

EMBODYING THE AESTHETIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE:  
EXPLORING THE METACOGNITIVE PROCESS OF CREATING FUNCTIONAL  
OBJECTS THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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A Thesis

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Abstract

of

EMBODYING THE AESTHETIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE:  
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This thesis is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway I: Artist as Educator. This project focuses on the author's journey as a budding artisan of weaving and ceramics and as a devotee of poetry. Over the course of the year, the author created a journal using her exploration into these crafts as a platform to explore the convergence of ideas from disciplines thought of as divergent: Zen and Buddhist ideas of life and aesthetics, systems theory of interrelationships, cognitive science's ideas of embodied knowledge, and ideas from the philosophers of art and education. All was researched, reflected on, and discussed in the journals along with documentation of the processes of designing and creating the objects. The author reviewed and incorporated many of the ideas touched on during her undergraduate degree in architecture. (Architectural education depends on meta-cognitive and heuristic pedagogy, architectural theory parallels many of the ideas of craft.) As related in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the author found at the crux of the relationships of these varied disciplines, a new direction for our educational institutions through the integration of

embodied narrative inquiry. The objects produced during this thesis were shared with the public through an interactive installation at the culmination of the master's program.

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Karen D. Benson, Ph.D.

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I would also like to thank my family for their patience and support as I traveled along this path over the last two years. Finally, to those who fostered my love of learning, allowed me to find my own voice, and made sure my Cabinet of Curiosities was always brimming with treasures, my parents Russell and Janice Lukey.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

This Project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway I: Artist as Educator.

#### Problem

In, *Evolutionary Biology and Its Implications for Craft*, Bruce Metcalf (2004) stated, "... the human mind is a biological organ that predetermines many of our capacities and that is far from being an arbitrary cultural construct" (p. 221). By this he meant that, every human's mind-body has basic characteristic mental structures with individual capacities, multiple and multivalent. Though biology is not destiny, social construct can be. Alarmingly, just as public classrooms across this country devoid themselves of curriculums supporting students with capacities other than linguistic and logical-mathematical, current educational research is cementing the relationship of the mind and body's interdependency during learning, as seen in studies of cognitive embodiment, gesturing, and situated learning. Privileging technological and mechanistic pedagogy over the biological and somatic aspects of a human's mind in public education is a purely arbitrary social construct. Rewarding the successful application of this through narrowed curriculum and circular forms of standardized assessment is not arbitrary and begs the question of institutionalized discrimination.

Reexamination of this author's early educational history revealed such a hierarchical experience as noted above. Wondering how this author's own capacities would develop outside this construct was the genesis of this pathway choice: Artist As Educator. Could the capacities in a neglected intelligence be resurrected, expanded, and integrated? This pathway allowed the author to explore bodily-kinesthetic learning, documenting and examining their development along the way. In addition, she researched current theories into the relationship between cognition and bodily-kinesthetic mastery.

A demonstratively high level of intelligences used simultaneously, the primary being bodily-kinesthetic, was evident in reviewing the work of Master craftspeople. This was echoed in the emerging area of cognitive sciences entitled "embodied cognition" whose beliefs hold: cognitive processes are deeply rooted in the body's interactions with the world. "That is, human thought cannot be reduced to symbol manipulation, or social exchange, but is inextricably intertwined with perception and action" (Rambusch & Ziemke, 2005, p. 1807). Did this author's fusion of an art form with a craft, poetry with weaving and pottery, deepen the knowledge and enjoyment of each? The objective for the past year as this author worked in textiles and pottery was to produce objects whose final form reflected the interpretation of an aesthetic experience, maintained the purity of the intended use, and honored the appropriateness of materials. A parallel and equally substantial goal was to document the author's development of metacognition and self-knowledge as the paths of learning and the creative process evolved.

### Importance

In *Towards A Psychology of Art*, Rudolf Arnheim (1972) stated: “The purpose of art and craft is to make the world visible” (p. 355). This author believes crafts represent a set of skills available to all levels of society that were historically used as a pathway to meta-cognition and self-knowledge. Particularly in America, these skills became neglected in education and home once the industrial revolution replaced handmade with machine made. Just as traditional crafts handed down through the family supported intergenerational continuity, craft trades and guilds supported connections within the workplace and greater society.

Educators dictate that children learn many skills- none so important as sense of self as learner. Today’s educational pacing and practices are devoid of heuristic opportunities within core subjects. In the current school day, the space and time to reflect on experiences and develop students’ dispositions are not available. The disciplines of art and craft do afford such opportunities. Craft unfolds creative expression within a defined goal, usefulness, heightening the craftsperson’s objective: to create an object that draws from the user her own definition of beauty allowing her to become its craftsman.

These objects can transcend the ordinary to become personal talisman, touchstone, artifact, axis mundi, or genus loci for craftsman and user. The process of craft can become a structure for intrapersonal development. As well, the object can become a conduit for interpersonal communication, such as the idea of psychological phenomena, described as resonance, in *Values of Perception* (Arnheim, 1991). By resonance he meant

that the perceptual dynamics embodied throughout an object during creation from the craftsman, could resonate to those who use it. We find this idea repeated by Rob Barnard in *Use and the Art Experience* (1991):

For the viewer, it is a way to access an artist's work and become an active participant in the art experience rather than a bystander. In the hands of the serious and questioning craftsperson, the dynamics of use can make art both accessible and participatory, and by doing so re-establish it as a meaningful and potent activity in our culture. (p. 8)

Craft requires the viewer to interact with object, often within a very personal setting or act, such as during a ritual or while eating a meal within the home. This multi-sensorial intimacy is unique to a craft object, giving it an advantage over any other monist form in the creative disciplines.

#### Context

The author holds an Undergraduate Bachelor of Architecture (BArch 1989) from the California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (BCLAD1999) from California State University, Sacramento.

The seminar titled “Systems Thinking,” led by Fritjof Capra was given through The Center For Ecoliteracy at the David Brower Center Berkley, California. The workshop titled “Geometry For Artists and Artisans,” conducted by Michael S. Schneider, Ph.D. was held in San Francisco, California. Interviews and research

regarding the International Mingei Museum were held on museum grounds in San Diego, California.

Production of these objects occurred at the author's studio within her residence in Carmichael, California. Textiles were produced on a 26-inch, four-harness Schacht Baby Wolf loom. The design process occurred primarily in the studio unless otherwise noted within the process journal. The ceramics were produced while at a workshop at the Mendocino Art Center (Mendocino, California) under the direction of Marc Lancet and on the Sacramento State campus within the ceramics department under the direction of Scott Parady. In addition, Sacramento Weavers and Spinners Guild (SWSG) meetings, gatherings and events were attended monthly. Consultation with Guild members as needed for mentoring of technique occurred as noted in the process journal.

#### Procedure

Over the course of a year this author designed and created poetry, textiles, and ceramics to be fitted into an installation that was presented in the spring of 2010 as a culminating experience. Throughout the process a journal was kept recording experiences, reflections, artifacts, inspirations, and reaction to research. Each object that was created was based upon either an original experience or meditation through a poem. The final design of the installation included these elements: art or other objects that were acquired personally, found objects, poetry, the author's weaving, and ceramics. The three dimensional installation was interactive, and as such invited viewers to explore through any sense they felt appropriate the forms and textures of the objects. The goal for the

installation was to provide a forum for sensual exploration, meditative contemplation and dialogue. The viewers were given blank pages in the process journals to log their reactions.

### Main Questions and Readings

How can art in education foster the development of self-actualization of our students? Can such pedagogy and curriculum also support the development of interrelationships between self and other, or self and world? The present day American society has fixed public school success, and as such the majority of citizens', on industrialized models, turning towards making what counts that which can be counted. Furthermore, curriculum continues to be fashioned on Newtonian beliefs of a mechanistic universe deconstructed to educational units within narrowly focused bodies of knowledge. For this section, the writings of Fritjof Capra, John Dewey, Donald Arnstine, Rudolf Arnheim, and Elliot Eisner were researched and reflected upon.

When is a teacup more than just a vessel or a blanket for more than warmth? Research looked into how handmade objects, intentionally created based on experience, provide a dynamics of resonance that can be experienced by the user. Can handmade objects promote the interrelationships among our species? Can they provide a starting point for conversation or for dialogue? Readings of the work by Rudolf Arnheim, John Dewey, Sir Herbert Read, Mircea Eliade, John Berger, and Howard Gardner were conducted.

Does self-knowledge deepen as abilities in one's craft deepened? This author researched how the craft of creating useful objects was used as a pathway to develop self-knowledge. Particular focus was given to the Japanese craft movement known as Mingei, especially those beliefs drawn from Buddhism and Zen. Further research was done on how the journey of the craftsman was used for meditation. Focus was on the writings of Bernard Leach, Soetsu Yanagi, Shoji Hamada, Rob Barnard, Bruce Metcalf, Margaret Wilson, Elliot Eisner, and John Dewey. This section was enlightening because of the difference of Japanese and American cultural approach to craftspeople and craft objects.

This author also researched how the dynamic in an art or craft studio provided a special environment to develop elliptical dialogue between student and professor, student and student, and explored its benefits to education. The author noted what special conditions occur in the built environment of the studio and the unique pedagogy that occurred due to this arrangement. In addition, the author researched the idea of "double loop learning" in relationship to learning-in action and how this was similar to the elliptical dialogue found in design studios. Research was conducted through the readings of Donald Schon, Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, and Shirley M. Sheridan.

#### Documentation

During the course of the year the processes were documented by keeping a metacognitive process journal including photographs, writings and artifacts. Reflections on knowledge gained during attendance at conferences and workshops were also documented. More formal research included readings of literature on philosophy,

psychology of art, craftsmanship, and educational philosophy. It was this researcher's goal to present an artifact in the form of a journal, which detailed the meta-cognitive process, pertinent literature, and the portfolio of textiles and ceramics, along with the poems they were based on, for their culminating project.

### Change and Application

Today's children in America's public schools are not provided tools to develop metacognition, a safe environment to explore the process of creative thinking, nor are they given a medium for self-actualization.

This particular task is one common to most educators: An educator, frequently, if not primarily, wishes to communicate ideas, experiences, or insights which cannot be reduced to the form of a textbook, a lecture, or an educational film. Modern man has painfully realized that a pupil may be able to memorize a text, identify a Rembrandt or a Bach, or may even perform excellently in an examination, and yet, somehow, miss the entire point of the lesson. (Kobayashi, 1962, p. 220)

As an educator, one can see whether a student applied the Pythagorean Theorem to correctly compute an answer, but not see whether they furthered their geometric sense. Will that same student be able to apply this knowledge in the trade of carpentry or the discipline of history or architecture? The same dilemma appears with thought processes that do not provide concrete answers such as ethics, morality, and creativity. How are these processes made visible? This researcher hoped that by better understanding herself as a learner within a kinesthetically creative process, she could support future students to

make their own learning self-evident, and subsequently to communicate their processes to others.

One way for this to be successfully experienced and transferred to other areas of cognition is for the process to be based on a skill outside a person's quantifiable cognitive development based on language or math. Craft processes such as weaving and ceramics are accessible to all people, regardless of education level or success. The objective uses of functional craft are commonly experienced by all people. This author proposed the process of learning a craft that produces useful objects provides an exact set of circumstances through which a student can be taught meta-cognition successfully. The basic skills necessary to successfully produce a cup or hat allows the learner a wide, creative field, but provides limitations easily understood. In addition, the mastery of such a process can be a life long pursuit, providing challenges both technical and personal. Because mastery of these skills does not necessitate the successful application of cognitive skills based on language or math, they support heuristic and meta-cognitive opportunities for all students.

#### To Inform and Lead

It is this author's hope this project provided an example of a different pathway for individual classroom and art teachers to promote the self-actualization and meta-cognition of their students. This author's experience of the dynamics of studio thinking and process journaling can be used in general education classrooms to promote constructive dialogue and heuristic pedagogy. The research done by this author on

embodied knowledge can be used to provide School Boards with information demonstrating the value of the adoption of additional time in the classroom to promote kinesthetic activities such as craft. It is this researcher's hope the educational system will adopt a model with goals aligned more towards interrelationships, reflective of the variety in which humanity actually exists, and supportive of students to live self aware lives as they pursue their niche in our society.

#### Vocabulary

Cultural, philosophical, religious and scientific terms used by this author, as well as technical vocabulary for pottery, weaving, spinning, and dyeing were defined within the context of use throughout this thesis.

#### Special Circumstances

There were no special circumstances to limit this project.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, literature and research was reviewed on the importance of art in education with a particular emphasis on the aesthetic experience and its role in the interrelationship of mind and body, through development of written symbolism and functional object. First, a context of art and craft in public education was constructed, then the written form of poetry, haiku, was explored as a form of double loop learning. Next an introduction to the concept of embodied cognition was made, and, finally, an argument for the historical, cultural and environment importance of functional handmade objects was fashioned.

#### Art in Education: Need In Context

Within this section the imperative need for arts in education will be explored. Theories of educational philosophers such as Rudolf Arnheim, Eliot Eisner, John Dewey, Herbert Read, and Donald Arnstine will be discussed along with anecdotal evidence of Eastern cultural dispositions. Discussion of educational practices to guide students, towards the goal of offering students concrete experience, reflective inquiry, and support in the formation of self and one's interrelationship to a nondualistic world. This section will review the educational practices of Augusto Boal, Howard Gardner, A.S. Neill, Donald Shon, and Rudolf Steiner. With a foundation of arts education the attainment of such a goal is solidly within reach, gradually reforming present day educational policy

from a mechanistic and self-serving agenda towards one of interrelationships, balance, and self-actualization.

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. (Donne, 2004, p. 62)

Though our scientific knowledge of the world has altered drastically since the time Donne wrote the sermon above, our approach to education remains doggedly rooted in the Cartesian beliefs and values of that time. Newton furthered this line of belief and developed a mechanistically modeled worldview, which pervaded all levels of his society including those of the budding social sciences. Locke, taking his cues from the Newtonian model, described humans as basic building blocks and their minds as *tabula rasa*, on which knowledge could be imprinted. Society itself, he purported, acted according to the laws of nature, similar to those that govern the physical universe as he understood it. This value system was adopted and incorporated throughout science of all types, including those of the social sciences. The current educational system has not evolved beyond an elaboration of the mechanistic model of the universe brought about by the Newtonian world machine. Indeed, it has succumbed further to reductionism, as seen in far reaching pejorative legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2002) and Race To The Top (*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*). Pedagogy, curriculum, and

evaluation are currently enslaved by “the industrialized model born of Taylorism” (Eisner, 1998, p. 110).

Though social sciences remain stagnated, early 20<sup>th</sup> century discoveries shifted physical science into a new paradigm: quantum theory.

In quantum theory you never end up with ‘things’; you always deal with interconnections. This is how modern physics reveals the basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into independent existing smallest units. As we penetrate into matter, nature does not show us any isolated building blocks, but rather appears as a complicated web of relations between various parts of a unified whole....But here, at the level of particles, the notion of separate parts breaks down. The subatomic particles-and therefore all parts of the universe-cannot be understood as isolated entities but must be defined through their interrelations. (Capra, 1982, p. 81)

This revelation, that science itself deals at best with limited and approximate descriptions of reality, should have liberated educational policy. Though hard science can at best provide an approximation of the true nature of the universe, education doggedly remains clamped on a mechanistic model for every aspect of our schools, ignorance, oppression, and the absence of leadership, has kept it so. Education professionals must completely reexamine the model on which it was based and redesign educational practices. The role of arts in education, which have been marginalized and

misunderstood, can now justly hold a key place in the guidance of students' development and capacities (Eisner, 1998, p. 85).

Just as the strength of the whole is equal to the strength of its parts, the strength of its parts, are equal to the strength of its whole. In other words, the ethos of a culture is dependent upon the enlightenment of the minds that make up the culture. "A culture populated by people whose imagination is impoverished has a static future" (Eisner, 2002, p. 4). Given this, it behooves a democratic culture to provide the richest environment in which to grow citizens' minds. Curriculum, with its influence on forming minds, is a powerful place to start incorporating the arts (Eisner, 1998 p. 13). Art education, both alone and woven into other subjects, provides a rich medium for children to explore their senses, enlarging and deepening their qualitative literacies.

Humans are experiential beings. They develop through play and through concretely interrelating with the environment.

Froebel went so far as to claim that 'play' is the highest expression of human development in the child, for it alone is the free expression of what is in the child's soul...at the same time it is a type and copy of all stages in all relations. (Read, 1956, p. 109)

The more varied a child's experiences the better. A student can read Shakespeare's sonnets, but until they have experienced the emotions surrounding amorous love, their knowledge is abstract and foreign. Wielding a chisel, drawing a bow, or sitting under a cherry tree in blossom, connects students to the universes of Michelangelo, YoYo Ma,

and Bashō. Much of this type of learning can be found in classrooms modeled on the Waldorf methods developed by Rudolf Steiner, the Summerhill School founded by A.S. Neill, the democratic learning methods found in Sudbury school models, and the Reggio Emilia approach.

When a pupil learns by doing, he is reliving both mentally and physically some experience that has proved important to the human race; he goes through the same mental process as those who originally did these things. Because he has done them he knows the value of the result, that is, the fact. A statement, even of facts, does not reveal the value of the fact, or the sense of its truth-of the fact that is a fact. Where children are only fed on book knowledge, one “fact” is as good as another; they have no standards of judgment or belief ... Thus we see that it is a mistake to suppose that practical activities have only or even mainly a utilitarian value in the schoolroom. (Dewey & Dewey, 1915, p. 293)

Humans are sensorial beings. The formation of mind depends on the cognition supported. What is included to be taught, how much time is allowed, the method of delivery, and how to evaluate its mastery are overt political statements of what a society values. Furthermore, if one narrows the focus of what matter will be learned, then the goal of education is subverted, which is to learn to learn (Arnstine, 1967). This is much like mistaking the pointing finger for the moon. “There are two principles that can guide education: one helps children become what they are, the other helps children become what they are not” (Read, 1956, p. 2). Each of the experiences a student meets can be

infused with a greater understanding by the thoughtful development of their reflective lexicons. Strong education, in and of the arts, provides opportunities for articulation of the individual's reaction.

The arts help students to learn to pay attention to qualities and their expressive content. ... But it is not only the formal elements or qualities of the thing itself that need to be addressed, but the way these qualities generate expressive content. Put another way, it requires a willingness to allow the form to inform the way we feel when we see it. Sight, in this case, is put in the service of feeling. No teachers on the faculty of a school are more likely to address such matters than teachers of the arts. (Eisner, 2002, p. 85)

The best way to explore and understand the hues of experience is through the development of a vocabulary rich with "fine grained discriminations," which in turn will inform your observations (Eisner, 1998). This necessitates that multiple literacies be developed through the curriculum and supported within the classroom. An example of this in practice occurs when multiple intelligences are supported in the classroom. Here students explore knowledge through a variety of formats in which art is integral for both evaluation and knowledge. Arts education broadens what they are capable of experiencing, capable of responding to, and capable of inscribing (Eisner, 2002).

As a citizen, the person will possess a more diverse palette by which to react to the unknown. Alone with this internalized dialogue, they are better prepared to meet unpredictable situations as forums for discovery, creativity, and imaginative problem

solving. Because in classrooms the opportunity to enlarge students' imaginative natures occurs, these skills are carried into culture. The hope is to transfer these qualities and inform citizens' experiences in the world outside school. Dewey (1934) saw aesthetic quality as "implicit in every normal experience" (p. 11), but acknowledged the difficulty in moving from these implicit qualities to an explicit recognition, an aesthetic experience, an act of expression, and perhaps into a product. Dogen Zenji (1976) has described everyday life experience as the fundamental koan. People everyday respond to their environments spontaneously and intuitively, as Jun' ichiro Tanizaki spoke about in his essay *In Praise of Shadows*:

The quality we call beauty however, must always grow from the realities of life, and our ancestors forced to live in dark rooms, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows towards beauty's ends. (1999, p. 18)

The Japanese demonstrated tacit knowing in development of their architectural spaces as they experienced environmental interrelationships. One way to bridge the gap between implicit and explicit aesthetic experience is for students to be exposed to a pedagogy like that of a studio, such as architects, whose products required skills of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1984). Teachers' use of this pedagogy enables them to cope with uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflicts during the flow of instruction. The aim of modeling this skill is the transference to students of reflective and reciprocal learning. The elliptical structure of the conversation allows for safe risk-taking, with immediate practice of knowledge and feedback. Less oppositional than the Socratic Method, this

pedagogy allows for nondualistic solutions that value the individual dispositions of both teacher and student.

The development of arts and artists provides a democratic forum for formation of a culture's intersubjectivity. By this is meant the agreement between individuals as to shared cultural meanings. This intersubjectivity influences the development of cultural norms and values. Art, even for citizens outside the dominant power structure, is a safe forum to explore the subjective nature of society and to highlight inequities and injustice. Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed provides such a forum for dialogue and evaluation. Is there a vested interest to provide art education? Arnheim (1991) soundly places arts education as a conduit of self-determinant humanism.

I believe one can do no better than raise a question that is explicitly asked by few persons but is implicitly faced by everybody sooner or later. It is the question of the ultimate goal of life. The practical objectives of doing a useful and gainful job, acting to the benefit of others, and entertaining oneself are readily defined and pursued. But there comes a time when all this seems temporary and one is faced with the revelation that the only sense there is to life is the fullest and purest experience of life itself. To perceive the fullest what it means to truly love, to care, to understand, to discover, to yearn, or to hope is, by itself, the supreme value of life. Once this becomes clear, it is equally evident that art is the evocation of life in all its completeness, purity, and intensity. Art, therefore, is one

of the most powerful instruments available to us for the fulfillment of life. To withhold this benefit from human beings is to deprive them indeed. (p. 26)

The role of art and artist is not just creator and form, but as a conduit of human experience, of universality, which can physically manifest itself within those who interact with the art. “A third valuable property of perceptual dynamics derives from a psychological phenomena that may be described as resonance.... The dynamics transmitted by the image resonates in the nervous system of the receiver” (Arnheim, 1991, p. 26). The implications of what he stated are profound. What this means is that the artist holds a unique niche in our society, a chance to relay embodied aesthetic experience. Given Dewey’s (1934) ideas in the creation of the enduring elements of civilization, “The enduring forces are not separate; they are functions of the multitude of passing incidents as the latter are organized into the meanings that form minds. Art is the great force in effecting this consolidation” (p. 340). One can see the artists’ impact on culture as a strand in the very creation of it.

In summary, imagine a loom; the biological nature of humans provide the warp as they move through time. Human consciousness moves through providing weft. To extend the metaphor, enlightenment, nondualism, transcendence, etc. describe states of being from which one views the interrelating composition of these as a culture’s fabric. Where warp and weft meet, a node is made, tension is felt, and energy is created. The artist’s work is one such use of this energy. Works of art exploring this node become visible expressions of felt life (Langer, 1953). They are a manifestation of the aesthetic

experience and serve as reminders that society examines its relationships. To the public, works of art are visible signposts of human experience, and, as such, become potent catalysts for dialogue about societal values. One such dialogue is the value of art in education.

### Haiku & Aesthetic Experience

In the words of Tzu-ch'eng:

If the mind is not overlaid with wind and waves, you will always be living among blue mountains and green trees. If your true nature has the creative force of Nature itself, wherever you may go, you will see fishes leaping and geese flying.

(as cited in Watts, 1959, p. 187)

The art of poetry is one way to communicate an aesthetic experience: a great poem can serve as a cognitive agar, providing opportunity for personal transcendence. By capturing poetic truth, one moves oneself through factual truth, to the nature of one's experience of the world. Poetry's description of the world is as cognitive, as truthful, and as important as the sciences. As Yasuda (1995) stated about the problems that disciplines based on the intuitive approach fell into: "Reality, as painted by science for its own needs, has been mistaken for ultimate reality, which, being based on a positivistic, mechanistic naturalism, wrought havoc with traditional religious, philosophic, and aesthetic assumptions" (p. 143).

One form of poetry alone and one master of that form have come to exemplify this crystallized transcendence: the haiku of Matsuo Bashō. So revered is his haiku his

countrymen call him Hansei- the saint of haiku. Haiku's form is an art that spans several areas of human intelligence. Haiku's craft is a life long pursuit at communicating the intersection where mind, body, and spirit reside.

Originally, haiku (hokku or haikai) was the first three lines setting the tone of a tanka (waka), a verse of 31 sound units, divided into five-seven-five-seven-seven. Bashō alone saw the potential in these initial three lines to transmit an aesthetic experience. Though the style of the day was to use ornate, often foreign words, Bashō chose to use common words and, going a step further, chose commonplace subjects, wu-shih-“nothing special,” to everyday life. This democratized his poetry, making accessible his observances about nature, human conditions, and universal experiences. These elements formed poems with both momentary and eternal meaning.

Though for many years, scholars erroneously thought haiku contained no metaphor, this genre is now understood to contain a different kind of metaphor, one that requires the active participation of the reader to complete. Poetical metaphor bridges the gap between embodied experience and human linguistics. As Alan Watts (1959) wrote in his book *The Way of Zen*, “But the non-Japanese listener must remember that a good *haiku* is a pebble thrown in the pool of the listener's mind, evoking associations out of the richness of his own memory. It invites the listener to participate” (p. 183). Each of us has the experiences to participate in the haiku moment.

Haiku creates an opportunity for resonance using the reader's own memories to share a universal truth that the poet has experienced and wishes to communicate. What is

meant by that is a haiku is created using signposts, or better said suggestions, to guide readers to their own aesthetic experiences. It removes the dualism of being both reader and that which is being read. This non-dualism, this “aimlessness,” is crucial to the experience: the point of reading a haiku is not to “get it,” but the real joy is what turns up in the course of reading, that is, to be alive and present throughout the journey. As we see in this translation by R. H. Blyth (1949), of Bashō’s most famous poem:

The old pond;  
A frog jumps in-  
Sound of water.

The reader is not told what to think, or feel, but must draw from their own embodied experiences to construct an understanding of the poem relative to their own stage and experience in life. Bashō’s above haiku of the frog jumping into the pond can be enjoyed at all ages of life. This aimlessness is not to be misinterpreted as frivolity, but understood as a shift in importance to the process. To clarify: the value of reading a haiku is in the reader’s journey through it, not the words, not even insight if they are to have arrived at one. While the reader is following with “intentionless intention,” they re-place themselves over and over in the universe, grounding themselves as an interdependent member of their environment.

Cognitive activities of particular importance and unique structure occur around poetic metaphor. The cognitive theory of metaphor describes the mental mapping and blending used to understand, and, reciprocally, to write poetry. Of particular importance

is the theory by Turner and Fauconnier (1999) that when poetic metaphor, which is a non-conventional use of conventional metaphor, is analyzed, “a special case of the many-space model” (Hiraga, 1999, p. 465) is created. This is important because usually during a conceptual projection two input mental spaces are created, source and target. These spaces are, “small conceptual arrays put together for local purposes of action and understanding” (Hiraga, 1999, p. 466). Having been built in relation to conceptual domains they contain information from the respective domains and other background information necessary. Additionally, “Turner and Fauconnier (1995a: 184) proposed a model of “conceptual projection across four or more (many) mental spaces rather than two domains” to explain a wide range of phenomena” (Hiraga, 1999, p. 465), amongst which is the conceptual metaphor we find in haiku.

With haiku success depends on interactive metaphorical construction. Unlike standard models of conceptual projections that are unidirectional (source to target), these projections are special because they are dynamic. Additionally, in the many-space model, there are two additional spaces created in the middle that are generic, containing “skeletal structures” from their respective input space and, most importantly, within these is a blended space that has parts of both, but also a unique, “(Turner and Fauconnier 1995a: 184), namely, ‘emergent structure of its own’ (183)” (Hiraga, 1999, p. 466). The concept of emergence that Turner and Fauconnier propose in the above many space model shares striking similarities to that found in the study of systems thinking:

It is technically known as self-organization and is often referred to simply as “emergence.” It has been recognized as the dynamic origin of development, learning and evolution. In other words, creativity-the generation of new forms-is a key property of all living systems. And since emergence is an integral part of the dynamics of open systems, we reach the important conclusion that open systems develop and evolve. Life constantly reaches out into novelty. (Capra, 2002, p. 14)

Given the apt fit of a model thus used to explain environmental phenomena being now used to explain human cognitive processes, one might theorize on a similar nested evolution of both systems, cognitive within environmental.

The cognitive theory of metaphor’s importance lies in its powerful insight that metaphor is not verbal, but a conceptual phenomenon that emerges from a person’s bodily experiences. These sensorimotor experiences arise from our body’s interaction with its environment and are used in subsequent construction of concepts such as space, location, movement, etc. and then used in linguistic expression.

Conceptual metaphors are basic, universal, and cognitive in nature, and linguistic metaphors express these conceptual metaphors.

Basic conceptual metaphors are part of the common conceptual apparatus shared by members of a culture. They are systematic in that there is a fixed correspondence between the structure of the domain to be understood (e.g., death) and the structure of the domain in terms of which we understand it (e.g.,

departure). We usually understand them in terms of common experiences. (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 51)

Though rooted in concrete physical experiences, the most successful haiku are thus because the interrelationships of the subjects provide basic metaphor. The images represent an underlying conventionalized metaphor: at the conceptual level it represents an automatic, effortless mode of thought amongst humans. The basicness they relate is indispensable to the human community for purposes of conceptualizing abstract ideas such as life, death, time, etc. Lakoff and Turner's (1989) analysis of image metaphors found in surrealistic poetry led them to limit the importance of image metaphors,

One-shot image-mappings characteristically do not involve the mapping of such rich knowledge and inferential structure. Moreover, LIFE IS A JOURNEY is used unconsciously and automatically over and over again in reasoning about our daily lives. But one-shot image-mappings are not involved in daily reasoning. (p. 91)

However, the image metaphor in the following Bashō poem, translated by Chimyo Horioka (Holmes & Horioka, 1973, p. 76), begs a reexamination of that conclusion.

A child of a poor family

Stops grinding rice

To look at the moon

This uses conventional images that involve cross mappings among several domains, providing rich inferential structure for metaphorical reflections on life, death, and time.

Because Lakoff and Turner (1989) explored poems that use uncommon images-

metaphors, they derived the notion that image-metaphors rich in detail are too idiosyncratic to be useful in daily life. But what of poems that contain image-metaphors basic and conventionalized, such as that of Bashō's haiku translated by Robert Hass (1994) below?

Year after year

On the monkey's face

A monkey's face.

Unlike those unconventional image-mappings of the Surrealist poetry whose sudden image shifts force the reader to explore afresh the ways they see and think, "Whose waist is the waist of an otter caught in the teeth of a tiger" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 93), haiku uses images-metaphors just as idiosyncratic, but whereas the Surrealist intentions were toward the novel, haiku evolved within Buddhist belief and lends itself toward the eternal, "that the universe originate, develop, change, and perish through the operation of natural causes, and that this cyclic process has no beginning or end" (Hass, 1994, p. 305).

This is directly accessed in the reading or writing of haiku because, as stated above, the structure of the poem forms an elliptical dialogue with the reader. The importance of this elliptical dialogue is the parallel pattern it has to studio teaching and learning practices. In functional artistry studios, such as those of pottery and architecture, much of students' education takes place through a form of learning-in-action. The melding of aesthetics and function must be seamless for the object, a dish, home, or hat to

name a few, to be successful. Though the aesthetic is based on the designer's individual funded experiences, the design is based on common universal limits. The student and the studio master can evaluate the negotiation of the aesthetics, once the function has been established. Because functional art is based on universal human experiences, it shares patterns of development with haiku. Take, for example, an architectural studio as described by Donald Schon (1984), discussing his theory of Reflection-in-Action. Here the student and studio master communicate in an elliptical fashion, oscillating through speech and drawing between descriptions of "design" and descriptions of "designing" to determine and ultimately refine the success of a design. If the conversation is successful, it converges; their speech becomes elliptical and a communicative shorthand of sentences and gestures conveying complex ideas. The process of designing has become the teaching of design; the teaching of design emerges through the process of designing. As above, we see a non-unidirectional flow of ideas: the emergence of something unique, based on the different skeletal structures of two unique domains-that of student and studio master. If we extend this idea we can see the writing and reading of haiku as a type of functional art as well. An example, is Bashō's following haiku as translated by Jane Reichold (Bashō, Tsujimura, & Reichhold, 2008, p. 54):

on a bare branch

A crow settles down

autumn evening.

With the reading of this haiku the master Bashō has grounded one in objects so common as to be universally accessible. One “sees” the crow in its “crownness,” the autumn in its “autumnness,” and the branch in its “branchness.” One comes to know each in its meaning through one’s own experiences, then all together as they function in their “all togetherness” to synthesize a unique aesthetic experience. If the haiku is a success, it will function as map to idiosyncratic experience. After the poem is read, one can reflect on one’s internal dialogue as one negotiated the content, synthesizing meaning from personal experiences of the objects and the memories surrounding them. This type of thought process can aid a person to deal well with uncertainty, uniqueness, and evaluation in their development of self.

With haiku, the value of experience of object does not lie outside the object, nor is it the value of the object based on the relevant relationship, value, prejudices, or feelings of the person viewing it. The experience of the object is for the object’s sake. For example, if a person writes a poem of joy in seeing a butterfly, the poem is about joy not about the butterfly, the poet has distanced herself/himself from the object, and though the poem might be metaphorical, and might communicate an aesthetic experience, it is idiosyncratic to the poet and not a haiku. Though written over three hundred years ago, Bashō (1966) has encapsulated the link between the natural world, the egoless-self, and haiku:

Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want to learn about bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your subjective

preoccupation with yourself. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object and do not learn. Your poetry issues on its own accord when you and the object have become one, when you have plunged deep enough into the object to see something like a hidden glimmer there. However well phrased your poetry may be, if your feeling is not natural-if the object and yourself are separate-then your poetry is not true poetry but merely your subjective counterfeit. (p. 33)

Herein lies the potential of reciprocity between human and environment. “He is like a tuning fork placed before a vibrating one of the same frequency...in a state of aesthetic resonance, a harmonized whole of all the meaningful experiences he has had, brought to bear upon the moment of aesthetic contemplation” (Yasuda, 1995, p. 137). The haiku artist’s spirit is not divided from nature. Nature is not to be conquered, categorized, tamed or feared. Man exists in nature as much as nature exists in man. To understand nature means to understand one’s place in nature.

Indeed all who have achieved real excellence in any art, possess one thing in common, that is, a mind to obey nature, to be one with nature, throughout the four seasons of the year. Whatever such a mind sees is a flower, and whatever such a mind dreams of is the moon. It is a barbarous mind that sees other than the flower, merely an animal mind that dreams other than the moon. The first lesson for the artist is, therefore, to learn how to overcome such barbarism and animality, to follow nature, to be one with nature. (Bashō, 1966, pp. 71-72)

Through poetic refinement the truth of the universe can be found in the truth of natural phenomena. “For when you climb it is the mountain as much as your own legs that lifts you upwards” (Watts, 1959, p. 190). Important to remember is that nature, as described by disciplines of science, for example biology or physiology, is classified and categorized abstractly in terms relative to the particular uses these disciplines want to make of it. To the haiku artist all nature is opportunity for reflection, “...Since the truth of the universe lies even in a single flower, insight into the universe...can be grasped by understanding this truth” (Yasuda, 1957, p. 22).

As Dewey (1934) remarked, everyone travels with a body of funded experiences, those that make them a unique individual. To further explain, the model of ecological hyperspace is borrowed from science. As individuals we exist in fundamental niches in a hyperspace, a theoretical geometric volume, whose boundaries are defined by radial axes along which resources are negotiated within a universal community. These resources can be described much like those of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, love-belonging, esteem, self actualization. Our human experiences create axes of sociological hyperspace by and through which we interact with the world. Through these axes (or vectors) we evolve our idea of ego self, i.e. which of our desires are met and how often, what prejudices are validated, what relationships are formed, etc. Our ego self is defined by our reaction to the constant negotiation of these resources through shared use by our species.

The world is subject-matter for knowledge, because mind has developed *in* the world; a body-mind, whose structures have developed according to the structures of the world in which it exists, will naturally find some of its structures to be concordant and congenial with nature, and some phases of nature with itself.

(Dewey, 1958, p. 277)

Furthermore, varied, authentic, sensorimotor experience becomes important. The most holistic experiences derive from one's interactions within the natural environment and with subjects of one's natural environment: concrete, sensuous, and secular. Because one objective in haiku is to remove the self from between the object and subject, the linguistic aspects of the haiku cease and become the experience that they had been standing for: the aesthetic experience.

#### I Sense, Therefore I Am

Dewey (1930, 177) described “a certain delicate combination of habit and impulse” that optimizes our creative, imaginative power and thereby (as Herrigel wrote) will “establish the right frame of mind for creating.”...but for Dewey knowledge does not simply reside in a vague, mental “consciousness,” but in “muscles” – the *mind-body*...where the practice and repetition of specific skills define a developmental sequence in which one is not simply cultivating behavioral habits or cognitive processes in the mind, but rather an integration of the mind-body as a means of developing an experience and understanding at a

most profound level-where imagination and the aesthetic dimension of reality is never lost from experience. (Zigler, 2007, p. 3)

*From Mind*

Each human is embedded with a catalogue of experiences. For artisans this is the pool from which to draw inspiration. The breadth and depth of their work is bound by the experiences of their body: the variety of sensations and interaction with their physical world. What one believes to be subjective judgments about things such as affection, importance, morality etc. are largely based on the conceptual metaphors formed from one's objective experiences of the sensorimotor domains. The embodied mind, in other words, is a co-evolution of our systems of cognition and physicality, an indivisible union of self. When the relationship is encouraged to flourish, it maximizes one's subsequent degree of success in the world. The human species' higher ordered reasoning grew from the nature they share with other animals. It is evolutionary based and represents not transcendence from "animal" selves, but a more developed use of these traits (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Therefore, the diversity and quality of a person's capacity for reasoning, imagining, and evaluating (i.e. higher ordered thought) is in direct relationship to the nurturance of their sensorimotor development.

From birth, one builds this catalogue from the sensorimotor and somatic interactions with one's environment, these experiences are used in the construction of primary metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). The philosopher John Dewey summed this up in the following statement from his 1934 book *Art As Experience*. "The nature of

experience is determined by the essential conditions of life. While man is other than bird and beast, he shares basic vital functions with them and has to make the same basal adjustments if he is to continue the process of living” (p. 12). Dewey continued, “The first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment; not merely *in* it but because of it, through interaction with it” (p. 12). As sensorimotor beings, humans engage constantly with the physical world. As neural beings each of these experiences are categorized into domains. This process occurs constantly, mostly subconsciously and automatically. It organizes aspects of the experience, grouping them with others of similar ilk and is drawn upon in the act of reasoning. For example, when a preschool child piles sand, pours water in a container, or stacks blocks on one another, the corresponding areas of their visual and physical cortex among others are engaged, as are the categorical domains. Simultaneously, the child is in the developmental stage of acquiring their language-gesture, whereas the child’s mind does not differentiate their body as apart from the action or object being manipulated. Thus, what began as separate sensorimotor experiences are now neurally and domain linked, and the resultant metaphor “More Is Up” is created, with corresponding iconic language-gesture. This primary metaphor will be built upon and used to create secondary and complex metaphors. Due to the universal nature of a human’s body, most primary metaphors are also universally found throughout the world cultures.

During the process of creation in the studio environment students are constantly asked to re-examine their interpretation of experiences.

Students are asked to become reflective about their own art-making, and this reflection takes two forms. They are asked to think about and explain their process, decisions, and intentions, a process we refer to as *Question and Explain*. And they are asked to judge their own work and that of others, a process we refer to as *Evaluate*. Both of these dispositions involve the construction of meaning: Students think about their own artistic goals and those of others. Both also involve self-knowledge: students learn about themselves and their reactions and judgments as they evaluate work, whether their own or that of others. And both involve consideration of quality: Describing work is a prerequisite to evaluating elements of varying levels of effectiveness. (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2007, p. 65)

This leads to their negotiation of their understanding of the experiences they have had, the categories in which they are put, and the concepts to be drawn from them. “What we call *concepts* are neural structures that allow us to mentally characterize our categories and reason about them” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 19). These concepts allow one to draw inferential information about the category. This inferential information forms the basis for a human’s ability to reason, imagine, and evaluate their experiences. Humans use concepts from one category of experiences to map a course of action, or to form an opinion about a different experience. Novel blending between two or more categories gives rise to creative thought and imagination. As Turner and Fauconnier (1999) stated, “Conceptual blending is a basic mental operation. It plays a role in grammar, semantics,

discourse, meaning, visual representation, mathematics, jokes, cartoons, and poetry” (p. 417).

Philosophically, the embodiment of reason via the sensorimotor system is of great importance. It is a crucial part of the explanation of why it is possible for our concepts to fit so well with the way we function in the world. They fit so well because they have evolved from our sensorimotor systems, which have in turn evolved to allow us to function well in our physical environment. The embodiment of mind thus leads us to a philosophy of embodied realism. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 43)

What is the evidence of embodied realism and the link between the physical and cognitive selves? Conceptual (cognitive) metaphor. Conceptual metaphor is pervasively used in both our thought and language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Where better to explore the nuances and range of conceptual metaphor than in the process of creation, such as that which goes on in a craftperson’s studio. “Envisioning-the ability to imagine and to generate mental images-is a disposition important in many domains. And visual arts classes are perhaps the arenas in which this disposition is most consistently fostered and demanded” (Hetland et al., 2007, p. 52).

Many different things happen when the artisan draws from different areas of experience and synthesizes them during the process of creation. Not only was a new piece of work created, but also additional neural paths using image schemata were created changing the architecture of their brain. “selective borrowing, or rather

projection, is not merely compositional-instead there is new meaning in the blend that is not a composition of meanings that can be found in the inputs” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 398). As well, depending on the experiences, corresponding cortical areas of the brain involved in the sensorimotor experiences are activated with all the accompanying sensations stimulated.

Metaphor then provides a bridge between disconnected experiences. The body, through the use of metaphor, creates somatic templates...Metaphor then contributes to the illusion not only of the constancy of the self (in current time) but also to the continuity of the self through time past. Inasmuch as metaphor is the means by which we find familiar in something unfamiliar, metaphor is a necessary cognitive component in maintaining a sense of the continuity of our bodily selves. (Modell, 2003, p. 83)

In short, during the design process, the artisan’s brain physically relives the sensorimotor experiences that the metaphor is built on that the artisan is using for conceptualization. In creating the design the artisan is not just blending experiences to create a new metaphor, but is simultaneously creating a sense of self.

#### *From Body*

When one uses a loom, a pottery wheel, drives a car, or even rides a horse, the body and mind interact to create maps inside the brain-body, maps that envelop and integrate these tools as though they were literally part of the body.

Your brain also faithfully maps the space beyond your body when you enter it using tools. Take hold of a long stick and tap it on the ground. As far as your brain is concerned, your hand now extends to the tip of that stick. (Blakeslee & Blakeslee, 2007, p. 3)

What the authors are describing is one function of the integration of the body and mind—the creation of a body schema: the felt experiences by the body constructed by these maps (Blakeslee & Blakeslee, 2007). The body-brain function of mapping includes the body, the world around one, and the interaction with that world. Like the peripersonal volume of space surrounding you, these maps are elastic and constantly morphing to accommodate information from both sensorimotor and somatic (touch, thermoception, nociception, proprioception, balance) experiences. “Your body is not just a vehicle for your brain to cruise around in. The relationship is perfectly reciprocal: Your body and your brain exist for each other” (Blakeslee & Blakeslee, 2007, p. 12).

Additionally, through the process of plasticity, anytime one learns something new that the brain decides is important enough to retain, new connections between cells form, and old ones are strengthened. If this skill involves the motor cortex the corresponding body maps in the brain will increase in size. Thus, a master craftsman’s hand and finger maps are much larger than average, and over years of practice the information that resided in the premotor cortex will move and become integrated into the primary motor cortex. This integrates the motor movement of their craft with their primitive motor maps. Fundamentally, their craft has become a part of them.

Let me begin with a bold and preposterous claim. *I want to hand you an idea that at first may seem hard to grasp, but if you turn it over and over again in your head until you finally get a firm handle on it, it will feel completely right to you.*

Now, if I could make a movie of what your brain was doing as you read that last sentence, it would most likely look very similar to a brain movie of you turning an unfamiliar object over and over again in your hand until you found a way to grip it well. Your primary motor and somatosensory motor cortices would be active in the areas mapping the hand and wrist, and the premotor and secondary somatosensory hand cortices would also be active...However over the past few years we have been able to paint just that kind of picture, given recent advances in brain imaging technology coupled with research findings by, e.g. Hauk et al. (2004); Coslett et al. (2002); Moore et al. (2000); Rizzolatti et al. (2002; 2001) and Rohrer (2001b)...However, a new picture of a distributed model of semantic comprehension is now emerging. In the new model, brain areas formerly thought to be purely sensorimotor are turning out to have important roles in so called “higher” cognitive processes, e.g., language. In other words, language makes much more use of the brain’s processes of spatial, visual and mental imagery than previously thought. (Rohrer, 2005, p. 166)

Image schemata are mental patterns formed from recurrent bodily experiences such as those of moving through space, manipulating objects, and perceptual interactions (Johnson, 1987). They provide a link between sensorimotor experience and

conceptualization and language. They can be used as a source domain in metaphor to understand other experiences as well as used in conceptual blending. To be sure, these are multi-modal patterns of experience, some basic examples are: containment, force, balance, cycles, scales, center-periphery, path, links, to name just a few. Each of these is created through a range of sensorimotor experiences mapped in the mind to develop a schemata from which one draws “structures of understanding” to make sense of our “being-in-the-world or our way of having-a-world” (Johnson, 1987, p. 126). The image schemata of balance is persuasive, well-defined, and sufficiently internally structured such that it constrains our understanding and reasoning (Johnson, 1987). Though experience is culturally and socially situated, humans have basic physiology and commonly patterned interactions with natural forces. Therefore, in all likelihood, they share areas of universal image-schemata. One sees this conceptually used in the areas of artistic visualization, mathematics, psychology, and morality, all based from somatic experiences of balance.

It is my contention that...the image schemata evidenced in human language and development are grounded in the sensorimotor cortices...In other words, when we grasp an object versus reading about grasping an object (or idea), we use a functioning secondary repertoire to mentally *simulate* –to imagine- performing the action using the same cortical area we would use to perform the action.

(Rohrer, 2005, p. 181)

What happens if a person does not possess that particular sensorimotor experience?

If we are to experience our world as a connected and unified place that we can make sense of, then there must be repeatable structure and pattern in our experiences. Image schemata *are those recurring structures of, or in, our perceptual interactions, bodily experiences, and cognitive operations.* (Johnson, 1987, p. 79)

The following reiterates the link between a person's physical experiences and the idiosyncratic nature and range of their conceptualized understanding, underlining the danger of limiting children's sensory experience:

Numerous experiments assessing the relationship between embodied cognition and language have shown that that there is a facilitatory/inhibitory effect on accuracy and/or response speed that holds for a diverse set of language comprehension tasks. Such experiments suggest that the sensorimotor and somatosensory neural regions implicated by the neuroimaging and the selective-deficits studies are functionally related to language comprehension. (Rohrer, 2005, p. 172)

This clearly has wide implications in classrooms across the country. Students lacking in the sensorimotor and somatic experiences upon which primary metaphor are based are at a severe disadvantage educationally, doubly so since the tools to evaluate their success are also linguistically bound.

Not so in the studio classroom. "Metaphor is a fundamental and uniquely human cognitive ability, a primary form of cognition and thought that becomes secondarily

incorporated into language (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Turner, 1991; Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999)” (Modell, 2003, p. 26). The studio environment encourages work exploring the relationship between the body and mind. Through working in studio arts students enlarge the sensorimotor body maps pertaining to their craft, they deepen their understanding of different image schemata, and create objects exemplifying their unique conceptualized world. The synchronistic relationship between the loom and fiber, the wheel and clay, or the brush and paint is mirrored by the relationship of the student with their embodied experiences. This negotiation is deeply personal, highly cognitive, and vastly important for the well-being of students. As the physicality of design and creation has literal meaning for the students’ bodies and minds, it is imperative it be supported and nurtured. Within the studio environment interaction with materials in the process of design can bring together their cognitive and physical beings safely to reach a uniquely integrated state.

Students are taught to focus, to develop mental states conducive to working, and to develop inner-directedness. They are taught to break out of ruts and blocks, and to feel encouraged about their learning so that they are motivated to go on. They are in a state of “flow”(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). (as cited in Hetland et al., 2007, p. 42)

Imagine all of the above as exemplified in the unique motor activities involved in the fiber crafts (weaving, spinning, knitting, crocheting, tatting, sewing, basketry, felting) and the neurons linked to the corresponding sensorimotor and somatic areas of the brain.

Next, imagine the spatial image-schemas and mental models being created: pattern, connectivity, balance, density, part-whole, etc. Now, uncouple this and imagine all the conceptual applications that borrow from the mental pathways that were created. Many of the common metaphor, metonyms, icons, and symbols are built from these: the fabric of society, networking, web of life, close knit family, telling a yarn.

### *I and Thou*

The integration of mind and body is not limited to the relationship between the artisan and the object created. Along with other species, human brains contain specially developed neurons called mirror neurons. These neurons serve as a bridge for decoding and internalizing the meanings of other people's actions by processing them directly within the observer's body maps (Blakeslee & Blakeslee, 2007). The resulting sensations will be delivered by the observer's own mind using body maps from their image schemata and sensorimotor experiences. The sounds, tactile sensations, visual representations etc., captured in the artisan's work, will all resonate within the observer's body instigated by their mirror neurons. The depth of these sensations will be in proportion to the observer's expertise and experience within the area observed or interacted with. For example, a pianist's mirror neurons are more active when listening to a recital than those of a nonmusician. Or as with the above passage that mentioned grasping, a master ceramicist would have a deeper sensorimotor reaction to a bowl than someone who has not worked with clay, even more so if the object was handmade. However, just as with the music or bowl, commonalities are formed within certain areas

of personal lives in daily ritual and experience. Susanne Langer (1957) described this in the following passage from her book *Philosophy In A New Key*,

...but the emotive content of the work is apt to be something much deeper than any intellectual experience, more essential, pre-rational, and vital, something of the life-rhythms we share with all growing, hungering, moving and fearing creatures: the ultimate realities themselves, the central facts of our brief, sentient existence. (p. 260)

When interacting with an object made by humans, whose creative process began with an aesthetic experience has included mediation on their unique image schemata, whose skill at one's craft has folded the tools and materials of the work into one's own body maps, and all has melded together, a resonance of life is shared, at once universal and spiritual.

However, embodiment, the relationship between mind and body that is now understood to be indivisible, has systemically been removed from homes, public institutions, and relationships to the natural environment. So ubiquitous is the notion of Cartesian dualism, the conceit of subservience of body to mind has been legislated and enforced throughout time and culture. Its deep roots begun in Plato's time, crystallized under Descartes, flourish virtually unquestioned since the Industrial Revolution. "Popular psychology and much so-called scientific psychology have been pretty thoroughly infected by the idea of the separateness of mind and body. This notion of their separation inevitably results in creating a dualism between 'mind' and 'practice,' since the latter must operate through the body" (Dewey, 1934, p. 274). This way of thinking has given

rise to many schisms: between those making a livelihood with their body's facilities and those through their mental facilities, between those objects handmade and machine made, between conservation and consumption. It perpetuates in the prevailing, false pretence that a public education geared towards the mind and hostile to the body will insure the success of the nation. This notion, and it is only a notion, is predicated on the bifurcation of legislation supporting an economy based on mechanization and dependent upon unsustainable consumption. "Mind that bears only an accidental relation to the environment occupies a similar relationship to the body" (Dewey, 1934, p. 275). Convexly, mind that bears only an accidental relationship to body occupies a similar relationship to environment. Dewey (1934) continued,

In making mind purely immaterial (isolated from the organ of doing and undergoing), the body ceases to be living and becomes a dead lump. This conception of mind as an isolated being underlies the conception the esthetic experience is merely something "in mind," and strengthens the conception which isolates the esthetic from those modes of experience in which the body is actively engaged with the things of nature and life. It takes art out of the province of the live creature. (p. 275)

The question becomes: How do human beings once again live united?

#### The Many Functions of Craft

Who does one invite into the home? How deeply into the home is one afforded access? Does the intimacy extend to one's children, one's dinner table, one's bed, one's

body? Humans give thought and exert control over people who share the most intimate spaces of their lives, but how many use the same level of consciousness towards the objects that are allowed in? Are there more covert functions to functional objects? One aspect of this project was to examine the link between cognition, handmade functional objects, and the aesthetic experience. Explored in this section are the extenuating roles of handmade objects both mundane and celebratory in humans' lives. Crafted objects, particularly those used daily, sustain aesthetic experience in human culture, but also are revolutionary statements towards human culture's examples of sustainability.

#### *As Continuity*

Just what lineage does an object in the home have? Archeological evidence has associated textiles and weaving with hunter and gatherer societies from the Paleolithic era (Soffer, 2004). Objects displayed in museums worldwide from this time period show techniques of coiling, plaiting, and twining that are still employed by weavers today. Functional objects such as unfired pottery, though developed later, also date to the Paleolithic era. Examples of fired pottery date concurrently with the establishment of human settlements at the beginning of the Mesolithic era. Plausibly, the motions used to create the handmade basket in one's house have been continually employed by human hands for over 30,000 years, and those to create a the handmade bowl, 10,000 years. Similar lineage exists for the furniture, textiles, glassware, and metalwork found in homes worldwide. These functional objects have co-evolved with humans to work in

harmony extending, easing, replicating, and supporting the body's interactions with the natural world.

The origin and identity of crafts as a discrete artistic practice is intricately bound to function. Function is so crucial that it gives crafts their identity, an identity that not only links the physical form of traditional objects to sources in nature, but also becomes the *raison d'être* that links them to the human body. (Risatti, 1998, p. 34)

Craft is the continuous practice of human biomimicry. Its principles are toward design based on the emulation and inspiration from nature's models, systems, elements, and processes. A new word for an ancient idea, biomimicry, is once again coming into fashion as a possible answer towards sustainability.

Materials, forms, and production cycles of craft objects were once directly responsive to the natural environment. "They are not representations of reality but part of it, a stable and unchanging reality based on nature....But applied art is not based on representing something else, ... Its origin and its traditions emanate from the precultural reality that is nature" (Risatti, 1998, p. 52). To give inhabitants of the Americas a historical perspective, these ideas, principles, and beliefs have been in practice by craftspeople since the last migration across Beringia. Tool use appeared with homo habilis some 2,400,000 BP (before present) and continued with the modern lineage of homo sapien appearing some 120,000 BP. Tool refinement began around 50,000 BP, with the first craft in evidence in the form of fiber manipulation 30,000 BP, and the first

human settlements marked by built shelter and food storage around 12,000 BP. Only very recently has there been a rift between functional object and nature.

There is no modern human society, past or present, which does not create and employ functional objects. The path of the human species began by using objects occurring in nature to supplement its successful adaptation to an environment, moved on to independently replicate those naturally occurring objects by hand, and continues as a species that employs objects to create other objects. This path, one of ingenuity and marvel, does not exemplify or justify a dominance of nature, but underscores one of interdependency and balance.

Approaching the crafts from a view of function, we can divide them into several simple categories: containers, shelters, and supports...All of these categories are fundamental to crafts worldwide because they exist in nature and developed from their natural forms into manmade objects as human beings organized themselves into social groups. (Risatti, 1998, p. 35)

The latest stage of human evolution, homo sapiens, has tipped the relationship with nature from one of a commensal symbiont, an organism dependent upon, but not harmful to its host environment, to one of being a parasite. In other words, through the misuse of earth's resources in production and consumption of human objects, humans have degraded the health of the host, pushing the relationship into one that is not sustainable. Humans are just one species in a complex network of life, each of its adaptations a response in co-evolution with every other species of this planet. The

essence of humanness, is inextricably bound to the oak in its oakness, the bee in its beeness, the pelican in its pelicaness. For this to continue, the relationship of humans to objects must change radically. This can begin with meditation on one's relationship to objects that occur in one's everyday life, an elucidation of what an object is made of, and an education to the process of personally constructing an object. Wendell Berry (1987) writes of how one might begin a respectful conversation with nature,

We need to understand it as our source and preserver, as an essential measure of our history and behavior, and as the ultimate definer of our possibilities. There are, I think, three questions that must be asked with respect to a human economy in any given place: What is here? What will nature permit us to do here? What will nature help us to do here? (p. 146)

Similarly to those who before the Copernican Revolution mistakenly believed the sun revolved around the earth, we are living in a time of "anthropocentric," human-centered, beliefs. Each species is to an extent self-centered, which is appropriate. However, humans alone, in their development of "extensive" rather than "intensive" economies (Orr, 2004, p. 105), are guilty of being able to perpetuate bad design. "When human artifacts and systems are well designed, they are in harmony with the larger patterns in which they are embedded. When poorly designed, they undermine those larger patterns, creating pollution, higher costs, and social stress" (Orr, 2004, p. 105). If we have learned anything from evolution we have learned that nature does not support a species' bad design.

### *As Consumption*

If one defines technology as an adaptive tool, one sees its advancing in relation to human population growth, both constrained by energy availability. Human cultural development can be tracked historically through the forms of energy it has harnessed, which progressed through five stages: use of human energy, use of domesticated animal energy, use of plant energy, use of non-renewable natural resource energy, use of nuclear energy (White, 1943). The first three stages are actually various stages of solar energy mediated through a balanced and free system. This was rent when technological advancements in a culture became dependent upon non-cyclical (bound) energy. By this is meant the use of non-renewable energy of fossil fuels to circumvent an ecosystem's closed loop. In turning away from the Earth's free energy system, humans attempted to transcend natural order by using the bound energy of fossil fuels.

Coupled with shortsightedness of thought during the last two centuries that dominated Western culture, such as the misappropriation of Darwin's (2009) theory of natural selection (people misread the word *fittest* as meaning *strongest*), and Cartesian philosophies of mind and nature as machine, industrial mass production became globally prevalent and economically encouraged. Until that time population growth had increased proportionally to the energy and products consumed through harvesting the elements of nature. As people moved to urban centers, the natural world, whose cycles were once ubiquitous in everyday life through storytelling, food production and preparation, animal

husbandry, folk wisdom, and functional craft, became a nuisance to subjugate and overcome.

Applied art also contains a cultural component, as evidenced by its ritual uses ... Because of this, we can argue that applied art is nature brought into the reality of culture through its nonfunctional elements. But unlike fine art, it is never a purely cultural construction. It is a unique art form that straddles the boundary between pure nature and pure culture, keeping a foothold in each as a way of making meaning of necessity. It is this aspect of applied art that presents us with the possibility of returning to the real. (Risatti, 1998, p. 53)

Quite literally fueled by this circumvention of the natural energy cycles, the exponential growth of consumption also affected the materials an object was made from, releasing it from the cycles of decay normally associated with closed ecosystems such as this planet's. Whereas middens of ancient settlements show remains of shells, bones, pottery, and fibers in various states of decay returning their elements to the ecosystem, modern middens (landfills and dumps) concentrate toxins, non-natural materials which do not naturally occur in those states and cannot return to the ecosystem. In essence, however beautiful or functional an object of plastic is, it is a dead end use of resources and a concentrated toxin entering our ecosystem. Though historically speaking, this represents a small slice of the timeline of all objects, because consumption has been unchecked and exponential, it represents a crippling waste of resources and energy.

*As Connection*

In the postmodernist world, so the argument goes, the natural hardly exists, and reality itself is always mediated in some way. This is apparent in a world filled with endless duplicates (of mass-produced objects without originals) ... Whatever remains of the “real” world is generally experienced secondhand, predigested via the media. (Risatti, 1998, p. 34)

Unlike art or media, functional objects evolved from, and maintain a direct link to nature. When in 1931, Alfred Korzybski, the famous Polish-American scientist and philosopher, wrote, “The map is not the territory,” it crystallized the conflict between the real and the symbolic. By this is meant any representational medium will never replicate embodied experience. Put bluntly, a painting, sculpture, or photograph of an apple is never going to make apple pie. Virtual realities are not reality, movies of actions are not actions, photos of people are not people. Upon reflection one can use this to understand the importance of individuals’ objective experience. In reflecting on the changing nature of modern human lives, one can see the prevalence of mediated experiences. “In stark contrast to this world of endless multiple and virtual realities is the aesthetic quality that comes from the tradition of applied-art objects; it is the beauty founded on tangible realities connected to genuine human needs” (Risatti, 1998, p. 53). Furthermore, if one thinks only in terms of objects, then one is left only to objectify one’s world. If instead, one thinks in terms of relationships, one’s world opens to interconnections, complexity, and transformations.

*As Construction*

The successful craft conforms to the body in its form, weight, and use, becoming an integrated extension of the body. The laws of nature that govern the human body must remain consistent when the craft object is integrated through use. Additionally, the material of the craft object must be in harmony to the function. A container to hold grain is different in form and material than one which will be used to hold flour, and again different to one which holds bread. These containers:

are bound by the laws of physics, which pertain to both the materials used in their making and the substances and things to be contained, supported, and sheltered.

These laws are universal in their application, regardless of cultural beliefs, superstitions, geography, or climate. (Risatti, 1998, p. 36)

Unlike culture, which is formed and dependent on negotiated norms distinctive to itself, crafts depend on universal constants and patterns in nature. Craft is dependent on the similarities of humans, and, as such, is a medium through which issues can be addressed without provoking disparate cultural norms. “Since the laws of physics, not some arbitrary decision, have determined the general form of applied-art objects, they follow certain patterns, so much so that functional forms can vary only within certain limits” (Risatti, 1998, p. 36). So, just as seen with image-schemata, though there are universal constants of functional form because the craftsman’s experiences are idiosyncratic, there exists an infinite variety of finished object. Beyond use, to be successful, a craft object’s form, method, and material must resonate the craftsman’s aesthetic experience.

The potter shapes his clay to make a bowl useful for holding grain; but he make it in a way so regulated by the series of perceptions that sum up the serial acts of making, that the bowl is marked by enduring grace and charm. (Dewey, 1934, p. 52)

It is outside the scope of this project to definitively judge whether a handmade object is labeled art or craft. Yet, if one relates the embodied experiences of its creator better to the user, there is no doubt that handmade objects bring a quality to humans' lives absent from those made by machine. As reviewed in the previous section of this project, nothing of the mind was not through the body first. Schisms and ambiguity aside, the objects associated with the word craft provide relief from everyday technological hubris. "Quite different from the fluid world of interpersonal relatedness...The nonhuman environment, Searles believed, offers relief from certain kinds of tensions, and can be a source of solace and companionship at times of loneliness or anxiety" (Spitzform, 2000, p. 278).

### In Conclusion

All human knowing is deeply rooted in the body's relationship to the natural world and its cycles, patterns, and relationships, as explored through somatic and sensorimotor experiences. Though overwhelming support for this is found in current research, public educational policy continues to institutionally negate this area of pedagogy, instead promoting mediated materials and experience.

If we wish to recover common sense, then we must invert the representationalist attitude (of a pre-given world) by treating context-dependent know-how not as a residual artifact that can be progressively eliminated by the discovery of more sophisticated rules, but as, in fact, the very essence of creative cognition. (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993, p. 148)

As with all Earth's natural systems, the human's substantive diversity not homogeneity is the basis for strength, and, thus, our continuation as a species. Each human has formed a disposition from unique physicality, culture, and experience. Exploration and communication of this self has only very recently been through abstract written symbolism. Far more established traditions of art and craft support direct embodied pathways to cognitively understand and interrelate human experience. Nevertheless, aesthetic experience, whether resolved as a form of literature such as haiku, a functional object such as a bowl or shawl, begins and ends in a body alive in the natural world. John Dewey (1934) described entering this cycle of creation, of knowing the extraordinary from the ordinary, as integral to self-actualization:

A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live... We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried beyond ourselves to find ourselves. (p. 202)

## Chapter 3

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Crafting the Beaux Esprit, the Beaux Monde

This Project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway I: Artist as Educator. This researcher's thesis, which entailed documenting the metacognitive processes of writing poetry, designing, and crafting functional handmade objects based on aesthetic experiences, was conducted as a narrative inquiry.

Bruner argued that although narrative is complementary to traditional scientific knowing, it is also different from it. One mode cannot be reduced to the other... The process-product paradigm of standard research on teaching and learning was turned on its head. Teaching is about the construction of knowledge and meaning by individuals, not simply the transmission of information. (Lyons & La Boskey, 2002, p. 3)

Story telling, or narration, is an ancient method of communicating ideas, beliefs, cultural traditions, values, and information. Cultures pass along warnings, historic deeds, ecological information, and such as ways of informing their young and bettering their chance for their survival. Story telling "is an ancient and altogether human method. The human being alone among the creatures of the earth is a storytelling animal: sees the

present rising out of the past, heading into a future; perceives reality in narrative form” (Novak, 1975, p. 175).

Not only is narration oral and written, but also it is recorded throughout history on objects of art and craft. One hears of story clothes being woven as early as in the Illiad (lines 125-27) where Homer writes of Helen of Troy: “She was weaving a great warp, a purple double layered cloak, and she was working into it the many struggles of the horse-taming Trojans and bronze-clad Achaians” (Barber, 1994, p. 211). Indeed, as we examine Greek vases, Native America baskets, Hmong story cloth, Egyptian tomb paintings, and even Paleolithic cave painting, we are not just seeing the stories of a culture’s events, but the story of the maker of the object as well. “Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 24). Likewise with writing in any genre, the writer’s own experiences are always an elemental part of what is written. To learn from the stories individuals tell of themselves, a new form of research methodology has emerged in the last several decades, narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry in the social sciences is a form of empirical narrative in which empirical data is central to the work. The inevitable interpretation that occurs, something which is embedded even in the data collection process, does not make narrative into fiction even though the language of narrative inquiry is heavily laced with terms derived from literary criticism of fiction...The sense of the

whole is built from a rich data source with a focus on the concrete particularities of life that create powerful narrative tellings. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5)

But how is one to explore the subject's experiences without falling down the rabbit hole of endlessly contextualizing the context, or delineating points of perspective? Within the broader landscape of Social Science research there are several approaches to narrative inquiry. The approach of this thesis will follow that delineated by Clandinin and Rosiek as they address this very issue in the publication in 2007 of *Mapping a Landscape of Narrative Inquiry* which, as opposed to other philosophical territories in which narrative inquiry occurs, places the methodology within the context of the Deweyan theory of experience:

Dewey's (1981c) conception of experience differs from this. It does not refer to some precognitive, precultural ground on which our conceptions of the world rest. Instead, it is a changing stream that is characterized by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social, and material environment. (Clandinin & Roseik, 2007, p. 39)

The importance in placing this researcher's experiences in perspective, as those of one human's within one year of a longer journey, cannot be overlooked. Because the writings and objects are particular to this researcher, the methodology lends itself to focus on the processes of doing and knowing with the products as artifacts of this. In doing so, this researcher hopes to deepen the understanding of her disposition towards knowing through doing. Again Clandinin and Rosiek (2007):

In other words, Dewey's ontology is not transcendental, it is transactional. The epistemological implications of this view are nothing short of revolutionary. It implies that the regulative ideal for inquiry is not to generate an exclusive faithful representation of a reality independent of the knower. The regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new relation between a human being and her environment-her life, community, world-one that "makes possible a new way of dealing with them, and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced objects, not more real than those which preceded but more significant, and less overwhelming and oppressive" (Dewey, 1981b, p. 175). In this pragmatic view of knowledge, our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation. (p. 39)

This researcher's story was told in two forms, one through writing and one through object. Each were investigated individually and then as they entwine through embodied narrative inquiry, a branch of research first explored by Liora Bresler, described here as she introduced it at the First International Conference on Narrative Inquiry in Music Education in 2006:

Narrative inquiry in the social sciences, I suggest, is grounded in auditory, kinesthetic, and aesthetic sensitivities, and embedded in the lived experience of constructing and attending to narratives. The notion of embodied narrative centers on processes and spaces that facilitate the creation and communication of narratives in qualitative research. The distinction between narrative and narrative

inquiry, I propose, parallels Barthes' distinction between text and textuality (in Csordas, 1999). Text is a material object that occupies space in a bookstore; textuality is a methodological field that is experienced as activity and production (Csordas, 1999, p. 145). Embodied narrative inquiry, I suggest, is a methodological field that can be tremendously powerful in researching across the human sciences. (Bresler, 2006, p. 23)

Again, the premise of this thesis was to explore the metacognitive processes that lead this researcher through an aesthetic experience towards creating a functional object. These experiences were reflected upon concurrently through the form of written language, poetry, and the physical language of handmade objects. This researcher sought to extend their story telling beyond that based on expository language components, which can be prejudiced by cultural syntax and vocabulary. The poetry was written functionally, using pared down interpretive language elements. The making of the objects, likewise, strove to develop a simple language of functional craft to tell the story of these experiences. These common functional items were purposely chosen as an opportunity for the audience to intimately interact with these story elements. In the following chapter using embodied narrative inquiry, this researcher will examine story through writing and story through object, separately and that which was brought out by melding the two, following that which Liora Bresler describes below:

In his discussion of culture thirty some years ago, Clifford Geertz refers to Susanne Langer's notion of *grande idée*—certain ideas that burst upon the

intellectual landscape with an extraordinary force. Promising to resolve many fundamental problems at once, these ideas become the conceptual center-point around which a comprehensive system of analysis can be built (Geertz, 1973, p. 3). Narrative, as I discuss in this paper, is one such contemporary *grande idée*. A second contemporary *grande idée* is embodiment (Bresler, 2004). Juxtaposition of these two forceful concepts, I argue, creates a methodological field that draws on our ability to connect with others to achieve empathic understanding and can illuminate the fluid, embodied nature of lived experience. (Bresler, 2006, p. 21)

Finally, a reflection on an early example of embodied storytelling: Thoreau's relationship to his land around Walden Pond. This researcher sees parallels to embodied narrative inquiry within his exploration of the gentle conversation between him and his land, which is his own palette for narrative inquiry. In the following passage by Gary Snyder (1990), Thoreau's disposition is explored and a sense of its applications to this thesis revealed:

Thoreau set out to "make the soil say beans" while living by his pond. To cause the land to be productive according to our own notion is not evil. But we must also ask: what does mother nature do best when left to her own long strategies? This comes to asking what the full potential vegetation of a spot would be. For all land, however wasted and exploited, if left to nature (*zi-ran*, the self-so), will arrive at a point of balance between biological productivity and stability. (p. 90)

One interpretation of his point is that he came to know himself through knowing his land deeply by listening to its story. Similarly, one needs to listen to one's own

experiences deeply in the exploration of self-self, self-other, and teacher-student.

Embodied narrative inquiry has given this researcher the methodology to know deeply this ecology of her person.

*Cabinet of Curiosities*

It was thus quite common, toward the end of the nineteenth century, for the museum's early historians-or, perhaps more accurately, its rhapsodists- to contrast its achieved order and rationality with the jumbled incongruity which now seemed to characterize the cabinet of curiosity which, in its own lights, the museum had supplanted and surpassed. (Bennett, 1995, p. 1)

Sand dollars, Snoopy books, a big toenail, the shell of a robin's egg, a copy of Ripley's Believe it or Not, a mud pie, the bud from an impatient flower, a Barbie wearing a hand stitched green gown, a foreign coin with a square hole in it, a granite rock, a pair of little Inuit beaded moccasins, a pint of plum jelly, a pair of wooden knitting needles, my green plastic water pitcher, a religious art book, a molasses chip candy from See's.... Several significant things happened when I was five years of age that began the path to this thesis. I sat next to my Granny and watched her knit a sweater for my Barbie, I made plum jelly from a tree in our backyard with my Grandmother visiting from Florida (and sold it at a stand in front of our house). My Godfather gave me a book on Christian art and architecture where I first saw work by Michelangelo, and I raised a brood of tadpoles scooped from a creek behind our house in a tin baking pan of my mother's. Though we lived in what I now understand to be a poorer neighborhood of Sacramento, my

childhood memories are infused with family, art, and above all nature. The wild places in our two home states of California and Florida provided experiences I can recall in utter clarity. My family's trips of backpacking, hiking, and camping gave me a perspective and scale to my place on earth, forming the foundation of my deepest beliefs.

We moved from coast to coast, ping-ponging between the two sides of our family, the houses interchangeable but always filled with books, photos of family, odd furniture, and my Mom's piano. Because the distance was so great, objects that made the trip were cherished and had their own set of stories, together forming a place of their own that sheltered us wherever we lived.

In those days with four of us, driving was more practical than flying, so my sister and I were packed into the backseat to make the three thousand mile journey to our new home. I still count myself very lucky to have seen our country this way. Along the highways the American landscape was largely unspoiled and towns still idiosyncratic, with a deep regionalism evident in the architecture, food, products, and people.

We moved often, seven times before I graduated high school, each time becoming more self-reliant and reflective. I spent a lot of time looking out at the world from inside my self, documenting what I experienced through diaries and art. I gravitated in interest and focus towards what was constant but unique in the different places we went: forms of nature, people's personal stories, architecture, objects, and school.

Constantly the new kid, the role of outsider was preordained and gave me the unique advantage of freedom. I was free from playground social order. Couple this with

reaching my present height of six feet at age 13, the labels were constant, some of which I came to embrace and encourage. In this way having no social group let me court any social group, I was free to spurn the queen bees, court the eccentrics, hang with the losers, and be as creative or invisible as I wanted to be. I was outspoken and voted by classmates at the end of sixth grade “Most likely to become a lawyer.” When I was ten living in the South and amongst overt racism for the first time, I crossed to the other side of the playground not caring about teachers’ furrowed brows or students’ wide eyes.

I knew my parents would support me as long as I could make the argument for what I believed was right. Note, I did not say agree. With two parents, both English majors, I was expected to be articulate in my reasoning and opinions. Our dinner table was both a place where their stories told of richly lived childhoods and titillating adventures of life at college, and a plane to deliberate and debate all areas of life without fear of circumscription. For me, school was where you learned to learn; home was where you learned to think.

My early interest in architecture led me to apply and be admitted to California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Ironically, their motto “Learn By Doing” was to resurface later and become integral to my teaching philosophy, as was the concept of form versus function to appear in my approach to the craftsmanship of my functional pottery. I received my Bachelor of Architecture in 1989 after having the opportunity to study for two years of the five-year degree on other campuses. My fourth year of college was spent amongst a consortium of five schools at Washington Alexandria Architectural

Consortium (WAAP) on a satellite campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Alexandria, Virginia. I completed my fifth year as a student in the California State University (CSU) International Program studying in Florence, Italy. The studies I completed were truly those of a Renaissance Education. By this I mean, I was afforded an opportunity to study the world through an area of practice, architecture, which every human has shared common experience. My knowledge of architecture was constructed by studying multiple areas of knowledge, history, philosophy, art, sociology, archeology, and literature. Through the lens of architecture, a unified fabric was created capturing the fundamental nature, and thus the human experience of Architecture. This example of thematic learning would contribute greatly to my own design of curriculum for my students. Couple this experience with my exposure to other diverse cultural practices domestic and abroad, and I began to question the intelligence of the narrow pedagogy being practiced in the United States.

I ended up working in the field of architecture for five years. When on maternity leave, I was asked to participate in an American Institute of Architects outreach program in a classroom of local sixth graders as an extension of their math education. The six-week project was a success for the class and reinvigorated my love of learning. In her letter of thanks, their teacher remarked she felt I had a natural affinity towards teaching and encouraged me to look into it as a profession. I returned to her class to teach twice, shortly thereafter leaving the architectural field and enrolling in the Multiple Subject

Teacher's internship program conducted jointly by Sacramento City Unified School District and California State University Sacramento (CSUS).

I accepted a position at a high poverty (above 90%), high minority (above 70%), multiethnic (ESL 39%), South Sacramento campus, with a student population of about 600. Along with patterns of high transiency, our students also struggled with neighborhood crime, lack of social infrastructure, homelessness, and gangs. I remained teaching fourth, fifth, and sixth grades for the next nine years. The professional environment on campus was difficult to say the least. During my time on campus the intermediate staff, averaging eight positions, turned over 20 teachers. We changed principals three times and vice principals four times. Three resource teachers came and went, and a beloved music teacher was replaced by a room of computers. Every year, a wave of new intermediate teachers had to be brought up to speed on campus norms, culture, and a mountain of tacit knowledge. Quickly I became the senior intermediate teacher, and the role fell to me. Two thirds of these teachers were interns or first year teachers. Nevertheless, we found ways to provide opportunities to engage in poetry festivals, science nights, student council, field trips, field days, Earth days, trips to Sly Park, history celebrations, plays, assemblies of music, dance, and theater. Over my last two years most of these events were scuttled as pressure from the state focused on standardized testing. Knowledge began to be referred to only by its pieces coded by number, and content became mechanized bits of data without relationship to the whole subject. Student files were color coded by their test outcomes of the previous year and

grouped in classes accordingly. I grew increasingly uneasy with the direction our campus administration continued to take towards a more punitive, extrinsically motivated, and mechanistic view of campus culture and student education. With the ground shifting under me both in and outside of the classroom, I began to doubt my effectiveness as an educator and colleague, so I resigned my position at the end of my ninth year.

After a year I reentered life as a student, applying and being accepted into the Masters of Arts in Education, Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Arts in Education at CSUS. This is a two-year cohorted Masters program unique in its approach in methodology and utilization of five individualized pathways for a Culminating Experience. While maintaining the rigorous scholarly, and critical work of traditional programs, its holistic approach allowed for deep self-reflective work, crucial to educators, particularly those working within the arts. It was created and is taught by professors Karen Benson, Ph. D., Lorie Hammond, Ph. D., and Crystal Olson, Ed. D. I was drawn by my previous experiences while studying under Professors Benson and Olson ten years earlier during my teacher credential program. Knowing Professor Benson to be a strong advocate for experiential knowledge, having studied the philosophies of John Dewey to receive her doctorate, I was pleased to be accepted as a thesis advisee. For my thesis I chose Pathway I Artist as Educator, which I believed provided a way to study the metacognitive processes one undergoes when creating poetry and functional objects. I documented my experiences from the initial aesthetic experience, through the physical process of learning a craft, to the application of this skill to form a functional object,

whose design was based on my understanding of the initial aesthetic experience. Part of this reflection was the writing of poetry based on the same experience. Additionally, I would document the continued development of my skills of dyeing, spinning, knitting and weaving, and my study of others' poetry.

### *The Travels*

My first year of study was spent exploring the general knowledge surrounding educational theory and more specifically art in education. These explorations came on the heels of my own investigations informally done over the course of the gap year after resigning my teaching position. I had worked as a substitute, and on my days off I conducted research on educational philosophies that I hoped might help me understand why I had such misgivings about the current trend of educational policy. Now in class, I was able to formalize my studies and began seeing how these movements, theories, and policies fit within the greater historical context of education. I was also able to investigate and reflect upon the sources that informed my own teaching disposition.

In the first week of March 2009 I attended a workshop in San Francisco entitled "Geometry for Artists & Artisans" conducted by Michael S. Schneider. Mr. Schneider, a former classroom teacher and widely known lecturer, is the author of the book, *A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe: the Archetypes of Nature, Art and Science*. That day he led us through numerous exercises to discover the geometry found in several historical pieces of art and architecture. His initial presentation drew many lines between geometric forms in nature and our mathematical number system. Though I

had been taught most of this in my undergraduate studies, it was enormously worthwhile to revisit the ideas. His presentation was engaging, and afterwards he led us in an exercise to create our own mandala, which I found vastly interesting. I first ran across this idea in C. G. Jung's book, *Alchemical Studies*, and still have a copy I refer to, so it was refreshing to revisit the idea. I used similar, yet simplified, exercises in my classroom, and it was fun to be the student for once.

An essay we read in our first semester of the program, *In Praise of Shadows*, by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki (1999), re-awoke an interest in the culture, philosophy, and theology of East Asian people, particularly those of Japan. Earlier, as an 18-year-old living a banal life in Modesto, California, I had stumbled onto the works of Herman Hesse (1971), coming across the following passage in his book *Siddhartha*:

“This,” he said, handling it, “is a stone, and within a certain length of time it will perhaps be soil and from the soil it will become plant, animal, or man...I do not respect it because it was one thing and will become something else, but because it has already long been everything and always is everything. (p. 145)

When I rose after reading that passage, my footfall landed on a path bearing no resemblance to the one I traveled just a moment before. The land I would now travel was populated by the philosophy and writings on systems thinking by Fritjof Capra (1982), the essays of Gary Snyder (1990), the poetry of haiku, and thoughts of a green flash on my horizon. My interest around this continued and during my undergraduate degree, I spent time studying the historical architecture of these cultures and was taken by works

exemplifying these aesthetic characteristics, such as those of Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, and Tadao Ando. All this prepared me to be open to the writings of Soetsu Yanagi (1989) in his book, *The Unknown Craftsman*, and to pursue knowledge about the folk art movement he founded entitled Mingei, culminating in my travels to see the actual objects he wrote of.

Soetsu Yanagi was a contemporary of Bernard Leech, a religious philosopher, and a disciple of Dr. Daisetsu Suzuki (D.T. Suzuki). I followed this reading with a visit in June of 2009, to the Mingei International Museum in Balboa Park San Diego, California. I was treated to a personal tour by Martha Ehringer, Director of Public Relations, where she shared her reflections as we walked through the exhibits including, *Shibui: The Subtle Beauty of Japanese Craft*. Here were the original pieces of craft that I had only been able to view in photographs. The details and beauty of tea bowls, kimonos, pottery, woodwork, and basketry lay before me. Many of the objects bore wear marks of their users, and I saw each object's construction in relationship to these. Although I was unable to touch any of the work, my degree of intimacy with Yanagi's philosophies and its manifestations through the craftsmen's work was deepened profoundly. I took photographs and videos of the pieces for my primary source collection. That afternoon I was given the opportunity to immerse myself in their extensive library, which provided even more information about the movement. The simplicity and craftsmanship of the objects on display reflected the philosophical beliefs and writings of Soetsu Yanagi, and I

found myself reflecting on how a philosophy might be embodied through functional objects in our everyday world.

In July of 2009, I attended a ceramics workshop on the campus of Mendocino Art Center, in the small coastal town of Mendocino, California. This was the first time I had ever traveled or attended an event lasting more than a day by myself. The week long workshop entitled “Everything Goes: The Benefits of Inviting Chaos into the Studio” was lead by Marc Lancet, a visiting professor from Solano Community College, who is internationally known as both ceramic artist and the co-author with Masakazu Kusakabe of the book *Japanese Wood-Fired Ceramics*. In addition to promising demonstrations of a variety of hand building and wheel techniques, it listed in the description “developing novel forms and investigating the artistic process. Creative strategies for development and discovery in the studio will also be covered. Marc asks participants to bring a written copy of their favorite art related quote, poem or writing on creativity, art-making or art process.” I stayed on the Art Center’s campus, sharing a room with a functional potter from Alaska. That first day I wrote in my journal:

7/12/09 Only a few hours after arriving @ Mendocino Art Center. I’ll be here for a week taking ceramics...Ocean is far off in the distance. I’m nervous. I’ve never done anything as organic and 3 dimensional...I’m staying at the center and have a roommate, Liora(Leola), who seems very nice. But...I’m very worried it’s going to throw my energy off. I’ve become so solitary these days, quite a loner. Silly, but I think I’m homesick.

I was one of four participants, which allowed for intimate interaction, sharing of ideas and theories, supported by Marc throughout the week. It was an invigorating and challenging week, the best creative experience I have had since my architectural design studios.

In August of 2009 I participated in the workshop, “A Short Course: Systems Thinking, Education, and the State of the World,” at the Davis Brower Center in Berkeley, California. This three day workshop offered by the Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL), gave me, along with forty other participants from around the world, an opportunity to interact with the leading minds of ecoliteracy education and systems thinking. We were lead by Fritjof Capra, a leading systems theorist, and Caroline Sly, educational program director for CEL, in a series of workshops and seminars to deepen our knowledge of systems thinking and ecological concerns. We were able to interact with Fritjof Capra and participate in intimate question and answer sessions during the afternoons. I also met and heard a lecture from David W. Orr, The Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics at Oberlin College, and author of many books, including: *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. All events were held in the David Brower Center, a platinum rated LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) facility, which overlooks the western end of the University of California’s campus.

*The Environments*

In this section I will describe the various settings where the objects were created and the social groups that accompany them. The environments where the aesthetic experiences occurred that inspired the objects will be touched upon but explored in greater detail in the Objects section below. There are six primary settings where the objects were created, or an element of the design process took place: my home in Carmichael, the ceramics department on CSUS campus, The Shepard Arts Garden Center in Sacramento, the ceramics studio of the Mendocino Arts Center, the wheel room at Alpha Fired Arts in Sacramento, and the Tahoe National Forest.

To begin, my home is located in a 1970s suburb of Carmichael, on land that was formerly an olive ranch and the trees still dot the neighborhood. My husband of six years and I knock around in this typical two-story, four-bedroom house, due to our very recent status as empty nesters. My studio is on the bottom floor facing north with a Japanese Black pine framed outside my window and a view onto the street. I am very attached to the space and can watch life unfold as I go about the business of my day. Last year, I watched from the moment a Black Phoebe began to build her nest, to the first flight of her three chicks. I remodeled the studio myself, and, though small, it is cozy and holds all my craft materials, I do all my weaving, most of my spinning, and designing here. I am often kept company by my old black lab and a longhaired orange tabby. Our backyard provides enormous respite to the urban surroundings. It has a series of vine wrapped arbors shading the south side of the house that create an extension of our living areas. Year

round it overflows with apples, pomegranates, oranges, cherries, grapes, peaches, apricots, blackberries, and four vegetable beds all competing for space. I have converted the west side yard into a potting area and primitive outdoor kitchen for natural dyeing, using dye materials, which I either grow myself or collect in my travels.

As stated previously, I have been a member of the Sacramento Weavers and Spinners Guild (SWSG) for three years now. Most of my spinning is done in the company of this group of people. Our general monthly meetings and yearly show and sale are held at the Shepard Garden Arts Center in Sacramento. This facility is located in McKinley Park and used year round by various social groups and guilds. It has a large high ceilinged main room where our monthly meetings and presentations are held, with a smaller room adjacent to it, through which is a large outdoor patio. Our spinners meetings are normally held in the Northminister Presbyterian Church's social hall, an average room, large enough that we can set up about 20 of our wheels in a large oval. No matter what the skill level, socioeconomic level, age, or gender of the member, each is treated with openness and caring. On my very first visit I hadn't walked 10 paces when a person took me by the arm and introduced me to half the members, in essence weaving me into the fabric of the group. At every turn the members go out of their way to include everyone, reach out to the community, and maintain a positive inclusive community. My observations of the group socially echo the craft they practice: they are closely knit, readily supportive, balanced in organizational structure without a hierarchy.

The ceramics classes are held in two rooms on the CSUS campus, one with wheels for throwing pottery and the other with tables for hand building. Both have an abundance of natural light and are spacious. Attached to the hand building room is a room for the gas and electric kilns, and through this, an outdoor patio where the salt and fire kilns are constructed. Interestingly, I found a similar parallel in the social structure of the pottery community at CSUS and the craft they practice, as evidenced in the following part of a conversation with a student recorded in my journal, “12/9/09...S talked about the metaphor of a merry-go-round that the people who have been there for a while are on w/momentum and they ?don’t want to or can’t? slow down to let others on...” The group is hierarchically and radially structured, with one center craftsperson, the instructor, Scott Parady. Scott is a tenured ceramics professor, described as a functional ceramicist, with over twenty years of clay experience and a particularly deep knowledge of wood firing. From him, the group then forms surrounding layers, emanating from the center in degrees of experience or intimacy to the group. As such, it is initially an insular crowd. Individuals ran very hot and cold, and most were skeptical of my purpose and motives. If you are new, as I was, it was as though I needed to prove my worthwhile intent before I was accepted. Do so or else you are flung off by the group’s centrifugal force. It takes tenacity, a thick skin, and a healthy dose of curiosity to make inroads to the group. Luckily, I happen to have these in abundance. But once I was accepted, they enfolded me and most were happy to include me in events, many going out of their way to share tacit information and help with improving my craftsmanship.

Alpha Fired Arts in contrast is a commercially run business providing supplies and studio space to ceramic craftspeople. The people on staff are very helpful and accommodating. The workspace is divided into a table area for the sculptors and a wheel area for the potters, with both sharing the common areas for clay preparation, glazing, and storage. My initial impressions were of an insular group. I witnessed gossiping, backbiting, and disparaging remarks of other people's work in the first few days of my being there. An example from my journal:

8/4/09 What makes this group (actually both but especially the sculptors) so catty? They talk behind one another's backs about the artwork... Maybe because there's so many of them? Maybe because they consider themselves "artists" and not craftsmen(?) Maybe because it's not (they're not) part of a guild and have to face one another. Is it competitiveness? "If you're down, I'm up?"

I wouldn't have continued if the facility were not the only one available to me between my workshop in Mendocino and class at CSUS. As my knowledge of the community deepened, I began to make inroads with individual members. As a result I overheard the negative comments less often, whether this was because they stopped or stopped around me, I don't know. I took a six-week class from an instructor attached to the facility. Unfortunately, within the studio outside of class this person proved to be insular, proprietary, and insecure, with a penchant for bullying. Presently, I've structured my time to be amongst those supportive and whom I believe to be friendly.

My next environment is that of the Mendocino Art Center (MAC), located in the small town of Mendocino, population about nine hundred, on the northern coast of California. The art center takes up a block slightly out of the center of town. It houses a theater, art gallery, multiple studio spaces, and support facilities, and rooms to let, on a grounds suffused with works of art. As a participant of a workshop, I was given the opportunity to stay at the facility and rented a shared a room with bath and kitchenette. Out of the windows I could just see the ocean and at night could hear the steady rhythm of waves. A fellow workshop participant from Alaska was my roommate, Leola, a full time functional potter who owns her own ceramics business, was generous and a great help to me. Additionally, our group included an art teacher from New Mexico, and a businessman from Northern California and was often joined by an artist in residence at MAC and the MAC studio tech, both of whom fired all of the pieces we made that week. The town is known for its Mendocino Headlands State Park. As luck would have it, we avoided the fog on most days, so I spent in the mornings walking along the trails before class, sitting with a cup of coffee and pastry to overlook the bay. We met for class in the wheel room of the ceramics studio, around one of two large tables. The room has ample natural light and sits off the

Never wear hiking boots,  
to a tea ceremony.

Do drink tea with new souls,  
and three crows.

Amongst pine boughs,  
collecting fog and wisdom.

At noon

*Figure 1. Poem 1*

courtyard of the center where the weekly potluck was held for the various workshop participants. Along the walls of the studio, shelves displayed work of former teachers and participants; materials were neatly stored and accessible, and a chalkboard was provided to plan out our week. The smell of eucalyptus was a constant companion, hanging on the summer ocean air. Midway through the week Marc treated us by hosting a tea ceremony on the grounds using his own tea ware. He told stories of his own tea ceremony experiences while in Japan and explained the different steps and gestures we were experiencing. Above, is the poem I wrote after our experience.

My final environment is nature herself. I have already described my front and back yards which are daily inspiration to my poetry and where I carve most of my tea bowls, do all of my fiber dyeing, and try to put into practice many of the ecological ideas that are foundations to my philosophies. The other is an area within the Tahoe National Forest, eighty miles northeast of my home. For me the Sierra Nevada mountain range epitomizes my identity as a Californian. Since I was a toddler, I have hiked, backpacked, and camped various places in the northern Sierra, which runs north south for 400 miles along the eastern part of California. Though the mountain range rises spectacularly to 14,505 feet at Mount Whitney, and includes treasures like Lake Tahoe and Yosemite Valley, it has always been dear to me for all the common things: pine trees, granite rocks, snow melt lakes, and little creatures. Staying amongst these, I find deep contentment. It nurtures me, providing both endless sources of inspiration, and humbling challenges

physically, intellectually, and spiritually. The particular area, reflected in several of the pieces I have created, Grouse Ridge, afforded all of this.

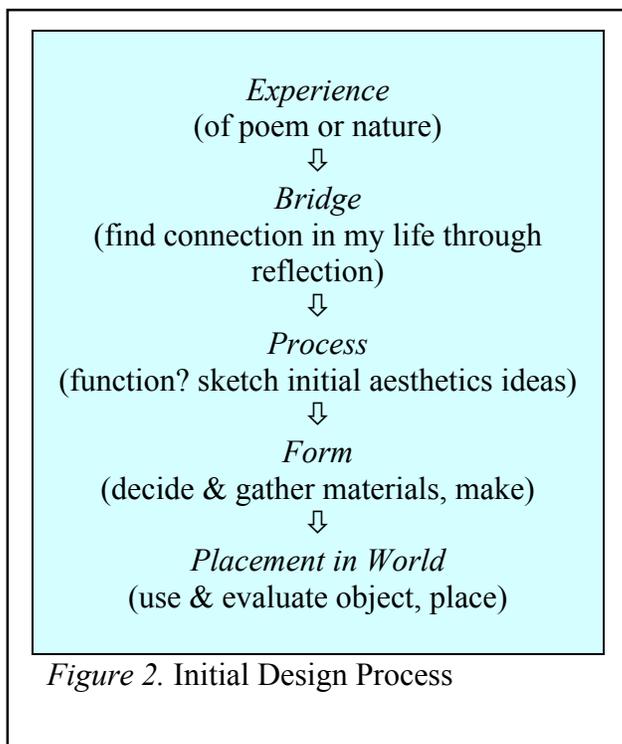
*The Do*

There is learning and training that goes with the grain of things as well as against it. In early Chinese Daoism, “training” did not mean to cultivate the wildness out of oneself, but to do away with arbitrary and delusive conditioning. (Snyder, 1990, p. 92)

My original goals for this project were twofold: to document the metacognitive process that I followed from the initial aesthetic experience to the finished object, and to document my cognitive and bodily experiences when initially learning a craft, ceramics. In this section I provide the general path I follow from an object’s conception to completion. Throughout the course of this, I kept separate journals, one for fiber and one for ceramics. As I have been writing poetry for just under two decades now, I have a preexisting process that I have developed and will continue to follow.

I have actively been involved in the fiber community for three years, learning the crafts of spinning, dyeing, and since April of 2009 weaving. Given this exposure and my knowledge of knitting learned from my Grandmother when I was very young, I felt I needed to learn a craft anew. I would still include the creative process of my fiber crafts in my journals and document the process, but in order to experience the full development of a craft skill from the very beginning, I chose to learn the craft of pottery.

Initially, I had a very loose idea of steps the process would follow. I thought I



would base my designs around the aesthetic experience I had upon reflections of reading a poem of haiku, most likely written by Bashō, then making connections to either an experience of my own in nature where I could see similarities, or directly from my interpretation of the poem and the feelings that rose while reading it. In the past I often had many visceral reactions to readings whether the

reading was done while in a built environment or in nature. This path was similar to what I had learned in my undergraduate studies of architecture. This was the course I pursued in crafting my earliest objects both in fiber and in pottery. I would begin by rereading poems (I have an extensive collection) and then recording those that elicited the strongest reactions in my journal. From this I would write a reflection about the poem, making as many connections to it from my own experiences as possible. From that I would begin to sketch ideas for forms, materials, colors, and shapes, often referring to images in books or the internet, particularly those with images of Mingei crafts. All this would be collected in my journal. Then, over the next few days, weeks, or months I would carry the ideas

with me, in essence letting them ferment, returning to my journal to add to my ideas, while collecting the materials that would be used to create the object. When I felt

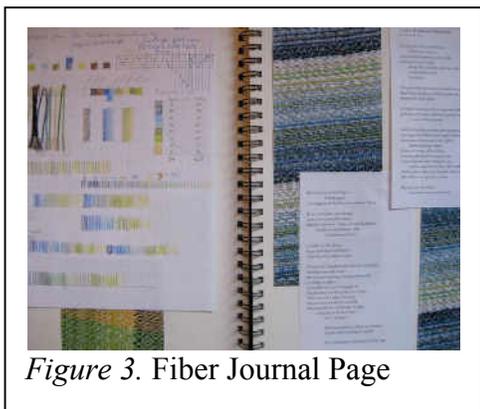


Figure 3. Fiber Journal Page

satisfied I had the materials and a design in mind, I set out and crafted the object. All my earliest objects came home for evaluation by my family and myself.

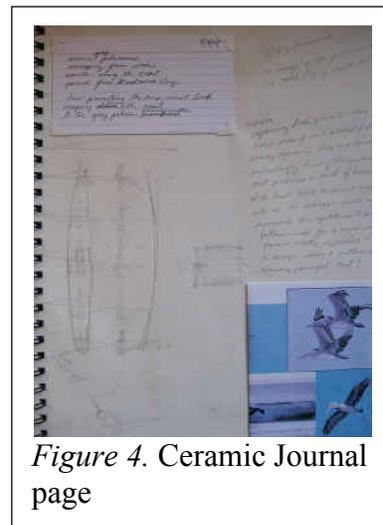
The path diverged in the process stage. If the object was to be in fiber, this meant I would

look through my book, *The Handweaver's Pattern Book* by Marguerite Porter Davison (1944), for a pattern that would reflect in structure the nature of the poem. I would look through my stash, which is a collection of raw or spun fibers, for materials that again reflected my interpretation of the poem. Strands of these would be pasted into my journal along with photos I found inspiring. I began to layout the pattern and calculate the yardages of the yarns, the number of heddles needed, and any special circumstances I might come up against. From beginning the project and through construction to completion, I kept a photographic log and made notations of difficulties in process. Once finished, I reflected on the process, incorporated the object into our home, and pasted a photo of the finished piece in my journal.

Many of the elements were the same if the project was in clay, whether hand built or on the wheel. Though initially, because of the steep learning curve that I experienced familiarizing myself with clay, my aesthetic sensibility, while there, took a back seat to

my craftsmanship. For example, in the Mendocino workshop the five of us would begin each day gathered around a table in the studio, and Marc would begin by asking if anyone would like to share a poem or passage they brought with them. From this someone would chime in with a connection to the piece they had brought, and Marc would perhaps expand on this from his own experience or ask questions of the person as a guide for them to expound. We quickly formed a cohesive group, which, while very individual, was able to link ourselves by many common threads. Through the morning discussions, a creative tone was set in the studio that carried into our work. Because it was such a short and intensive workshop and my first exposure to clay, I focused on my craftsmanship more than aesthetics.

7/14/09 ..., my roommate Leola said it best “it’s like dancing with clay”. Leola is a true ‘Unknown Craftsman’ a production potter turning out hundreds of pieces of her own design each year. Watching he(r) work seemingly effortless(ly) was eye opening in the sense that she exhibits skills that took thousands of hours to master and having tried it myself it sinks deeper, the appreciation, of what a true craftsman working looks like.



*Figure 4. Ceramic Journal page*

However, Marc's demonstrations both at the wheel and sculpting were very revealing about his aesthetics, which seemed to dovetail nicely with our morning discussions. I was able to see a continuity between his craftsmanship, aesthetics, and teaching philosophy.

Different from what I experienced at the workshop in Mendocino, my instructor Scott Parady at CSUS began most classes by grouping us together to explain the goal of the project and giving a demonstration of a technique of handbuilding. We were then left on our own to develop the form and aesthetics of the object. Scott circulated and offered direct critique on the functionality of the piece, for instance if the object was a cup, he would comment on the lip or handle, but would use an oblique and often playful observation to indicate he found something unsuccessful aesthetically in the form. Interestingly, as a recipient of a couple of the oblique references, his comment was always perfectly aligned to guide me to reexamine an element of my design and lead me to improve it without stifling how I aesthetically answered the goal of the project. Even when my initial design was on paper our instructor-student relationship was fruitful, and demonstrably less oppressive than that of any other design professor I have studied under. Here is an example from my journal: "Scott criticized my design for 3 foot piece-very helpful of particular interest was his critique of the lip- told me that this is one of the most important aspects of the piece because it reveals some of how it was constructed."

During the week, when not in class at CSUS, I spent hours on the wheel at Alpha Fired Arts, ultimately throwing close to three hundred pounds of clay. I believe my craftsmanship was a direct result of persistence. There are no short cuts or

intellectualization that substituted for me simply being at the wheel day after day. An early note in my journal reflects this, “8/4/09 Frustrated! -nearly in tears because I can’t get the clay centered. It’s just about there but this is definitely like horseshoes and hand grenades. Like having an itch for four hours that you just can’t quite get to.” The creative process was different, more one of intention than direction. I still am not skilled enough to be authoritative with the clay, my relationship is more that of author, all the forms come through me but often have personalities of their own. In other words, the clay and I are dancing, but it still likes to lead now and then. I have worked in several stoneware clay bodies, all high fire from cone six to cone ten. Each exhibits different behaviors and is appropriate for different functions. The glazing presents infinitely more issues: of purpose, fit, aesthetics, and skill applying to the piece.

As I mentioned above, I have already arrived at a process through which I write poetry. The aesthetic experiences on which my poetry is based occur irregularly and spontaneously. Additionally, I read the work of other poets daily, and a memory or reflection will emerge prompted by one of their poems. So, I have developed a system to capture my thoughts at these moments. The artifacts of the process are primarily three by five index cards, which I have near me at all times: in my purse, backpack, car, and home. I record the thought, brief comment, wisp of an idea, or detail of an observation, on the card then mark the date, place, time, and if needed the book’s information. Periodically, they are rounded up and added to a stack that sits on my desk in my studio. I review them every couple of weeks and ruminate over them in my mind as I go through

my days. If I feel strongly about an experience, and it is primarily objective in nature, several poems are sketched out immediately. Shortly thereafter for each, different versions are composed. Words are rearranged, or dropped so that the poem conveys the aesthetic experience using the fewest and plainest words possible. But, if the experience is multi-thematic or subjective in nature, it could be months of reflection and distillation before I am ready to attempt to write. These strands are then transferred to the computer and refined. Every poem is written, then rewritten, then after a lapse of time returned to, and the various versions evaluated. As I stated above, I initially used other poets' work to inform my creative processes, but it became obvious to me that when the two objects were based on the same aesthetic experience each would be better if I entwined their development. So, I recorded the poem in the journal and used it to inform the craft object's design process. Because of my reflective thoughts surrounding the initial aesthetic experience during this process, I used this to reevaluate the poem and edit it accordingly. In the Objects section below, five are presented together as examples of this relationship.

Towards the sixth month, December 2009, my craftsmanship in clay matured to a level that I began to see the pieces include evidence of my initial aesthetics intentions, and through this, wisps of the experience they referred to. I now enjoyed a roughly equivalent relationship of craftsmanship to aesthetics

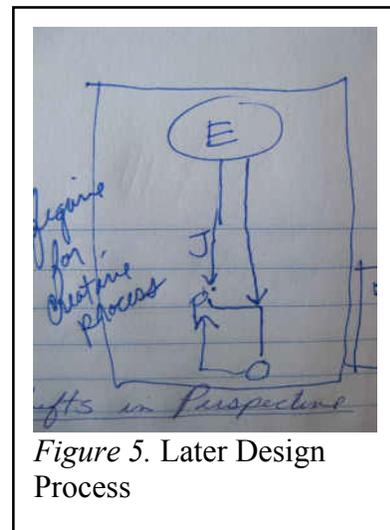


Figure 5. Later Design Process

in clay that I was experiencing with my fiber objects, and as well my poetry, which concurrently I had been writing and editing. My process became more fluid and multidirectional. In February of 2010, I sketched the chart to the right while trying to explain to my thesis advisor how my design process had changed.

Of the dozens of pieces I created over the two years, in the following section, Objects, I will present those I feel exemplify the paths of my metacognitive processes. When I refer to something as an object this title includes: a poem, object made of ceramics, or object made of fiber. Along with quotes from my journals is prose, based on the writings, sketches, photos, and other artifacts from the journals that surround the experience of the object's creation. All craft was singularly created by me and unless otherwise noted the poems are original.

### *The Objects*



*Figure 6. White Rhubarb*

*Forcing jar. What does it mean to be a white rhubarb?*

Is it the red or the leaf or the roots, does it know it's not dog or oak or tuna is it the soil or sun how many of these can be taken before it becomes other than rhubarb other than part of the cycle and then what of the animal that feeds, what of the insect, are they now other too and of the microbes and fungus do we call them different can we expect them to live up to same carry out carry out the

same role Debbie says it is red and prolific and tastes great over ice cream and

honey Sharon says pie! Is it still good for pie with strawberry But what does the strawberry think when it has to share a tin with this rhubarb but not rhubarb is it enough that it could be rhubarb and what of the world around it is it the same now Stephan thinks of it on ice cream-vanilla-would he eat as much if it was white on white if we eat only for taste and sustenance then why should it matter what is the change in its relationship to its caregiver no longer is it free to grow as it wants where it wants when it wants and the gardener...their life has changed their relationship to the plant has changed, minor avenues, practices are no longer enough Brenda thinks of pie is it more valuable now because it has been controlled by man because we have exhibited our dominance over a plant is it symbol, metaphor, or perhaps prophetic an example of a severing of mind from body, human from nature, a small example along the path, our path of evolution (not that of Darwin) the basis for Darwinism Manifest Destiny (sorry brother

buffalo) dualism~ white rhubarb : red rhubarb, self : other, good : evil, growth : decay, healthy : infirm, man : woman, dominant : submissive, smart : stupid, day : night, gain : loss, patriot : terrorist.

The above quote is the inscription I made on a three foot forcing jar that was my final assignment for hand built ceramics class, fall semester at CSUS. I am all about the functional, but with an object that must

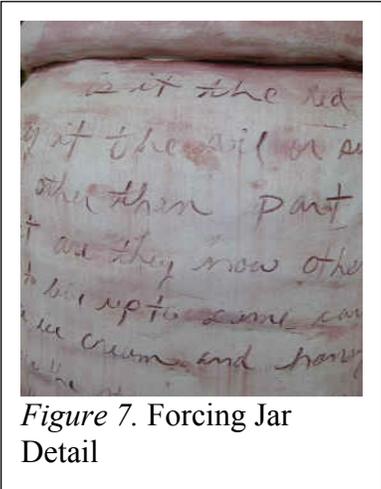


Figure 7. Forcing Jar Detail

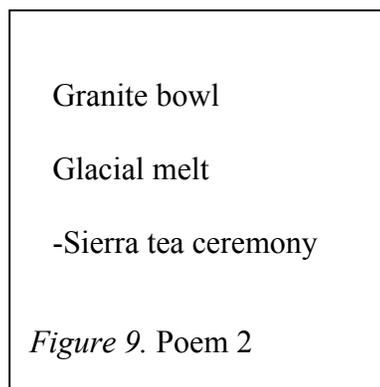
measure three feet in height, it limits the possibilities. I ran across this object in my research, and it popped out at me dovetailing nicely with one of the themes my thesis has explored: forcing children to be something they are not. To paraphrase Sir Herbert Read (1956), we can either teach children to be who they are or who they are not. Similarly, I saw in this object a vehicle developed by humans to pervert the nature of the rhubarb. Stripping it of a very characteristic part of its nature, the color red, which has evolved over millennia for purposes particular to its successful evolution.

I built it over the course of three weeks using the pinch and coil method. It took 75 pounds of WSO clay to complete. Initially I wanted to inscribe the inside of the jar, unable to do that I made several sketches for different inscribed designs on the outside. All of them seemed too tight, too overly thought out, too obvious that I wanted to get my message of Oppression across in not so subtle ways. I remember being very uncomfortable going to class that night to finish the piece according to one of the designs. I decided to inscribe the top with a line from my journal: What does it mean to be white rhubarb? As I sat down in front of it, I began to spontaneously write, playing really. I knew at this leather hard stage I could still wipe it off if I didn't like it. But I was enjoying myself, and the words spiraling around seemed appropriate. My classmates, working on their pieces alongside me, became interested. I asked one, "What do you think of when you think of rhubarb?" As she replied, I incorporated her answer into my inscription and then added my own reactions to what she said. Interestingly, as another student wandered into the studio, the first one asked the question for me. We continue

like this until I ran out of room. It was exhilarating to know our words and thoughts created in the moment were on a medium that could exist for centuries. After it was dry to the touch, I used red oxide to highlight the inscription. It was fired in a single firing to cone ten. Moss has begun to grow on the side of it as it sits in the middle of my garden.



*Figure 8.* Tea bowl entitled Forest's Fire



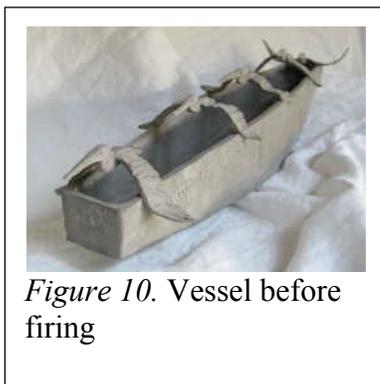
*Tea bowl.* Hiking over granite in Grouse Ridge in 2005, we came across two small, unnamed lakes entirely fed by snow melt, the bottom fed from the top spilling over a granite shelf into it. Around this was a meadow still ringed by snow even this late in July, with a profusion of purple wildflowers and clover. We spent the afternoon there utterly alone. That was my first time backpacking in the area, and since then I have had similar experiences, but none so compelling.

Intermittently, at home, the experience would come back to me in flashes, and lines of the above poem would appear. The initial version was completed when I was in Mendocino after our instructor treated us to a tea ceremony in a clearing under a stand of pine trees on the Center's grounds. Crows squawked all the while in the trees, seeming to

give a running commentary. Though I had read about the ceremony, this was the first time I had experienced it myself and was doubly delighted that we used Marc's tea bowls and pottery.

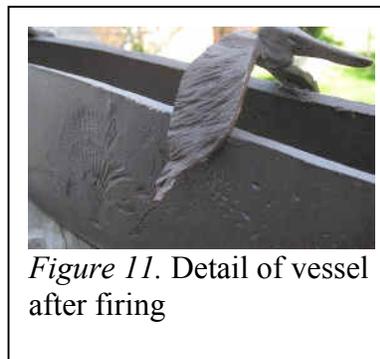
From the above poem came the wood fire tea bowl encrusted with pine needles and a copper flash as the flame curled around the edge and lowered itself into the bowl. In the fall semester at CSUS Scott assigned us six tea bowls to carve. This was the fourth one I was carving. It is quite different than the others, more angular. I was doing the final carving at home, outside under our grape arbor, and pine needles were scattered around, I had the poem still rattling around in my head. It came to me to roll the sides of the bowl through the needles to make the texture that is seen. Later in the semester we had a wood firing on campus, and it was one of two bowls I chose to go into the kiln. One can see where the flame hit the side, turning it copper, then leaped over the rim and licked the inside.

*Vessel.*



“...sitting as a man on one side and a pelican on the other stand at the further most point closest to the water's edge high above surveying, then stretching stretching each unaware of the other or for that matter the greater world cavalier, territorial nonchalant claiming communicating no mind just body sun ocean breeze morning...”

I wrote this while on a bench having my coffee and pastry in Mendocino along the headlands overlooking the bay I saw framed on one side a pelican stretching its wings greeting the currents of wind in the morning and on the opposite side of the bay, simultaneously and unaware of either the pelican or me, a young man stretched his arms up high and greeted the same sun, the same breeze, the same morning. In all the continuum of the mornings past and future how many times were these motions mirrored by man and beast? Driving home later that week groups of pelicans five, three, seven flew paralleling Highway 1 near to eye level to me for a time. I wondered what they must think looking at us in our metal boxes moving tightly bound to the earth. How many versions of this must they have witnessed, canoes, horses, wagons, just as humans' other attempts at replicating and participating in things for which we didn't evolve? I must revere the pelican in all his "pelicanness" so that I might live in all my "humanness." Who is the real dinosaur "...how clumsy how foolish the pelican pities us crawling along in our metal shells earthbound limited bitter as the north coast stretches below beyond blue green white crashing sucking churning flying so low the spray catches on wings then soaring warm vapors lifting up all is life below him endless possibilities."



*Figure 11. Detail of vessel after firing*

The above passages are from my notes during my week spent in Mendocino and the reflection from my journal when I got back home. Scott allowed us free choice for our final project the Fall semester. I was drawn to the above reflection and the fact that

pelicans are my Dad's favorite bird. We had seen a few when we were kayaking in the bay at Jenner, CA a few summers ago.

I decided to build this vessel in Black Mountain cone 10 clay, using slab construction. I had difficulty sculpting the birds, balancing realism with gestural forms that best symbolized their iconic features, and made three variations before I was satisfied. I built it on an arced wooden form to give the bottom the bow. When it was leather hard, I made imprints on the sides with shells: starfish, sea urchins, scallops, augers, mussels and limpets. The salt firing at CSUS gave it an iridescent sheen, but also warped the sides so that four of the five original birds broke. Luckily, three were salvageable, so I chose to glue these back together and return them to the vessel with the one that made it through the firing.

*Cotton scarf.*



*Figure 12. Squash Blossoms scarf*

In silence, squash blossoms fall  
 Though bee courts daily  
 -Autumn marriage

*Figure 13. Poem 3*

“The boys are back, juncos, wrens, knocking into one another a little gang of teens making their daily rounds, I watch the waves of tiny creatures go about their business. No matter how much I want the blossoms to be pollinated I can't make

it happen. I participate in my small way make sure the soil is fertile, the sun gets the opportunity to reach the beds, it gets adequate water, and not too many weeds set up house. I'm struck by the parallels of both my role of mother and as a wife in a second marriage, that I have no more control of the outcomes of these huge pieces of my life than I have over the pollination of the squash in my garden."



*Figure 14. Detail of scarf on loom*

The design of this scarf is a nod to my relationship to the garden I keep in my back yard and how from my window I see its progress each day. It is my first woven piece. There are 320 threads in the warp, I chose the birds eye pattern to replicate the abstracted form of a flower, which is brought out by the pink weft thread overlaying the vertical stripes.

*Blanket.*



*Figure 15. Detail of blanket warp*

Indigo buntings

Ignoring views from Butte to Butte

Hold court in the sage

*Figure 16. Poem 4*

“Hiking along sand ridge trail the views were spectacular stretching from the sierra to the black buttes we had it all to ourselves until we looked into the sage and two buntings an iridescent blue color were preening and flitting quite oblivious to both us and the view we had held so dearly just the moment before overwhelming the end of a three day



*Figure 17. View from Sand Ridge Trail*

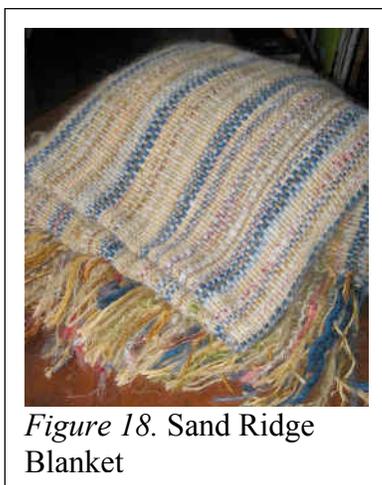
backpacking trip with my husband I began to think how apt it was to stop me in my tracks like this, how more human to be interested in the details, the little things than the conquest.”

This was the third time I had backpacked in this area. We made a loop so we saw new areas each day. We were on our final leg going back to the car a day early due to horrible winds and light showers during the night. Just having climbed up out of a basin where we had spent the night beside a small-unnamed lake, we crested the ridge and had a 360-degree view including the Sierra Buttes, Black Buttes, and English Mountain. All around the trail it looked like a moonscape, but the views off in the distance were stunning. About half a mile along the ridge in a sage bush at the edge of the trail were two indigo buntings preening and flitting.

At the next clump of trees I stopped and reached around into my pack for my index cards and recorded a few words of the experience. I had already made the same motion a dozen times this trip. We still had four miles to go to the car. When I backpack,

there is usually a cadence to my physical motion on the trail, and I think the poems reflects this. The day after I arrived home I sat down at the computer to sort them out. This is one of six poems written, based on experiences of this trip.

Two weeks after I was on my way to a retreat for my cohort at the Marin Headlands and stopped at a shop in Sausalito, ironically named Bluebird Yarns. I found



*Figure 18.* Sand Ridge Blanket

yarns for the warp there, including one dyed gold titled Haiku by a spinners group in Berkeley. It took me another five months to complete the design and begin the project. I decided to weave a blanket, but my loom is only 22 inches wide so I chose to weave it in double weave to make it about 42 inches wide. This means I was weaving the piece simultaneously in two connecting layers using plain weave. I had to thread the reed using

two threads per dent, which normally would not be a problem; however, being an inexperienced weaver, I had chosen to include mohair in the warp. This meant the yarns passing by one another in the weaving process continually became tangled. Subsequently, I had to clear the tangles at each pass of the shuttle. It was a nightmare, but I learned a lot and after completing it I had a real sense of satisfaction in having created something very functional for my home, while maintaining the aesthetic experience. I showed it in our annual SWSG Show and Sale in February of 2010.



Figure 19. Vernal Shawl

So deeply, so quietly  
 reflections pool in  
 blue green hollows  
 -of wave and waterfall

Figure 20. Poem 5

*Shawl.* I made this shawl to wear at the wedding of my husband's cousin. It is woven in plain weave with yarn collected over the last several months. It includes cotton, hemp, linen, sugar cane, bamboo, handspun wool, recycled silk, and mohair. The color pattern in it has been something I've been chasing for over 35 years,

6/15/09 I need a wrap for an outdoor wedding in San Diego. Made me think of the ocean-crashing waves- and to be honest recapturing that moment/colors @ Vernal Falls in Yosemite w/Dad on the mist trail when I was 7(?) that deep blue green

I had explored this color pattern in a table runner based on the title of a book and poem by Gary Snyder, *Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Although the weaving was successful in and of itself, and I am satisfied it captures the essence of the poem, I was anxious to revisit it. Some months later I went back to reflect more on the interplay between weaving's role in words and society. "12/6/09 The wool over your eyes, the veil, the hood, all ways to control to mitigate to mediate... Can handmade objects cut through

the veil the mediation mitigation that is the hood almost sewn shut over our eyes.” I include the above entry from my journal because it reflects alternate feelings about the weaving process and its products’ relationship to female experiences in society. It also glimpses my state of mind while designing and weaving it in the days preceding the wedding. The play of the word veil set my mind off in many directions while I worked.



*Figure 21. Mountains and Rivers fabric*

I found the last strand to tie the poem together in a description on the wall of the Crocker Art Museum’s exhibit “Soaring Voices” in September 2009, about a piece of ceramic sculpture. “...Indeed, Ando describes her process of making work as a ‘going down to the inside of one’s mind so deeply and quietly.’” This resonated with me on many levels, of ages and experiences during my life.



*Figure 22. Detail of Vernal Shawl*

It continued to roll through my mind over the next months. I had the initial images of the blue green pool from my childhood, and later, from Hawaii the hollow of waves. “Many, many of the memories of my youth center around nature and my family trips water was ever present in various forms my father always in energy of roiling and crashing my mother in still lakes and calm pools.” I am no stranger to bouts of melancholy and for years have carried the imagery of Virginia Wolff’s journey into the river as a metaphor to describe the feelings when I myself sink into these bouts. Being

pulled deeply into the design process feels a lot like this. However, for me with each articulation or execution during the creative process another stone is removed.



*Figure 23.* Detail of Delta Bowl

*Bowl.* This is about my Mom and Dad, they live in a small town in the Sacramento Delta. For many years we had an island, truly a small piece of land with a dock on a slough in the delta that we would camp and fish from. It was in the bend of the river quietly tucked away

from the deep channels and ski boats. If you are familiar with the topography of the central valley in California, you know it is basically a bowl, the views sweeping from the Sierra Mountains to the Coastal Range. From our island we could see Mount Diablo to the southwest, only interrupted by reeds and bamboo growing along the opposite banks, with the occasional scraggly trees popping up here and there. This is where I watched a praying mantis climb a stalk of bamboo with a wasp on its back. Where in the calm of dusk, the river sparkled as minnows wove their way through the surface and clouds of blackbirds settled on the tips of reeds. In the mornings steam rose off the river surface parted by a pair of otters who swam from bank to bank, silky and the silent.



*Figure 24. Delta Version 1*

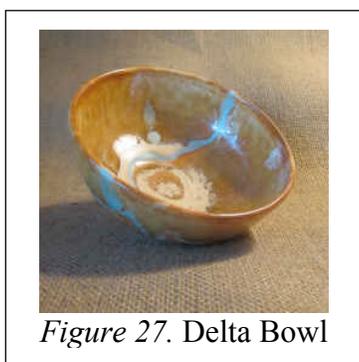


*Figure 25. Delta Version 2*



*Figure 26. Delta Version 3*

9/16/09 Yesterday I had a breakthrough. While glazing Mom's bowls & plate I set the base @ red gold and another @ sat. iron-then in the moment I let baby blue satin run down the side and it occurred to me that it looked like a river like the delta like her life now and historically. Why not customize a series of place settings based on my understanding of the person my view of them-my relationship. Also based on my poems my experiences let the poems be written in the clay body, form & glazing. Mom's might be titled "Her River Runs Through Me."



*Figure 27. Delta Bowl*

One of the first glazes that caught my eye was Red Gold, a Coyote cone five glaze. It took me four months to perfect this process. Initially, I used this combination as layers over Omega stoneware, which I applied using a spray gun. It turned out beautifully, but didn't delineate the river (River Version 1). It created

more of a beautiful gradient effect. I then tried brushing it on the surface of the same stoneware and again, pretty, but it blistered and ran horribly (River Version 3). Next, I

switched to a stoneware without grog, B-Mix, and again sprayed the Red Gold on the brushed the Baby Blue Satin over. Again, no success. It continued to look flat (River Version 2). I finally resorted to applying both glazes by brush and found a combination that I feel answered what I was trying to communicate successfully (Delta Bowl). I made three smaller bowls in this pattern for my parents to give as gifts to neighbors for Christmas presents. They reported each was delighted, and my Dad immediately asked for a larger one for themselves.

### *Placemats.*



Figure 28. Detail of Saki-Ori Placemat

5/20/09 Book *Riches from Rags: Saki-Ori & Other Recycling Traditions in Japanese Rural Clothing* (SF Craft & Folk Art Museum 1994) Just there two weeks ago! Japanese rural weaving using recycled cloth (rags) because of poverty and prohibitions for lower

class to use certain materials (totally excited writing this-bursting) the weft would be the cut/reclaimed cloth and the warp would be any number of natural materials that particular area weavers had available: hemp, fujifu (wisteria), kudzu, nettle, ramie, .... This fits so perfectly into many of my ideas-simplicity (indigo) beauty,

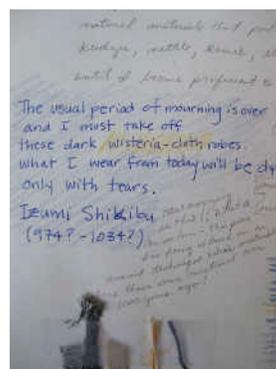


Figure 29. Detail of Saki-Ori Journal Page

earth (recycle + materials in nature) weaving... ‘The usual period of mourning is over, and I must take off these dark wisteria-cloth robes. What I wear from today will be dyed only with tears.’ Izumi Shikibu. How amazing is this!! What a connection-this piece is based on an ancient technique who’s materials where those same mentioned over 1000 years ago!

I was already deep into researching the Mingei movement when this connection occurred. This was the most synchronistic moment during this thesis. This excerpt comes from my journal when I realized the connections between a poem I had just reread from the book *The Ink Dark Moon* and the research surrounding a piece I was about to start weaving based on examples from the book

*Riches to Rags*. Ironically, the book is published by The San Francisco Arts and Crafts Museum, which I had visited three weekends before. To realize I was about to weave in a style that had been written of by a poetess of ancient Japan’s imperial court a thousand years ago was overwhelming, more so because the poetess is so dear to me. I have owned this book of poetry for years now. I have a line from one of my poems, seen above, based on one of hers from this book, inscribed inside my wedding ring. I became interested in the translator, Jane Hirshfield, herself a poet, when I attended a fundraiser in 2001, where she was reading at for the Di Rosa Art Preserve in Napa, CA. To compound this, I found

Rain comes through the roof  
of this ruined house,  
but so too does moonlight.

Weave with me a blanket  
each day a strand,  
and lay with me beneath.

*Figure 30. Poem 6*

out, Scott Parady, the ceramics instructor I would be working with at CSUS come Fall, has a large piece in the courtyard within which the reading took place.

During this same time I was in contact with the International Mingei Museum and in two months time would be able to see pieces from their collection of both Saki-Ori and



Fujifu. I brought the finished piece to my June meeting of the SWSG and found two members who also had woven in this style and was delighted to listen to their experiences. Once word got around the Guild, a member of Japanese heritage gave me several books about the Mingei movement. At our next spinner's meeting, I made it a point

to sit near her, and she shared her memories of this and other Japanese movements and cultural ideas surrounding objects, craft, design, and cultural practices and traditions. The weft of this placemat is made from strips of my children's worn out blue jeans and chinos. The warp is linen thread I purchased. It is woven in plain weave on a four-harness loom.



Figure 32. Peony Pot

How reluctantly  
The bee emerges from deep  
within the peony.

-Bashō

Figure 33. Poem 7

*Lidded pot.* This is one of the few objects that I feel seamlessly melded the poem with process into the object. This is the very first poem of Bashō's that struck a deep note within me. I not only carry it within me as a mantra while I am at the pottery wheel, but also have it painted on the wall of my studio. It took me months to become comfortable at the pottery wheel and feel as though it was a seamless extension of my body. This bowl is a brief glimpse of that embodiment. The lid though is an even better example of shibui, a Japanese word to describe a beauty of quietness, depth, simplicity, and purity. Lids are very, very, difficult for me to do. They are time consuming, rarely fit correctly, and I dislike the idea that the form is not thrown in total. What I mean by this is often the knob on the top is added, and at the beginning of my throwing I felt it was a bothersome interruption of the process. During the trimming process if the clay is too wet, your tool isn't sharp enough, often I can make a deep gouge in the piece. I experienced this many times and became very frustrated with myself when it happened. But one time I surrendered to it. I encouraged it, dragging and dipping my tool as the

wheel head revolved simply giving myself over to the moment and the process.

Emerging, I realized I was staring down at the petals of a flower, a peony.

This experience resulted in me reflecting upon my process. I hadn't consciously gone to the wheel that day with this pot in mind, nor had I gone with it not in mind. When the lid began to emerge, I stayed with it, not becoming excited at the prospect of a successful lid, a beautiful lid, but just remained immersed in the moment whatever came of it. Reflecting back upon this later, I realized there was looseness, a fluidity, that hadn't been in me before. I had by now thrown dozens and dozens of pieces. The reflection was intoxicating and momentarily I craved to get back to the moment immediately- then caught myself. Until then I hadn't known. Ultimately, I sold it at the CSUS Fall Ceramics Guild sale, I priced it very low so most anyone could afford it, it was gone within the hour.



*Figure 34. Detail of  
Crone Shawl*

My womb was once  
a wild bee nest,  
deep in the hollow  
of an oak tree.  
Memories roil,  
borne aloft to me  
-on currents of Spring

*Figure 35. Poem 8*

*Shawl.* All fiber people have a closely guarded area where they keep their materials. It is commonly known as one's "Stash." To be invited to view someone's stash

is always an intimate treat. It's akin to venturing behind the curtain in the back of the video store. Often after projects I am left with smaller amounts of favorite yarns, quantities of which have built up over time. This shawl is in answer to that problem. It is crafted in a style, more of a process, called Vegas knitting, which calls on probability for its design. The overall idea is to choose 12 yarns from your stash, assign each a number, and then use a pair of dice to select the order of strands as you knit. It was done over the course of nineteen months on circular needles in simple stockinette stitch, a stitch alternating knit and purl. This was my outlet when I was frustrated throughout this thesis, and, as such, indulgent in that it is not very functional because of its length.

The poem was written over a series of days. Though the seed image was the bee's nest, the core of the idea was my experience of watching bees in my garden and then later in a meadow. Our native population of wild bees uses found objects or areas for their homes, unlike the hives of their European cousins, which brought me to the oak tree, a species native to my area of California. The bees seemingly random visits to flowers and their erratic flights between them reminded me of tipsy college students. I thought of my youth and all the bifurcations that lead me to this moment. Now that I am back in college for this thesis, I look at my fellow students from a very different perspective. The poem reflects my current time of life, the changes my body is undergoing, and the possibilities that are no longer before me. The poem and shawl together embody the certainty of uncertainty and change.



*Figure 36.* Examples of functional ware

*Functional pottery.* Last, I include an account of the successes and failures of creating functional pottery. As stated above, there is a very specific physical process to create functional pottery on the wheel, and the road to learning and maintaining this skill is very steep. When engaging in a relationship where elements of nature such as centrifugal force, gravity, chemical interactions and phases (firing and glazing), somatic perceptions, and human kinesthetics have to be intricately balanced in respect to one another, a lot must go right for the object to be successful. Add to this the range of ceramic materials, teaching practices, my own learning disposition, my own aesthetics, and the variety of end uses and users, and I often traveled tenaciously between frustration and faith. Learning to craft the objects on the wheel is very physically intimate:

7/14/09 Reflections on my first throwing @ the wheel last night there was an inner release when the clay came to center. I say came because it was an extension of me. The sudden effortlessness is a sweet release an alignment of my body and materials. There is such a force before-aggression to an extent; then a sudden release and a 'full' emptiness.

I spent many hours each day at the wheel at Alpha Fired Arts in the Fall of 2009. My body must have undergone a change, because when I went for a period of about five days while traveling without being at the wheel, I wrote this reflection:

10/19/09 Mentioned to Karen in class tonight that my body had a physical ache a weird kind of yearning for the motions of centering because I hadn't been on the wheel last week for a few days when we went back to see Liz. It's weird I've never experienced this before but it felt like there was something that was supposed to be in the middle of my arms. If I focus on it the entire physical experience comes back to me and I can feel it in my arms and radiating down my chest and stomach.

When seven months later I had to back off on



*Figure 37. Examples of un-functional ware*

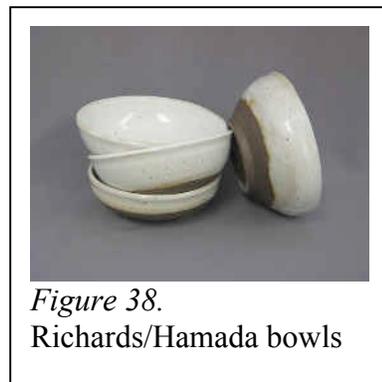
throwing to focus my attention on the writing of this thesis and my time was too limited to travel to Alpha Fired Arts, I tried to throw at school. The wheels and set up are much different than Alpha Fired Arts, the wheels do not have as much power; there is no guard on the side so I get wet and splattered with clay, and the chairs are fixed at one height. I had a horrible time. Three separate times trying and three failures, I just couldn't adjust to the physicality. The last time I was reduced to tears of frustration. This is a very big problem because although I could throw at Alpha Fired Arts, I would have to drive the bisque ware, pottery fired for the first time without glaze, to CSUS to glaze. This meant I

would be spending a lot of time out of the loop of CSUS ceramic happenings such as glaze firings, glaze mixing, and any tacit knowledge that I could pick up while at CSUS. My experience with the ceramic world has shown me that the majority of decision-making, learning, and community building went on sporadically. If I am not physically present, there is no substitution, such as expressing interest or willingness repeatedly that will allow me access to this. Just as I had mentioned the metaphor of the merry-go-round, things happened fast, and I need to stick to the core of the group if I am to benefit from the group's knowledge and generosity. These opportunities would be severely diminished if I had to divide my time between places. However, one of the group members went out of their way to include me, after I relayed my frustration surrounding my last attempt at throwing. While in the hand building room together afterwards, she included this in our conversation,

No I get it sometimes if your body gets used to something you just can't get over it. You know there was a woman a couple years back that couldn't get the hang of the wheels either because she had learned somewhere else too so she just brought her own and used it here, I'm sure it would be okay if you talked to Scott.

She then spent more time brainstorming with me, even going so far as to offer a space in her individual school studio to store the wheel. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of the offer, the awareness of sensing I was having trouble, and the time spent going out of her way to include me.

Outside of the specificity of developing one's own aesthetics of ceramics I experienced the benefits of being be part of a larger craft community. Within the educational environment there is an inner core of craftsmen who function as both gatekeepers and knowledge depositories of the department. While I could have chosen not to engage with them by working on the periphery, remaining ignorant of the inner dynamics of the community, my experience has been richer for it. My knowledge of this community has in turn widened my scope of practical knowledge and afforded me greater opportunities to development my craftsmanship.



*Figure 38.*  
Richards/Hamada bowls

### Conclusion

In conclusion, within this chapter I have provided relevant accounts of my own history leading up to this thesis, a description of my travels, my environments, and the processes surrounding the crafting of my objects. As well, I included a more detailed description of several individual objects, the associated aesthetic experience from my journals artifacts and prose of the creative process, and, finally, images of the objects themselves. I see each of these objects as an embodied aesthetic experience and present them as physical manifestations of my narrative inquiry.

## Chapter 4

### FINDING AND INTERPRETATIONS

#### In Balance and Grace

In this chapter, I have written from the apex of three perspectives: as a craftsman who looks toward the functionality of the embodied objects, as a human telling her story through embodied objects, and as a researcher whose intent it is to identify the metacognitive elements within the construction of the embodied objects. From this vantage point I have sought to identify how the three exist, intertwining in relationships, interconnections, patterns, and context. During this thesis, I have felt wisps of connections emerging similar to those structures I am familiar with in the area of ecological systems theory: nests, networks, cycles, flows, novelty, dynamic balance, development, and metabolism. So where appropriate, these ideas have been integrated.

#### *Process*

In contrast with the preselection of categories of quantitative approaches, qualitative researchers emphasize the construction or discovery of concepts that give categorical identity to the particulars and items in their collected data. Qualitative researchers examine data items for common themes and ideas...Much qualitative analysis is not content simply to identify a set of categories that provide identity to the particular elements of the database. It seeks a second level of analysis that identifies the relationships that hold between and among the established categories....The kinds of relationships searched for include, for

example, causal, correlational, influential, part-whole, or sub-categorical.

(Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 10)

Even though I am intimately connected to every object created during this thesis, I realized how ignorant I was of the nuanced roles they had come to play in my life. They all turned out to function in the literal meaning of the word, albeit some better than others, but what other roles had they, or were they, playing in my life, although not so literal or apparent? And what, if any, connections did they have to one another? Just as with the objects of my childhood, what place do they occupy in my Cabinet of Curiosities?

I narrowed it down from the dozens to sixteen I feel strongly enough about to explore in more detail: five fiber objects, five poems, and six ceramic objects. I included the poems because they were written as a unified concrete whole, like the bowl or blanket, and I would treat them as I would the other objects. I began by writing a reflective piece, trying to get a feel for them from my current perspective. This is shown in Appendix A. I highlighted; I made lists; I cut and pasted; but still I felt short changed. I needed a format to provide even more distance, more perspective, to see the arc of any overall patterns. I finally decided to create a table, in its final form seen in Appendix B. Within it, I felt I could organize my thoughts and record information more directly, and I could see the information juxtaposed. Possibly from this, I would see relationships, interconnections, and patterns emerge.

At first, I tried to use the categories seen in Chapter 3, Figure 2, but this only spoke to the process. It did not allow for recording emotional or cognitive elements, or underlying relationships between the two. If I could show a greater range of my thought processes while creating the objects, and what they represented to me beyond their physical functions, I might see deeper connections. I had to include something to address this possibility. So, I went back and reviewed Chapter 2 of this thesis and decided to create categories from the topics that I had researched. Because these topics all related to my work, they seemed to fit as tools to differentiate information.

I decided on the following categories that, while general within the total process of producing the objects, were specific to my thought processes. This is what I selected: Craft & Object, Aesthetic Experience (AE), Process, Use: Functional (F) or Cognitive(C), and Relationship to AE. In the table they looked like this:

Craftsmanship & Embodied Object (EO)	AE (Aesthetic Experience)	Process & Tool(s)	Use: Functional (F) Cognitive (C)	EO's Relationship to AE
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As I mentioned, the categories for columns two through five are organized around ideas I introduced and explored in Chapter 2 and documented in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In column two, Aesthetic Experience, I would list the original experience(s) used as a source in the EO's origin that I wrote of in Chapter 3. In the next column, I would provide a skeletal list of steps along the path from the origin of the EO to its completion. Then, thinking back to Risatti's description of crafts' function as containing, sheltering, or supporting (Risatti, 1998, p. 35), for column four, I would provide the physical use of

each object. But, I was really interested to reveal whether the objects served any other purpose of a more cognitive or emotional level. So, with that in mind, I added the descriptor Cognition (C) under uses. I would use the same categories, but would mean it metaphorically, in terms of containing, sheltering, or supporting my thoughts and feelings. For example, to cognitively shelter, I mean in the sense of protecting my feelings, the object figuratively protecting me from others where I felt insecure. To contain, I mean the object figuratively contains a memory or is imbued with a philosophical idea of mine. To support, I mean through my interaction with it I am able to reflect on or process an experience. Column five is the most abstract, but speaks to an idea very important to me about how I view the intersubjectivity of the EO. In this column I list my feelings on whether the EO is more objective or subjective in nature. I will explore this more in the discussion section below, but briefly, I mean this in two ways: first in the phenomenological sense, as the object falls within a range between objectivity and subjectivity, and second, in the sense of psychical distance as theorized by Edward Bullough (1912). Additionally, in this column I have included a list of words I found which I thought were directionally descriptive of the EO (the list of these appears in Appendix C).

I then set out to differentiate each object by using these categories. I referred back to Chapter 3, my journals, and notes, and proceeded to fill in the table accordingly. The complete picture is found in Appendix B. I then spent some time playing with and sorting

the information in the various categories and placed it into tables in Appendixes C and D.

The following are my observations of what emerged.

### *Observations*

Other writers (e.g., Carr, 1986; Carr *et al.*, 1991; Kerby, 1991) hold that a primitive form of narrative configuration is inherent in people's understanding of their own and other's actions. My position is similar to that of Carr and Kerby (Polkinghorne, 1991a). The storied narrative form is not an imposition on data of an alien type but a tightening and ordering of experience by explicating an intrinsically meaningful form. (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 20)

*Relationships.* Regarding the objects' relationship to me, there was a surprisingly high occurrence of EOs that function as cognitive support; in fact the objects went well beyond their mere physical functionality for me. The majority of the eight "Objective" pieces have dual uses, that is to say they are both physically and cognitively functional to me. I believe they have a great chance to resonate with another user. Even more interesting, there were four objects that I felt not only served dual uses, but the categories they served were the same for both function and cognition. For example, the pine needle tea bowl literally served to function as a container and also figuratively served to contain the aesthetic experience I had while backpacking. Another example is the vernal shawl, which literally functions as a shelter, keeping me warm, covering me, protecting me from the elements, but I feel its use is also metaphoric, to shelter me emotionally. My relationship to my tools and skill using them (my craftsmanship) did matter when the EO

was created. The four versions of the Delta Bowl (see Figures 24-27) are good examples, as is the Richards/Hamada Bowl (see Figures 38).

I was also surprised by what relationships did not seem to matter or emerge in any significant way. It does not seem the type of craft mattered as to whether the EO was successful in its use or even in its relationship to the AE. The environment also did not seem to matter where the pieces were created or within which social group I was. Yet, both of the two objects created because they were assigned, the White Rhubarb (see Figure 6) and Vessel (see Figure 10) are too intellectually bound and did not relate to anything but themselves.

*Connections: Nests & networks.* From five of my aesthetic experiences, I have crafted two objects. I think of them metaphorically, like fraternal twins. They share common origins and many of the elements of design are similar, but through materials and tools they take on unique identities. Each of these sets also has an internal relationship with one another. Two of them are nested. By that I mean, one was dominant, and its design informed the design of the other. An example of this was the Grouse Ridge blanket (see Figure 18) and the Indigo Bunting poem (see Figure 16). The design of the blanket was informed by the elements of the poem. The choice of color and pattern is a direct result of the color of the buntings and the horizontality of the pattern is the movement from butte to butte. In the Richards/Hamada bowl (see Figure 38) the design was nested in my readings of Soetsu Yanagi and M.C. Richards. I suppose I could depict it as directing my design, but truly that is not the feeling I felt when I was

designing it. Interestingly, the connection held whether it was a poem, a weaving, or pottery.

My connection to nature is evident throughout my pieces. The majority of their designs are from a direct experience of it. The objects I feel are most successful are those where my AE was sensorimotor and somatic. When backpacking, gardening, in the mountains, on the river, or by the sea, I am fully present and able to deeply enjoy the experience. My observations are concrete, and I record them directly.

*Patterns & flows.*

The goals and processes of empathetic connections provide a space for others to articulate experiences, to create “arcs of narratives” in the process of reflecting on meaning. Empathetic understanding involves resonance, an embodied state of mind that is cognitive and at the same time, affective and corporeal. (Bresler, 2006, p. 25)

As I read, handle, and use the objects I created, I feel a directional energy pervade the experience. It fascinates me to feel it flow in different patterns. More interestingly still, that the flow seemed to be different for different objects. Energy flow for some of the objects seemed to be trapped, bouncing within it. Others seemed to flow back and forth along a straight line; still others seemed to create some sort of circuit. The most important for me were the objects whose energy seemed to form more of an ellipse. Ostensibly, where it traveled to me (the user in this case), joined with my energy, and the two together informed one another. I cannot help but think that I am feeling the resonance

of my intent as the craftsman. I think the difference in the flow of resonance has to do with impediments, either psychological or ergonomic.

As I mentioned above, there are four resonance patterns that emerge from the craftsman (me)-object-user relationship: uni-directional, bi-directional, circular, and elliptical. In a unidirectional relationship the flow of AE comes from the craftsperson and into the object and stops there. Though the object might be functional, the user can feel nothing of the AE in any significant way. In the bidirectional relationship the AE comes from the craftsman to the object and onto the user. The object is functional and the user might be able to identify some of the elements that represent the original AE, but cannot access them except intellectually. In the circular relationship the original AE comes from the craftsman into the functional object, where it resonates. The user can identify the AE both intellectually and on some levels through sensorimotor and somatic experience. The user can communicate this to others but only on an abstract level. The elliptical relationship is one in which the original AE passes from the craftsman into the functional object. Through use, the object becomes a gateway that the user, picking up on the resonance of the original AE, can through sensorimotor and somatic experience enfold it into their experiences. This informs the user and extends their primary metaphor and image schemata. In essence, it creates a new embodied AE for the user. Some examples of this from my own work:

Unidirectional

- Delta Bowl (Version 2)

- Crone shawl
- Most functional ware
- Saki-Ori placemat

#### Bi-directional

- My womb was once..., poem
- Pelican vessel
- Forcing jar
- Squash blossom scarf
- Delta bowl (version 1)

#### Circular

- Delta bowl
- Granite bowl... poem
- Indigo buntings..., poem
- So deeply, so quietly..., poem
- Peony pot

#### Elliptical

- In silence, squash..., poem
- Sand Ridge blanket
- Vernal shawl
- Pine needle tea bowl
- Richards/Hamada bowl

*Novelty.* There were five instances of design-in-action: carving the tea bowls, imprinting the pine needle pattern on the Forest's Fire tea bowl (see Figure 8), inscribing the White Rhubarb forcing jar (see Figure 6), carving the Peony Pot lid (see Figure 32), imprinting the side of the Pelican Vessel (see Figure 10), ordering the yarn strands in the warp for the Vernal shawl (see Figure 22) and Grouse Ridge blanket (see Figure 15). A vacuum occurred where need, experience and objectivity met. I find this to be similar to the idea of emergence in systems theory, the blended spaces of haiku, and of the hakeme pottery from Korea. In all these instances, the creation process, the "do," without ego gave rise to new ideas.

### *Analysis*

In narrative research that includes a section devoted to the interpretation of the assembled stories, researchers need to justify their interpretations for the reader. The general purpose of an interpretive analysis of storied texts is to deepen the reader's understanding of the meaning conveyed in a story. An interpretation is not simply a summary or précis of a storied text. It is a commentary that uncovers and clarifies the meaning of the text. It draws out implications in the text for understanding other texts and for revealing the impact of the social and cultural setting on people's lives. (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 483)

What was particular to an object that I have judged to be objective, that is, one that supports an elliptical dialogue for a user to construct their own AE? I found that the objects I felt were successful are those where there was a melding of the Do (the craft

skill), the I (the craftsperson/creator), and the Thou (user). This occurs when many distinct elements occur simultaneously. When they do, the result is an embodied aesthetic experience. “The notion of embodied narrative centers on processes and spaces that facilitate the creation and communication of narratives in qualitative research” (Bresler, 2006, p. 24).

To begin with, the origins of the aesthetic experience must be in an experience that engages the sensorimotor or somatic system directly. Whether this is through actual physical action, or by engaging mirror neurons at a high enough level so that the experience becomes your own, is not important. As well, it must represent a primary metaphor or image schemata that speaks to the universality of the aesthetic experience. Next, the object the craftsman is constructing must be at the craftsman’s skill level. What I mean, is that the mind must not be engaged in the acquisition of the skill during the construction process. The skill must be automatic; the craftsman cannot be occupied with using the tool correctly. The tool, whether it is the craftsman’s body or an extension thereof, has to have been mapped into the craftsman’s mind so it is one with the craftsman. If all these things occur then, finally, the removal of the self (the ego), from the process is the only barrier to completion.

For this we go back to the origins of the aesthetic experience. The more physically integrated the better so that the craftsman is relying on primary somatic and sensory experiences. In the end these experiences will provide the link for the mirror neurons of the user to engage. This window into the work is where the user engages their

own previous experiences to make sense of the resonance they feel. If so, that person can enter into the elliptical dialogue and physically experience the craftsperson's original aesthetic experience.

I am speaking of the space, the connection between the craftsperson and the user that the object creates. The goal for the second part of this analysis was to determine what must happen for an elliptical space to be created between the object and the user. It is my hope that within this space the user will experience the original aesthetic experience that I, the craftsperson, had around which the object was based. It is my observations that the following must happen for this to occur:

The AE:

- was grounded in primary metaphor or image schemata
- must have origins in sensorimotor or somatic experience
- must be universal enough to engage the mirror neurons of the average user

The Craftsman:

- must have experienced an AE
- must have an objective awareness of their AE
- must have a skill level equal or superior to the object they are crafting
- their tools must be incorporated into their body maps
- must be focused on only one AE, or one aspect of an AE

The Object:

- must be ergonomically functional

- it supports, contains or shelters appropriately
- the materials must be appropriate to its function
- no aspect distracts the user's sensorimotor and somatic systems

If all of the above instances occurred, it is my opinion that a superior functional object would be created that embodied a resonance of the AE providing for an elliptical dialogue between it and the user, where the user not only could experience the original AE, but also create their own experience. If only some of the elements are present, the object can range from merely functional or aesthetically pleasing, to downright negative and damaging. Here are examples from my own work:

#### The AE

that were used successfully:

- My backpacking experiences direct physical sensorimotor and somatic experiences
- my gardening, primary image schemata
- my reading of the Bashō poem had its origins in primary metaphor and mirrored sensorimotor or somatic experiences

that were not:

- the forcing jar
- the pelican vessel

#### The Craftsmanship

that was successful:

- My carving of the tea bowl: I had enough skill with the hand tool that it was effortless
- My weaving of the Vernal Shawl: this is plain weave and I knew my loom well enough
- my Richards Hamada Bowl: it is smaller, using a clay I am able to manipulate, the second try mixing the glaze was stable, functional, and appropriate to the object
- The Sand Ridge blanket: this was a “no” that turned to a “yes” because one yarn at first gave me a problem, but through the working towards the answer I was able to meditatively engage and continue

that was not:

- weaving the Squash Blossom scarf: I didn't know the loom and the pattern was too complicated I had to focus at every step
- most functional ware-my cups, large bowls, plates and ewers- I do not possess enough skill to properly craft these objects
- The Vernal poem: my awareness was not objective, and I tried to incorporate two AEs

### The Objects

that are functional:

- The vernal shawl: materials are appropriate, it is functional to shelter
- The Richards/Hamada bowl: the form and size is ergonomic, the glaze is appropriate, it is functional to contain

- The peony pot: the form and size are appropriate, the lid fits and is tactilely engaging
- The Sand Ridge blanket: The size, materials (see above), and pattern are appropriate

that are not functional:

- The Crone Shawl: the materials are beautiful, but it is too long to be functional
- The Indigo Buntings poem captures the experience, but is too specific for it to be open to the average user's mirror neurons

There is little question for me that an AE can be embodied in an object on an intrapersonal level, in which the craftsman is the user. However, can it transcend the personal and provide universal access? Can it play the roles of embodying an AE and functioning to contain, support, or shelter, on a level accessible to the majority of users simultaneously? And if it cannot, how much of one role are we willing to give up for the other?

### *Discussion and Development*

A key way I have judged my pieces, and have tried to communicate my interpretation of their success, was to refer to them as either subjective or objective. In fact, this idea's evolution and refinement lies within the heart of this thesis. In her article, "What is the Inquiry in Narrative Inquiry?" Carola Conle (2000) writes of the methodological conundrum of narrative inquiry, "As I suggested earlier, difficulties as well as advantages arise from the interwoven nature of process and product in personal

narrative. Methods of narrative inquiry, rather than being externally defined, emerge out of the inquiry activities” (p. 201). More important for this discussion is her mention of the following, “Dewey uses distinctions about means to distinguish between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic: All cases in which means and ends are external to one another are non-aesthetic; but in aesthetic work, means and ends coalesce (1934, 198)” (Conle, 2000, p. 201).

Dewey’s ideas are a good place from which to begin the following discussion. From his perspective, it is the means (motivation and goal) being in concert with the ends (journey and process) that determines whether we have acted aesthetically (Dewey, 1934, p. 205). So the question I must ask myself becomes: Have I been authentic in my means during this thesis as I journey towards its end? As Dewey stated, “There are ends which are merely welcome cessations and there are ends that are fulfillments of what went before (Dewey, 1934, p. 205). From the beginning my goal was to become a craftsman- to create objects that served useful purposes in my life- and through the resulting objects to explore and share my story with others. In essence, to aesthetically embody my experiences. Was I successful, true to my intent? For a functional object, success falls within clear boundaries and can be critiqued objectively within equally concrete margins. To wit, machines can construct functional objects. I believe art falls at the opposite end of the spectrum. I chose to try and coalesce functionality and aesthetic over the past two years. When I use the terms subjective and objective to describe one of my functional pieces, I am trying to place them along a line, which, in my mind, stretches between these

two dynamics. To be clear, it is not a question of good or bad, but whether in my judgment, the functional object has the ability to resonate my aesthetic experience. Have I done this in an egoless way, where the object's approach is subtle, and encourages a user to pause, and create their own dialogue? In an interview with Doug Flaherty for Road Apple Magazine Gary Snyder (1980) spoke of a type of experience as an "inner order of experience that is not available to language." He goes on to explain:

The true poem is walking that edge between what can be said and that which cannot. That's the real razor's edge. The poem that falls all the way over into what can be said can still be very exciting, but the farther it is from the razor's edge the less it has of the real magic. It can be very well done but the ones that make your hair stand on edge are the ones that are right on the line. And then some of them fall too much in the realm of what can't be said.

Then they are no longer poems; they are meditation themes like the koan, or they are magical incantations, or they are mantras. Mantras or koans or spells are actually superelliptical poems that the reader cannot understand except that he has to put hundreds of more hours of mediation in towards getting it than he has to put in to get the message out of a normal poem. And the experience is correspondingly more profound than a reader usually experiences with a poem. But then it is the property of a very special practice.

Haiku has something of this quality. The haiku of Bashō and his immediate disciples have the quality of the poem pushed as far as one can push it.

The words stop but the meaning goes on. (Snyder, 1980, p. 21)

This closely describes my intent for the objects. What can be said is whether the object is functional, what cannot be said is the resonance of my aesthetic experience. Beyond that, I would like my objects to serve as physical koan, mantra, or spell, and with their daily use serve as vehicles for meditation and reflection. I want them to stand on the razor's edge to provide a possibility for eddies of reflection in a person's day.

In judging whether I have crafted a successful functional object, the question of ego must be examined. One hurdle I felt impeded their success is their subjectivity.

Because they are based on my aesthetic experiences and made by my hand, I understood that they would reflect a great deal of my self in their design and construction. However, I wanted commonality in the objects, for the objects to have an archetypal language so that the user has a place from which to experience the resonance of my intent, the echo of my original aesthetic experience. It is a drawing across and away from self I desired, towards the universality of human experience,

Without that drawing the cross between the personal unconscious to the collective unconscious and one's personal use of language into the collective use of language, you remain simply private. And poetry to be poetry has to speak from a deeper place than the private individual. (Snyder, 1980, p. 38)

My embodied craft must also speak from a deeper place. In Chapter 2, under “Haiku & Aesthetic Experience,” I write about the relationship between object and subject. As I examined in that section, the success of haiku is found when it is written in such a way as to remove the poet’s ego from the poem. This objectivity enables the user (reader) to create a unique, embodied, aesthetic experience through the object. “The thing that keeps someone else’s poem from working for me most often is too much ego interference, too much abstract intellect, too much striving for effect; there’s a lack of contact with the inner voices” (Snyder, 1980, p. 4). The object, though perhaps emotionally, visually, or tactilely appealing, lacks the void necessary in which the user could create a dialogue. I have categorized an object with this issue as subjective. What I mean by this is: I have inserted either enough of my own idiosyncratic nature, or too much concrete detail of my experience. Again, I am not speaking to whether an object is good or bad, but whether it successfully embodies my intent.

In regard to the instances of novelty that occurred in my process, all these instances represent elements of craftsmanship, in the absence of abstract intellectualism. I wrote above of crafting in the void where need, experience, and objectivity met. Soetsu Yanagi (1989) wrote about this as he describes a technique Korean potters use:

In Korea, of course, no *hakeme* was ever made for such an artistic purpose; it was simply a technique dictated by practical purposes... They did not do so for its beauty, they merely did it. And yet, “merely doing” something is in itself a great

source of beauty, implying as it does a state of freedom not bound by the concepts of beauty, much less fear of the ugly. (p. 173)

These moments I have termed novelty were the most crystalline in my time thus far as a craftsman. I have heard people describe freedom as the moment between when something happens and when you react. I believe it is here I experienced archetypal “do,” by which I mean the pure process of craftsmanship. Yanagi (1989) stated,

The materials, tools, and techniques will not grant one freedom at once. One should not, in such a case, consider that freedom exists in a human being; one should seek freedom, rather, in the work that emerges spontaneously when one entrusts oneself to the materials and tools. The same inevitable process is to be seen in all true craft work. It is not accidental, yet neither is it artificial. It is govern by the same kind of laws that make water run downhill and clouds rise. (p. 175)

Which brings us back to the beginning of this discussion: how I determine if an object I have made is successful. Like Lao Tzu’s elephant, each person in her own way has described the place I strive for when forming clay, fiber, and words. John Dewey spoke of a coalescence of the means and ends, referring to it as esthetic; Gary Snyder called it “the real work,”; Po-chang said, “When hungry eat-when tired sleep,”; Soetsu Yanagi described it as “thusness.” I myself, call this “do,” the process of my own work towards the razor’s edge: grace.

### Conclusion: Dynamic Balance and Non-dualism

The tension of opposites can be seductive for the craftsperson, and for the researcher. I admit it was initially a very uncomfortable place trying to communicate my story using terms like observation, analysis, quantitative, even qualitative. Each carried the tension of decision and exclusion. I understood how quickly one could find oneself nodding in agreement with Descartes, seeking shelter by breaking the world into measurable parts. But I suggest we begin from another direction, from which emerges a different view.

Each of my objects' existence, rely on what most people interpret as the interplay of opposite: inside and outside space (the bowl), sound and silence (the poem), bound or free (weaving). But begin again from this thought: that by nature, my objects "are" in a sense because they exist in the state of neither. Neither inside nor outside has manifested as bowl, between silence and sound is poem, between bound and free is cloth. What I mean to point out by this is the idea balance through nonduality. This goes back to Thoreau's' statement. The beans he made the soil say were always there, just as my objects were always there within a continuous whole.

In a 2010 interview by columnist Chris Bergeron of MetroWest, Gary Snyder related the following,

Summing up, Snyder said, "There's a literary world, an environmental world and there's a Buddhist philosophical world which are sort of woven or braided together." Choosing his words, he said, "It's not enough just to know yourself.

You have to become more aware of yourself and your context which is your world... To illustrate his point, Snyder said when teaching workshops he'll sometimes take people out for a walk "to make them see where the rivers and streams are flowing to and from." "I'll remind them that good manners requires you to get to know the names of the plants and flowers and birds," he said. "That's etiquette." (Bergeron, 2010, ¶ 33)

We inhabit our world, but our world also inhabits us. The exploration of this dynamic comes through many forms. For me during these last two years, it came through craftsmanship. In a very concrete way I have re-formed materials borrowed from the very environments where I have had my aesthetic experiences. My objects and I are simply reorganized –for one moment in time, in the life of the rocks, the trees, and the birds. There is no escaping that I am what they have been and will be again.

The story I have presented really is the story of all things on this planet. I do not think it advantageous to limit the story of our species to the language of our minds. I believe I gain as much knowledge through my skin, and hands, and lips, as my ability to read and write. As we balance our mammal selves and our mind selves, we can arrive in a place that honors both, but gives priority to neither. This thesis does not complete my exploration, but presents an eddy in my journey. For myself, I will continue along the path of craft, hopefully, to share my story in balance and grace.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### What Is Craft Good For?

For the last two years I have been on a journey to become a craftsman. As I documented this process, I found that seemingly unrelated strands of learning often resurfaced, crossing in and out of my path. When relevant, I have included them in the following sections, organized around the grander ideas of what I have come to know.

#### *To Explore Connections*

Every single thing on earth is nature. Every single thing is linked to every other single thing. This is called interdependence. Every single thing in nature is changing together in concert with every other thing. This has been going on for billions of years. A natural, sustainable deviation in this relationship is called evolution. Evolution is not an advance, but an adaptive response. A human is nature in the form of a mammalian species called *Homo sapiens*. Some species use tools, a tool being defined as something used to achieve an end. Humans have used tools to extend their influence as a species and propagate. In the continuum of tools, for me, concrete tools are those that are physically manipulated to make physical objects: hammer to arrowhead, the pottery wheel to the cup. Conversely, complex tools are manipulated towards abstract ends: pencils to written language, mathematics to engineering. Humans also use tools to craft objects, which, like humans, are made up of nature. Constructive objects bridge human need and their environment, working symbiotically and sustainably with nature's processes and

provisions. Destructive objects try to circumvent nature's processes and provisions unsustainably and detrimentally.

Specialized tool use by humans is called craft. Craft and language are common to most human communities. Interestingly, through modern technology we are finding out more about their interconnectedness, "...the very same brain areas involved in representing familiar tool-use skills also show increased activity when retrieving and planning communicative gestures. This is consistent with the hypothesis that human specializations for tool use and language have common origins" (Frey, 2008, p. 1955). Furthermore, the craft of weaving holds a very special relationship to a rather new tool that has really taken hold in just the last four hundred years- writing:

We might further speculate that the older traditions of weaving-one that dates back between nine thousand and twenty-five thousand years-has influenced the newer one of writing. Writing was invented around fifty-five hundred years ago, and has only become a widespread practice in the last four hundred years or so. Before written texts could record and preserve the stories of a culture, cloth was one of the primary modes for transmitting these social messages. (Kruger, 2001, p. 12)

Examples of vocabulary surrounding weaving where crossover occurs between literal and the figurative usage are ubiquitous: spun, woven, knitted, quilted, sewn, pieced together, spinning a yarn, unravel, tangle, fray, loose ends, shoddy, on tenter hooks, clue, spinster,

shot through, fabric, fabrication, text, texting, thread of the story, fabric of the story, web of story, kept me in stitches.

The connection between weaving (textiles) and language (texts) becomes so entangled as to be almost impossible to separate. In many languages, including English, the verb *to weave* defines not just the making of textiles, but any creative act. Likewise, the noun *text* comes from the Latin verb *texere*, also meaning “to construct or to weave. (Kruger, 2001, p. 27)

The same goes for that of many other cultures:

In Greek this verb, *tekhne*, refers to art, craft, and skill. Therefore, a weaver not only fashions textiles but can, with the same verb, contrive texts. Roland Barthes states that “etymologically the text is a cloth; *textus*, meaning ‘woven.’ (p. 28)... Likewise, in Hinduism, and later Buddhism, sacred esoteric text were called *Tantras*, The etymology of *Tantra* “derives from the weaving craft and denotes interpenetration...inter relatedness.” (p. 29) A *Tantra* is not only a woven text, then, but is thought to have innate power to weaving the reader into a more integrated understanding of the sacred and secular worlds. (p. 30)

Could craft be a progenitor, a physical representation of metaphor? Throughout much of our society the link between conventional wisdom and practices, the wisdom found in folk knowledge and physical practices of craft, and current practices of learning has been severed. I believe we are seeing the implications of this loss in the continued difficulty of students, during their early to middle years, to progress in their acquisition of

language and math. I theorize that further research will find crucial ties between the physical practices of craft and their associated tools, and a human's ability to manipulate complex tools like language. That our somatic and sensorimotor systems are so crucial to humans' development of language and math, in the construction of image schemata and primary metaphor, begs further research towards discovering any possible links between the two. Furthermore, I wonder if primary metaphor is the way our species tries to communicate our first experiences of dualism. Are, then, practices such as poetry, art, and even those of meditation trying to get back to the place before we began to formulate our primary metaphor?

*To Gain and Keep Perspective*

For 2.6 million years an individual's learning was experiential, the means and ends coalesced, and tool use occurred within and in accordance with the intended natural environment. The current practice of separating and institutionalizing our children in systematic education programs for learning represents only the last two hundred years of our species development. That is, within five generations, through public educational policy, we completely scrubbed 2.6 million years of symbiotically adaptive learning. The last generations of American students have labored to learn in situations where neither concrete ends, nor appropriate means occur: current policy has disembodied the mind, current pedagogy has depersonalized experience, current learning environments have been homogenized, current curriculum has rendered interactions with the natural

environment irrelevant, and current assessment tools negate variation among our species.

This should not continue, we can and must do better.

This reductionist thinking began three centuries ago. With the introduction of Descartes' ideas separating mind and body, and the application of his mechanistic view of matter to explain all nature as a machine, physical sciences began breaking living organisms into discrete, quantitatively categorize-able pieces. Quickly, other disciplines followed suit, including those of the social sciences: education and economics. Though now disproven, instead of scraping this doctrine our national leaders persist in trying to apply it even more universally. Sadly, our education system continues to labor doggedly under the Cartesian doctrine, foolishly trying to model their operational practices and policies as though schools were machines within a centralized factory called public education. Many have seen and railed against the folly of this over the last century:

Harvard philosopher and mathematician Alfred north Whitehead had a different view on the liberal arts. "The mediocrity of the learned world," he wrote in 1929, could be traced to its "exclusive association of learning with book learning" (Whitehead 1967, p. 51). Whitehead went on to say that real education requires "first-hand knowledge," by which he meant an intimate connection between mind and "material creative activity." Others such as John Dewey and J. Glenn Gray, reached similar conclusions. "Liberal education," Gray (1984) wrote, "is least dependent on formal instruction. It can be pursued in the kitchen, the workshop,

on the ranch or farm...where we learn wholeness in response to others” (p. 81).

(as cited in Orr, 2004, p. 28)

Precious energy, in the form of children and parents’ faith in educational leadership, continues to be wasted on Orwellian slogans and catch phrases (The key is me, Where children come first, High standards), which shamelessly try to use primary metaphors to manipulate citizens. Still more insidious, titles of educational policy (Race To the Top, No Child Left Behind) ineffectively cloak the heavy hand of our Federal government’s draconian policies. Using classic logical fallacy (think: “Have you stopped beating your wife?”), the imagery chosen serves to manipulate and divide, like the policies pitting state against state, district against district.

Still, I remain optimistic. Our species has valiantly overcome divisive beliefs we once were utterly convinced of, beliefs of planetary centrism, racism, misogyny, and slavery, to name a few. By rejecting the idea of learning as a race having winners and losers, that learning is a voyage where one can be left behind, that learning allows some to reach the top and leaves others at the bottom, or any of the other pejorative metonyms used to describe our current system, we can begin to turn back towards sustainable learning and living practices. A shift in the focus of our policies and practices, from one of learners as objects (reductionist), to one of learning as relationships (holistic), will ultimately broaden our citizens’ knowledge, and along with it our country’s economic future.

Through the amoral practices of the banking and housing industries our society recently was shown first-hand (2009 recession) what devastating effects are brought about by an educational system that has lauded cleverness over intelligence. What I mean to say is that what we reward in our educational systems today is driven more by questions of “can” than questions of “should.” What we reward in our educational system today is short termed and shortsighted in content, but catastrophic in consequence. As inane as it would be to separate the design of a cup from the use of a cup, we daily separate the pursuit and use of our knowledge from the consequence of its applications.

*To Celebrate Cognitive Diversity*

Some specialization is imperative for a species. Each of us is best at one thing, good at a few things and probably mediocre at many more. Our species’ polymorphism has allowed us to fill untold niches and spread ourselves across the planet. Our communities hitherto have relied on this diversity. Here Jonathan Weiner (1994) explains our species strength of variation in terms of those Darwin observed in his finches:

But they are ruled by selection as much as any other creature on the planet, for they too are using their own individual variations to lessen the pressure of natural selection. Everywhere very young human beings start acting out more or less alike, just as the fledglings on Daphne start out using their diverse beaks in more or less the same experimental ways. As we get a little older we enter a phase of wild experimentation, as finches also do on Daphne. As we get older yet we narrow our efforts, again like the finches. In every country, within the limits of

our choices and opportunities, we tend to seek trades in which we have learned by experience that we are unlikely to lose, to be killed or driven out by the competition, trades in which our weaknesses will do us minimal harm. We try to find the work for which our beak best fits us.... (p. 288)

The model for an ecologically healthy and stable system calls for increasing complexity with maximum diversity. What does this mean in terms of our practices of learning? Currently, our society has placed focus on learning over labor, placing inordinate emphasis on the use of abstract tools. This can be seen within the trend of educational policies towards the goal of every citizen to attend college. But to what end does this prejudice serve?

The early cessation of education confronts the teacher in the industrial sections of large cities. A large number of children leave school to become wage-earners the moment the compulsory school years are over...as the usual public school courses are planned to culminate later, the education which these young workers have received is of questionable service to them in making a living. The only gainful occupations into which they can enter, therefore, are those which require unskilled labor. (Schenck Woolman, 1913, p. 14)

Take note of the date. Our country has been faced with these same issues for over a century. There is no evidence the current model, one we have been perpetuating for over a century, will provide a diversified work force and stable economy. In fact, in terms of the very polymorphism, which propelled the success of our species, we, particularly this

citizenry, are moving in an opposite direction, towards rigidity and instability, which is actually maladaptive. As students of history, we know change is not progress, and forward movement is not always an advance. Instead, our society should be encouraging a diversification of learning process and practices both institutionally and economically.

So why as a matter of perspective, has our society turned from earning a livelihood through our bodies? My research into embodied cognition showed how total the integration between mind and body is in all human learning. From the moment we are born, our successful adaptation as an individual relies on the integration of our mind and body. Education has turned away from learning concretely through our bodies, in practice cognitively castrating huge numbers of our population over the last two hundred years.

This, to me, is very worrisome. Must our mechanically and artistically talented children suffer twelve or more years of failure or near-failure before they are urged to find “some form” of learning compatible with talents that have so far gone unrecognized? (Noddings, 1992, Excellence section, ¶ 5)

This is a mistake of epic proportion, its effects being played out in the dysfunction of our societal structures.

Who is to say the path of learning through craftsmanship, or the information in the subject areas learned surrounding its practice, is any less valid than if learned by sitting at a desk in a classroom? My intention, for the last two years, was focused on my learning from the perspective of a craftsman in weaving, pottery, and poetry.

Unexpectedly, along this path I developed subject knowledge in the areas of chemistry,

physics, ecology, history, sociology, biology, animal husbandry, economics, religion, art, and language. I learned this information not as isolated subjects, but as they were intertwined in relationships of context and meaning. My learning developed in response to concrete situations of need. Importantly, each step of the way I maintained ties between my embodied experiences and learning disposition. Learning a craft, like all tool use, concrete or abstract, is a process. In this case, the process is overt and standards of practice are easily tested. Whereas with complex tools, like math, demonstration of mastery can be standardized yet remains abstract. In craft, mastery is universally understood but individualistically exhibited.

Craft is uniquely suited to honor variations of context and experience within our species on which learning depends upon. “Biology and physiology, for example are types of knowledge which represent the real world in terms of their own special abstract categories. They measure and classify the world in ways appropriate to the particular uses they want to make of it” (Watts, 1959, p. 25). For all learning, the context of a question is important because it defines the perspective and informs us of the intention. We can change intentions with even slight changes of perspective, and new paths can emerge.

Again, the tools we teach our young to use in measuring and classifying our world forces them to see the world from that perspective and informs every decision they make of how to form a relationship with it. Perversely, this lesson also carries through to the very tools we use to measure and classify our young. Our tool choice and use tells them in what ways, and if, they are valuable, and what particular use we will make of them in

society. If we look at it metaphorically, we could liken this to American agribusiness: our school system has created a monoculture of learning. Just as precarious, just as unsustainable, just as homogenized, just as removed from the natural environment. Our current choice of perspective is just one choice, one from which to view the world from thousands we have seen throughout history, and thousands more we have not yet thought of. Looking at the policies (tools) our government is using, and given the current state of our economic and educational systems, what would you say is our government's intent towards their citizenry? Does the intent reflect the perspective you have, or would like to have, from your front door?

*To Honor Materials and Energy*

As we saw above, until recently, our species' use and development of tools was diverse and followed our adaptation in response to a variety of natural environments. Humans, through our somatic and sensorimotor systems, knew these environments intimately and concretely. Our natural environments literally embodied our cognition. My understanding of this deepened as I experienced the relationship shared between traditional craft and the natural environment. I came to understand it has always been intimately connected. A moment of enlightenment came as Fritjof Capra was explaining the components of Systems Thinking. He described a way, through gradually shifting emphasis from part to the whole, quantity to quality, objective to contextual knowledge, structures to process, objects to relationships, and contents to patterns, that we could as a species bring back into balance our relationship with nature. I now had a language to

describe what I was experiencing in the practices of traditional craftsmanship as it nested in human and natural communities.

I began to see my objects as repositories of bound and free energy. The interplay of materials and energy became for me a question of balance. Through the physicality of my crafts, I also explored these cycles within the natural environment. I experienced the physical labor needed towards the non-industrial creation of objects. Crafting functional objects reveals overtly the energy and materials used from the bottom up. What is meant by this is literally from the soil up you see the energy cycle, either from plants to fiber with weaving, or earth materials through fire to pottery. There is physicality during each transformation of energies and materials. More to the point, I realized at some fork in our economic road over the last two hundred years, our nation chose to build its economy around abstract tools and devalued physical labor. In her essay, *Bringing People Back Into the Economy*, Vandana Shiva, described work as energy, and elucidated the connections relating to our unemployment, energy, and climate crisis (Shiva, 2008).

To this I would add our crisis of learning. All of the cycles, patterns, paths, and the objects that populate them, can be explained if one looks at the energy systems used to create and maintain them. This includes our system of education both theoretically and literally, of both content and pedagogy. Students and their spheres of influence represent even greater systems of free and bound energies. As we have seen to the Earth's detriment, within the educational system lays the potential to change students' knowledge of, and with it their relationship to, nature. This should be explored from the perspective

of, “maximizing resource and energy efficiency, taking advantage of the free services of nature, recycling wastes, making ecologically smarter things, and educating ecologically smarter people” (Orr, 2004, p. 104). Objects, humans, even the educational system itself should be seen as subject to the same conditions. If the system is dependent on free energy, then it will remain in balance with earth’s ecosystems. If instead it is created and maintained through bound energy, then it is unsustainable. It is imperative we conduct ourselves, especially as it pertains to the resources and energies of our educational systems, sustainably.

*To Center Self*

“Man must always ritually establish a “center” to live in” (Korom, 1992, p. 104).

From my kitchen window, I am watching the blossoms on the branches of my cherry tree. The branches sway in the wind. (*A shower of cherry blossoms, onto the pine boughs-childhood.*) This is the seventh year I have done so, and it is a couple of weeks late. In three months time, after harvesting, I will need an object to carry them inside, wash and dry them, and store them. Three needs, three objects. I already have the basket and towel, but what about a better bowl to store them in. The one I have is too deep and crushes the fruit on the bottom. What, I wonder, are the unique functions of a cherry bowl? (Lukey)

By answering this basic question, I have established a focus through which I will work. Every decision from start to end is now rather easy to make. This does not say the object will be successful; it speaks only to my intention for it. By extension, it also

answers what community, I the maker, will be in, what knowledge and skills I will need, what raw materials I must gather, what types of energy will be used. This thesis has led me back to my center. What I mean by this, is that through the process of crafting objects from my aesthetic experiences, what I formally call embodied narrative inquiry, I have been given the opportunity to rediscover my focus.

Another reason that felt meanings about a situation are always greater than what can be said about them is that not all of the meaning one has about a situation is available in awareness. Experienced meaning is not simply a surface phenomenon; it permeates through the body and the psyche of participants. However, participants are able to articulate only that portion of meaning that they can access through reflection. As Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) described it, it is as if participants are asked to shine the light of reflection into a well. The light only carries so far, and the well is deeper than the light can penetrate. This deeper portion remains in the dark and, thus, cannot be observed. (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 481)

And it was felt through the creation process. Embodied narrative inquiry is a powerful tool. Its beam allowed me to illuminate places that, through time and the travails of my life, I had let fall silent and darken. Along the way I was able to reintegrate these elements of myself that I had thought lost. I found strands in others like me, supportive people in the craft communities, who share my similar interests and values.

Through the process of craftsmanship I have learned to observe, to question, and to listen. As a craftsman my objects, like those of art, created conduits of communication radiating from me:

Therefore, when an artist expresses emotion through her art, the person who is the audience to that art is brought into connection with the emotions expressed in that instance. Because the poet investigated emotions and formed them into a poem, one is presented with the possibility of exploring one's own emotions in the process of interacting with the formed emotions expressed in the art of the poem. This is Dewey's "expressive object", one that does not separate "the act of expressing from the expressiveness possessed by the object..." The poem serves as an expressive embodiment of the creator. (Benson, 1992, p. 196)

After letting go of extraneous distraction and need, I became a centered self.

Paradoxically, it freed me to be fully present: to live wholly in my surroundings. I believe I have begun to ask the right questions, questions of intent, questions of context, questions of use. And I learned to listen to the nuances and implications of the answers. Experiences came to my body and my mind as they nested in a variety of communities. By observing, questioning, and listening I came to deeply know the relationships, patterns, flows, and cycles of these communities.

This led me to thoroughly understand that what I focused on communicated what I valued. I began to recognize this exemplified throughout every level of my communities. Regardless of people's spoken intent, their physical intent, by that I mean

dedication of their physical resources, revealed their attitudes, values, and beliefs. How did they approach their craftsmanship? Did they clean the shared work areas? Properly clean and store their tools? Come in extra hours? Observe the teacher, or listen to the suggestions they made? How did they behave towards their peers? Functional craft is dependent on tradition, community, and patience. Unlike more individualistic forms of expression, functional craft quickly makes these elements of a person's character apparent.

Learning a craft has exposed the ways in which I had allowed values of our larger society to insidiously influence my way of living and livelihood. It has given value back, not just to the larger decisions I make, but also to the small moments of my day. I had become enmeshed in the very economic practices that I now understood were destroying the environment I so love. I had given in to technologies' cost on human relationships. Moreover, I was complacent about both of their influences on what I have come to understand is our most precious commodity-time.

#### Conclusion: Authoring My Own Story

Initially, I entered this master's program to strengthen my voice and find joy in teaching again. Through embodied narrative inquiry I feel I have achieved one of these. For ten years I cherished my role in students' learning, but towards the end, I found myself descending into a cycle of anger, guilt and sorrow. I felt helpless to advocate for my students' learning. I blamed myself for my lack of knowledge, my inability to "get on board" with policy, and my naïveté about this country's educational system. I, after all,

with all the inconsistencies in my life came through the system just fine, better than fine. Learning has, and will always be, my soulmate. I did not realize it until recently, but I believe during the last year of teaching I was in mourning. Experiencing the loss of faith in our educational system was for me like watching an old and dear friend die.

As I have moved towards the end of my story here, I have done a lot of reflecting on my feelings surrounding this country's practiced meaning of "to educate." If I followed one definition of its root meaning as "to lead," uneasiness settled within my chest. Thoughts of leading, leaders, leadership, brought with them the connotation of the one and the many, a top and bottom, a back and front. It whispered manifest destiny and ethnocentricity. But through another interpretation, it was defined as "to draw out." Feelings of peace, connectedness, and wisdom grew from within me. It is through this latter interpretation I understand more fully what I have experienced through embodied narrative inquiry. If I am to have any role in the future of learning, it will have to be through my own example of learning and living: learn through doing, and live as example. For now, I no longer see our educational system as one of "right livelihood," to borrow a Buddhist idea.

I have found joy again in my own learning within the greater cycle of humanity's. I have rediscovered and re-centered myself, gaining confidence that what I think is worth being thought. My beliefs about learning, livelihood, and our natural world, though not populist are valuable. I have begun to learn the language of craft and to trust my mind

and body as they work together, bringing my aesthetic experiences to light. I have reconnected to communities of humans and deepened my commitment to nature.

I will continue my story as a craftsman and a steward of learning and nature. The knowledge I have gained through this thesis, of balance, focus, and connection, will be used to inform the decisions I make along my journey. I will continue to write haiku and prose, and to research issues surrounding my concerns on education and the environment, with an eye towards publication. My challenge will be to practice my crafts and maintain my home sustainably and primarily in systems of free energy. I will live more in nature, and honor the nature that lives in me: mind and body as one.

Once in his life a man...ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and the faintest motions of the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colors of dawn and dusk. (Momaday, 1993, p. 83)



*Figure 39. Author on Grouse Ridge*

APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## Reflections on Objects

## Peony Pot lid (figure 32)

The lid is an example of design in action: a happy accident that I was ready and able to use to my advantage. I used the Bashō poem as a type of mantra to clear my mind while trimming the lid to the bowl. I had the tool in my hand and made an accidental gouge, but instead of getting uptight and losing focus I continued the same motion and began to see an interesting pattern emerge. It looked like a many petaled flower from above.

## White Rhubarb forcing jar (figure 6)

Without an AE this was based very externally, very mind driven, philosophical. The best part of this was the inscribing it- the freedom of writing and incorporating my classmates' and my thoughts in the moment. The sense of community, the political statement, both very outward and symbolic. It was art not craft, very subjective and metaphorical.

## Pelican Vessel (figure 10)

I don't feel an affinity for pelicans, but I know there is something metaphorical to them that is just out of reach of my comprehension. So, knowing my Dad likes and identifies with them I took a stab at honoring and exploring that. Even, though interesting, the AE at Mendocino was not compelling. I felt more like an observer than a participant. I love them for my Dad's love of them but not for myself. One element was the actual construction of the piece. The salt kiln's effect on the clay, the imprint of the shells, the figures of the pelicans, made me love the object for its sake not as an expression of an AE, or an object of art or craft.

## Delta bowl (figure 27)

So many metaphors are involved in the design and construction of this bowl that it cannot be anything but subjective. The cyclical nature of a delta: nurturing the land and receding. My love for, and relationship with my Mom. It is beautiful and functional, again just like my Mom. She is who taught me to dare to express myself by creating something, for her it is through her piano. But I felt it should be a piece whose nature is to contain, to carry. I feel as parents it is our function to carry our children's hopes and dreams and possibilities along with their memories and I wanted to embody this message for her in the bowl.

## Saki-Ori placemat (figure 31)

Synchronicity. Cycles. An expression of my social, political, aesthetic, philosophical, spiritual, romantic and familial beliefs is carried in this woven piece. Everything came together to be expressed in the simplest pattern of weaving with the simplest materials, but with the most profound historic aesthetic lineage of any of the weavings.

### Richards/Hamada bowl (figure 38)

For me this bowl marries the spirit of two great movements: Black Mountain College and Mingei. The clay is called Black Mountain, it reminds me of MC Richards, John Cage and North Carolina where my Dad is from. I paired that with a glaze originally formulated by Shoji Hamada that I mixed myself. The white glaze over the dark brown clay resonates with my experiences of reading about these and visiting the Mingei Museum.

### Fraternal Twins

#### Squash Blossoms scarf and poem (figures 12 and 13)

I love this poem, I think it's one of the best I have ever written. It captures the parallels between nature's process and human's process perfectly. It is an extension of an AE in my life, although not a particularly happy one. It is just a statement of fact, a statement of a natural function of the world. It's neither from outside me, or inside me. I think it approaches non-dualism. I'm there but only as a small part of the largest whole, in concert with all the other small parts. The scarf that goes with this same AE could have been as successful, but I made too many mistakes and those rendered it un-functional. The colors are perfectly in concert with the pattern and both together with the AE, but it is poorly woven. Admit ably, it was the first piece I had ever woven and I am self-taught, however I cannot get over it being unusable. And it should have been something involved in food preparation or serving.

#### Grouse Ridge blanket and poem (figures 16 and 18)

I feel both this poem and blanket really capture the essence of the AE and do so without placing me in the middle of them. Oddly, I do not have much to say. Everything about bring these objects about from the AE was very straight forward. I believe the blanket is objective and resonates with the AE, but there is too much specificity in the poem for it to transcend to metaphorical and provide the user an elliptical dialogue. I think that is because it is still to outside me. I have to reflect more deeply on my overall experience of the moment I saw them. I can see myself returning to rework the poem to achieve that.

#### Vernal shawl and poem (figures 19 and 20)

Again the specificity of the poem makes it too subjective to be metaphorical for other users. I believe there are too many strong competing elements from nature. Although water is deep and quiet in some forms, waves and waterfalls are not the forms to lead the user (reader) into that moment- it overreaches. Probably because I have too much to say and really there is enough there for three poems. Each of which should be anchored to a direct AE in nature. The woven shawl on the other hand, I feel, is very successful. It melds the image of water, the gradation provides a physical metaphor for change, with

numerous tactile sensations, including the play between the coolness of the colors and the warmth of the fibers. This is extended by the fact that the fibers alternate between dense and lofty which you only experience when you interact with the fringe. This captures perfectly my AE of the pool of water along the Mist Trail. On a personal note, the shawl also metaphorically captures my action of being pulled back into my reflections of childhood. And provided a protective shield to be worn when I faced my husband's family at the wedding. Known only to me is the fact that all the fibers are completely natural and made of unusual materials like sugar cane, bamboo, hemp, linen, and raw silk. This furthers my hidden political agenda of which his family is so disapproving. It said "Look I'm talented in this way...I'm of worth-here's proof!".

Forest's Fire and poem (figures 8 and 9)

This was one in a series of tea bowls, my thoughts were only of the pine needles, the morning around me. I loved the act of carving away the clay, using just my hands and a simple tool. A lot of AE went up to the moment, but I was wholly present for the final patterning. When it came out of the wood fire kiln it completely circled back to the moment at the granite lake and the experience. I think the poem tries too hard to link two concepts instead of just staying with one AE and fully exploring it. That makes it seem flat to me, without a place for the user (reader) to climb into the experience.

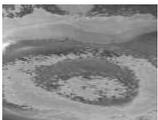
## APPENDIX B

## Characteristics of Embodied Objects in Categories

Craftsmanship & Embodied Object (EO)	AE (Aesthetic Experience)	Process & Tool(s)	Use: Functional (F) Cognitive (C)	EO's Relationship to AE
<p>Writing: poetry</p> <p>My womb was once a wild bee nest, deep in the hollow of an oak tree.</p> <p>Memories roil, borne aloft to me on currents of Spring</p>	Meadow Menopause CSUS campus	<p>AE</p> <p>Need: reflection, self-expression</p> <p>Draft: pencil</p> <p>Redraft: pencil</p> <p>Redraft: computer</p> <p>Final Draft: computer</p>	To support (C)	<p>Subjective</p> <p>Philosophical</p> <p>Synthesizing</p>
<p>Fiber: knitting</p>  <p>Crone shawl</p>	peri-menopause	<p>Need: pass time</p> <p>No pre-design</p> <p>Choose yarn: hand &amp; machine spun purchased</p> <p>Knit: hand tools, knitting needles</p>	To shelter (C)	<p>Subjective</p> <p>Unidirectional</p> <p>Plodding physical</p> <p>Cathartic</p>
<p>Writing: poetry</p> <p>In silence, squash blossoms fall</p> <p>Though bee courts daily</p> <p>-Autumn marriage</p>	watch garden marriage	<p>AE</p> <p>Need: self expression</p> <p>Draft: pen</p> <p>Final Draft: pen</p>	To shelter (C)	<p>Objective</p> <p>Elliptical</p> <p>Calm acceptance</p> <p>Release</p>
<p>Fiber: weaving</p>  <p>Squash Blossom scarf</p>	Garden poem	<p>Need: try loom</p> <p>Pick pattern</p> <p>Choose yarn: machine spun purchased</p> <p>Design: pencil</p> <p>Weave: manual loom</p>	To shelter (F)	<p>Subjective</p> <p>Nested</p> <p>Joyous celebration</p>

<p>Writing: poetry</p> <p>Indigo buntings Ignoring views from Butte to Butte Hold court in the sage</p>	backpacking	<p>AE Draft: pencil Redraft: computer Final Draft: pen</p>	To contain (C)	<p>Subjective</p> <p>Direct Nested Surprise Delight</p>
<p>Fiber: weaving</p>  <p>Sand Ridge Blanket</p>	Backpacking poem	<p>Need: SWSG show Choose yarn: hand processed, dyed, spun by me Choose yarn: handspun purchased Design: pencil Weave: manual loom</p>	To shelter (F) To contain (C)	<p>Objective</p> <p>Nested</p>
<p>Writing: poetry</p> <p>So deeply, so quietly reflections pool in blue green hollows -of wave and waterfall</p>	<p>Vernal Falls 1972</p> <p>Japanese pottery exhibit @ Crocker</p>	<p>Need: no Draft: pen Redraft: pen Final: pencil</p>	To contain (C) To support (C)	<p>Subjective</p> <p>Elliptical Philosophical</p>
<p>Fiber: weaving</p>  <p>Vernal shawl</p>	Vernal Falls 1972 Kauai	<p>Need: wedding announcement Choose yarn: hand &amp; machine spun purchased Draft design: pencil Design-in- action Weave: manual loom</p>	To shelter(F) To shelter (C)	<p>Objective</p> <p>Elliptical Experience</p>

<p>Writing: poetry</p> <p>Granite bowl Glacial melt -Sierra tea ceremony</p>	<p>Backpacking Mendocino</p>	<p>Need: no Draft: pen Write: pen</p>	<p>To support (C)</p>	<p>Objective  Unidirectional</p>
<p>Pottery: hand building</p>  <p>Pine needle tea bowl</p>	<p>backpacking Mendocino Backyard (while carving)</p>	<p>AE Need: assignment Design-in-action Build &amp; carve bowl: hand, hand tools Imprint: hand Fire: wood kiln</p>	<p>To contain (F) To contain (C)</p>	<p>Objective  Circular synthesis looping back to poem Philosophical Do nested</p>
<p>Pottery: wheel thrown</p>  <p>Peony pot</p>	<p>How reluctantly The bee emerges from deep within the peony.  -Bashō</p>	<p>Need: practice Throw bowl: electric wheel Carve lid: hand tool Glaze: spray gun Fire: electric kiln</p>	<p>To contain (F) To contain (C) To support (C) To shelter (C)</p>	<p>Objective  Radial (poem to pottery) meditative Nested Philosophical ?do?</p>
<p>Fiber: weaving</p>  <p>Saki-Ori Placemat</p>	<p>Research reading read poem make connection</p>	<p>Need: thesis Design: pencil Cut strips: hand tool Weave: manual loom</p>	<p>To contain (C) To support(C) To shelter (F)</p>	<p>Objective  Tangential synthesis ancient stable cyclical</p>

<p>Pottery: Hand building</p>  <p>Forcing jar</p>	<p>research reflection</p>	<p>Need: assignment Design: pencil Build: hands, kick wheel, hand tools Design-in-action Fire: gas kiln</p>	<p>To contain (C) To support (C)</p>	<p>Subjective Unidirectional</p>
<p>Pottery :hand building</p>  <p>Pelican vessel</p>	<p>Mendocino Kayaking w/Dad</p>	<p>Need: assignment reflection Design: pencil Build: hands Fire: Gas/salt kiln</p>	<p>To contain (C)</p>	<p>Subjective Unidirectional Philosophical</p>
<p>Pottery: wheel thrown</p>  <p>Delta Bowl</p>	<p>my mom Sacramento Delta</p>	<p>Need: no Reflection: pencil Design: pen Throw bowl: electric wheel Choose glaze Glaze: hand tool Fire: electric kiln</p>	<p>To support(C) To contain (F)</p>	<p>Subjective Bi-directional Experience directs design forces reflection</p>
<p>Pottery: wheel thrown</p>  <p>Richards/ Hamada Bowl</p>	<p>reading about Black Mountain College reading Mingei</p>	<p>Throw bowl: electric wheel Research glaze Make glaze: hands glaze bowl: hand dip Fire: gas kiln</p>	<p>To contain (F) To support (C) To contain (C)</p>	<p>Objective Historical Nested Philosophical Cyclical Continuum Research</p>

## APPENDIX C

## Frequency of Descriptive Words

Subjective	Objective
Bidirectional Cathartic Celebratory Delight Design forces reflection Direct Elliptical Experience directs design Joyous Nested Nested Philosophical Philosophical Philosophical Physicality Plodding Surprise Synthesizing Unidirectional Unidirectional Unidirectional	“do” “do” Acceptance Ancient Calm Circular Cyclical Cyclical Elliptical Elliptical Elliptical Historical Meditative Nested Nested Nested Nested Philosophical Philosophical Philosophical Radial (AE to pottery) Release Synthesis Synthesis Tangential Unidirectional

## APPENDIX D

## Differentiated Information for EOs

## Craft &amp; Object:

- 5 poems
- 5 fiber objects (1 knit, 4 woven)
- 6 pottery objects (3 wheel thrown, 3 hand built)

## Aesthetic Experience:

- 2 direct AE in nature
- 9 combine 2 or more direct AE in nature
- 5 secondary AE (1 from reflection, 1 from reading Bashō haiku, 1 from research on aesthetic movements, 2 from observation of and research on Mingei objects)

Process: See APPENDIX A

## Use:

## Type of use:

- cognitive (21) than functional (8)
- category frequency: support (8), shelter (8), contain (13)

## Uses occurring together:

- of the 7 objects that had dual uses, 6 were labeled objective.

## Uses occurring alone:

- 7 objects have singular uses, (however three of these are poems)

## Object's categories coinciding, i.e. to contain (F) and to contain (C):

- Pine Needle tea bowl- "to contain", Vernal Shawl- "to shelter", Richards/Hamada bowl-"to contain", Peony Pot-"to contain"

## Relationship to AE:

## Objective versus Subjective

- 8 subjective: 1 knit, 1 woven, 3 poems, 2 hand built pottery, and 1 wheel thrown pottery.
- 5 sets of objects originate from the same aesthetic experience

*-In 4 of these sets one object is subjective while the other is objective. (In this case the AE was directly from my physical experience in nature.)*

*-In the remaining set produced objects both of whose relationship to the AE was subjective.*

- 8 objective: 2 poems, 3 weavings, 1 hand built pottery, 2 wheel thrown pottery

*-5 of these have origins in direct AE with nature.*

*-3 share common Japanese origins, either through my experiences with Mingei or Bashō. With each of these I experienced an elliptical dialogue while within the AE.*

Occurrence of relational and descriptive words:

Subjective Objects:

there was a higher instance of unidirectional paths (3:1)

positively emotional (4:0)

negative emotions (1:0)

Objective objects:

double the amount of nested objects (4:2)

most elliptical (3:1)

circular/cyclical(3:0)

synthesis (2:1)

neutral emotional language (4:0)

“do” (2:0)

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