authority. The student is forced to accept the prevailing agenda, or quit the school.

Alex was interested in being in a professional art school solely to learn artistic technique. During the period he attended, students were required to also study commercial

forms of art, since marketability was one of the school's goals. Alex rebelled against this, as did other students.

"So I went there for about a year and a half, and we had a teacher. We were going to be given a broad spectrum. We were asked to specialize in architecture, commercial art, or fine art. I chose to be a fine artist. So the powers that be - a guy named D., who was an architect, said, 'Everybody should learn how to make a living in art.' And it's kind of like, excuse me. I'm over 21, and I did not come here to learn how to make a living as an artist. I came here to learn art. I have a job. I do not want to learn how to make a living as an artist. I don't want to be in the slave market grinding out commercial art.

The school would not back down in its demands that he take courses other than in fine arts, and he grew angrier at the requirements. Then one of the architecture professors who had assigned the students a major project went to Europe and did not return. The students ignored the project. He sent a letter from Europe that if they did not complete the project they would fail.

"So the whole group in the class just resigned en masse. This was before the Columbia riots but it was the same kind of thing, where the students had no representation, no recourse, - had it been ten years later, Cooper Union would have been probably burned to the ground. But it happened earlier, and all we could do was just resign and walk out."

Alex never got a degree in Fine Arts from Cooper Union, but did not care. His purpose was not to credentialize. In his subsequent years he supported himself in various occupations, working as photographic assistant, in construction, and in medical laboratories, and painted for himself.

Summmary and Conclusion

The interviewees have described how both positive and negative experiences in educational settings have affected their development and conception of themselves as artists. Arts educators have long debated how best to teach the arts. One such educator, Monk, divides teaching ideologies between those who stress the pleasurable and those who promote the cognitive, rational, and disciplined elements of the field. He says, with regret:

"We have seen through history a constant battle between Dionysism and the Apollonian efforts to control, rationalize, or repress it...

The anhedonic has come to dominate the approach to teaching music in colleges and universities and at all levels...there is an unconcealed bias in favor of the rational spirit as favored by Plato and his contemporaries, a bias that drives most activities in the university... (Monk 1996:7)."

Formal education, as represented by required schooling and classes in schools selected specifically to develop the artistic interests of the interviewees, is part of development from childhood to adulthood. It therefore is required to serve radically different needs in students, on the one hand, and demands from the society on the other. The people in this study tell about how they moved from free-floating drives often including biological expression, toward the mastery of an artistic form, from idealism to a realistic synthesis of all they learned, from spontaneity to discipline, and from dependence to realistic decisions. The social structures encountered along the way, particularly the formal educational institutions, were very influential in that process.

CHAPTER FIVE

"OUR WORK IS MORE THAN OUR JOBS"¹

"I am on the lookout for
A great illumining,
Prepared to recognize it
Instantly and put it to use
Even among the desks
And chairs of the office, should
It come between nine and five."²

"That's all any of us are - amateurs. We don't live long enough to be anything else."³

¹from a song by Charlie King. "Our Life is More than Our Work". 1977.

² Harvey Shapiro, Selected Poems, Wesleyan University Press. 1998, Middletown, Connecticut.
cited in review by Virginia Adair Hamilton, New York Times Sunday Book Review Section. February 1, 1998.

³Charlie Chaplin, in the film, Limelight. Twentieth Century-Fox. 1951

CHAPTER FIVE

"OUR WORK IS MORE THAN OUR JOBS"

American society was built and continues to be based upon a strong work ethic. At the same time we live today with curious contradictions about the necessity of work. Obviously, most people need to work to survive. But beyond that, the stigma attached to not working, or non-traditional means of survival, has grown immensely, as evidenced by the dramatic curtailment of the Welfare system. Simultaneously there is less job security, and meaningful work, which people had come to expect more and more, is beginning to be considered a rarity. Belief in attainment of the good life is at an all-time low, yet the Puritan insistence on everyone working hard, regardless of the significance or rewards of their work, has grown.

Work Life and Artistic Expression

In the background of understanding non-professional artists is always work, because paid work is still considered the most important aspect of our culture. The people considered here have added another dimension to their lives beyond their paid employment.

The ways that they balance their art with their work lives can be loosely fitted into categories. There are:
1) those who incorporate their artistic interest into their

workplace; 2)those content, even fulfilled by their work, for whom art is a complementary interest; 3)those who aspired to be Artists with a capital "A" but ended up settling for it in a secondary role; 4)those who divide their art between the commercial and the personal, and 5)those who are not happy with their work, for whom their art is a "saving grace". In any of these categories, art meets a particular need not met through work.

Art in the Workplace

Certain subway stations in New York City are so deep within the ground that it is necessary to take an elevator from the subway station to the street. Phil operates such an elevator in Manhattan. Phil also dabbles in music, playing jazz at times, but more intensively, listening.

Phil's elevator is most unusual. Over the years it has developed in decor like somebody's living room. Large plants inhabit its corners and posters cover its walls. Additional motifs emerge depending on the season. Near Valentine's Day red paper hearts appear glued all along the ceiling edges. Around the Christmas holidays, Kwanza, Christmas, and Hanukkah pictures appear. Photographs of nature scenes are on the walls, bordered by little poems about friendship and life.

Most prominent of all are posters of jazz musicians: Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Errol Garner, Sarah Vaughn, Dizzie Gillespie. One of the posters is autographed, "To

Phil". The musical visions accompany the sophisticated jazz that the elevator operators play on tape cassette deck. The music comes from Phil's collection of mainly jazz and classical music.

On a typical day Phil's relief operator will also be playing music. He might say to Phil before he goes off on his break that the music Phil was playing was too "romantic". He wasn't in "a romantic mood", did Phil have any Spinners? Phil would use a key to get into his locker room, a fairly large space shared by transit workers containing a table, lockers, and bench. There he has a locker full of tapes. He would rummage through them looking for something suitably unromantic for the relief operator.

After a harassing subway trip home from a hectic day at work, elevator passengers are grateful for this soothing and homey atmosphere, and typically greet the operators warmly when entering and say "thank you" when they get off the elevators. Although one might think a brief daily ride up and down an elevator would be too insignificant an event to notice, Phil's efforts to humanize the urban experience have made enough of an impression to be written about in the New York Times, at least four local neighborhood newspapers in Russian, Spanish, and English, and shown on local television news and on a program about the arts in the city. A passenger was inspired to write a poem about him and send it worldwide on the internet.

Phil's collection is enormous. He claims to have every jazz album on the Verve label. His collection is so vast he leaves some at a sister's house. Since he has worked on the elevator, people in the neighborhood give him CD's.

"I get CD's, tapes made up for me. I don't even have to ask. They just bring 'em. A fellow brought me about 32 tapes. He had sat down and recorded all of his tapes and brought 'em to me. Somebody that's on the elevator now, I think I have 5 CD's that he gave me yesterday... they just hand CD's like mad...I have so many, I lost count.

I must have received about 100 CD's since I've been working here."

He returns the favor by updating his collection at the listener's request:

"Anytime somebody asks, 'Do you have so-and-so...' I say, 'No, do you have it?' They say, 'No.' I say, 'ok, then, you're gonna hear it next week. I'll go and get it.'...If I can find it, I'll get it. I add it to my collection. I love music. Most of the time the things they mention, I do have. 99% of the time. But if I don't have it, and if it's something I haven't heard yet, I'm gonna get it...there's gonna be at least one or two cuts on every single album that's gonna be good. And I'm gonna get that, and subtract those two that are good and make a master."

His musical relationship with the passengers has created friendships:

"I noticed that since I've been working up here, there's a lot of people trying to question me. I figured out why. They're trying to get me to give them answers to certain things. You know. Like I have one friend. He became a pretty good friend...he used to live up here...and he used to come by every night, and we'd talk. Because he was really stressed out. I hadn't seen him since last summer. I was wondering what happened to him, because he used to say, 'sometimes, I feel like ending it all'. He came by here about two weeks ago, looked good, and told me he got married and everything. I said, 'ok, that sounds nice.'"

This picture is not entirely rosy. Phil's locker has been

broken into and his CD player stolen. When he went on vacation the Transit Authority took his plants out of the elevator. He managed to recover them on his return. Nevertheless, he has humanized a potentially alienating work experience by bringing into work his private artistic passions. He has turned his job description from "elevator operator" to "elevator operator/Disk Jockey/counselor." In so doing, he has enabled subway riders and fellow transit workers to feel less alienated as well. He has attracted widespread press attention, and has made many new and close friends.

Phil had set out to do a simple thing - humanize his workplace. Since, in this case, his "workplace" was also an open, public space, passed through by thousands of people daily, his micro-revolution received public acclaim. Yet still, why should such a simple thing attract so much attention? A worker who manages to pleasantly shape an aspect of city life is so unusual as to merit a lot of notice. Subway musicians and conductors who add a personal touch to their announcements are also appreciated in the same way because it breaks the monotony of daily unavoidable trips. Yet its uniqueness is a sign of something lacking in normal work and daily life. Georg Simmel describes how, to survive the metropolis, with its multiplicity of stimuli, where the dominance of money equalizes and flattens emotional expression, the urban dweller adapts by maintaining a blase attitude (Simmel 1950). Those who play with these stalwart

urban realities are appreciated.

Art as Complement to Fulfilling Worklife

People with long, satisfying careers also engage very seriously in an artistic pursuit, and find a contented balance. There is a well-known penchant among medical doctors, for example, for playing classical music. George, a distinguished cardiologist now in his seventies and semi-retired, has played the piano very seriously since he was a child, where his home was full of music and his sister was playing at almost concert pianist level. As an intern and resident, he quickly found other young doctors to play chamber music with. For forty years, he had a serious musical friendship with a professional violinist, meeting and playing with him on an advanced level, several times a year. He also studies at music schools, and plays with others that he meets through the association of the Amateur Chamber Music Players.

The balance between his musical life and his professional life seems natural and free of conflicts. He seems pleased with how both aspects of his life have developed. He considers himself a "serious amateur", which he defines as

"one who may not have too much native talent, but who loves music, loves to play, loves really seriously to practice, and if I put in enough time, I can play just about anything.

He is serious enough to practice every day. Citing a well-known aphorism among professional musicians, he says:

"The pianist says, if I don't practice for one day, I

notice. If I don't practice for two days, my audience notices it. If I don't practice for three days, the critics notice it! (laughs)

So you really do feel guilty if you don't practice, you can feel it right away. I try and play every day and on the average, I would say, I play at least 40 to 60 minutes every day, and on the weekends I play a lot more."

Playing well is an achievement that he has earned. He doesn't feel that a professional relationship to music would have added to his pleasure:

"I've...in my fantasy life visualized myself every once in a while, playing something so brilliantly ...at Avery Fischer Hall or Carnegie hall, or something like that. But in the real world, I never wanted to do music professionally because that's an extremely demanding and traumatizing kind of work...It means commitment of the utmost kind - practicing 4,6,7 hours a day, and each concert an emotionally traumatic experience, no matter how good you are, for even the greatest musicians. And I don't think I wanted to expose myself to that kind of emotional stress. So I said, 'I'll be an amateur, and I'll enjoy it. And I won't have to make a living from it, and I won't have to worry about being stressed.'"

Those Who Aspired to be Artists With a Capital "A"

Nathan has not been mentioned in other parts of this study because he does not represent a person who has spent a lifetime engaged in an artistic pursuit. Nevertheless, I include him here because he went through a period of intensive engagement in such a pursuit, and gave it up when he saw that he could not be commercially successful at it. He represents the opposite type of person that I am concentrating on in this study, and as such he presents an interesting contrast.

Presently a fifty-year-old psychotherapist, Nathan explored many career directions. Of draft-age during the

Vietnam War, he chose to go into the Peace Corps, to South America, believing this "represented a moral way to escape military service", as opposed to getting an exemption or going to law school. When he returned two years later,

"the society and the youth culture was...the intense 1960's countercultural kind of a thing...that hit me very hard - those currents...I was planning to go to Law School, and Stanford was holding a place for me, and I went out to California, and I went to the bookshop and looked at the books I was supposed to buy. I guess my Peace Corps experience had something to do with this, but also what was going on in our society had something to do with this, because what I did was I decided I just didn't want to do it. No thank you. Left Stanford after one day. Went and lived with friends I'd met in the Peace Corps, out in Sonoma County, California, lived with them for a couple of months - they were very kind people...I didn't really know what I wanted to do at that point. I knew I didn't want to go to Law School. But I wasn't sure what I did want to do in a positive direction. And probably this decision to go to the Peace Corps leading to not going to Law School - if you could look at this in retrospect - kind of makes sense in terms of trying on the artistic identity as a printmaker."

Nathan felt that rejecting bourgeois values, which included choosing a financially secure profession, led to an attempt at an artistic vocation.

Nathan moved to New York and took a much despised oppressive job for eight years in the Civil Service. In his late twenties early thirties, while at this job, he tried an etching class offered at a print shop, and immediately took to it. He became a member of the print shop, obtaining a key, so that he could use the facilities when he wished.

"I always was more or less a primitive artist. Which is almost a contradiction in terms in printing because printing tends to attract people who are into technical quality. It's not really a primitive's medium, in general. (I think Rousseau may have done a lithograph or

two but basically not. I don't imagine Grandma Moses made too many etchings! She may have.) But this is the direction I took.

I liked line, the dark line. The kind of line you get when you print with an etching plate,...I branched out into guashes - which is opaque water color. I remember I did a series of guashes, which are always done on paper, by the way. I produced a series of portraits of couples who I knew. I would ask them to come over and I'd draw them. I'd work those up into guashes. And I showed some of those in a gallery in Soho. And began to do some of myself - self-portraits."

He very quickly thought of his art commercially. He wanted to sell his work in bulk, to be successful and commercial. For several years he took a booth at the annual Washington Square Outdoor art show. He was able to get into a few galleries by making the rounds and showing owners his work. He had a two-man show in Long Island. But he noted that his work did not sell in the galleries very well. He remembers one etching of his cat that was somewhat popular, and prints that got into bookstore windows for displays. He was able to sell a few of his prints to a curator at the Metropolitan Museum.

"That actually made me think that I really am talented....But counterbalancing that, I took my work at one point to a curator at the Brooklyn Museum, and he looked at my work and he told me very honestly that it was kind of interesting and maybe I could sell something - illustrate something in the New Yorker, or sell an illustration to the New Yorker or something...there's a difference between being an illustrator and being a fine artist."

He went about his art as one would a new profession, seriously trying for about five years to see if there were any real opportunities, checking with the "experts" and the public, and ultimately concluding that he did not have what it

took. As he puts it:

"At some point when I realized that I wasn't gonna make any money at it, I began to take it much less seriously in terms of a career. But I've maintained my love of art, and I occasionally fool around a little bit at home with pastels. And I collect art. I've maintained my connection with art that way too."

Gradually he moved into social work, working as a case worker for the elderly and then as a counselor in a methadone clinic. He says that he is glad he "gave it a try" with the art, and that it has remained a part of who he is.

"the creative impulse which obviously animates printmaking, to a certain extent I'm able to channel that now as a psychotherapist...I think the work of psychotherapy is certainly a place where the creative impulse - can be animated. And I think that indeed the field of psychotherapy is really more of an art than it is a science. It has a lot to do with intuition and empathy. There's a lot of rational thought-through stuff in the journals and everything, but when you're actually sitting there with a client, it's really more of an existential kind of thing. You don't have journals that you look up - you may be influenced by things that you've read, but it's a pretty creative enterprise, I would say."

Being an artist was an identity that Nathan experimented with. Unlike the other people in this study, when it did not meet his basic survival needs, he threw the identity away, going on to other ones. In this important sense, art represented something very different for him from what it does for the others.

Commercial/Personal Division

Some people find multiple outlets for their interest in the arts, by developing their talents on a commercial level, but saving their more personal creative expression for the private sphere. Reasons for choosing this career path range from pure economic need to genuine enjoyment of a commercial field. Marianna, who for many years worked for large corporations as a graphic designer, saw it as a genuine art form in itself:

"I really loved working on design, and I used to actually feel sorry for people that weren't artists. I felt so good about what I did that I would really kind of say, 'Boy, it must be terrible if you can't do this. It would be a horrible way to live.' But as I've grown up a little I realized, well, there are a lot of things that you can feel good about doing. For me I just really felt great about that.

I continued doing my own quote unquote 'fine art' for myself, all through my life whenever I could. It was always important to me, but I was a graphic designer by profession, and really liked it.

...Design is like music. There's only a certain number of elements that you have to work with and you just put them together the way you want to and somebody else can put theirs together very similarly. Not the same but it might look similar."

Marianna divided her art into personal art - painting and drawing, and commercial art. She includes her total output when she calls herself an artist.

An advantage of working commercially is the development of mastery over form, that spills over to their personal creative style. Vicky, for example, working for fifteen years as a writer, (first as a journalist, then in an ad agency, and finally owning her own business in commercial writing), felt

more skilled than her classmates in fiction writing classes:

...I had a much more deeply developed voice, style, ...I arrived at my keyboard able to craft the sentences in a way that I wanted to craft them, able to handle the dialogue...I arrived with deeply...emotionally connected developed characters. Whereas some people in the group were struggling with whether they should write a true story about their family, or whether they should make it completely fiction...How can I explain it? People were still looking for their voice and struggling with basic issues...in terms of vocabulary and style I have a very strong fluency in the language,...and a real sensitivity for physical description as well as dialogue. So all of those things, much to my surprise, were there. Maybe in a little rough form, but a lot of building blocks were there. And I believe that 's because I've been writing for a very long time. Not necessarily what I want to write."

While Vicky sees major differences of purpose and artistic value between commercial writing and fiction writing, she also sees the carrying over of skills between the two forms of writing. The craft of writing extends beyond form. In this sense, she embraces the different writing experiences that she acquired while working for pay.

The split between commercial and personal art is often referred to by well-known artists as well. It is a tension that few escape.

Discontent with Work; Art as Saving Grace

In contrast to the established doctor who has built up a successful practice are those who cannot find meaningful jobs. For some, the blame lies in the larger culture. Mitchell describes a devaluation of work, a diminished political culture that once fought for the dignity of labor but has

diminished in strength, and a scrambling in the marketplace at all levels, a fight for survival of the fittest.

"I am coincident in time and space with a depression, (economic) and in our time labor has come to be something so unelevated...my formative years (in terms of labor), were not the sixties - the happeners, the breakers away - nor was it the period of fights to develop rights - define labor as integrity - make it equal with human dignity, respectable, deserving of reward. I lived through the era of the Union givebacks, PATCO, the airline strike. The meaning of labor was changing - it was becoming depressed."

Those who are well-educated yet not interested in standard professional careers of doctor, lawyer, or therapist have difficulty finding their place in the current job market. Matthew, also in his late thirties, is a graduate student in Comparative Literature¹. He is unexcited about his job history, a series of scattered succession of jobs, in libraries, warehouses, and publishing companies. By contrast, his creative writing, which has seriously engaged him since college, is a "serious, methodical," and daily pursuit, sustaining him by all criteria except income. While his graduate work interests him, he says he's not "driven" to be an academic, (as graduate students, who must devote many years to training, are assumed to be). His hopes are modest - to get a job as a result of his graduate training, and he entered graduate school out of exasperation:

"Oh god, I don't know. One shitty job after another. I basically just didn't know what else to do!

Yeah, I think there are a lot of people there for that reason. You know, I like it. I like it okay. It's not that I hate it. But mainly it was a stalling tactic."

This represents a generational view of work quite

different from its parents'. Where the parents saw a post-war economy of prosperity and hope, their children are cynical. They see a lot of current work opportunities as unstable and redundant, and they tread water half in, half out of the labor market. The autonomy, mastery and control of Matthew's personal writing regimen contrasts sharply with his job history, which did not challenge or excite him. That is what sustains him.

Many devoted artists choose jobs, not because they love them, but in order to be financially secure and to allow themselves time and energy to paint, write, or play music. Eric, the poet, said:

"I got a job by accident as an assistant teacher at a day care center...I really liked it a lot and I realized that I could teach. Cause at first I didn't want to be a teacher. But then I liked it, so I decided to become a teacher so I could have the freedom and the energy to be a writer. And the security. Because at my job I have tenure. I work from 9 to 3. I get home at 3:30. And I could work on my writing."

Frank, the painter, hoped for many years to make art his main occupation, perhaps by becoming a tenured art professor. Instead, after greater time flexibility in earlier years, he had to work full-time for the past decade or more in the insurance industry. Once forced to work a full week instead of part-time, finding the time to paint has been more of a struggle for Frank than for Eric.

"Right now it's pretty much working nine to five, Monday through Friday. I don't really work much at painting at night. I'm beat by that point. My painting is mostly done on weekends. At the moment what I'm mostly trying to do is accumulate enough money so I can retire early. Then

I'll be able to paint.

This studio that I'm trying to buy now, one of the ironies particularly for something like painting or sculpture, you need a lot of space and particularly in the city, space is very expensive. So you keep working to get a studio, but you don't have time to do the work because you're working in order to pay for the space! It's a really vicious cycle."

Florence and Maria have both worked as paralegals solely to make money. Neither enjoy these jobs or find them intrinsically worthwhile. Jobs that provide flexibility, such as temporary, paralegal, restaurant and service-oriented work, are filled with people whose interests are elsewhere, including artistic preoccupations. One could speculate that the combined income sacrificed by this sizable population for the sake of pursuing their dreams is enormous. In an eight year period, for example, restaurant workers earned a substantially declining share of earnings compared to workers in all other industries in New York City: 51.4% in 1980, down to 39.7% in 1988. And while there is no data on numbers of aspiring artists in the restaurant business, anecdotally it is known to be substantial. (Zukin:1995:161)

While Florence worked full-time for seven years and then quit, Maria worked for fifteen years part-time, gaining flexibility but losing a better salary, benefits and a pension. Maria describes the work as non-creative, utilizing the "other side of your brain", tedious, at times requiring her presence at the office until sunrise. Florence is even more venomous about her former work.

"...horrible place. When I think of it now it was like a prison, a reformatory. It was so punitive and so brutal - the whole setup, from the minute you walked in you had to be buzzed in - very high-pitched electronic - and then the phone system was set up so if the phone rang anywhere in an eight-person office, all of the phones would ring. You'd be sitting there trying to work and the phone would ring hundreds of times a day. Can you imagine what that does to your spinal cord? Those were just the infrastructural things, and then when you add the interpersonal dynamics - just unhappiness. Weekly, somebody would burst into tears or threaten to quit, the DRAMA was unbelievable. And it was miserable."

But it paid extremely well, and she said she was "seduced by the money". She fit her writing into a very busy schedule.

"I would get up very early in the morning, I would write from seven to nine, get to work at ten, and then when I came home in the evenings, or if I didn't have a class that night, after my class, (like if the class was 6:30 to 9:00, and I'd be home 9:30 or 10), I would print out what I wrote in the morning, and get up and do it the next day. And on the weekends and when I had days when I had more time I would just devote myself to it."

Now her situation has changed; she works at a different job part-time. In her first year of newfound free time, she was not productive. She had written three plays in a row, with no break and thinks she just was not inspired.

"But now I actually had structured it, making a quarter of the money that I used to make (I used to work at a law firm on Wall Street), but I have more time. But just NOW am I getting into a routine of using the free time that I had structured in a productive way. I was actually more productive - until now - until I'd say, this month - I was actually more productive when I had all these obstacles to the writing!"

The quality of her writing has improved because she has free time to rest and refresh her brain.

"One thing that I have noticed is that my work is getting better, now that I have more time. It's not as superficial. I have space and time to think longer thoughts, I have DOWN time, to let thoughts develop a

little bit more. That may be a function of my development as a playwright that I'm doing it better, than I did as a beginner. But my sense is it's also a function of space and time too, to just let things percolate a little bit more. But I'm finding that with my newer work I'm much more satisfied with what comes out the second or third time, whereas with my older work I would have to rewrite maybe a hundred times!! I mean a lot! So things seem to be coming out more refined and less raw."

The problem of working full-time with little energy left to do art happens to many people, and accounts for long periods of barren creativity. The writer, Tillie Olsen, in her essay Silences, talks of how the writer needs to have full time free of distractions in order to write "substantially", a privilege that few artists in the United States enjoy. Olsen believes that great writers like Kafka, Melville, Katherine Anne Porter and many others were thwarted by jobs that demanded their energies. Melville, for example, worked in a Custom House, with only evenings and Sundays to write. For thirty years he was not writing. These jobs did not merely steal time, they interfered with inspiration. Olsen says:

"Subterranean forces can make you wait, but they are very finicky about the kind of waiting it has to be. Before they will feed the creator back, they must be fed, passionately fed, what needs to be worked on." (Olsen 1965:78).

The damage that jobs inflict upon the muse is debated by artists, affecting each idiosyncratically. The needs of the muse, as Olsen herself elaborates, are more complex than can be explained by mere presence or absence of jobs, time and distractions.

Kafka's job as an official in a state insurance agency is

one of his most well-known biographical details, most important for marking him for the kind of writer that he was. Many other famous artists have carried their job histories with their fame. Frank, the painter in this study who works for the insurance industry, laughs at the industry's fame in this regard. He finds it ironic that a college for Insurance has a plaque or statue near its front door for Charles Ives, "as if they created this composer, which of course I'm sure had nothing to do with him composing music, but they're sort of taking credit for it after the fact!" Frank's colleagues at work, after learning about his painting, reminded him with pride about famous people such as Charles Ives and Wallace Stevens who worked in the insurance industry. In the lore of the artists' ways, professions and the arts become linked as a symbiotic web, the artists believed to bring the experiences they gain in their careers into their writings. In the case of William Carlos Williams, it was his doctoring, while for Kafka, it was as much his suffering, in the bureaucratic maze of the civil servant's drudgery. The influence and inspiration of careers upon literary expression is the most obvious. There is, for example, a long history of famous physician writers that spans centuries. Sherlock Holmes would most likely never have been created had his author, Arthur Conan Doyle, not been a physician, his inspiration for the character stemming in part from his medical experiences (Green:1993).

Attitudes Towards Professionalism

The precise definition of "professional" in the sociological literature has been debated for decades. Before industrialization it referred to the fields of law, medicine, divinity, and the military, the only occupations not connected to commerce or manual labor. Industrialization introduced new occupations categorized as professional. Sociologists defined them by a set of criteria, including "possession of a skill based on theoretical knowledge, provision of training and education; testing of competence of members; organization; adherence to a code of conduct; and altruistic service." This approach to professions, known as the "trait" approach, was challenged in the 1970's as "arbitrary", "ambiguous", and biased. Newer approaches considered the defining feature of professionalism to be "autonomy" (Waddington 1996).

The attempt to define the professional artist becomes even more problematic. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define the professional artist as the subjects of this study define it, which is approximate to the dictionary definition: "following an occupation as a means of livelihood or gain" (Random House 1967). I would only add "primary means of livelihood" to differentiate it further from the situation of my subjects.

The professional artist stands both in contrast and alongside those in this study. Such a person is like a close cousin, maintaining a kinship yet different in many respects.

Certainly, the self-proclaimed artist is an object for their imaginations and curiosity on account of that fact. In general, people interested in a particular way of life have a special interest in those already seen to be living it. The experiences of the people who have "made it", the "chosen" people, are viewed as models of what that life would be like. When these experiences are seen as negative, it can dissuade them from going down the same path. For example, Brian remembers how a talented boy in his elementary school was shunned by the others:

"I recognized at that time, even though I was ten or eleven years old, that in that orchestra there were certain people who really could play.

There were people there who were really good. I remember this one guy, he was a real violinist. (As a matter of fact, ...last time I talked to him he was interviewing for a symphony Orchestra.) ... he was sitting in the front! The teacher even knew. Everyone knew that this guy was really something. He even looked like a musician. He was a weird looking guy. Ten years old - high forehead...he didn't look like the rest of us. And he lived in this corner house that nobody ever went to. You just knew that this guy was a strange guy; he was a musician."

The "musician" for Brian, the ten-year old, is weird and unpopular, different from other children, and perhaps going a little too far out on a limb. He was not a typical child; he did not fit into the norm. In the other children's eyes, he stood out and seemed destined for social ostracism, something children want to avoid at all costs.

To be a musician symbolized danger in George's memory of the tragic demise of his music teacher, a Russian pianist with

whom he studied until he was about to go to college in his late teens.

"He was a very exciting person to me and also to my cousin, who was a year and a half younger than I am...We studied with him together, and he was a professional concert pianist. We would turn pages for him and his wife at concerts...it was very exciting for us as teenagers...to have contact with this very glamorous artist.

A brilliant pianist, but came to a very untimely and tragic end. I don't know if this had any subsequent effect on me or my cousin. But he gave a concert in maybe 1930 or 1932, at Carnegie Hall. Very badly attended...I was in the balcony. I couldn't see anyone else in the audience. I'm sure there must have been other people there. But anyway, the critics did not like his playing. I think the next day he committed suicide. Took an overdose of barbiturates and killed himself. My mother and my cousin's mother tried to withhold that information from us.

But anyway, that was the end of my formal musical training."

People looked at those around them who either attained the status of a professional, or were working towards that status, and wondered if they could be like them. They were seen as models for their own ambitions, their lives as dress rehearsals for how they might themselves live. Mitchell found such a model in a colleague at a professionally geared music camp that he attended in his late teen years, a camp that he could not adjust to or enjoy. The camper, a bit older than himself, appeared very different from himself.

"he was to my left in cottage practicing. His discipline was awesome to me. I wanted that. That ability to rationally, steadfastly plow through my musical education to get that solidity that he had."

Mitchell's approach to music was not disciplined in the sense demanded of by the camp. Music meant release of emotion,

expression of deep feelings, and the camp did not focus on this aspect of music but rather on discipline, technique and relentless practicing. The camper that Mitchell admired represented his own search for that discipline which he wanted but at the same time rejected. Going through a period of years where he was torn and conflicted over this contradiction in his own desires, he sought the approval of the camper in a symbolic attempt to come to terms with his own conflict. He went to the same college as the camper and tried to befriend him but was as unsuccessful at that goal as he was at becoming anything like him.

The subjects of this study often react ambivalently but passionately to the professional artists that they have met. As do many other facets of professionalism, the artists arouse strong feelings within them. It is combination of wanting to be accepted, to feel a part of their world, and to not feel like a failure, yet on closer examination, realizing very often that the very world they are trying to enter is not so desirable after all, rather ultimately foreign, alien and false in their terms.

Beth, upon meeting a community of artists, discovered elements of their value-system to be distasteful:

"I'm not involved with a community of artists at all. But I don't feel a need to be.

I went to a party a few years ago where everybody there was some sort of artist - a lot of them were visual artists. Everybody had on black leather skirts. I like black leather skirts and everything but I felt really out of place because they all seemed so sophisticated...Some of the people got thousands of dollars for some of their

paintings. They exhibited in some of the galleries in [the city]. Some of them were not exhibiting, but were struggling young artists.

These two women were talking and I was standing near them and so I just tried to -join in their conversation (because I wasn't talking to anybody) and I said, 'oh, what kind of art work do you do?' She sort of looked at me and told me briefly what she did and I said, 'oh, are they in a gallery?' and she said, 'yes'. I said something stupid, - (this was before I really started painting again). I said, 'I haven't done any art work in so long but I 'm really trying to get into it again,' and she said, just like this, 'oh, really', (cool tone of voice) and turned her head and walked away. I thought, I don't want to be part of this. I mean I don't care about trends in art and people who earn their living that way, they have to be. Figure out the trend and always be doing something new to attract attention and that's not what art is about to me at all. It's just so foreign to me. So I feel really fortunate for the support that I have cause I think it's exactly the kind that I need."

As she spoke to these apparently successful artists her sense of inadequacy was heightened and it curbed her motivations to become like them.

The Marketplace

A strong reason to avoid professionalization is to avoid the competition of the marketplace. The stress and effort of trying to sell their artwork changes people's feelings about it. The following story illustrates what the marketplace symbolized for Sybil:

"My mother was always suggesting that I should sell stuff in arts and crafts fairs. Constantly, all throughout my youth. She was constantly saying, "Oh, well I went to this arts and crafts fair and I saw the batiks they had there, and yours were so much better...I guess the thought of sitting in an arts and crafts fair with pieces that I'd made and having people come by - strangers - looking at my stuff, haggling over the prices, - the thought just made my skin crawl. I just couldn't imagine

doing that. And I guess that's one of the things about being a professional artist. You have to make a living out of your work which means you have to put yourself out there in that kind of environment...that just was such an intimidating thought..."

She sees the selling process as a corrupting one, situated in an alien environment devoid of any relationship with the original one, where the work was made. It distracts her from the personal satisfaction of the creative process. The strong language of disgust shows to what extent she sees it as a personally violating process:

"...part of it has to do with my discomfort with money in general but also just the thought of selling parts of myself. Doing pieces for me is a very personal, creative process, about expressing my own feelings, and the thought of strangers buying pieces of myself was just really - it's like you have no control over who gets your stuff, then.

People have said, 'You should be a chef in a restaurant.' I have the same feeling about cooking. I can't cook for strangers or people I don't like. Because it's about giving part of myself to somebody else and the thought of serving my cooking to someone I can't stand just makes me sick. So, I think because of that I don't think I could be a professional artist, because I couldn't stand going through that kind of experience.

Then there's the whole issue of possibly being rejected and going around the galleries. I just can't imagine. But I have definitely had encouragement in my life."

The view of the marketplace as corrupt is not universal. When art is exhibited, either as paintings in a show or music in a concert hall or some other setting, or the written form read in a public setting, there are other possible experiences that people report. It can be a validation of the merits of their work. This was certainly true for Marianna, who seemed to like to sell some of her paintings, although was too

attached to sell others.

"I had a show...in a church, which is not a church anymore. It's a cultural center. And there was an ad in the paper - "local artists' work" - and I thought, "what the heck, I'm gonna do this." So I applied, and brought some work down, and every show was a two-man show...

I think I sold six or seven paintings in the show. And it was wonderful to do. I don't even think this one was in there, (she is referring to a painting in her home) because this one I didn't want to part with. They were actually bigger and more complicated.. But it was a very successful show.

And then I was pregnant, and I got sent to bed in my pregnancy, and my daughter ...was born early...with a lot of problems. But my career as a painter would have gone differently had I not gotten pregnant at that time...I would have pursued more - doing more work, trying to get into more local galleries. Having just had a show that was very successful, I would have tried to get more - which was actually my goal at the time."

While doing the show, Marianna became more interested in the process of both showing and selling her work. On the other hand, showing and selling are not necessarily the same thing. Mel enjoys exhibiting in art shows, but he is not interested in selling his paintings. Speaking about how he began exhibiting, it becomes clear that the reason he gets so much enjoyment from it is because it provides proof that people admire his paintings.

"...the school I went to in Italy, after 20 years in business there, they decided to have an exhibit of their students' work. They had about 4000 students that went through there. They picked 40 of them. I don't know how, I got on, maybe because I was the only Jew. Whatever it was, I got on. I had some pretty decent paintings. I got a lot of good comments and so on, so I enjoyed that.

And then I got involved with this hospital, god knows how many years ago, and I got very friendly with some of the doctors. One doctor in particular wanted to see my work. We talked about art. He was interested in art. So I got the little photographic album of my work, and he saw it. He said, 'you know what? You're gonna show all these paintings at the (suburban synagogue)'. I

didn't know he was involved with that. He insisted on it. I declined for about a year, because I didn't feel that my work warrants that sort of...but he disagreed with me. He liked it very much and so after about a year or so I said ok, and I showed it for about six weeks and they wanted to keep it there for another four weeks.

So they came to me. I didn't go to them. I've shown in Long Island in different galleries. Libraries, churches, the only place I haven't shown is in an Orthodox synagogue! They don't want it, because everything about me is very non-Orthodox, except for my upbringing."

He adds that the money doesn't interest him:

"...I could have sold my works many times, but I chose not to because I put too much of myself into it. Since I don't need the money, (because my wife still has a job). I didn't want to part with them because I put too much of myself into it. And my kids know every painting I ever did. So I better not cheat on them. So ...that's where it's at."

In this exhibit he refuses to sell anything:

"The president of that particular place called me. Begged me to sell him something. I didn't want to. Spielberg's brother-in-law called me, wanted a couple of paintings. I said, if Steven sold all his holdings and everything, you still couldn't afford it. I don't need to sell them. My kids are heirs and if my grandchildren want to sell 'em in the year 3000 I figure ok, I won't be around."

Frank, the abstract artist who works at an insurance company, expresses intense scorn for many buyers whose purchasing criteria can be crass or utilitarian, rather than aesthetic. He pities artists who have to sell their paintings to people who don't appreciate them, who change the color of their living room and their paintings along with it. He remembered how his parents had to succumb to such pressures which determined what they created, and what they stopped creating. His father's advertising job destroyed his ability to be a fiction writer. His job destroyed his art, because one

had to affect the other. Since his job affected his mood, his ability to be inspired was numbed or deadened.

Worker/artist Identification

How do people with jobs and serious artistic interests define themselves, in terms of their art versus their work? Do they see themselves as artists with jobs on the side, or as workers or professionals with an artistic talent on the side?

Brian has worked for the same direct-mail advertising company since he dropped out of college in his junior year, first as a printer, and then as printing manager. He works long hours, but when home nights and weekends, he invariably plays his guitar and piano. He does not identify strongly with his job. In contrast to his music, his job is necessary, but exchangeable.

"I could be doing a lot of different jobs, but I really think I have some talent. I have an ear for music, and that's really more of what I am than what I do. It's like the color of my skin, the color of my hair, the fact that I have this talent, and I can play a little and develop a little bit (even though I should develop it a lot more).

That's more a part of me, what makes me tick. The fact that I'm in printing - yeah, that's become sort of an identity, but on a more superficial basis, because if I didn't do this job I would do something else and would identify with that job. So that's more of a replaceable thing. But the musicianship is a natural thing that comes about. It's something that one is drawn to. You either are or you aren't. No one is born to be a pressman or an accountant."

Beth's self-definition has changed over the years, because her idea of what is an artist has changed. At first she did wish she could have been successful as an artist:

"I don't regret it any more. And I think it's because of this whole change in attitude about what is really art. Art just means something so different than being a professional artist to me. It's life. Art is life. Life is art. I guess.

I see people doing art that would never call themselves artists and the world would never call them artists. My friend Barbara, actually she is an artist now. She's always been an artist, even she 's only recently - she's 55 or something and went back to school when she was 50. Now she teaches art. But she's always lived her life in such a creative way. Everything about her house, everything was art. It's integral to life, not something to hang in a museum, you know? Really."

There are others who feel it is extremely important to announce to the world that they are artists or writers even during the periods when they are not producing any work. Both Eric and Frank fit this category. Eric dates his being a writer to a time many years before he wrote intentionally.

"In fact, even before I was writing, I was telling people I met that I was a writer. People would say, 'that's good. Can I see some of your work?' I'd say, 'I just don't have any, but I'm still a writer. I can write better than these other people.

...Then when I became a writer, I wrote every day. To prove to myself that I was a writer.

Frank says that rather than as an insurance worker,

"I guess I think of myself as an artist, which, when you're not working at it, you feel it's a lie. That you're pretending. I had a friend who had pretensions to be a writer, but he always had writer's block, so he would never tell anybody he was a writer. He would say that he worked at...wherever he was working at the time. ... In a sense it's admirable. He's being brutally honest about it. In fact he wasn't doing that much writing, but my attitude - and I used to try to convince him of this - was that maybe that if he were more able to say (he was a writer) it would get him ... so he would just write! He was always trying to write something perfect, and nothing was, so he never really got beyond that."

Florence grasped onto the identity of "writer" for dear life, as an answer to a work identity that she had long been

searching for. The playwriting is important to her but so is the feeling of knowing and being proud of who she is.

"it really WAS a matter of identity. Because it was SO painful for me not knowing who I was and what my gifts were...Imagine going around saying you're a legislative aide or a paralegal. I mean, what IS that? It's not something that I value. I was doing it, but I was doing it while I waiting to figure who I was and what I can do.

Now I just feel so much - confidence, and a sense of myself. The first time - a couple of years ago - there was a National Women's Studies Association Conference... and I was reading one of my plays out there. Someone said to me before I went out to the conference, 'Oh, you should have a business card!' I said, "WHAT?" What would I put on it? They said, "You're a writer".

So I did this card, and I couldn't believe it. It said 'Florence Hutchins, playwright', on it. The first time I gave it to somebody I really expected them to say, 'Oh yeah, right!' But it didn't happen! You know? They said, 'Oh, that's a nice card. What did you write?'

You know, identities are constructed, and they're constructed by things like that! (laughs) Once you claim it, and you have a card."

While Vicky owns her own corporate writing business and therefore is blessed with autonomy and financial rewards, she finds the corporate world that her business services alienating.

"What I do for a living is I dress naked emperors. Don't get me wrong - I really like these people - I have some of the most wonderful human beings for my clients. But I cannot understand why people work for major corporations. (Maybe that's because I'm an entrepreneur)...I don't understand what meaning this gives people in their lives. You know? I don't understand why selling a new PBX that has 14,000 more features for corporate America is at all important. I guess I can in some respects but I don't understand why we need to do all of that.

And I'm an active participant in this whole capitalist scheme. I promote this shit, and I know how to promote it! I sometimes actually find it fascinating. But as a greater calling in life, it's not. 'Hi, I'm a product manager at AT&T.'

What about people in downtown Newark who've got no medical care and no food and no education and no opportunity and are completely despairing and yes, you

know, there are poor people in America. You know? I don't think that - there's such a disconnection. These people drive every day - my customers - to their big corporate building, surrounded by lots of tarmac and parking lots and they go in and they're hermetically sealed. They can't open the windows and they're plugged into the internet, and they're e-mailing each other back and forth. They're posturing for power. In a way, corporate headquarters are like the fiefdoms of the Middle Ages. ...There's the king. He's in the palace suite up in the executive suite, the mahogany wrapped suite. Then there are all the courtiers, courtier people who run around. Those are my clients, trying to please the king. It's a very strange thing.

So I'm really always feeling like an outsider when I do that kind of work. But I certainly have grown accustomed to my standard of living. I'm not complaining financially. I'm comfortable and I have no complaints about that."

While she may be a business writer, the writing that comes out of her imagination is the authentic part of her dual writing endeavors. Her novel gives her meaning, while her business writing gives her money. Its purpose beyond that is dubious at best. Her fiction writing satisfies her need for sense and purpose. It contrasts with her job, which is enmeshed in the hypocritical world of corporate logic.

"What's important is that I get a chance to write. Because if I don't write, I feel as if there's no meaning in life. It's sort of an existential kind of thing. It's the thing that gives you a *raison d'être*. Everything, from building the business - that's completely meaningless to me. Getting up in the morning and eating breakfast has no meaning. There's gotta be a greater reason why we're here, and for me, the calling is the writing. If I'm not writing, then I'm not answering the greater call, the call that's beyond who I am...And if I'm doing the business, all I am is doing commerce, which ...I don't find very socially redeeming. I'm a capitalist, because I live in a capitalist society and that's how you earn a living in a capitalist society, and I'm independent. I couldn't be a communally socialist person because I really can't put up with people, I have to run the show. So in that sense I'm a capitalist. But I don't find participating in the commercial world at all

socially redeeming."

Change in Status

For some people in this study, the place of the arts has shifted in the course of their lives. Some would now be included as "amateur-professionals" by the criteria of such surveys as the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (Peters and Cherbo 1992), those who have shifted from a private preoccupation with an art form to some more formal public recognition. Without giving up their day jobs, some have still experienced a change in status since I interviewed them. Phil, the elevator operator, continues to gain more local fame through the local media. Rebecca began having pottery shows in local crafts fairs and sold her pieces. Eric, the poet, has for the first time had a book published by a major publishing firm. Jenny's informal get-togethers to play Irish music have changed venue from a private home to a neighborhood bar.

With the changes come new ways of thinking about their art activity. After setting up at art fairs, Rebecca was affected by the pace of her selling. When she thought she was not selling enough, she began to have moments of doubt about whether to continue making pottery, even though earning money had never been her original goal. The transfer of Irish music playing from private home to bar caused the group to change its norms of relating. No longer was it an open or casual group. More commitment was involved, different practicing

routines, and different playing routines.

Eric's achievement in the publishing of his book has effected him greatly. His success came in stages. After many years of poetry readings, he began to attract attention.

"All these things were happening to me. One of my poems are going to be on the New York City subways -Poetry in Motion. So all these people were recognizing me, and just liking my work a lot. And I won a National Endowment for the Arts award. I was getting into a lot of anthologies, magazines. Doing a lot of readings. A lot of good things were happening. It didn't happen suddenly. Just all of a sudden people were getting into my work. People were talking about me. I was getting fans. People were writing me letters."

After this, he was noticed at one of his readings, which resulted in a book contract.

"I did a reading on Mother's Day, actually. I read poems about my mother. There were these two novelists in the audience, and one of them went up to his editor, and he started imitating the way I read, and she said, wow, that sounds good. Can you show me his work. And my other friend, this novelist, had some of my poetry and the editor read them and...she left me a message on my machine saying she wanted to make me an offer. So that's how I got my publishing contract, not through seeking it out. But I was always writing. I was always reading. I was on MTV. On....NPR, "All Things Considered." And I'm going to be on a forthcoming PBS..."

Eric found that the other poets he met at readings and groups became jealous of his success.

"I think what happened is as soon as I became more successful it's become even more difficult, because, what happened is that some people got envious with me, some got upset. It changed my world. I didn't think that anything would change my world. I always thought I'd just keep writing, and even if I wasn't discovered or wasn't well-known, it wouldn't stop me because I have this need to write. And now I'm getting a book out and people aren't and getting paid - the local poets on the scene - they can't understand how I could get a book out and they're not."

Because of the jealousy, Eric responded defensively to his hard-earned fame. His response will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Summary and Conclusion

The manner in which the participants of this study respond to the demands of paid work vary. Yet beyond their various work strategies and adaptations clear patterns emerge. While work for many is seen to be a fumbling, humiliating experience fraught with ambivalence and compromise, art is seen in a much clearer, more essential and pleasurable light. The art activity represents something more of the essence of who they are. Work may or may not fill this role; in fact, for most of this sample, it does not. Perhaps it is precisely within this dualism of work/art that clarity as to the significance of the art can occur.

The ultimate purpose of the art for the participants of this study is personal and private. While many are willing, even eager to share their art work with the outside world, they are unwilling to do so at the sacrifice of personal meaning. This is most evident in the attitudes towards selling and the marketplace. Sybil's disgusted reference to "strangers buying pieces of myself" evokes cannibalistic imagery. Those who have entered the marketplace generally do so at the urging of others. When they do enter, they establish clear limits on participation. The limits may include willingness to exhibit but not sell, or unwillingness to sell works that have

sentimental value. The contrast between Nathan and the others in this regard is striking. Mel, for example, benefited from showing his work because of the praise he received. He had no need to sell. Nathan, in contrast, used the marketplace as the basis for deciding whether to continue to do etchings.

For many, the identity of artist is essential, even if they never earn a dime. They may live dual lives forever, engaged in work that has no relation to their artistry. For Frank and Eric, the identification of themselves as artists has helped them through periods of self-doubt and creative slumps. Florence's relatively recent identity as a writer seems most critical, giving her new confidence.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Both professional and non-professional artists use social situations to express their creativity. While both participate in classes and workshops to develop and share their work, the goal or end result sought is different. For the professional, these activities are purposeful and part of the institutionalizing of their work. They are necessary for acquiring credentials and certificates and money. There is a linkage between these activities and the ability to market the creative product.

The non-professionals, too, attend classes and workshops to develop and share their work, display their work to strangers in public at performances, exhibits, and readings, form clubs and arrange impromptu, informal gatherings of friends. Groups organized for other social, political, or cultural purposes can be vehicles for them to incorporate their art, making statements with placards, murals, or drums. But their participation is not formally seeking a result; the process is more voluntary and follows a more jagged, indirect trajectory. Other aspects of their lives interfere.

People seek out groups for various reasons: to help them develop their art, to meet compatible people, to prove something to themselves, or to better society. This chapter will explore these motivations, and ask what it is that they

find. Does it keep them coming back for more, and if so, why? When they leave the groups, why do they leave? Are some people more group-oriented than others? What do they get out of it? What makes different types of groups different, and distinctive? What types of issues does each group stir up in people?

It is important to examine what exactly is social about the artistic activities of making music, creative writing, and drawing, sculpting, and making pottery. It seems obvious that making music is a social activity, but not so for writing or painting or sculpting. Writing in particular is not typically thought of as a social activity, but rather as a very personal, solitary endeavor. This is in fact the reason why the act of writing can be so fraught with anxiety for so many people. Only after the writing is completed and read by others does it seem to become a social product and develop an independent existence outside of the mind of the writer. That social existence is typically thought of as appearing at the end of a long process that remains very much in isolation in its important stages.

David Leavitt describes these two aspects of writing during and after the filing of a lawsuit against him for plagiarism by the author Stephen Spender. The publicity over that lawsuit transformed his feelings about writing. His new novel is about an author like him, who gets sued and develops writer's block. Leavitt said that this novel "represents two

models of writing, one of the little boy bouncing his ball, generating stories for the sheer pleasure of it, and the besieged adult, writing to make a living, having to contend with a very competitive, very unreliable world in which public image counts" (Bohlen 1997).

Leavitt's first model of writing, the child absorbed in his own play, is actually the pleasurable one, while the second model, where society interferes, is the painful one. Typical depictions of the lonely, isolated writer get turned around; it is the social encounter that becomes depressing, rather than the writer's isolation.

When analyzing the process of writing or painting with such considerations in mind, even the isolated stage of work is not what it appears. Eric, for example, takes a very social approach toward his writing. His motivation to write was socially related, and he has used groups to take his writing further. The limitations of communication and the frustrations of interpersonal relations were motivating factors in his wish to write:

"There's a few things (that made me want to be a writer). I realized early that I was a better conversationalist when the other person wasn't around. I would talk to someone on the phone, and after I hung up the phone, that's when my great ideas...I could still talk to the person even though the person wasn't there. But I could talk to them in my head, so I realized that people's absence had a strong effect on me.

... a lot of my poems are about these conversations that I should have had but that I didn't have. They are things that you wanted to say but you just couldn't say. Sometimes you just can't communicate it. A lot of my poems are about limitations of language, about how difficult it is to communicate. I think that helped me

to be a writer."

Eric's parents were "extroverted, really different from me. They weren't very creative, or artistic," the opposite of how he thinks of himself. Like other writers, who are commonly thought of as shy people who express themselves more easily on paper, he felt as though he was not completely understood for who he really was. His motivations to write included a need to be better understood, to be known in an authentic and real sense.

"...there was this need to be visible, to be known. I just found that when I was with...friends and all of a sudden six or seven of us showed up or when we went to a party, I had this need to be famous. I felt like no one knew who I was. I just wanted, I thought if I was famous people would know me, know who I was."

Eric was motivated to write because he hoped that by doing so he would be understood by people on a deeper level than occurred just talking or being with them.

Marianna, another writer, also wrote out of the desire to reach people, in her case her family. When her child was born with severe multiple disabilities, she underwent a serious crisis. One of the ways she dealt with it was by writing about it. While she does not consider this her primary motivation for writing, one of the factors that influenced her to express herself in that way was the fact that she could not talk to most members of her family about how she felt, and feel completely understood by them.

"I think one reason that I originally started writing the book ... my two older sisters and my parents - I just never really felt they really understood what it was

like, and I just felt like, if your own family doesn't understand, maybe you have to ... put it down and let them read it, or something."

The desire to be better understood is implicitly a wish to change the person who is misunderstanding. In a less personal context, Eric also saw writing as a form of social and political work, of being effective and influential in the world, of perhaps changing people's understanding.

"Writing was connected to my politics. By writing I could help people. I might be able to change the world somehow. Just seeing people really depressed I thought if I could write about life well enough, I could somehow help make them less depressed."

The Development of Skill and Talent: Public Exposure

Unlike the career artist, the non-professional has a choice about whether to become involved with the public, although for many, the public does play an important and influential role. The relationship between the artist and the public does not have the intimacy of friendship but it is nevertheless a real social bond. Particularly for a performer, be it a writer reading or a musician playing live, the audience becomes the "other person", taking on a character of its own, that the performer considers, reacts to, and is affected by. The social world, having entered into the private world where creative work originates, now is used more directly to develop and revise the work. The public audience plays a special role in this that is different from private groups or classes.

Presenting oneself to an audience was described as an electrifying experience, even if, or maybe even because, it can be terrifying. When Eric read his poems in front of groups, he felt this way:

"I remember seeing this movie..."Is Paris Burning", about these drag queens. This guy is talking about getting these drag queens on stage, modeling these dresses. They're saying, once you get up on stage, you're famous for that moment. Everyone's eyes are looking at you. And it's like a high, better than alcohol and drugs. And if people got high that way, instead of through alcohol and drugs, the world would be a better place.

I felt that way, too; I get up on stage, and everyone's looking at me, I felt this high. Then I communicate with people, and people say, hey, I've had your experience. I've been where you've been. I think that's what writers should do...the more people who wrote, people would be more powerful, have more control over their lives."

On the other hand, public exposure is frightening. Susan, the professional musician, explains that a common musician's nightmare is of walking out on stage to play a solo and discovering you are naked. She encounters the same type of fear when she sits down to write in certain genres. Having had a writing teacher advise her that the trick to writing is "letting yourself write," she realizes she can do that more easily with certain types of writing than others:

"I can write essay-like things on a particular subject, and I send them as letters sometimes. But I sit down to write a short story or a chapter and I suddenly become tongue-tied. Plain old inhibited. Very inhibited. It's weird. Like I'm not wearing enough clothing! Like one of my nightmares."

The imagined audience was more inhibiting than the actual one. The actual audience can in fact counter the destructive effects of the imagined one. It could have worked that way for

Mitchell, whose perfectionistic tendencies toward his musicianship as a teenager displayed itself regularly. In one experience, after forgetting a piece in the middle of a performance and stopping to look at the music in front of the audience, he was applauded for his "ability to recover from a mistake", but he refused to come back out on stage because he did not want to be "rewarded" for his "imperfection". Even so, he knew what the audience was telling him.

At another performance, he introduced a piece by Ernest Bloch, (a section of a larger work called "Contrition" for violin and piano), explaining that it was about Jewish suffering, an appropriate theme since it was around the time of the Jewish New Year. The audience appreciated his introduction, a "formative" experience for him:

"it made me realize that, again, we don't have to accept this concept ...that the performer is a servant...More and more it's being done today. People are talking about the music before they perform it. I love it...Just the fact that they are saying it and the way they express it shows - 'look at me. I'm here. Recognize you are here to see me and not the ghost of the composer. I am a creative force in my own right.' Language does that. Saying something invests your personality with significance before the audience."

The audience, by showing approval, confirmed his wishes to do more with the music than perform, to place the music in a wider intellectual context. Interaction with the audience can broaden the performer's scope, by providing a forum to experiment or expand upon previous undertakings. Equally powerful is the negative impact upon the performer when the enthusiasm of the audience is absent. The setting of the

performance can affect the level of enthusiasm and rapport. Mitchell remembers playing on the street with his brother:

"the audience...isn't a nothing, a vacuum, it's a something, and it has as much to do with the creative act as you do, in a certain sense. That's what people mean by the interaction making a performance. When P. and I played on the street, we were exhausted after a very short time because we were putting out but not getting back. You don't get back from an audience - it's rare when you do -on the street."

In Eric's maturation process as a writer, his gauge was his live audience, at readings. Readings thrive on audiences; they cannot exist without them. But they are not precisely audiences but rather peers. Aspiring poets come to hear each other. In an unusual display of democracy and non-hierarchy, there are opportunities around the city called public readings where anyone can go up to a microphone and try out their work on the public. Not all readings are of such a type. Many are by invitation, extended only to published writers, but opportunities are available for budding poets like Eric to find places several nights a week where he can go and be heard.

"...there's a community of writers and poets, so I started writing and going to open meetings, and I read out loud. And that helped me because when I first started writing I didn't even understand what I wrote. So I thought, this must be powerful. I can't even understand it!"

But then I'd read it out loud and I would just get blank expressions on people's faces. Then I said, "I have to change my style. *If I want to communicate with people, I have to write clearer.*" (*italics mine*) So I started writing clearer and then I went to workshops with friends. Local workshops. I never saw anyone famous. I would just work on my writing."

Eric found that both writing and going to readings were

tied to one another, each activity nourishing the other. As his aim was to reach people, participating in a reading was the most effective way of ascertaining if his intentions were getting across. Competition with other readers was also a motivating factor.

"Readings stimulated me and made me write more. You see someone read, and they're really not communicating. I'd say, 'I could do better, if I was up on stage, I could really reach people.' And then I just went home and I wrote.

Just going to poetry readings, images, words, would come into my head...hearing people read would move me."

External approval and encouragement are extremely important in spurring artistic development. For Florence, an introductory course inhibited her. When her interest in acting waned after too many years of the IRS labeling her acting as a "hobby", she began to want to write plays while working as a paralegal. Her first attempt at a play was not favorably received at a college continuing education course. The students found it confusing. Florence describes the fragility of the person who first attempts a new art form:

"I was so discouraged, because I think we all need a lot of encouragement when we're starting something new. Especially when you're gonna make a leap from being nothing particular into an identity in something artistic. It's so easy to squash it. And so - I was squashed for a couple of years."

Her play had been based on a true story of a friend who, married to a man diagnosed with AIDS, had gotten pregnant at a fertility clinic. The class could not decide what the story was really about - AIDS or fertility. Some years passed where Florence, discouraged by the reaction, did not attempt to

write more plays. When her friend's husband died of AIDS, Florence was asked to read a monologue from the play at the memorial service. The reaction to her piece was very different from the one in the class:

"I was really honored, and I was so nervous. I was shaking and my mouth was dry and my heart was racing. I read it and I was really honored to do it. Then after the service people came over and said, 'Oh, it was so good, and so moving.' This was so different from what I'd heard at that class, so it kind of undid the damage of the people at the class. So then I started writing again."

In this case, the audience literally jolted Florence back into writing again. What seems a constant is the need for encouragement, from whatever source. The importance of a variety of venues from which this can occur seems clear from these accounts, where people have received encouragement from unexpected sources.

Writing Workshops

Writing workshops proliferate all over urban centers in the United States. They are informal, organized by people wishing to read their work to others. This is intended to be helpful by providing critiques and suggestions. There may or may not be a leader. The group is fluid and sets its own guidelines. The possible arrangements regarding place of meeting, numbers of sessions, commitment to tasks, rules to be followed vary from group to group.

Discovering at the readings that his artistic intentions did not always achieve the desired effects, Eric went to

writing workshops, hoping to develop from criticism. While readings, a more informal and anarchic forum, provided a learning framework for Eric, ironically workshops, whose raison d'être is writing development, disappointed him. He attended:

"... workshops taught by local people. I didn't stay that long. I didn't like the process. At these workshops, people, instead of being creative, writing poems, they use their creativity to be very critical of your work.

I think your personality determines your style. I don't think we totally choose to be the poets we are. I think our personality determines our poetry. My poems are short, they are very direct, and intense. They are introverted. It reflects my personality. Other people write longer poems, in an extroverted style, that's a personality too. So people would say, 'why don't you write about this?' Or people would say, 'why do you keep writing about your mother? Why don't you go to a pizza shop and write about the people who come in and out?' But that doesn't interest me, because I don't know about the people who come into the pizza shop...I write about what I know. Those are my best poems, when I use my own experience."

Other writers had similar negative responses to workshops. Maria, the playwright, for example, says:

"When I was going to those groups as a playwright they were awful. It took me years to write one play. I thought, 'what am I doing this for?' And then nobody wanted to do it anyway. Why am I wasting my time? Write the play, find somebody who wants to at least do a reading of it, and then fix it from there. Don't waste your time with these groups. First of all you're paying money to have people make you miserable."

Maria attributes the failure of these groups to the competition between its members.

"It has to be a very good group of selfless people - which you're never gonna find - who can sit down and criticize another artist's work. Those aren't the people you're writing the play for, anyway. You're writing the play for other people who don't know about the unity of time, place...who don't have notions of what a play

should look like and what the constraints are that playwrights work under. A lot of them have these set rules, and that's how they're judging your play, by how you adhere to the rules."

She described how she collaborated with a composer on a musical Christmas play. The composer belonged to a writing group, and asked her to join him at the group when he presented the play to be critiqued. She was aghast at the group's extensive criticism of the piece for not following traditional playwriting rules, especially since she thought the music was quite beautiful and the play had been performed twice and enthusiastically received by the public.

"I don't care about your rules. I don't care about your opinion. You know whose opinion I care about? The people who are in the audience. Those are the people who matter. Because that's who I wrote this play for. I didn't write it for you."

Maria in this case was returning to her original motivation to write, which was to reach the audience, and she thought the workshop, caught up in rules of writing and the didactic exercise, has lost sight of that motivation. She says:

"I think artists are very hard on each other, and don't allow for growth. It's stifling, sometimes...we have to listen to our audiences more than critics and other people in the theater."

Both Maria and Eric were reacting to workshops in which competitiveness was the key element functioning. The standards of those particular groups were "professional" or state-of-the-art standards and Maria and Eric were looking for a more "private" form of creativity - one that emphasized self-

expression rather than form, craft, or convention. Their responses illustrate again the powerful need for self-expression, that experiences a conflict when it collides with the social standards of acceptance.

The reactions of Eric and Maria towards writing workshops were not representative of any overall consensus. Jill complained about her workshop having no standards, being a "little like an insane asylum" and, with very little actual writing occurring, seemed "more like a support group than a writing group." Others reacted very positively to workshops. Some people spent several years in workshops and for others it helped give them a jumpstart in their writing.

One advantage of the workshops was the structure they provided. Even if the quality of the workshop itself was lacking, its mere existence was helpful. Jill has had difficulties writing consistently over the years on her own personal writing. Her work, being closely related, interferes. She has done freelance writing and editing, written children's books, taught reading and writing, and now works in educational publishing. The times when she has been in a workshop helped her to focus.

"When I was in my first writing group, I'd be on the bus, and think, that's so interesting. Why is everything that everybody says grist for my mill? Everything is interesting once you say yes to writing. It's really amazing. It's amazing. And stop for two minutes and the lights go out. It's unfortunate, but on the other hand, it's reversible. So then when there are things that are happening you feel talented, smart, alive, and when they're not, it's a struggle."

Workshops can begin as classes and become important enough for some of the students that they choose to continue to meet on their own after the official "semester" ends. They bridge the gap between formal and informal organizational structure. These groups can last for significant lengths of time, as long as decades. Vicky was in a class which continued to meet for over a year at one of the members' offices until their group slowly lost its participants. In the formal class they were inspired by the teacher. Vicky says:

"What was good about that class was it got me started. I'm not the kind of person who can sit down every day and write for a half hour...I'm much more the kind of person that has to get very pissed off and stomp around and ruminate over scenes for days...for many years that's how I wrote professionally. I would stomp around, procrastinate, clean the house, make phone calls, do the checkbook, pay the bills, make coffee and forget that it was made, and then, finally, sit down and the story would be pretty much done when it hit the screen, and then I would spend the rest of the time punching it up.

(The teacher) was after me to write every day every day every day. I couldn't do that, and it made me really angry. But what I would do would be then sit down and write 20 pages. Like I wouldn't write for a week and then, 20 pages...that was good. I got a lot of pages done, maybe 40, 50 pages, or more."

The class became too large and unwieldy, with everyone wanting their pieces read twice. With too much to read, discussions diminished. A group in the class broke from that formal setting to meet on their own. The disadvantage was that they lost the input of the teacher. Since Vicky was considered to be the most knowledgeable about writing, she was informally designated as the "editor" but felt that she herself did not receive enough rigorous criticism from the others.

"They would all say to me, 'oh Vicky, your writing is very nice.' I would need much more criticism. I would say, 'ok, how about the characters? Oh, they're fine.'"

They were very nice people...We all cared about each other. I liked these people very much. But I found that, from a creative standpoint, I wasn't getting very much."

She felt a "deeper communication" with one of the students who had studied the fine arts.

"Because of the creative connection. I think there's an understanding of creative criticism. I certainly do it a lot in my business. I work with a lot of creative people. So we sit down and say, 'you know, I'm not so sure about the energy of that illustration. It seems kind of weighted down on this side, and it seems like there's a lot of stuff moving off to the left. Perhaps we could bring some stuff in from the right so' -- whatever, in other words, I'm not the kind of person who says, it stinks, redo it. I talk about the issues or the colors or the energy or the conflict, visual images.

She did that for me. When you study in the creative arts, you learn that stuff, so she had learned that kind of criticism. We would talk about the work back and forth. But I found myself expanding much deeper into her writing style, which was very austere. It was a very interesting juxtaposition. Mine was very thick and - so, there was a little deeper editorial criticism back and forth, but still not enough, because I think that for her, coming from the visual arts, she was still struggling with the word thing. The word thing was different."

Again, the overwhelming criteria in terms of positive reactions to workshops is the degree of constructiveness of the criticism and advice. The other variable remarked upon is the extent to which the groups become personal, or, in the pejorative sense, "touchy-feely". When this occurs it is no surprise, since writers in workshops often delve into the personal, and lines between fact and fiction blur. But this annoyed some of the subjects, for example, as mentioned earlier, Jill. Vicky also complained about this, although a

certain amount of ambivalence is evident in her description. Since Vicky was writing a novel about lesbians, conversations arose about sexuality:

"They were all straight women in these groups, and so there was a great deal of explaining that had to be done. And a great deal of embarrassedness that was going around. Which was OK. It was an education for me. I discovered that a lot of women don't like their husbands very much, and complain a great deal about them. They find them to be these alien creatures that they have chosen to live with, for whatever reasons, perhaps to pay the rent or the mortgage so that they can raise their children or complain about them. I don't know. But again, it was sort of like being with a group of aliens. So that was very interesting. It was all educational stuff. The education went both ways.

...in these writing groups people would talk about their personal lives a great deal. Which I thought was sort of intrusive. Really I was there to work on the craft."

The students at the New School, like Vicky, had demanding professions but an equally intense calling to write novels. After having recently been rejected from two Masters of Fine Arts programs, being in this class was important to her identity as a writer. She could be part of a group of serious career people with another, writing side to themselves. The group was probably different than her classmates in the MFA programs would have been. They, in their focus on professionalism, would think more in terms of publishing, of putting everything into this one activity. As it had been traumatic for Vicky to be rejected from these schools, the New School class provided her with a viable and respectable alternative. She received criticism from the class that was most useful for her writing.

"...their criticism was so rich and so in depth, that it really got my head spinning. And really got me rethinking.

I gave them lots of pages to read. (at this point I had about 120 pages or so, the first 5 or 6 chapters,) and they felt I had too many characters, I should cull them back, they wanted more emotion from the characters. I thought I could have a whole bunch of very interesting characters and that would substitute for not having a lot of characters who were going through deep angst. What they really wanted to see was a lot of character transformation - the shy character that becomes bold - a lot of character evolution. And I thought that those were very good points. But what they were also pushing me to do which I was resisting was to change my voice a little bit. And I really didn't want to get into this serious angst ridden voice. They all had serious angst-ridden stories, and I really wanted to write social commentary - a biting social commentary.

When I read things I make no assumptions, so I remember one student, I read his work, and and told him, first of all we never knew the main character's name, and never really knew what the gender of the main character was. And he was utterly shocked. Of course it was a man. You didn't know? I said, I don't make those kind of assumptions going in and reading a piece. Maybe she was butch. What do I know?

What I ended up doing was giving them an outline for the rest of the book. And the outline really ran through the plot that I had come up with for the end of the story. And one of the things they said was that I really should let the characters tell the story rather than try to pigeon-hole the characters into a prescribed plot that I had already created."

Group Dynamics

Invariably, participation in a group brings up issues of competition, judgmentalism, and the tensions of working with people of differing levels of skill and talent. People tend to prefer a non-judgmental atmosphere. It is not unusual for women to prefer being in groups with other women, partially for this reason. Sybil is explicit about enjoying a group specifically because it is all-women:

"When I took the class, the woman who taught it was a really nice person. Most of the other students in the class were women. It was just a very woman-space kind of experience. That's what I really needed at that time in my life.

...the best experience was in the pottery class, I think because it was mostly women..."

In a group, people fear having their talents judged and rated. When Sybil found one of the participants of a group project to be a "real artist", it aroused certain fears in her:

"I was involved in an anti-nuclear war/power group... during that period in the '80's when there was a lot of work being done in anti-nuke stuff. The group I was involved with had organized a one-day festival/rally...I worked with several other people on a banner.

I didn't tell anybody that I had done any art work before. I felt a little insecure. I didn't want them to expect too much out of me - that kind of thing - I had this little secret thing. We were working on the banner and people complimented me on my stuff, and I just acted like, 'oh yeah, this is a surprise to me too', that I was able to do these nice drawings or whatever. Cause one of the people in the group was an artist and was into being an artist, and I just didn't want to set up a situation where I was going to be judged on the same level that they were. (underline mine). Which is stupid, but it was just what I went through."

These stories show a fear of being judged to be not as good an artist as one should be, by some external standard of ability. On the other side is the fear of being considered too good, and then standing apart from the others. In this group banner making activity, Sybil did not want to admit to having drawn before for both reasons:

"I have to say that what I tend to do in groups is - there's a part of me that wants to show off but there's also a part of me that holds myself back from doing that because I'm afraid of getting attacked for drawing attention to myself. So I do these little mind-games with myself over it."

In a pottery class with a non-competitive atmosphere where people freely admired each others' work and borrowed ideas, Sybil nevertheless felt discomfort over the same issues:

"I found that when the teacher would compliment me on my stuff I would be, on the one hand, really glad she did it but also embarrassed. Then embarrassed that I was glad and embarrassed that I was embarrassed. It always takes me back to being a little kid in school and wanting to do well in the spelling bee and then being embarrassed when it happens. I've always had this problem with attracting attention to myself, and then at the same time feeling ashamed that I've done it. But then at the same time wanting to be important and special."

In a more public way, Eric was achieving success and recognition when his poetry book was published. This placed him in a completely new status vis-a-vis the other poets he had become friendly with at readings. He seems angry over the way they change in their treatment of him once he achieves some success. There is also defensiveness in his words. One senses he is trying to show that they are all victims of an arbitrary marketplace. He plays down the possibility that it is his talent that separates him from the others.

"... What happens is certain people who wield power decide who should get published. And those decisions are made. I mean, I didn't make the decision. I just kept writing and just got my work out there. Then they made the decision with me. I went along with it because I hoped it would make it easier for other writers to get published, and as a way of communicating my work. Then other people just get really upset, because they want to be famous and get a book out but I was writing for seventeen years. I didn't just come out of nowhere. I paid my dues, as a writer, and along the way I read a lot, *I helped organize poetry communities. I helped a lot of people. I was friendly...I helped people get jobs. I just related to people as closely as I could.*" (italics mine)

Both Sybil and Eric are expressing ambivalence and self-consciousness over being singled out in any way above others. There is a sense of guilt, or at least a need for an explanation, as to why they have been chosen. The ambivalence is rooted in the fact that one of the consequences of being recognized is separation from the group, and therefore in its own way can create loss. Eric's wish to write was in part based on a wish to belong, and he comments on the irony of success:

"...it's interesting that things have their down side. I think one reason I wrote was because I felt invisible. I had this need to get known. And yet, you know, my book is coming out, and so you'd think, aha! I'm finally getting known, but I'm still invisible. Because people don't quite understand why I'm getting a book and they're not."

Unlike the person involved in two worlds, the professional would not feel the same ambivalence, but would rather be thrilled to have "made it", having had that as a more explicit goal to begin with.

Working with people whose level differs markedly does not always cause negative tension. George, for example, is a doctor who has played the piano with an accomplished professional violinist for his entire adult life.

"I would say the most serious beginning of my interests in chamber music began...in 1951... that was when I met these musicians from the Philharmonic. It then became apparent, if I was gonna play with F., the associate concert master of the Philharmonic, I'd really have to prepare. I couldn't just sit at the piano and fumble through this, if he was gonna play with his magnificent Stradivarius instrument. He was a soloist.

So what I would do is pick 3 or 4 sonatas from the

standard literature, and prepare for a period of three months or so - really study them, and then say, 'F., I'm ready. Come on over and we'll play.' And that's what we would do. We would do that group of three or four, and then I would study another group of sonatas and then we'd meet again. So over a period of many years we got through of a good bit of the literature for piano and violin. But I think mainly my experience with him, and the need to do as well as I can, (because I didn't want to embarrass myself playing with him, if he was an artist of high rank), I think it was then that I really seriously worked on the music and studied and practiced, without any teacher, at that time. I never took lessons again."

George, a serious amateur pianist, sought out a professional to play with. He was seeking a creative tension - as he admits, he did not want to be embarrassed when playing with this man. He used the difference in levels between himself and his playing partner to force himself to develop his own playing. It functioned for him as a replacement for a teacher.

While there may be specific types of people who play music, for some participants the overwhelming criteria in terms of playing preference is level of ability. George belongs to that category:

"...a very important consideration for someone who's in chamber music, not so much in the social sense, whether you get along, or things like that, but in the strictly musical sense. The important thing is that you play with individuals who are at least as skilled as you are, if not more skilled. Because if you play with people who are less skilled, then it is not very enjoyable for you. If you play with people who are more skilled, you can generally try to keep up with them (and probably you could do pretty well if you're reasonably well-trained yourself.) So the important thing in forming a combination is that it consists of individuals with approximately equal skills."

The group presents not just competition or criticism, but

in some cases an emotionally cathartic experience. Particularly for classical musicians, there is a mystical and emotional aspect to the group experience. Mitchell remembers a period of his life when he wanted nothing more than to be part of a chamber group.

"The most beautiful day of my life was when I was lying out in an abandoned barn in the middle of a field, sheltering myself there from a rainstorm, in summer, after having come back from a skinny dip in a lake there, and after a short nap, waking up - looking out at the pouring rain, lying on my side and reading a book about string quartets, an old book which smelled of the mildew that old books can sometimes smell of. The world was promised there in those pages - the world I knew I wanted. I was going to have a string quartet. That was my paramount desire in life. I didn't want to be a soloist or an orchestral musician.

There is something particularly intimate about just such a combination that draws people to play music. Frederick is inspired and involved by a music camp for children that is near his country home, where he now spends half the year. The group feeling engendered in the music is something very special and emotional:

"A lot of the kids at the camp play very well. Maybe they're being pushed - think of themselves as prima donnas. But nobody plays solo there. They find they can't play without a quartet. And the results are a remarkable thing. They learn this, the remarkable encompassing affection and solidarity among these kids, which remains for many many years. They have reunions and continue to play. The last day of the camp when they come down to the church they cry.

...Doing music together is like accomplishing something together. Maybe that's something to look into."

Group Composition

Social class can become a criterion in terms of who gathers together. Certainly as far as formal classes are concerned, one needs to have a decent income to be able to afford them. But as far as informal get-togethers are concerned, finances can also play a role. For example, Frederick's fellow chamber music players get together at people's homes to play.

"So even if you play only once a month, it's a significant part of your social life. It doesn't involve merely playing. You talk about how you play, with whom. N. keeps a card catalogue and says, 'You know, we haven't played this piece since 1973, when so-and-so was here.'

We predominately meet at N.'s place because he has a big place but afterwards you provide food and you sit around and gab. N. can afford that better than the rest of us. We sometimes bring things...The conversation after playing involves more people than just the players, (like) N.'s present wife..."

And Frederick remarks about other people:

"There are people who put on a very elaborate meal spread. We can't afford to do that, so we tend not to invite such people."

Frederick thinks that amateur chamber musicians have a higher than average number of people in certain professions, such as mathematics and medicine.

"No, I don't think that's just a coincidence...I do not find that strange. Music is the most abstract of arts, and mathematics is abstract - trying to make order out of things that aren't there in a sense...to study medicine you have to have a certain amount of scientific interest and abstract thought....

He adds that group playing corrects imbalances for those whose professions require them to adhere to strict interpersonal rules.

"...mathematicians sit by themselves, and doctors continually deal with people but within a particular relationship, very different from playing music."

George, a cardiologist who plays classical piano, agrees that there is abundant musical interest among medical professionals, dentists and other scientists. There are hospital orchestras and many amateur chamber groups of physicians. There is an arts program of students and faculty at his medical school that gives concerts once or twice a year.

On the admissions committee of the medical school, he would interview:

"...all these bright talented young people, who were in college and wanted to go to medical school, and a very significant number of them were interested in music in one way or another. They played different instruments or they knew a lot about music. I would often ask them, why do you think that there is this strong positive correlation between interest in medicine and music? And as the students would think about this, they would often say something like, well, as a student, which included usually training in mathematics, there is a strong mathematical background in music, equations and so on. They thought that might be a factor.

I don't think the reason was anything like that. I think the reason so many young people are interested in medicine and also in music was that the same family background that would persuade a young boy or girl to study medicine is the same background where there would be music in the household!!! In other words, there would be, as one of my old friends used to say, a cultureful environment. And the same people who would go to museums and concerts and maybe play an instrument would also be interested in medicine, or any of these so-called learned professions. But there's a very strong correlation between doctors and music.

George believes this preponderance of interest stems from a middle-class cultural education, rather than cognitive predilection or brain patterns, as some theorize.

Development Of Friendships

Strong, steady, varied and long-term friendships often accompany participation in artistic-related groups. Varieties range from casual acquaintanship to lifelong friendship to the most intimate kind involving love and marriage. Marriages are not uncommon. Frederick met his wife playing chamber music. Those involved in chamber music have friendships that sustain long periods of time when there is no contact, and vast geographical distances. Frederick described the ties he has made through his music as quite strong and devoid of the usual restrictions of time and geography. He traces musical association back to his days in the army fifty years ago. He can go years without seeing some people who may be faraway in another city; then in the course of traveling there for some other purpose, they will meet to play music, the ties they have forged over the years being stronger than purely the music. These involvements become close friendships and endure other barriers.

When one begins to join groups engaged in any activity in the city, one meets a whole new set of people, and develops a new social circle. Friendships developed for Eric out of his attendance and participation at poetry readings around the city.

"It provided an available group of people to meet and get to know.

"Through reading poetry out loud, people liked my work. I got to meet people.

I made friends. I always had something to do. Each night, a weekend night I could go to a poetry reading,

and socialize with people."

The new social set can be unfamiliar. People one encounters can differ from the people one is accustomed to. In art classes, people say they meet people whom they never would have otherwise met, who lived in different boroughs and had totally different types of jobs. The class provides access to the social worlds of people who would otherwise remain strangers. Sybil says:

"It also brought me in contact with people that I wouldn't ever have known otherwise. People that I may not have felt necessarily that I had that much in common with had I not been in the class. It also brought me in contact with people I couldn't stand! Who just got on my nerves, were totally neurotic, and they were there for their own therapeutic reasons and...You don't want to know about their neuroses. They probably don't want to know about mine either, for that matter."

On the other hand, the person who shares one's interest in this important respect can have an advantage over others, finding himself accorded more respect and interest. Mel says:

"But I have some normal friends too who are not artists, just normal people. They're bores. I prefer to hang around art people. Their conversation is more interesting than the run-of the mill, "what did the stock market do today" stuff. You know."

The way one gets to know the people is different, because one is getting to know them via the artistic communication. For Eric in particular, this opportunity addressed one of his strong motivations for writing in the first place. Having felt that people did not really know him, this provided a more authentic way of becoming known and understood.

"So I enjoyed that 'cause people knew me *by my work*. Whereas some of that socializing in the political scene,

demonstrations and stuff, people kind of knew you by *what group you belonged to* (italics mine) and so it just wasn't as easy as through writing, where people tended to like my writing. So I just gravitated towards writing more."

Sybil says she got to know people, at first strangers to her, in a different way than she would have gotten to know them had they met in some other context:

"There definitely were relationships that developed through the pottery class...

...there's a lot of talking about personal stuff when you're in a situation like that. There was one woman whose mother was very sick and dying. All of us knew about it. We were really supportive, and we'd always ask her how it was going and offer tips and suggestions about how she might deal with it, 'cause she was having a hard time. She and I talked about a hospice. I told her my grandparents had both gone through a hospice when they were dying and suggested she might look to that as a source of support. So there were those kinds of things that happened in the class. *Like I said, when you're working on something and talking at the same time, it deflects some of the tension of the moment which allows you to speak more freely about things. So it creates a flow of conversation that may not happen between you and this person otherwise.* (italics mine)

Sybil says the physical nature of the activity contributes to a relaxation of inhibitions with others. In addition, her class was majority female, which also played a role in the extent to which people felt free to talk to each other:

"In a way those kind of settings allow women to talk to each other and share, not just ideas about the work they're doing but also ideas around other things they're doing, 'cause I think when you're working with pottery or you're doing something like that, any kind of creative, expressive activity, you end up talking about all sorts of other things too. It provides that space. 'Cause you're working with your hands, you're not looking at each other. It allows you to say things you wouldn't - it's kind of like talking on the phone with a friend. Sometimes you tell them things you would never tell them

otherwise. It frees you in a way. You don't have the experience of having to see what they're thinking. Things just fly out of your mouth that you normally wouldn't say. I think that's part of why working in groups would be really appealing because it creates that kind of space. It's almost like consciousness raising group combination cooperative working group."

The spark that ignites creative expression, rather than coming from within, can be initiated outside a person. At times people's friends introduce them to an artistic activity. Like the old stereotype of youth drug culture, they notice their friend spending a lot of time and enthusiasm doing an activity, they become curious themselves to find out about it, and eventually become hooked themselves. At this point, sometimes old friendships deepen as a result of this new shared activity. For example, for Sybil:

"... as a side result,... my friendship with L. changed as I started doing pottery, because it gave us something in common. She is an artist. We were able to then talk about stuff that I don't think she had felt had been there between us as a commonality. And I think that meant a lot to her, to be able to share feelings about doing stuff. In fact, she's been really encouraging of me doing pottery. So that friendship deepened as a result of me doing the pottery."

Solitude and Sociability - Dual Elements

Even though this chapter has focused on the social aspects, one cannot ignore the other side of the coin - the importance of solitude at various phases of creative activity. Sarah describes an ongoing tug-of-war around various types of creative expression, a war that encompasses the tensions between privacy and sociability. Her chosen profession has

been music, and one of her reasons for this choice, aside from talent and opportunity, was its social component - her family played music and her good friends were all in the youth orchestras rather than in her high school. As a teenager she studied with a renowned teacher, placing herself on the path towards a musical career. Now in her forties, she is feeling the need to return to her other enjoyments: writing, ceramics, gardening and crafts, and cites their differences from music in terms of social criteria.

"That's one of the things I love about them, is the solitariness. I love it more and more, as I get older.

There was a time when I was very uncomfortable with myself. I think that was the time when I had lost these things. I really didn't like to be alone, and I would be very lonely. Now I love to be alone! I could go for days and days, and I'm not unhappy at all. And I'm not lonely at all."

She suspects that the discomfort she felt with being alone was related to difficulties with doing those things that required solitude. Once her abilities returned, the pleasure she felt was equal in intensity to the earlier discomfort. The very solitariness of these creative arts appealed to her. Just as there is a need to be social, there is a concordant need to be solitary, to reflect upon oneself, part of the artistic process.

Jill went through a process of struggling with solitude, when she worked on and off as a freelance writer.

"In the beginning it was terrible. Like a nightmare...I was given almost a year to do some stuff at home. If I heard a drippy faucet I would be relieved. It was so quiet. It was horrible, not just normally quiet. I was a different person then. I guess I had never had to

structure my life for myself. You know in college you don't really have to. You're reacting to everything all the time. It was very hard. And over the years I learned, I just changed.

Generally, working for money writing, the time goes by very fast. Writing a day went by in a flash. Writing for myself - if I was into a story - is very enjoyable - and why people, including me, resist it like it's a bad experience - when you get into it, it's not! You know, you act like you're going to the dentist. It's very strange. It's almost like you don't want to feel pressure. It's hard to explain. Did you see Barton Fink? You know, the blocked writer? It wasn't like that. I've never figured it out - what this thing is of avoidance. When your experience is, you relish it, writing drafts, when it's your own stuff, when it's shaping up into something living that you did. So I don't know. That's a whole interesting thing to investigate."

Summary and Conclusions

The experiences of those in this study show how sociability is an inherent part of the artistic experience. Even the isolated writer is socially motivated to express himself, wanting others to understand him better.

From childhood on, others participate in one's attempts at artistic self-expression - whether as audience, playmate, colleague, peer, critic, guide, teacher, or stimulus. Social settings for the adult continue to have these myriad purposes: a musical group to inspire, a class for critique, an audience to challenge or terrify. People have the opportunity to try on many roles via these various avenues.

Friendships that are formed around these activities are reported to have a distinctive, often special, quality. Since one's poetry is an authentic expression of one's "real" self,

to become known through this medium can create a more authentic type of friendship. The sensual process of working with clay allows a group to be less inhibited than it typically is in other settings. The power of group music making allows its members to reach a transcendent state, and this power binds people together over distances of time and geography, to ties that under other circumstances would not survive.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ORGANIZED WORLD OF THE NON-PROFESSIONAL: ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

The arts may no longer be an integral part of daily life as they were for primitive or rural societies; by the same token the urban non-professional artist is not bereft of external support. There are available to him/her many organized opportunities for support, direction, and evaluation. Paradoxically, there might even be more opportunities than there are for the professional, because financial pressure and competition are not considerations. These opportunities are represented in various settings, including community, business, and leisure.

Groups are occasionally organized at various places of employment. Some hospitals have their own orchestras and staff art exhibits. A few corporations, such as Hewlett Packard and Microsoft, following the lead of the Japanese, are organizing their own orchestras. In the Silicon Valley, Hewlett Packard donates sheet music and auditorium space, which the fifty-five employees use to give lunchtime concerts for their coworkers. Playing in the orchestra enables more people to meet, and brings those of different status into an equal relationship (Goldenson 1996). Another example of a work-organized music group is the Police Emerald Pipe and Drum Band. This is a group with strict entrance requirements that plays every year at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Interviewed on Channel 21,

members of the band beamed when they spoke of their participation. One policeman said, "it's probably the best thing I've done in my entire life. It's a great release, a way to express all my pent-up emotions two hours a day. Some people draw or write. I play drums." The stereotype of the macho policeman clashes with the men's manner of verbalizing their intense pleasure, yet the evidence was there on many of the men's faces as they spoke of their participation (WLIW 1998).

There are also organizations at the community level. For classical musicians alone, there are community orchestras in every major city as well as many towns, orchestras organized along social categories, (such as age, gender, occupation, or ethnicity), university orchestras, institutional orchestras, (in churches, for example), and private orchestras. There are organizations that support and promote amateur music, including the Amateur Chamber Music Players (Stebbins 1978).

There is a vacation industry dedicated to the arts. Music camps are very popular during the summer all over the country, tending to be in appealing environments, near lakes or woods, so that people can also enjoy the outdoors. These camps or "workshops", as they are often called, often offer more than music - for instance, photography, crafts, ceramics, writing. Regardless of what they are called, the principle is the same: an intensive experience devoted to the study and further development of an artistic endeavor, usually entirely filling

the day's or week's time span. The level of interest among the participants is usually more than merely casual. They have chosen to spend their vacation immersing themselves. Examples include: Augusta, a camp in Elkins, West Virginia, well-known among folk musicians, where each week is devoted to a different theme - swing, blues, Cajun, Irish, or bluegrass, Pinewoods, a folk music club, and Ashokan, near New Paltz, which also offer different musical traditions each week. In Piano Lessons, Noah Adams, a reporter for NPR, describes learning to play the piano for the first time at the age of 50, and studying at a piano camp, a family business operating out of a large Vermont home. A February 1997 newsletter for amateur musicians listed 231 music workshop sessions nationwide described (Rust 1997). In the Irish tradition one could spend an entire summer travelling around the country attending each camp as its annual Irish week appears, and the same goes for other kinds of music. Many of the teachers work their summers in this manner.

This chapter will report on three amateur arts organizations involved with fine arts and music: the music camp, the art league, and an organization for classical musicians called the Amateur Chamber Music Players.

The following is a description of what went on in one such camp, in this case, for Irish music:

Vignette of Irish Music Camp

For the last few years an Irish cultural center in Cramden, a town known as "Ireland in the Rockies", has gathered top Irish musicians and artists together to teach "Irish Week". Approximately 200 students come from all over to study, play music, dance, and attend nightly concerts and sessions, for one week in July. I joined the group both as a student and as a participant observer.

Like many old resort towns, the town's heyday has come and gone, and efforts have been made recently to revive it. A beautiful place, mountainous and green, it is dotted with Irish bars and banquet halls, all put to full use during the week.

Most people are housed in hotels in town, next to the bars where their classes and jam sessions are held. Several of my friends decided instead to share a large Victorian house fifteen miles away. We knew each other from the city, where we study Irish music together, some on the whistle, others on the guitar, banjo, mandolin, fiddle, flute, accordion. Over the course of the week our days were a steady routine of a class in the morning, the same class in the afternoon, a slow jam or a fast jam at 4pm, a concert at night, followed by music sessions or dancing until well after midnight, when we got a

few hours of sleep and then repeated this routine the next day. Those with self-control skipped an event here or there in order to swim in the pool, take naps, and practice. The more enterprising people tried to do everything and snatch moments to practice throughout the day - before breakfast, early morning, before meals, at dawn and dusk. Wafts of whistle sounds corporally unattached, as though elicited from ghosts, echoed from different corners of the large acreage surrounding the house.

While classes were offered in every instrument, many at our house took the whistle class. Our whistle teacher, Maura Sullivan, extremely famous and admired, was continually introduced throughout the week as the "top whistle player in the world". There were sixteen people in our class, mostly in their thirties and forties, including my friends from the city and people sharing our house: Cathy, a woman in her thirties, short blond hair, smallish, who works in a high level job for an insurance company, but whose real enjoyments occur outside of work, in sports, music, and travel; Janet, a thin woman in her early thirties with long dark hair, who teaches in an elementary school; Tracy, a thirtyish blond woman who works as a copyeditor for a magazine, writes and publishes fiction, and plays the whistle perfectly even though she hardly ever could get to class because of her job; Ted, another housemate, works in the environmental field and back in the city commutes an hour to the whistle class; he grew interested in Irish music

after hearing our whistle teacher's albums.

Finally, there was Melissa, who was our connection to the house. A photographer and a travel writer, she works part-time for a business magazine. In the city, having played the whistle for only a year, she was in a beginner's class but quickly advanced. Her initiation to the whistle was through abdominal surgery. While lying endless hours in bed recuperating, too uncomfortable to read and too weak to hold anything heavy, the weightless whistle was her ideal toy, and she grew extremely good at it.

Although our class was scheduled to be in a bar, we preferred the big open field in back, where we set up benches in a square, moving close together so we could hear Maura. Maura taught us by going over each section of a tune about three times, and then having us play along with her until it clicked in our heads and our fingers. At difficult sections she would play alone and have us silently finger the tune without blowing. We learned three or four tunes a day - jigs, reels, hornpipes, polkas, and airs. In the city we were accustomed to learning one new tune a week, so the accelerated pace of the class amazed and humbled us. While the tone of our whistles was occasionally hampered by the wind, the bugs, and the sun, this only added to the charm of the atmosphere.

Our little group within the group - part of the group that shared the house, spent a lot of time together, sharing a car, traveling from place to place. We spent a lot of this

"down" time commenting on the scene. One of our heroines in these conversations was our teacher, Maura. We admired her personality, her extreme modesty and the way she never insulted anyone; when she corrected a person she did it in a nice way, making everyone feel comfortable. Even so, there were some bruised feelings. On several of the first few mornings we went around the circle, each person playing a tune which she would comment on. She advised a few students to concentrate on the rolls, ornaments basic to Irish music, rather than even learning the tunes. Ted took this literally and badly, wondering what was the point of going if he couldn't learn the tunes, and stopped coming to the whistle class. After a while he just couldn't listen to whistles any more, he said, and went to the singing class, where the teacher was really "cool", and later to the fiddle class, which he doesn't play but wanted to watch how it was taught. He said it was very different from Maura's teaching style, the teacher repeating the same phrase over and over for technique. He seemed to like that.

Maura had a remarkable ability to hear or see how each of us was playing, even though there were so many of us playing at once that we couldn't hear ourselves. She would periodically stop and tell each of us what our strengths and weaknesses were, or if we were missing a particular line. She could tell best with those sitting right next to her, and developed a special relationship with whomever it happened to

be each day. People habitually played the same phrases wrong. She would turn to them and giggle, saying in a friendly teasing way, "you did it again." She made the whole experience fun and challenging, a good time. She had an extraordinary bubbly sense of rhythm, and a very joyous style of playing, no doubt the reason for her success.

The learning process was intimate, chummy, and intense, an immersion process, much like a language institute where the student throws himself into a strange environment where he can only communicate in a foreign tongue. This experience produced feelings of anxiety that eventually turned into elation. The student felt like a marathoner who pushes beyond capacity, and extends himself beyond his dreams.

Melissa, for example, described such a process in herself. For the first few days, she said, she wanted to get up and leave because she felt so intimidated by how advanced it seemed. Struggling with indecision, she decided to stick it out. Once she stopped struggling, a curious thing happened. She had been upset over not keeping up with the class, until suddenly she stopped caring. Telling herself, "I can do this"; she stopped watching Maura's fingering while playing the tune along with her. She closed her eyes and tried to hear the tunes she was playing and just repeat them. Suddenly she could play tunes that a day before she could not play. The joy of the accomplishment was palpable.

While the classes were usually the focus of each camper's

self-development, the week's cultural experience extended well beyond them. The Irish background of most of the participants provoked a lot of exchange about Ireland - places of family origin, counties revisited, in-jokes and gossip, and even a course in the history of Irish music. A lot of conversation centered around albums and CD's. Those in the know about Irish music exchanged detailed knowledge of musicians, styles, news, and statistics, equivalent to the way baseball enthusiasts talk about their sport.

Music was everywhere, all the time. In addition to nightly concerts and dances, there were marathon sessions, day and night. Sessions are open musical gatherings in bars and public places, where anyone who shows up can play the tunes begun by someone in the group. They are popular in every city and town where a sizeable Irish community resides. The session marathons held at the camp were an extension of an activity engaged in by many on a regular basis in their lives back home, the difference being that here they had the opportunity to play with famous and excellent musicians, as well as numerous new acquaintances. One might come to this camp from a small town where one played with the same group of people each week, and here be challenged by more tunes, and faster tempos.

In participant observation, the researcher sometimes chances upon an event that reveals the real dynamics of the set of social relations that he is studying. The famous

example of such an event was Whyte's bowling night in his book, Street Corner Society. (Whyte 1943).

An equivalent incident occurred one night at a late-night session. At eleven o'clock at night after a concert, seven of us drove around, looking for the best session. We drove past all the bars in town, counting the number of cars in parking lots to see which were more popular. We'd already passed up one and stopped at another. As we approached we had the unusual experience of hearing a lot of concertinas, an instrument that is popular in Irish music but not usually played in large numbers in sessions. Inside was a small bar connected to a large dance hall in the back, where the musicians were sitting in a large circle at the far end. We recognized the famous veteran fiddler James Mulligan and the young concertina player Gordon Blanchard, who both appeared to be leading the session. Usually sessions are crowded, full of people packed together in small spaces, but in this enormous room people were sitting spread out. Tunes were played pretty slowly, which is also unusual, since the typical pace is quite fast. There were a few concertinas and uilleann pipes, but because their sound is so dominant, it seemed as though they were leading. There were long pauses between tunes, a lot of silences. The room was very quiet. There was almost no talking, even between tunes. When someone started up a tune, only those who really knew it played along.

When we walked in and joined them it felt like we were a

large invading group of seven. Our group was composed of friends from the city. Three of the men in our group, John, Jimmy and Carl, play once a week at a bar in a regular session. Our whole group occasionally gets together at someone's house to play. John is a jocular, gregarious man while the other two men are quieter among strangers, but keep up their share of kidding in the regular group, and play often.

Now in the room, these men sat a little bit closer, with their guitars and banjos, but still at a comfortable distance behind the circle, while we women whistle players sat on the fringes, in back of them. We stayed that way for about half an hour, the whistle players hardly joining in at all, and John and Jimmy playing along quietly. The atmosphere was tense. After one of the many long pauses between tunes, John said to all assembled, "Have you played such-and-such yet?" asking about a very well-known standard set of three session tunes. Expecting everyone else to join in once they heard the tune's beginning, John began to play the first tune. Nobody joined in. He continued to play and play, with Jimmy and Carl and a couple of others playing quietly along with him, but the main group not joining in, and his quiet playing reverberated self-consciously throughout the whole large room. Towards the end of the first tune, the distinguished players joined in, and everyone else followed, but as John went into the second tune, they stopped playing again. For what seemed like an eternity,

John was playing practically all by himself in this large room, and the rest of us were looking very uncomfortably at each other, not sure what to do. After he finished playing, the concertina player Gordon Blanchard said, "That was very nice."

Then a few more minutes of silence, and people stood up, packed up their instruments, and moved into the room next door, the small bar room. James Mulligan didn't move right away, and someone from the other room came in and got him. A little while later in the other smaller room, after a lot of socializing, they had formed a tight little circle of established top musicians, including the rest of the staff of the week and others, people of high musical calibre whose albums are well-known. They played for another hour or two amongst themselves, and everyone else in the room listened.

Only later in the car did this scene become "deconstructed" by those in the know. It seems the young concertina player was actually running the session. He lives in a small town in Ohio and hardly ever comes down to play with others. Much respected by the other major musicians, he is known as a "soulful" player with a meticulous, subtle and nuanced style. We speculated that he or James Mulligan were supposed to be the ones starting all the tunes. There was also a woman concertina player, probably one of the better students, who occasionally seemed to start a tune. That was allowed, as other teachers have also let their best students

start tunes as a way of "breaking them in" or a kind of "coming out" ritual. But a new-comer is never supposed to start a session tune, as John had done, unless the leader asks them. To do so is considered disrespectful of the expertise and renowned musicianship of the session leaders. Letting them call the tunes gives them the respect they are due as the most accomplished musicians carrying on the musical tradition.

Even though this is session etiquette, if someone else had been leading the session, they probably would have overlooked the breach of etiquette and played with John, or at least, afterwards, would not have gotten up and led the whole group to the other room. But to these particular musicians John's behavior required a drastic response.

This incident had an enormous impact on us. Jimmy was so upset and mortified for having played with John that he did not want to go into the next room, or leave through the front door and walk by the "elders". Back at the house he was too upset to sleep. John turned to us sitting behind him, right after the incident, and said, "where the hell were you?" (meaning, "why didn't you play"?) though it was unclear beyond that how John was affected. Carl, on the other hand, was so angry at the "elders"' behavior that he walked out the door of the bar without telling Tracey, his girlfriend. After about 15 minutes she went out to look for him and found him waiting for her in the parking lot. They did not return. "He said he'd be damned if he was going to listen to them play after the rude

way they'd treated John and the others," Tracey explained.

We continued to talk about the incident on the way home and the next day, retelling the story to everyone who hadn't been there. Upon each new recount of the story Janet, who is familiar with session etiquette, further refined on the subtleties of each person's behavior.

The next afternoon, there was a final session, and people who were not attending Irish Week, mostly older Irish people, were sitting in the back, listening. An older couple sat nearby, and said they were visiting the town for a vacation. The husband asked why everyone wasn't playing. He clapped along, and stopped abruptly, realizing that no one else was clapping. From his behavior it was clear that knowledge of session etiquette does not come by osmosis at the Irish mother's knee, but is learned by those who attend and participate over a long period of time.

It was in fact a highly unusual event that we witnessed. Janet, the most serious session attendee, said she had actually never seen such a reaction. Yet once being in it, she was able to decipher the rules upon which the behaviors were based.

Some time later, one of the participants of the session gave his version of the events. The top musicians had intended to meet for a secret, private session and were warming up waiting for the others to join them when we stumbled upon them. (The woman we had presumed was a student who was leading

some of the tunes was actually also a distinguished musician who had made an excellent CD in England.) What was considered most offensive and quite simply a major faux pas was when Fred, soon upon arriving, tuned his guitar while James Mulligan, a revered and award winning fiddler, was playing. They also did not think much of the calibre of our musicianship. Presuming that we should have known better than to have been playing rather than listening, they got up and moved to the other room.

Though Irish musicians have gathered in small groups in peoples' homes for centuries, the form of the 'session' - a large gathering in a public place - is only about fifty years old. Session etiquette gets more confused the farther the session travels from its origins. Irish manners presume modesty. One is not supposed to seem forward or aggressive, but rather expected to sit with the instrument case closed, and wait for others to ask you to play. In this particular camp session, expectations clashed. This may possibly have been because it was at a camp. In the midst of the confusion, each side appeared rude and insensitive to the other. In fact, unstated rules in the social structure of an Irish music session were being uncovered.

The Amateur Chamber Music Players

The Amateur Chamber Music Players is an organization that most represents the phenomenon described in this dissertation. In 1947, the organization was founded through the combined efforts of Leonard Strauss and Helen Rice. Leonard Strauss was a businessman who travelled a great deal for his work and wanted to find people to play music with while he was away on his trips. Helen Rice was an independent woman of means who loved to assemble musicians at her home.

Since its founding, the ACMP's sole raison d'être has been to facilitate meetings between people who enjoy playing chamber music. At key moments in the organization's history, when opportunities for commercial or professionally oriented development emerged, its members have shown particular stubbornness in keeping it loyal to its original purpose. In a recent newsletter, the words of its chairwoman show the self-consciousness with which they still approach their purpose:

"This year we celebrate the half-century point in the existence of ACMP. The little group gathered in Helen Rice's living room in 1947 wanted amateur musicians - people who make music because they love to play - to be able to get in touch with one another. It was a simple, straightforward idea which was carried out in a simple, straightforward manner. How successful have we been in preserving this directness and simplicity? As ACMP's size and scope have changed, have we remained faithful to our founders' original intent? (Is it indeed important to maintain faithfulness?) I wonder what Helen and the rest of that founding group would say..." (Wilson:1997)

The founders of the organization at Helen Rice's home in New York City agreed that she would become its first

secretary, which she remained until her death in 1980. She compiled a mailing list/directory of musicians according to geographic location, first in the U.S. and subsequently an additional one of musicians around the world. This directory is the basis of the organization, since members use it to meet other amateur musicians in their hometown or when they travel, making arrangements to play together as often as they choose. For example, two of the subjects in this dissertation are members, who use this directory.

The only information included about members in the directory are: their address, telephone number, instrument, and how well they self-rate their playing ability using the letters A through D. Upon joining, a guide is sent to members to help them rank themselves, via a series of questions. These questions include: how often they practice, how often they get lost, if they do get lost, do they find their way back, how good is their sight-reading, and if they feel "comfortable" with a set of standard chamber music works listed.

They are also asked about any foreign languages they know, if they have instruments available for visitors' use, and when they are available to meet and play. At the bottom of the questionnaire are the following questions:

"When you arrange chamber music sessions, you may wish to consider factors that cannot be graded.
How do you like to spend an evening:
Sight-reading obscure works?
Playing standard repertoire?
Mostly sight-reading?
Studying a work over several sessions?

Spending time talking and eating as well as playing?"¹

Even with a guide for determining one's level, such estimations vary, and the rating system leads at times to mismatches. For example, George recounted this episode:

"Some years ago I was doing a Beethoven cello and sonatas - there were five of them. I was looking for a good cellist with whom I could play. So, I found this name in the directory (near my home), and he classified himself as "A". That is the best on this scale. We arranged it. He came over. It turned out he was a tottering 80 year old man who came with his wife, who, I think, was a German musicologist. He was very interested in music history - knew a tremendous amount about music. And we had a very pleasant time. But, he may at one time had been a very good cellist, but he wasn't any longer, so our playing together was a disaster, basically. So that's the big thing about these amateur chamber arrangements, ...you run the risk of becoming part of a group that really doesn't gel with each other. So, somehow you have to shift around. If this group doesn't work, you have to play with someone else."

The ACMP appears to think of itself more as a "community" and an "extended family", than an organization. In deference to that identity, it does not concern itself with money, and avidly protects the privacy of its members. Until recently, the ACMP operated on a low budget of between twenty-five and thirty thousand dollars, its major expenses being the publishing of the two directories, national and international, and the newsletter. Although no information is collected on members' professions, a large portion of the membership probably consists of professionals such as doctors and lawyers. A larger membership fee would not be a hardship, yet

¹Application form for the ACMP

members are only asked to donate a "contribution" of \$20.00 and no one is excluded for not paying. For most of its history, the group did not even have a brochure. It now has one, and sends it to summer music workshops and seminars, but the majority of its new members still hear about the organization by word-of-mouth. For two years, its board argued about whether to go on the Internet, because it did not want to attract people who were not really serious about joining. It does not rent out mailing lists to get new members, and it does not advertise.

Therefore, the organization had something of an identity crisis when, in 1992, one of their long-time members, Clinton B. Ford, an astronomer and amateur violist, died and left them a huge amount of money- \$200,000 plus 20% of his estate, totalling about six million dollars.

The Board of Directors debated over what to do with this money, as the needs of the organization were minimal. One Board member resigned in protest, arguing that acceptance of this money would change the nature of the organization. The rest of the board decided to set up a Foundation. The Foundation's mission is to further the aims of the ACMP, "participatory activity among music lovers". The majority of the Board members of the Foundation overlap with the Board members of the ACMP to ensure that the money is used for this purpose.

Daniel Nimetz, a PhD musicologist and musician who had

previously worked for a music foundation, was hired as director of both the Foundation and the ACMP. The Foundation pays for rent and expenses and bills the ACMP at the end of the month, except for large expenses, like a new computer, which it pays for.

Nimetz does not believe the foundation has changed the nature of the ACMP, which now prints three newsletters a year, and still puts out the Directory. The Foundation funds sixty-one groups internationally, and awards fellowships and scholarships to adult workshops, weekend workshops, summer programs, grants to community music schools for amateur chamber music players, and outreach programs to bring chamber music to local schools. It hires professional musicians to be "coaches" in some of these programs. Even though the board members make Foundation decisions, their involvement in the organization has not strayed from its original impetus; Nimetz points out that at Board Meetings people are always itchy to get done with business talk and get on to "the serious business of drinking and playing chamber music (Nimetz 1997)".

The sociologist Robert Stebbins describes a "functionally interdependent relationship between amateurs, professionals, and the public (Stebbins 1978:84)". He explains how the three groups are intertwined organizationally and monetarily, for example how "professionals train, direct, advise, organize and even perform with amateurs and...amateurs...compose part of their audience." (Stebbins 1978) The ACMP fits this pattern.

Monetarily, for much of its history, the ACMP has shared office space and budgets with professional music associations, subletting offices first in Washington DC from the American Symphony Orchestra League, (whose members include the New York Philharmonic), and then in New York city from Chamber Music of America. Daniel Nimetz describes it as a "symbiotic relationship", where CMA paid all the bills and then billed the ACMP. There is also a link in terms of funding by the Foundation of workshops, and hiring of professionals to coach these workshops. And while the majority of the ACMP's members are amateurs, a small percentage are professional musicians. Nimetz says:

"There are a lot - not as many as there should be - professional musicians who are not so completely jaded by their day in day out of earning a living - who would like to just play a Beethoven quartet without the pressure of giving a performance, and very often would like to play with non-professional musicians who quite often are very good technically and obviously well-motivated. For the last few years we've been putting on a workshop here in NY in conjunction with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. We've given them a heavy subsidy to do it because it's expensive. We get players from among our ranks and outside because we didn't want it to be just for our members, and emphasizing it's for advanced players. And the coaches are all chamber music artists and you should see how much pleasure they get with dealing with adult amateurs. They're used to teaching at Juilliard where the kids think they're hot and chamber music - most of them don't really care - they think they're the next Jasha Heifitz - they want to be soloists. So they really get a pleasure with amateurs who are there because they love to be there and really want to be coached - want to learn. I've been going there, one, because of my function, and this was my first year as a player, and it was wonderful, it was hard work. A full two days working. Very intensive, but gratifying. So that's why professionals join." (Nimetz 1997:6)

From news articles and anecdotes, it seems as though the

average ACMP member is very accomplished both in career and avocation. An article about members in Pasadena, for example, described the following people: a professor of biometrics, who early in his career had composed music for films, a doctor, who put together a music group that toured, and a female police captain who had played as a child, written a history of music in early California, and started playing again as an adult, a couple that met at a music camp, married and lived in Europe with their young children and had musical evenings at their home, including a famous annual event that lasts the whole night. (Pasadena Weekly 1997).

Perhaps the ACMP is an extended family but also offers the opportunity to be anonymous, yet part of a group when one wishes. People use the directory in any way they see fit, and there are also stories of total strangers who discover that both play chamber music and are both in the directory (Stebbins 1978:625).

To the extent that there is an extended family feel about the ACMP, it may come from its history and its founding by Helen Rice. Helen Rice has been affectionately described as the organization's "guiding spirit" and its main charismatic figure. Born in 1901 to an upper-class family in New York, she was sent to the Chapin School and Bryn Mawr college. Her family included artists, and her father, a lawyer, had a passion for chamber music. His clients included quartets, he was on the Board of Directors of symphony orchestras, and he

was an avid amateur cellist. His home was the center of weekly musical gatherings among friends.

As was typical for women of means of her generation, Helen Rice was expected to excel at academics and cultural pursuits, but not to pursue a career, although volunteer work was acceptable. From her school years on, her passions included athletics and tennis, gardening, and the violin and chamber music. In spite of the strictures of her time, she managed to develop an important career in mid-life in music education. She joined the faculty of Greenwood Summer Music Camp from 1940 until 1946, and from 1945 until 1950 was Director of the Music Department at the Brearley School. After resigning from that position, her main musical focus was the Amateur Chamber Music Players.

Her musical gatherings were famous. She had friends of the period, some of whom were distinguished in their fields, well-known writers, and others who met on a regular basis to play.

The Art League

As an example of the different ways that people organize themselves around their interest in making art, I observed three meetings of one suburban art league in the Northeastern United States.

This particular art league was founded in 1952 by local artists to display their work and exchange ideas. As one

of its volunteer officers said, it now offers programs for the benefit of the surrounding community, not just the "working artist" but also the "non-artist", those at different levels of art expertise, and anyone who appreciates art. The organization does not have a working staff but it has a growing membership. It meets once a month, except in the summer. Each meeting begins with announcements and organizational business, followed by a guest artist who discusses her work using visual aids.

The meetings are in the town library, upstairs in an empty room with folding chairs and refreshments in the rear. This month a member of the league was going to do a demonstration of her work in watercolors. Her work hung on two walls. At 8pm people milled about, talking and looking at her paintings, bright colored depictions of large vases and flowers, broken by thick streaks of black or gray.

The members of the group were mostly women aged fifty to eighty. Most of the handful of men were their artist husbands, and people behaved with one another in the chummy manner of old friends.

The meeting began at 8:30 with announcements, about a suggested trip to Paris, a regional show that the League decided not to enter because the entry fee was too large (\$35), a weekend fair that did not charge artists and provided them with a chance to sell their work, a summer award-giving cash prize show that all members could enter. It was suggested

they bring their best work to the library, where they would be critiqued prior to the show. The announcer pointed out that cash awards are very unusual for art leagues. There was also a review of the functions of the league officers.

The heart of the meeting, the art demonstration, followed, led by a woman artist named Jill. There was a large mirror slanted above a work table, on which were all her paints and brushes. The group spent several minutes getting the mirror positioned just right so everyone could see, and getting the chairs in the audience placed accordingly. The center aisle that was empty as a fire exit was eliminated by mutual agreement because those were the best seats to see the demo, and those in the back who couldn't see perfectly moved into that row.

Jill began to paint, while the group of about 50 people watched. Jill began by saying, "I never finish a painting. I keep taking the glass off," the glass that covers the paintings on exhibit. "But I'll show you how I start a painting, and then how I undo whatever I do!"

Modeling her demonstration painting on a photograph, she said that first she copies from the picture and then at a certain point, she "lets the new picture take over" and tell her where it wants to go. People watched and asked her technical questions in a form of ongoing dialogue as she painted. She acknowledged each friend who had given her special paint colors she was using. "The eye follows the

blue", she said, as she painted in blue on one side of the canvas and then added blue to other sides. People asked her about her brush, which impressed them, a Whitney brush. Someone asked, "Do you get these pictures from your imagination?" She said, yes, but she's seen all these shapes somewhere else at some time. Quoting someone who said that everything comes from somewhere, she pulled out magazine clippings she collected of shapes she liked, squares and circles, and lately, for some reason, "I don't know why, I put fish in". A man in back said quietly to those around him, "If I did that there'd be a reason for it! My name is Hecht, which means fish."

People told her the handles in her painting were gorgeous. She told a story of how she had a coffee cup once on her painting area and dipped her brush in the coffee without realizing it, and it was lucky she didn't die.

By now, the canvas was filled up to a sizable amount, and she was taking more time figuring out what to do next. She said, "there's no such thing as too much repetition." Her hand hovered around above the canvas in circles, like a plane circling a runway. "It's the shapes that count, not the content of the picture. I found this true even in photography, when I once showed a teacher of mine a photograph, and he ignored its content." She talked about the difference for the painting of the relative dryness or wetness of the brush, and about rhythms of a painting. She said, "I'll go home, and

think what can I do to make it better? And it'll take months to finish this!"

Having said that, to the audience her painting nevertheless began to look finished; people started murmuring that in their opinion the painting was done. As she added a new color here, a bold stroke there, some people would murmur, "no, don't do that!" Others would whisper their approval. Seeming to ignore them, she said, "Your painting begins to work when you say, 'I've got nothing to lose anymore', and you take risks! You get to the point where you're afraid to do things. At that point, you have to get BAD again." She picked up the painting and threw it on the floor, looked at it for a second, placed it back on the table and continued. She grew very quiet, as did the audience. After a time she seemed to remember where she was, and said, "You still out there?" Somebody said, "We're all painting your picture." Someone else commented, "It shows how each thing you do changes the whole thing." A woman said, "She's very bold, and direct." Her friend behind her muttered, "No more red". The woman said, "This is better than going to work", and her friend replied, "This is better than painting it yourself."

The following meeting of the art league was its last before the summer break, and it held a members-only show with prizes. It has three shows a year, but only one with cash prizes, which were seventy-five dollars and up. There was a large turnout, at least 50 people, and many new faces. Some

may have joined the Art League just to be eligible to enter this competition. Once again people walked around to view the paintings before the meeting. Next to the winners were colored ribbons for Best in Show, 1st prize, 2nd prize, 3rd prize and five Honorable Mentions. In a pile on a seat in the front were sheets listing each painting, its title, the artist's name, the price of the painting, (determined by the artist), and initials next to the winners. On the list there were 33 entries, 3 of whom were men, the rest were women's names, and all 3 men got Honorable Mentions.

A woman looked at the winners and said, "this judge obviously likes bright dramatic colors. It's purely subjective." She thought that some of the non-winners were better than the winners, and it was just the colors that determined who won. "Now I know what to do next time." she said.

Another member commented, "it's always so strange seeing my work on the wall surrounded by everyone else's. It's so different from having it in the house."

Announcements were made as to other shows that could be entered in the near future, the winners of the show were each called up to get a medal, to applause. There were a number of men in the Honorable Mention Category. Then the judge of the show was introduced. She was the curator of an art gallery, a woman in her forties, who began by saying how subjective judging an art show was, and commending the effort and

commitment of the league. She said she has been working in museums for fifteen years and judged two other competitions in this art league.

"There is no rhyme or reason, theme, or media, no commonality, no two works are alike - that's the strength and also the difficulty of judging the works. Judging is very subjective. Carlyle said, 'The merits of originality are not novelty but sincerity.' The art comes from within you, each of you are in a different direction and express yourself in different ways. It's wonderful that you get together and share your work and thus stimulate each other visually.

I don't like to treat artists like horses in a race. You are like apples and oranges. I know because I am on both sides of the fence. I am also an artist. What I did was I got a general feel and found the merits in each piece, and there were some that were outstanding, and I gave the prizes to those.

The language of the arts are each different. We do it visually. When you start to become aware of the media you have the language down pat first, and then you can express yourself. The pieces said something to me."

The judge went through each one on the wall in the order in which they were placed, and talked about the good qualities of each one. Comments like, "Clara's been working with collage for a while," showed that she already knew the work of some of the artists, probably from judging two other competitions of this league. Her comments were almost completely complimentary, except an occasional, "I'm not sure the bottom part of this painting works," or, "I don't think this black streak works here". For one person, however, she touched a nerve. "This painting here is in the style of 1950's graffiti, but done much better." After saying a few nice things about the style, she noted the colors. "There was a study of disturbed children that found they always used these colors -

blacks and reds." Looking a little uncomfortable after saying this, as if considering its implications, she went on a little more about the style. Afterward the painter said privately that she felt hurt. "You put your life out there, and it comes back all wrong."

The room was enormously silent throughout her comments, seeming to hang on every word. When she was done, a member said, "I'd just like to thank you. You looked at each piece very carefully and saw what the artist was trying to do," to which everyone clapped.

My next visit to the art league was the following fall. Members exhibited their pictures for a show whose theme was "Serenity", each picture selling for at least a few hundred dollars. They included a collage of pictures of 18th, 19th century women in cozy poses with their children, beach scenes, flowers, photographs of canals in Italy, an abstract of white and off white lines with "beach" in the title. There was a picture made with sand, and pictures of serene houses. A member told me that she was "one of those people who used to draw as a kid but stopped in fourth grade cause the kid next to me could draw better", but that as an adult with the help of the book, Drawing from the Right side of the Brain, she began again, and became an art teacher, using this book in her classes. "Just go out and buy that book, she said, and it'll change your life!"

The art league member who introduced the meeting said

that she notices the same "friendly" faces at each monthly meeting and would like each of us to bring one friend to the next meeting. She noted that the subject, "Serenity", is not an easy subject. It is hard to be peaceful, calm and tranquil. It is much easier in art to be passionate. She said, "You all did a wonderful job."

The speaker for the night was a woman named Roberta, who had a Bachelor's in Fine Arts and teaches art at a college. Her work has been widely exhibited, with juried shows. She gave a slideshow of her work in mixed media collage in contemporary style.

"I will begin by telling you a story. The first time I submitted a work of art for exhibition I made my first "art friend". Both of us had little kids. We were chosen to exhibit at a bank. I was walking around the bank, choosing where to hang the painting, and the president of the bank walked with me. At the end, when I was done he said, "Personally I prefer boats." (about my work). That was a put-down I never forgot. Whenever I feel down I remember his comment. The moral of this story is that we have to develop a very thick skin and take the "slings and arrows". We have to go on doing what we have to do.

Here's another story. I just came from teaching a class at my college. I finished at 5:30pm, got home after 6pm, really annoyed from the traffic. The class was oversubscribed, and there were not enough seats or desks. People couldn't see. It's a drawing class. I thought, how can they function? What does it take?

And a more general question - what does it take before you start a painting? What is your approach? One that you use all the time, or different ones different times? These thoughts were prompted by a visit to my hairdresser. I love the head massage, which he no longer does but still does for me. He says he gets pleasure out of it too. It must be from the repetitive motion - it doesn't require any thought. That's what I need to paint pictures - something that's second nature and puts you in the mood, that frees up the subliminal stuff, and allows you to go into the creative mode. I have to do dumb, stupid, repetitive stuff. I just finally built a studio that is 28 x 20 with a sky-lite. I pick up lint, anything

to postpone the moment when I start. This half hour or so when I do stupid things is very important. I see heads nodding. It is a way to take yourself out of the present world and into another place.

What are some of your habits?"

A woman in the audience retorted that what she was doing was just procrastination.

"No", Roberta said, "it's a way of freeing myself up. I believe everyone has a creative vein running in them - from the hairdresser to the bricklayer to the artist. To tap into it you have to let go of your problems, and concerns. Which my students with their lack of space are not able to do."

As Roberta showed her work on slides, she described her work as "schizophrenic", divided into different styles. Her fantasy style sprung from deeply troubling events, including the death of her brother. "My brother died from an illness suddenly. I was very deeply upset and yet I began to make these fantasy pictures very much not my normal style and very happy." A similar thing happened to her friend, a writer. After her husband was diagnosed with a brain tumor, she found herself writing a humorous mystery. To create in a comedic style when feeling deeply miserable is an ultimate escape from a trauma.

There was also her Oriental style, rooted in her biographical history. "When I was first married, my husband was in the navy and we had to move to Japan to a remote village, with no TV, electricity, entertainment. It was freezing. We got out of there and traveled whenever we could.

We were allowed free travel leaves.

An analyst friend looked at these Japanese style pictures of flowers and said, 'You've made peace with yourself, these are very serene.' She's right."

Her other style was collage. "Collage is messy. You need to save a lot of material." She said a typical painter's studio is full of junk. Putting "stuff" in different boxes, she could go ten years before using something. "There is lots of different imagery in the different boxes. One could be all calligraphy, for example. I have huge boxes with different paper in them. I set limits, and say I'll use only a few elements for a collage. I use thick backing board, acid-free.

My daughter went to live with a Japanese family and then their daughter came to live with us - on an exchange program, so we have a connection with this family. The Japanese consider their artists "national treasures". They are given a Government stipend. So I bought rice paper from an artist who made his own paper. It's a laborious process. I went to Japan on my twenty-fifth Anniversary."

The audience debated the best places to buy paper. "It's hard to get the right glue. My husband has put out a search on the Internet for it! You need Ph neutral, malleable glue, that allows things to bend."

Much discussion followed on the thickness of the paper, dry mounting, using plate glass on top of collages to get rid of bubbles, whether the glue is transparent once it dries, and

what to spray on the picture to prevent it from yellowing and crumbling with age.

Summary and Conclusion

In Robert Stebbins' account of those qualities of "serious leisure" that most characterize the activities of amateurs, one is that "their subcultures tend not to have a powerful centralized authority". (Stebbins 1992) This is certainly the case for the organizations described here. In the ACMP, participants have gone out of their way to ensure this does not happen. In the art league, there is an explicit belief-system that, as Roberta said, "everyone has a creative vein running in them", and this being a delicate quality, all efforts are made to nurture it. The invited speakers shared their expertise more in the spirit of collegiality. They confided what they implied was universal, (or at least very common), - internal and external impediments to creativity, inadequate funding for arts education, and negative criticism from others toward the artist and from the artist toward herself. The painting demonstration was a group effort; all in the room could give advice and opinions. The art shows, by their very nature, contain a somewhat competitive edge, but the judges tempered this with comments about the subjectivity of judging art, and emphasized the achievements of everyone's work.

The music camp is somewhat more of a complicated setting. There, for a week, people leave their regular lives and immerse themselves in a setting completely devoted to Irish music, dance and culture. Expertise is implicit in the differentiation of teacher and student. There are multiple settings for musical expression, each with their own norms of behavior. As has been shown, there is room for ambiguity and misunderstandings to occur.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Robert White viewed the development and deepening of interests as an important and neglected aspect of the study of human development in the life course (1952:349). Interests were emphasized in terms of their evolution into careers, an appropriate assumption for that era. Nearly two decades later, Orrin E. Klapp wrote that we are "in a new era of leisure when people seek identities that cannot be based on work or which deny the importance of work...loss of prestige in the work role - loss perhaps of the opportunity to work - means that the identity search must find new avenues in recreation; the number of play identities will increase, work (boring, anyway), will take more and more a back seat to hobbies" (1969:184).

The people in this study developed and deepened their interest in artistic expression over the course of their lives. It became at least one of their primary identities. Although not necessarily a substitute for an inadequate or unsatisfying work life, it did, however, hold a central place in their lives and fulfill different needs and serve different purposes from their work.

Wondering if its meaning changed over time, I inquired about the course of their lives. Most were artistically

inclined in childhood, as is the norm. Howard Gardner says that from the "ages of four to seven nearly every child with a supporting environment is overwhelmed by his own creativity and is full of inventiveness (1973:256)." Childhood is the freest, least inhibited time, and childhood fascinations are used by creative adults for inspiration, to maintain "childlike" openness and curiosity.

"The earliest sources that creative individuals draw upon are linked to childhood play; to the many long hours they have spent entranced by nature, by the play of lights, or by a book. Psychologists have long stressed the role of such childhood play and engagement as it continues to fuel the adult mind bent on overcoming the hold of the known." (John-Steiner 1992:37)

While childhood is generally a creative period, some in this study did not start creating as children. Eric did not write until well into adulthood, but knew he was a writer long before he started to write. His case shows how creative activity begins for many as a desire or urge, and indeed, was described in such terms by many in this study. Howard Gardner says of the artist:

"...the urge to write is there long before there is anything to write about and will persist even in the absence of anything substantive to say. Here the making apparatus is primed to go off, in the absence of sufficient motivation, energy, or appropriate subject matter. The desire to continue to explore the symbolic medium, to construct more elaborate schemes, to flex one's artistic muscles is inexorable. For young persons in this position, possessing skills but lacking themes, the imitation and elaboration of others' works may prove useful during an interim period." (Gardner 1973:254)

The childhood inventiveness described by Gardner continues on a more diminished scale during the latency

period, ages seven to eleven, but he warns that this is a critical time for identifying and encouraging "creative youngsters", because by the age of nine or ten, "many youngsters will curtail their making activity in favor of the roles of critic or audience member (256)."

In this study, by adolescence, constraints began to manifest themselves in the form of self-consciousness and self-criticism. Some, such as Beth, stopped doing art for many years. Some used art to be rebellious or mischievous, doodling on desks and in prayer books, purposely misinterpreting art assignments to be more inventive.

"With the coming of adolescence, for reasons not entirely understood, the young artist may either give up creative activity altogether, regress significantly, or fully embrace the art form and immerse himself into it professionally. There is a 'universal change that occurs around puberty from a natural enjoyment and easy identification with artistic behavior to one of inhibition and lack of satisfaction in experience and creating art.' In the more normal child, talented but not highly motivated, creativity usually regresses or drops out. " (Gardner 1973:258)

They were beginning to break in various ways from their own families, to become independent, separate individuals. In a quest for the formation of their own identities, they assigned adults various roles, seen to represent different alternative world views. Teachers, among them art and music teachers, were seen as mentors, protectors, figures to question or reject, or role models.

"Less fully delineated settings that provide a crucial opportunity to the growing individual are those Paul Goodman and others called 'communitas.' The art educator

Marjorie Wilson documented in a study of a high school art room areas and activities 'which unite individuals in a common pursuit culminating in one large effort or product.' The opportunity to spend long, intense hours with a caring teacher and with peers in an art activity, or putting a school newspaper 'to bed', or in rehearsing a play, forms the basis of relationships that can lead to a state of 'communitas'. The lessons acquired in these settings go beyond those of craft and subject matter. When creative young people form a community - however temporary it may be - they become more aware of themselves, they profit from the criticism of their peers, and they learn new ways to claim their experience (John-Steiner:208)".

The art classroom and the music room were havens for some to escape from their turbulent home lives. They provided much beyond simply art education - community, friendship, encouragement. Up to this point in their lives, through High School, the arts experience was generally positive, both formally and personally. Initial attraction to the arts based upon personal enjoyment was reinforced in positive educational and social settings. This is not to say that there were no negative educational experiences, but they had no lasting destructive impact. This changed in the period of young adulthood; at that point the influence of formal educational and institutional experiences upon artistic behavior grew.

The emphasis now shifts to occupational decisions. The subjects of this study in their college and post-college years made career decisions which varied in certainty. Some were already definite about art being an avocation and chose another altogether different profession. This was especially true of the older people in the study, men now in their late

sixties and early seventies, who went into professions in medicine, academics, and business. It was not as much the case for many of those younger, from their thirties to their fifties. The younger ones seemed to be still exploring the possibility of artistic professionalization. Is this an age factor or a coincidence, or is it that the opportunities still seem to be open? That is to say, some haven't completely closed the door to the possibilities of becoming a professional. Experiences that influenced the closing of the professional route included those involving rejection: from college art and music majors, from art schools and masters programs in writing. Also significant, on the other hand, were the experiences of those who were accepted into these settings, who had negative reactions once there. In summary, at this stage of their lives there exist two major themes. These are either the perception that: 1) their artistic abilities fail to meet external standards, or 2) to be true to themselves and their genuine artistic expression they must reject those external standards.

What is different about this stage, now that the decisions are no longer in their minds alone, is that they have to act on them. Therefore, they decide not to become professionals either because they don't meet the external standards or they cannot be true to themselves if they do. They see that now that they have to enter the work world, their own artistic experience doesn't fit marketplace

requirements. Therefore in seeking work they don't go for their own artistic experience but rather they go for another occupation.

Now they are living as adults in these dual worlds, that of work and art. These will continue to at times intersect, diverge, be separate or linked, or overlap each other. Regardless, they are two separate channels.

Typically, many non-professional artists, in their dual world of work and art, continue adult artistic education. They tend to most gravitate towards those experiences that helped them get past their own self criticism and those opportunities that helped them to find their own "voice". They need external approval to accept the internal. Teaching the arts requires much subtlety. Students must acquire knowledge of the field, "understanding of the medium, and become flexible in handling it". Even imitation goes into knowledge, but the most important element of an education is a stimulating atmosphere that invites inspiration:

"Skill alone is not enough: Absence of strong feelings and suggestive experiences will thwart the creative spirit, but the providing of the right stimulus can evoke a torrent of creativity" (Gardner 1973:292).

Gardner describes successful teachers who inspire creativity to have some of the qualities of movie directors. The subjects in this study point to experiences with teachers as influential. There were teachers who helped them discover their real interests, for example, Maria discovered playwriting through a course. Other teachers were able to free

them from the constraints of their own self-criticalness.

The assumption then, that people with strong interests will incorporate those interests into their work life does not apply here. Rather, they choose other occupations, placing their art on the non-monetary side. Their art is very REAL in their life, but it is not their REAL work. It is almost like their "secret life", a very special and important part of their life, as much who they are, if not MORE of who they are, than their work is.

These people live dual lives - their work lives, and their artistic lives, side by side. They can be contradictory identities, worlds with very different life styles, different values, different social networks. Frank would come home from his insurance job to his neighborhood in the East Village, feeling like "a bird being hunted", dash into his apartment to change clothes for an opening, or go to teach an evening art class as an adjunct, showing up in his suit, the students eyeing him warily.

Even though Frank feels slightly out-of-sync when caught in the incorrect clothes, he knows that there are many others like him in the offices he has worked at. Susan, the professional violist, is in a very different position. In the professional music community, it is taboo to have other creative outlets. In order to give music your "all", you must devote all your creative energies to it. In the norms of her profession, the musician is expected to practice at least one

or two hours a day, work as many concerts as you can, attend other people's concerts, take care of your instrument, spend time on the phone, "have blinders on, and be totally involved in this stuff all the time."

This taboo is strong enough that she truly feels she has to keep her other interests a secret from her colleagues, who are also her closest friends. While her career developed she repressed those other urges, but finds at this stage she no longer wants to ignore them. Again, without taking away from the pleasure she has received from a fine musical career, her other creative aspirations are still described by her as needs, and urges. She says that for people with wonderful careers:

"For some people, that's it. That's who they are. For me, it never was that way. And though I tried to make it that way, the bottom line is that it's not. And there's this whole other part of me that was entirely buried...that started to reemerge, but only in fits and starts...in the past five years."

There is another type of dual work identity, that of the person who sees herself working in contradictory value-systems. Vickey, who owns her own commercial writing business, has managed (despite some crises) to succeed economically, yet feels disdain for the values of the corporate culture of her clients. Her attitude is, that if one must earn a living, why not earn a good one, but her real values and heartfelt living goes into the novel that she writes in spurts when she gets the time. That novel, which depicts a comic world of an all-women's college and lesbian culture, is deeply ingrained in

her fantasy life. For many years, she and her closest friends and lover have been play-acting characters that become part of her novel. This novel then, is no small piece of her life. The contrast between her two lives is divided along the lines of social conformity.

These dual lives, by definition, contain time problems. On the other hand, there are also balancing elements. Eric knows that when his occupation, teaching, is going badly he has his writing, and vice-versa. The social relationships can also complement each other. For example, doctors are sometimes constrained by the formality of their professional relationships with patients and colleagues and their chamber music groups provide a welcome alternative. In general, this dual expression allows people to expand the "presentation of self". The author, Barbara Kingsolver, describes how her avocation allowed her to be more than one person when she and a group of established writers formed a rock band. She described her motivations in this way:

"I've spent my life hiding a closetful of other lives...

As I get comfortable with the middle stretch of my life, ...it's occurred to me that this is the only one I'm going to get. I'd better open the closet door and invite my other selves to the table, even if it looks undignified or flaky...

...I'd like to think it's okay to do a lot of different things even if we're not operating at the genius level in every case." (Kingsolver 1995:130-132).

Many part-time artists associate the professionalization of their art with compromise and stress, and avoid them. This allows relaxation of "expertise" requirements. On the other

hand personality intervenes. For example, George, the medical doctor, did not seek such relaxation. For him, pleasure lies partly in expertise. Part of the pleasure for him lies in the competence, the ability to know that he can play anything well if he puts in enough time and practice.

Briefly to recapitulate the main points, each of these subjects carried since youth very personal conceptions of their art. Those who made tentative moves in the direction of formalizing their art could not tolerate the very different artistic conceptions they encountered. Forced to choose between their own and the outside world's conceptions of the artistic life, they chose their own. Others interpreted the message from formal institutions to mean that they were not talented enough to survive the competition. Both of these unpleasant scenarios occurred in college programs, music camps, and art schools. Their primary motivations were to keep hold of a personal, expressive form that would sustain them. The formalization of their art appeared as a means to an end, something that would deaden their original impulses, and as such, were unacceptable.

Midlife creativity, unlike the more spontaneous earlier efforts, is described as "more deliberate and sculpted:

The work of the younger artist may be highly optimistic and idealistic, laden with themes of pure desire and glorious romance. With the increasing concern over mortality at midlife, however, the idealism may give way to a more contemplative pessimism and a 'recognition and acceptance that inherent goodness is accompanied by hate and destructive force within' (Jacques 1965:505). Creative products speak a more philosophical and sober

language after midlife - a result, says Jacques, of the artist's own confrontation with the prospect of death." (McAdams 1990:183).

My data contradict this description. The middle-aged and older subjects did not experience this pessimism. On the contrary, they became more productive and looser, more experimental, and less constrained. People who are now retired or semi-retired have more time, and experience more pleasure in this process. There are fewer impediments to the creative process, and they feel the most accomplished from a lifetime of work in their form, rather than "burnt out" or with nothing to express. This is a very different picture from the above quote. Aging has brought more confidence for a number of the women, in particular, regarding their abilities. Encountering more encouragement later in life, their creativity has blossomed. They are freer in their expression, able to find their own voices.

Jacques' description may be more typical of professional artists, which may have further implications for a comparative study of professionals and non-professionals.

Artistic Activity as Creativity;

In general, the social science literature on artistic activity defines it as creative activity; the words are interchangeable, although studies of creativity include other fields besides the arts. Creativity is the "ability to bring

something new into existence." The focus of most studies of creativity is on how it is manifested in the specially talented, famous, or most accomplished people in their various fields. When creativity is acknowledged as present in less than extraordinary lives, it is still discussed only in relation to renowned people. In the trade books, usually in the self-help category, there is some prescriptive advice for how to become more creative; there, again, the models are accomplished and extraordinary individuals. In a review of social scientific work on creativity since the Second World War studies are said to have by and large "restricted the term 'creativity' to the production of humanly valuable novelty in an effort to exclude from consideration the relatively mundane expressions of creativity in everyday life..." The authors ask "Whose values...must be met for an act to be creative - the values of the creative agent alone, or the values of a social group? And if so, which group? (Barron and Harrington 1996:147)."

In this study, I have chosen to observe creativity on this "mundane" level of everyday life. I found that for the participants involved, creativity is anything but mundane; rather it is a life-force. It is described over and over in many different ways by all the participants as a very special, meaningful part of their life. In fact, it would not be exaggerating to say that for many people, their creativity makes life worth living, and without it, there would be

emptiness. Marianna, for example, pitied those who did not have it, thinking, "it must be terrible if you can't do this. It would be a horrible way to live." Vicky says passionately,

"If I don't write, I feel as if there's no meaning in life. If I'm not writing, then I'm not answering the greater call, the call that's beyond who I am."

There is no difference between the ardor expressed among these subjects concerning the urgency to which they are responding and those of famous artistic figures. Here, for example, is what Thomas Mann wrote to his daughter Erika:

"I am very glad that I am writing again. I really feel like myself and know something about myself only when I am doing something: the intervals are gruesome." (John-Steiner 1985:221)

An article on "creativity as sentiment" (Birg, et.al. 1985) argues for studying creativity using the perspective of the sociology of emotions, since it found that the most common way of describing creativity among artists was as "an urge, compulsion, or yearning". In my study, the same language was emphatically used. It was seen by Maria as "an overpowering desire, needing to be satisfied...it has to come out some way, and it doesn't stop...it just keeps going and keeps going. It's almost like a sickness, or a psychological state of mind. It's something that you can't do without." Eric compared writing to the memories embodied in a home, each object containing a history, his poems as his belongings. The word "joy" was constantly used among the subjects. It was also clear that the activity involves their imagination, living in or going to dream worlds or places where their obsessions and

preoccupations lie, and feeling connected as well to a larger tradition beyond the merely personal, a tradition rooted in areas of literature, music, or the visual arts.

In intense emotional experience, artistic expression was called into play. For example, from failed love affairs: after losing his girlfriend, Mitchell turned from music to sculpture, making "effigies" in clay to his lost love. Beth painted a series of imaginative mythological characters, inspired by her ex-boyfriend's past taunts. In traumas: Sybil made pottery to reach past physical discomfort due to illness back towards physical pleasure. Marianna wrote at midnight to experience a safe place to express immense painful feelings for the condition of her disabled young daughter. As therapy, not just for traumas but for normal everyday life: Eric, when writing, "found" he could not lie; by writing he could "figure out things", how he really felt about a girlfriend, his parents, or political involvements. In this pattern of experience, physical and emotional pain are transformed through artistic activity.

Beyond all this, every person describes an experience that can only be described as "flow", that total absorption, where the involvement overtakes the mind. As my subject, Alex, described it:

"when I get into doing a picture, it's the most captivating experience I have ever had. I can remember flying an airplane and driving speed boats and riding bicycles, down steep hills, many other things up to and including sex of all kinds. Yet when you get into an intense creative mood of doing a piece of art, that piece of art dominates you. It's

compulsive."

Alex experienced absorption in painting as "captivating". Sybil described a similar experience of a focussing and quieting of her mind. She experienced this focussed concentration as an "ability", and as such, "reassuring". It was for a time the only such positive arena in her life, in other arenas such as graduate school many moments of anxiety and uncertainty overtook her. Art was an area over which she had control. Motivation theories of self-efficacy "tend to emphasize the experience of causal agency and to see it as a fundamental human need and a basic element in one's sense of self" (Gecas 1989:292). Sybil's confidence was in her "ability" to achieve a warm and satisfying presence of mind, as the motivation theorists also allude to. "Effectance motivation was conceptualized as an intrinsic motivation to produce effects on the environment, that is, to make things happen. It was characterized by White as exploratory, creative, and playful activity...also considered to be pleasurable, engaged in for its own sake" (Gecas 1989:292).

Sybil also described her pottery and artwork as the only facet of her life "free from responsibility". It is in that sense a return to childhood. There are no demands upon the individual, beyond what he places upon himself. This is a great luxury for adults, recapturing this precious time of freedom, with no one overseeing, dictating standards or rules.

There is a belief among many subjects that "ordinary"

creativity is undervalued by society. Maria expresses this in terms of the woman's situation. The pressure to be the "superwoman" - homemaker, mother, and career person, causes women to continue to feel inadequate. Many cannot meet such unrealistic demands, and forms of creativity that they express in their homes, perhaps in sewing or cooking, crafts, or other things, are never recognized by the wider society as creative.

"I think we've done ourselves a great injustice in that regard. I think we have to value everyone's creativity no matter how it comes out - whether it comes out in gardening, or graffiti or what. It's just creativity."

Stebbins has extensively studied many types of amateurs. However, his subjects were primarily chosen from established groups of amateurs. I had no specific list of criteria in my study, other than that this activity be important to them and their source of income derives from another occupation. My sample is composed of people practically off the street, showing the everyday aspect of what I am talking about, the ordinariness of it, (yet there is also the magnificence of it).

Even though I have described the various groups of like-minded artists that people choose to join, no one person necessarily fits into a single mold. People join or do not join groups depending upon their inclinations. In sum, there are no set standards to allow a person into this subculture of activity. While, yes, in the groups, there are standards, and levels, but everyone, at any level, can choose to do this. It is a democratic concept I am describing here.

When we think in terms of education, the data here suggests that the lens of creative life be widened. An environment should be encouraged for those with these inclinations to feel free to follow them. It is valuable for the quality of life of an individual. It is becoming ever more clear that the quality of life contributes to its longevity, so the society ultimately gains by granting this activity its importance and its due. One way that society can encourage it more is through its institutions: the family, education, and more funding for the arts. As the role of creative activity is still not completely understood, when it does become clearer, society will value it more.

The literature on the exceptional person focusses on the attributes of successful people seeking to determine what makes them successful. Even Stebbins, studying successful amateurs, follows this approach. I found that as amateurs navigate their way in their art form they have two sources of support - first, an internal source, meaning that they are expressing themselves in the manner that they wish, and second, they find a new type of extrinsic, social support from organizations. This study finds a considerable social organization of support for this type of leisure activity in the form of camps, workshops, readings, classes, orchestras, art leagues, and networks of musicians. These groups serve many functions: friendship, inspiration for development of the creative art, as ways of testing the self against group norms

and the norms of the established art domains. These organized outlets achieve a full cultural life, which, by itself, deserves further sociological inquiry.

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

Example: Music questions

(substitute the other arts for music in the appropriate interviews)¹

EARLY HISTORY - BACKGROUND:

At what age and under what circumstances did you become interested in music? Were there other artistic activities that interested you? Tell me about them also.

If your interest began in childhood, how did your family react to your interest?

Were your family members musically inclined? (or inclined toward the other arts?) What kind of work did your parents do? What were their hobbies?

Why did you pick the type of music you play?

Why did you choose the particular instrument that you play?

EXPERIENCE AND MEANING OF THE ACTIVITY:

Please talk about times in your life when you were involved in playing your music. What else was going on in your life at those times?

Now talk about times when you stopped. What else was going on?

How have you felt about playing music with groups? What kind of groups have you played with?

How do you feel about playing alone? Has your attitude changed at different periods of your life?

What is the relationship between your choice of activity and your cultural background?

Who do you like/dislike to play music with and why?

What are the settings in which you have played, and what did they mean to you? (park, people's homes, different countries,

¹ These questions were not asked verbatim. They acted as a checklist for themes and questions to be covered in the interviews.

for example)

Is there a difference between playing in New York and elsewhere?

Do you see any differences along gender lines, in terms of the people you play with? How about ethnicity, class, and race?

Have other things developed between you and the people you meet initially around music? Have these been important to you? In what way?

Do you have a philosophy of music or art, or see yourself as part of a musical tradition? Do you talk to the friends you've made about this?

Is listening to music equally important to you? Live versus taped?

What is the difference for you between listening to music and playing it?

What is the relationship between your music and your emotional/personal life? (over your lifetime)

Have there been significant periods along the way? What were they?

LIFE CHOICES - CAREER DECISIONS

How do you earn a living?

Do you consider it to be your occupation or just temporary?

What is its history?

How did you choose your job(s)?

What is your attitude toward "practicing?"

How do you feel about your level of competence? About making mistakes? perfectionism? Has your attitude changed?

Did you ever want to be a professional musician? What happened?

Did anyone ever encourage or discourage you towards becoming a professional musician?

What do you think your life would have been like had you become a professional musician instead of what you are now?

What is the relationship between your musical activities and your career choices? (over your lifetime)

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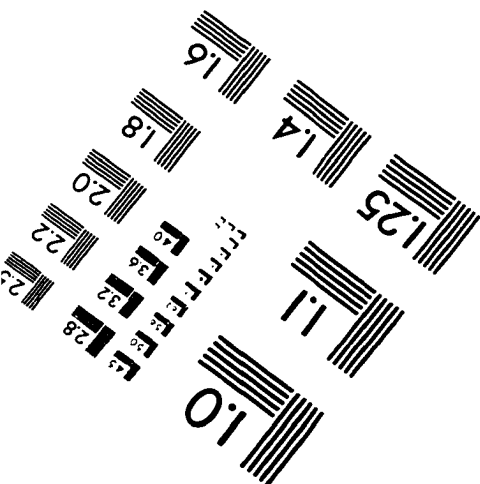
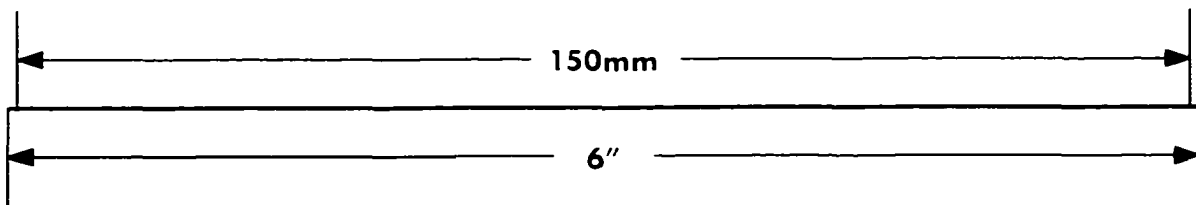
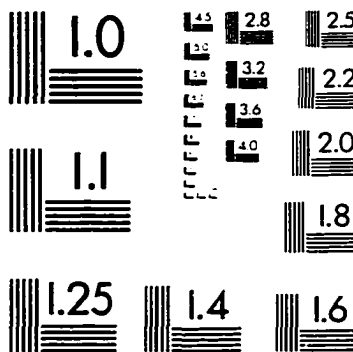
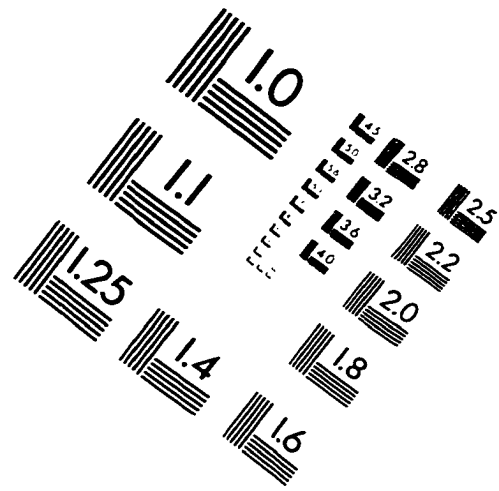
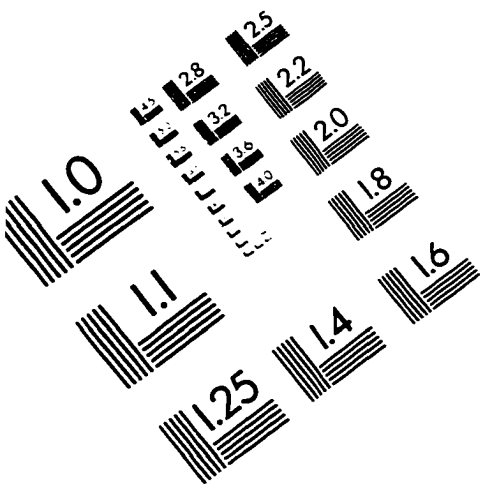
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