A poetics of reconciliation: The aesthetic mediation of conflict

Cynthia Eames Cohen
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Abstract
This dissertation, a philosophical inquiry into the significance of the aesthetic domain for reconciliation, addresses the following question: What is the nature of reconciliation, and what is the nature of the aesthetic domain, that aesthetic forms and processes should be uniquely well-suited to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation? The question is answered through the methods of conceptual analysis, with examples from the author’s practice of conflict resolution, oral history and cultural work.

The first section of the dissertation identifies 'reconciliation' as an ethical and educational concept. The educational tasks of reconciliation--through which former enemies must come to understand their own and each others' suffering, acknowledge injustices, and become trusting and trustworthy--are made difficult by challenges created by violent conflict. The challenges result from the ethical and epistemic interrelatedness of individuals and their groups; the ethical and epistemic interrelatedness of enemies; and the extent to which violence itself impairs necessary capacities.

The second section proposes an original conception of the aesthetic domain, based on Western philosophical theories and their feminist and Africanist critics, analysis of expressive patterns of pre-literate collectivities, and two Eastern theories. The definition builds on categories that emerge from Western philosophy--the integration of the sensuous and the rational; apprehension of formal qualities; and non-utilitarian response--and corrects for cultural bias. The aesthetic domain is defined by the pleasurable reciprocity between the organization of elements in a formal structure and the perceptual capacities and sensibilities of perceivers.

The third section of the dissertation demonstrates that aesthetic forms and processes are uniquely well-suited to accomplish the educational tasks and meet the educational challenges inherent in reconciliation. Both reconciliation and aesthetic transactions involve transformations that also respect the integrity of all parties. Aesthetic forms and processes cultivate the precise sensibilities--receptivity, respect, empathy, creativity, vitality, and metacognitive self-awareness--that are required for reconciliation. Finally, rituals and other collective expressive forms offer non-violent but viscerally compelling means through which human communities might substantiate large-scale framing assumptions, including new relationships imagined and created through efforts at reconciliation.

Keywords
Education, Philosophy of, Education, Bilingual and Multicultural, Folklore

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A POETICS OF RECONCILIATION:
THE AESTHETIC MEDIATION OF CONFLICT

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Reading and Writing Instruction

December, 1997
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November 24, 1997
Date
to my parents

to Ann

and to Amelia

and

to the children

who choose

to be seeds of peace.
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The practice of community oral history that gave rise to the questions that animate this study evolved through years of collaboration with artists, scholars and culture-bearers from many diverse communities. In particular, I would like to thank Feryal Abbasi Ghnaim, Tamar Yehoshua, Inea Bushnaq, Klara Barker, Wen-ti Tsen and all those whose stories and efforts made possible *A Passion for Life: Stories and Folk Arts of Palestinian and Jewish Women*. I also appreciate the insights of Bill Thompson and colleagues at The Oral History Center; Jane Sapp and friends at the Center for Cultural and Community Development; Ewa Pytowska of the Intercultural Training and Resource Center; Pat Dugan, Nancy Love and the women of the Trainers' Support Group; Judy Rigmont, Sarah Haskell and the New Hampshire PrisonArts Project; and Randy Thomas, Christy Hammer and the women of the New Hampshire Women's Oral History Project. This dissertation has benefitted directly from the courage and creativity of the young people of the Haitian bi-lingual program of the Graham and Parks Alternative School in Cambridge, Massachusetts and of the African-American teenagers affiliated with the Moore Community house in Biloxi, Mississippi. Their work embodied, and now illustrates, aspects of the theory I articulate here.

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More than a decade ago, when the last of my three siblings received her Ph.D., my mother commented: "Well, three down, one to go." I am grateful to my parents for their consistent commitment to education, and for filling my childhood home with both Japanese art and Jewish ritual.

Finally, I appreciate Amelia, Pamela, James, David, Liam and Shane, for generously sharing their liveliness, and Ann Morgan, for her steadfast patience.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION........................................................................................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ v
ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................. xiii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background ................................................................. 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Study ........................................... 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview ................................................................. 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation ......................................................... 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Aesthetic Domain ............................................... 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive Contributions of the Aesthetic Domain to Reconciliation.... 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Poetics ................................................................. 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle's Poetics ................................................. 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelard's Poetics ............................................... 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological Poetics ............................................ 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Contributions ........................................ 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RECONCILIATION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS .......... 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation: Overview of Section 1 ..................... 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem Reconciliation Seeks to Address ........... 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Reconciliation .......................................... 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation versus Tolerance: Engagement as a Prequisite for Trust ........................................ 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-establishing Trust through Apology and Forgiveness .................................................. 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-establishing Trust through Rituals Other than Apology and Forgiveness ........................................ 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problems of Inequity and Injustice .................... 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming Alienation and Transformation .................. 41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Conception of Reconciliation for this Study .......... 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. THE EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION .................................................. 46

The Criteria Implicit in Reconciliation .............................................................................. 46

Embodying Norms of Mutual Respect and Fairness Intended to Characterize Adversaries' Future Relationship .................................................. 47
Enhancing Disputants' Capacity to Trust and Be Trustworthy ........................................ 49
Expanding Disputants' Understanding of Their Own and Each Other's Suffering .................. 50
Engaging Adversaries in Acknowledging, and When Possible and Appropriate Redressing, Past Injustices .......................................................... 52
Recognizing Participants' Integrity as Moral Agents and When Necessary Restoring the Moral Capacities Required for the Work of Reconciliation ................................... 54

The Relationships between Reconciliation and Conceptions of Education ................. 56

Assessing Moral Philosophy as the Framework for Understanding Reconciliation ........... 60
Reconciliation as a Concept with Ethical Significance ...................................................... 62
Advantages and Disadvantages of Referring Directly to Morality .................................. 64

Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 68

IV. INTERSUBJECTIVITY: THE ETHICAL AND EPistemOLOGICAL INTEREMBDEDNESS OF INDIVIDUALS AND COLLECTIVITIES .... 69

Moral Capacity in the Work of Reconciliation .................................................................. 69

Capacities of Individuals and Groups Relevant to the Criteria of Reconciliation .................. 79

Nation-states ..................................................................................................................... 79
Persons ............................................................................................................................... 83
Social groups ..................................................................................................................... 86

Summary of the Contributions of Nation-States, Social Groups and Individuals to the Work of Reconciliation .............................................................. 89

V. TRANSSUBJECTIVITY: THE ETHICAL AND EPistemOLOGICAL INTERRELATEDNESS OF ENEMIES ................................................. 93

Coming to Know An Other ............................................................................................... 93

The Paradoxes of Pain ...................................................................................................... 95
The Meanings of Suffering ................................................................................................. 97
Suffering for the Suffering of Someone Else ...................................................................... 99
Presence to Pain, Suffering and Loss ................................................................................. 100

Transsubjectivity ............................................................................................................... 104
### VIII. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN NON-LITERATE COLLECTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homo Aestheticus: Dessanayake's View of Art as a Universal Human Capacity</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Challenges to Western Philosophical Conceptions of 'The Aesthetic'</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugusu Mitina (To Touch the Heart): An African Conception of 'Aesthetics'</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IX. THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN AND THE EXPRESSIVE FORMS OF COLLECTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folk Arts and Crafts</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Painted Baskets of the Yekuana</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Yekuana Expressive Forms as an Example of Collective Aesthetics</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Forms of Collectivities and the Mediation of Tensions between Innovation and Tradition</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Integration of the Sensuous and the Rational Neuropsychologically and in the Forms of Ritual</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual Construction of Social Reality and the Reintegration of Individuals into a Shared Moral Community</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liminality, Innovation and the Sublimation of Violence</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual Performance and Cultural Survival</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural Reflexity</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demarcating 'The Aesthetic' as a Quality of Collective Experience</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Integration of the Sensuous and the Rational</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and the Apprehension of, and Engagement with, Formal Qualities</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual and Collective Reflexivity</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### X. TWO EASTERN AESTHETIC THEORIES AND AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTION OF THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Aesthetic: Seeking Beauty in Darkness and the Hidden</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasa and the Experience of Self Itself as Pure Bliss</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Insights from Japanese and Indian Aesthetics</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Aesthetic Theories and Literacy</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinterestedness</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relationship Between the Aesthetic and the Sacred</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Integrated Conception of the Aesthetic Domain ............................................. 244

Does this Conception of the Aesthetic "Beg the Question" of the Dissertation? 247

XI. THE INTERRELATED ETHICAL AND EPistemIC POSSIBILITIES AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AETHETIC DOMAIN ........................................... 250

Overview ..................................................................................................................... 250

Aesthetic Engagement and Respect for Others ............................................................. 251

Aesthetic Engagement and the Needs of Self-Consciousness ........................................ 257

Aesthetic Engagement and Empathy with Others ............................................................ 259

Responding to Feminist Critiques of 'Disinterestedness' ........................................... 262

Intersubjective and Collective Aesthetic Experience and the Sensibilities of the Other ................................................................. 268

Ritual Forms as an Alternative to Violence ................................................................. 270

Aesthetic Engagement and the Non-Conscious .............................................................. 273

Risks Associated with the Aesthetic Domain .............................................................. 275

XII. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN TO THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION ................................................................. 279

Integrating 'Reconciliation' with 'The Aesthetic:' Overview of Section Three. 279

The Educational Tasks and Challenges Inherent in Reconciliation ............................ 281

The Aesthetic Domain and the Educational Work of Reconciliation ............................ 285

The Reciprocity of Subject and Object ........................................................................ 286

The Pleasure of Aesthetic Experience .......................................................................... 290

The Integration of the Sensuous with the Rational ..................................................... 291

Intensity of Engagement with Bounded Forms ............................................................. 295

Tendencies towards the Mean ..................................................................................... 296

Summary ........................................................................................................................ 298

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XIII. AESTHETIC MEDIATION OF VIOLENT CONFLICT: RESTORING CAPACITIES AND SUBSTANTIATING IMAGES OF A NEW FUTURE</th>
<th>299</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circumventing or Restoring Impaired Capacities</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming Intolerance</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumventing and Overcoming Difficulties in Listening</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming the Inability to Speak</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming Consuming Rage</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining and Substantiating a New Future</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining a New Moral Framework for Future Relationships</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiating the New Future Being Imagined</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XIV. LEARNING ABOUT OUR ENEMIES AND OURSELVES: AN EXAMPLE OF AN AESTHETIC MEDIATION</th>
<th>329</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Passion for Life: Poems in Six Voices</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| FOOTNOTES                                                                       | 369 |
| REFERENCES                                                                     | 374 |
This dissertation, a philosophical inquiry into the significance of the aesthetic domain for reconciliation, addresses the following question: *What is the nature of reconciliation, and what is the nature of the aesthetic domain, that aesthetic forms and processes should be uniquely well-suited to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation?* The question is answered through the methods of conceptual analysis, with examples from the author's practice of conflict resolution, oral history and cultural work.

The first section of the dissertation identifies 'reconciliation' as an ethical and educational concept. The educational tasks of reconciliation -- through which former enemies must come to understand their own and each others' suffering, acknowledge injustices, and become trusting and trustworthy -- are made difficult by challenges created by violent conflict. The challenges result from the ethical and epistemic interembeddedness of individuals and their groups; the ethical and epistemic interrelatedness of enemies; and the extent to which violence itself impairs necessary capacities.

The second section proposes an original conception of the aesthetic domain, based on Western philosophical theories and their feminist and Africanist critics, analysis of expressive patterns of pre-literate collectivities, and two Eastern theories. The definition builds on categories that emerge from Western philosophy -- the integration of the sensuous and the rational; apprehension of formal qualities; and non-utilitarian response -- and corrects for cultural bias. The aesthetic domain is defined by
the pleasurable reciprocity between the organization of elements in a formal structure and the perceptual capacities and sensibilities of perceivers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

A Poetics of Reconciliation: The Aesthetic Mediation of Conflict is a philosophical inquiry into a conviction. The conviction is one I have evolved through years of work as a community oral historian and cultural worker. I believe that folklore and the arts—and the crafting of the processes involved in their creation and appreciation—can be especially useful in bringing people together across all kinds of socially constructed barriers, including differences created by political conflicts, misunderstandings exacerbated by dynamics of oppression, and even enmity reproduced by violence.

This study addresses the question of why this conviction might be accurate. Specifically, I ask: What is the nature of reconciliation, and what is the nature of the aesthetic domain, that aesthetic forms and processes should be uniquely well-suited to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation?

My original intention had been to answer this question in two modes: aesthetic and analytic. First, I intended to present a compelling illustration of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict, using juxtapositions of an array of forms, including stories, poems, and images of folk arts representing the history and culture of two groups who perceive each other as enemies. I intended to follow the aesthetic presentation with analysis, explicating the theoretical interconnections among the political, educative and aesthetic dimensions of such a work. A preliminary step, I thought, would be the relatively minor task of defining the key terms: What do we mean by 'reconciliation'? What do we mean by 'aesthetic'?

Defining the terms represented a far greater challenge than I had ever imagined. In fact, conceptual analyses of 'reconciliation' and 'the aesthetic' have come to fill a total of
ten chapters, two of the three sections that comprise the body of this work.

'Reconciliation' and 'the aesthetic domain' have revealed themselves to be such rich and
generative concepts, however, that answers to my central question emerged through their
definitions themselves.

A Poetics of Reconciliation: The Aesthetic Mediation of Conflict, therefore,
articulates a theory at quite a high level of abstraction. It presents a thorough analysis of
'reconciliation,' and the educational tasks and challenges inherent in it. It also constructs
an original conception of 'the aesthetic domain,' a conception that builds on the insights of
Western philosophical literature and corrects for its culturally biased limitations. The
argument of the dissertation is that the aesthetic domain, understood in terms of those
features that distinguish aesthetic transactions from other kinds of expression and
interpretation, offers uniquely useful resources to the educational work of reconciliation.
This general theory invites elaboration, in many ways, specifically on the ways in which
specific art forms, genres, traditions and artists' works can be marshaled in support of the
peaceful resolution of conflicts and the establishment of respectful relations across
differences.

This dissertation does not include, as I had originally intended, a finely honed
multi-media illustration of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict. It offers instead, examples
drawn from several different projects, and concludes with an extended example of a work
in progress. Neither does this study include an analysis of the contributions to
reconciliation of particular art forms—such as poetry or drama, for instance—or the thinking
of many important artists who assess the potential of their own artwork, genre and form, in
terms that are relevant to the dissertation's question.

I hope that the theory laid out here, demonstrating connections between the
aesthetic domain in general with the educational tasks inherent in reconciliation, prepares
the ground for the future works, including inquiries into the potential contributions of each
of the different arts and particular traditions and genres within them.
Implications of the Study

The extended example of an aesthetic mediation that ends the final chapter of this study takes the place of what, in a more traditional dissertation, might be a chapter on implications of the work or applications of the theory. In lieu of a more extended, chapter-length discussion, I would like to suggest here the implications of this study for scholars, practitioners, educators and policy-makers in three fields: (1) the arts; (2) education; and (3) conflict resolution, co-existence and peace studies.

At a time when this country's prisons are bulging and when gang violence continues to be a major problem, public discourse about funding for the arts and the importance of arts education barely acknowledges the potential contribution of the arts to the resolution of conflicts, the reduction of violence, and the cultivation of the sensibilities needed for reconciliation. More often than not, arts education is justified by research that documents a connection between involvement in the arts and cognitive development. Public funding for the arts, in recent years, is as likely to be discussed in terms of benefits to a region's economy as enhancements to the quality of life or mutual understanding. I believe that as a society, we could make more informed decisions about the nature and extent of public funding for the arts, and better use of our cultural resources, if the connections between aesthetic sensibilities and the capacities required for reconciliation were more deeply explored and understood.

In responding to increases in the rate of violent incidents in schools, and, especially, to increases in the use of lethal weapons by young people, educators have reacted in a number of ways, ranging from weapons detectors and police presence to mediation programs and diversity training. Without commenting on the efficacy of such programs, I believe that educational leaders could make use of aesthetic mediations of conflicts to take a proactive stance. As educators, we can look to the arts and to the folklore of our students' communities for resources to help our students engage with conflicts constructively, and to cultivate the sensibilities required for tolerance, mutual
respect and reconciliation. Aesthetic mediations of long-standing, simmering conflicts can be enacted before violence erupts, to surface underlying tensions in ways that invite creative responses. As educators, I believe that we have a responsibility to do more than simply suppress or manage violent conflicts. We can transform them into productive exchanges, opportunities for students to develop capacities and sensibilities that will serve them well as citizens of a pluralistic democracy.

The responsibilities of citizens of this particular pluralistic democracy, the United States, have never been more pressing than at the present moment in history. With the end of the Cold War, the United States is, at least for the time being, the only remaining superpower. The Cold War's termination has revealed a world of rapidly changing political configurations, extravagantly armed, in which long-standing ethnic conflicts (within and across state boundaries) account for the great majority of the world's most costly and dangerous conflagrations. Conflicts based on ethnicity find the majority of their casualties among civilians—primarily women and children. Such conflicts often result in massive dislocations, sometimes the outcome of deliberate "ethnic cleansing," sometimes whole communities of refugees fleeing in fear.

If political leaders and diplomats ever could have claimed to achieve meaningful peace by the signing of formal treaties, the resolution of ethnic conflicts will inevitably require transformations as much educative as political. For this reason, and because of how well suited aesthetic forms and processes are to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation, I believe that the arts should be considered an integral component of the emerging professional and scholarly field of conflict resolution and coexistence. Consideration of the potential of aesthetic mediations should inform education and training programs, research, and practice.

I believe that these are among the most important applications of the theory articulated in the pages and chapters that follow. I intend to develop them more fully in
articles and presentations for audiences in the fields of education, the arts and conflict resolution.

This Introduction proceeds with an overview of the three sections that comprise the body of the study, followed by an explication of the term 'poetics' and the rationale for using it in the dissertation's title. The chapter ends with a summary of what I consider the work's most important contributions.

Overview

Following this introductory chapter the dissertation is divided into three sections: (1) Reconciliation; (2) The Aesthetic Domain; and (3) Distinctive Contributions of the Aesthetic Domain to the Work of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation

The first section defines 'reconciliation' for the purposes of this study as the creation, or re-creation of a moral framework for a relationship among former enemies—a relationship in which the acknowledgement of suffering and injustice enable a deepening reciprocity of warranted trust and respect. 'Reconciliation' refers not to a set of activities or to a stage of a process, but rather to a set of criteria towards which those involved in the resolution of conflicts can aspire. 'Reconciliation' is both a process and an outcome; it does not assume the absence of conflict, but rather a commitment to engage in conflicts in ways that recognize and enhance the integrity of all parties. Because it involves transformative processes that simultaneously must recognize (and when necessary enhance) capacities needed for integrity, as a concept 'reconciliation' has close affinities to 'education.'

The educational tasks of reconciliation—i.e., adversaries coming to understand each others' suffering, acknowledge injustices, learn to trust and be trustworthy, etc.—are made difficult by several challenges. The first challenge arises because it is not only individuals but also collectivities—including both states and amorphous collectivities like ethnic groups—that must engage in reconciliation. To understand the implications of this circumstance I
explore the ethical and epistemological interembeddedness of individuals and the groups to which they belong, understood within the rubric of 'intersubjectivity.'

The second challenge arises due to another set of ethical and epistemological relationships: in this case the interdependence of enemies themselves. Upon analysis, it becomes clear that enemies are implicated in each other's ability to understand and to act. The very qualities of presence adversaries bring to their attempts to understand each other can have an important impact on the trajectory of the conflict and its resolution.

'Transsubjectivity' refers to the ethical and epistemical interrelatedness of enemies.

The third and final set of challenges to the educational work of reconciliation arise because violence—including both overt destruction of life and property and the ongoing structural violence of oppression—often impairs the very capacities needed for reconciliation. The physical and psychological wounds of oppression and of war often leave people less able to listen well to each other, to express themselves, to feel sympathy, to imagine new solutions, and to take the risk to trust.

To summarize, then, Section One proposes a conception of 'reconciliation' defined as the creation of a moral framework for the relationship between former enemies, a transformation made possible through processes that are educative in nature. It demonstrates, however, that those who seek to engage in and/or facilitate efforts at reconciliation face daunting educational challenges.

The Aesthetic Domain

Philosophical literature about 'the aesthetic' is voluminous. At its best, it is complex and generative; at its worst, it can seem impenetrable, contradictory and damagingly ethnocentric. In the second section of this dissertation, I propose an original conception of 'the aesthetic domain,' grounded in the categories that emerge from Western philosophical literature, but embracing also the expressive forms and patterns of response of cultures throughout the world, including the experiences of collectivities as well as individuals.
The first step in my analysis is to make an important distinction between 'the aesthetic' and 'art.' Although these two concepts are related, not all aesthetic experience takes place in relation to art, and not all responses to art can be understood as aesthetic. To demarcate the aesthetic domain, then, we are compelled to seek an explicit understanding of the features of a transaction between subject and object that distinguish it as 'aesthetic.' Precisely what is it about some transactions between perceiver and perceived that lead us to characterize them as aesthetic?

My answer to this question begins with a synthesis of several Western philosophical conceptions of 'the aesthetic.' The literature points to a dimension of human experience that can be demarcated in reference to three clusters of ideas: (1) the integration of the sensuous and the rational; (2) attention to the formal qualities of objects of perception; and (3) special attitudes or qualities of response, generally described in terms of non-utilitarianism and disinterestedness.

Next, I present a challenge to the Western philosophical conception of the aesthetic domain. The challenge emerges from the work of the sociobiologist Ellen Dessanayake (1988, 1992), and from the perspectives of Africanist and feminist scholars. They argue that Western philosophical aesthetic theories make universal claims for patterns of expression and response that in fact are linked to the relatively limited--and, in sociobiological terms, recent--technological innovation of widespread alphabetic literacy. Africanist and feminist theories appropriate the word 'aesthetic' to refer to patterns of expression that are collective in nature, and patterns of response that are more likely to be ecstatic and committed than detached or disinterested, the qualities of response paradigmatically associated with 'the aesthetic' by the philosophers of the West.

Having clarified the contrast between two competing notions of the aesthetic domain, I seek to resolve the conceptual conflict following two trajectories. First, I examine in close detail several examples of both material and performative expressive forms of non-literate cultures. I argue that they can be described and demarcated in terms of
the same three clusters of ideas that emerge from the Western philosophical literature—although in some cases the ideas must be expanded or made more abstract. The specific ways in which the Western categories are inadequate become useful in articulating a conception of the aesthetic that embraces the experiences both of literate individuals and non-literate collectivities. Then, I briefly consider theories of the aesthetic that emerge from two Eastern, but literate, cultures. This inquiry highlights the inevitably intersubjective nature of aesthetic experience: as human beings, we necessarily refine our perceptual capacities and develop perceptual sensibilities in the context of culture.

Using insights from these two trajectories of inquiry, I propose an original conception of the aesthetic domain, based on the pleasurable reciprocity that can be established between the organization of elements in expressive forms and the perceptual capacities and sensibilities of those who behold and participate in them. The pleasure of aesthetic engagement results from (1) the integration of the sensuous and the rational; (2) an intensity of engagement with bounded forms; and (3) tendencies towards the mean along several different dimensions, including, for instance, a balance between chaos and rigidity and between innovation and tradition, and between the impulses of individuals and the imperatives of collectivities.

The section on the aesthetic domain concludes with an inquiry into the ethical possibilities and risks inherent in aesthetic transactions, understood to include the experiences of individuals, of collectivities, and of persons intersubjectively inscribed with the perceptual sensibilities of their cultures.

Distinctive Contributions of the Aesthetic Domain to the Work of Reconciliation

Although it is inevitable that my reading of the literature on both 'the aesthetic' and 'reconciliation' was influenced to some degree by my question about the relationships between them, my intention has been to analyze each concept independently of the other. Each of the first two sections of this work should, theoretically, be able to stand on its
own—and might, in some small measure, contribute to the separate philosophical discourses on the nature of reconciliation and of the aesthetic domain.

It is in the third section of the dissertation that I bring the two conceptual analyses into relationship. First, at a purely conceptual level, I show how each of the defining elements of the aesthetic domain are uniquely well-suited to specific educational tasks and challenges that are inherent in the work of reconciliation.

Following an analysis of the conceptual links between 'the aesthetic' and 'reconciliation,' I draw on examples from my own practice and the work of colleagues to illustrate how aesthetic forms and processes can be crafted to further three general goals of reconciliation. I offer specific examples in which aesthetic forms and processes contribute to (1) the restoration of capacities; (2) the imagining and substantiating of a future moral relationship; and (3) learning—about one's self, one's people, and one's enemies.

The dissertation ends with an extended example of a work in progress, an aesthetic mediation of the conflict between Jewish and Palestinian people. The stories of six Palestinian and Jewish women have been selected, edited, and rendered in poetic form. Strands from each of the six stories are woven into a script for a dramatic presentation, to be accompanied by projected images of their folk art. The performance of the script will create a new and integrated whole out of strands of stories that once seemed disparate or disconnected, inviting audiences to appreciate their resonances and to become feelingly aware of the history and culture they represent.

A Poetics

I call this study a 'poetics.' The word 'poetics' paradigmatically refers to a concept, system or theory of literature. According to Roman Jakobson (1988 [1958]), poetics deal primarily with the question, "What makes a verbal message a work of art?" Poetics differ in the extent to which they focus on the poet, the work, the text, the poem and the reader.
In some cases, the word is used more narrowly, to refer specifically to poetry; in other cases, it is applied more broadly, not just to literature, but to all forms of aesthetic expression. Some theorists use the word more abstractly, to refer not to a theory of literature, per se, but to theories of criticism. In its most expansive definition, 'poetics' refers to the conventions that implicitly govern the poetic, literary or aesthetic dimensions of phenomena not typically characterized as aesthetic (such as 'the poetics of military occupation,' 'the poetics of need,' 'the poetics of disaster,' 'the poetics of resistance,' 'the poetics of experience,' etc.).

In calling this study *A Poetics of Reconciliation*, I draw on three related meanings of the word. The precedents are: (1) Aristotle's *Poetics* and its interpreters (Halliwell, 1987); (2) Gaston Bachelard's theory about the nature of poetic understanding, as articulated in his book *The Poetics of Space* (1994 [1958]) and (3) the emerging field of anthropological poetics. Aristotelian *Poetics*

In the most general of terms, Aristotle's *Poetics* is a systematic descriptive and prescriptive theory about the nature of drama. Aristotle examines the strategies poet/playwrights use to evoke feelings for the purpose of engendering moral action, drawing on specific dramatic works as examples. Embedded within Aristotle's poetics is an implicit theory about what comprises human goodness: it is to be found in human actions. Thus Aristotle's theory emphasizes *mimesis*, or the ways in which drama convincingly portrays (imitates) human actions; he analyzes in particular how tragedies depict human characters who "miss the mark"—who fail to achieve moral goodness because of unethical actions, for which they may or may not be blameworthy. The purpose of such tragedies, according to Aristotle, is to evoke feelings of pity and fear within members of the audience; these feelings are intended to remind people of their own vulnerability. (References to Aristotle's theories and several of his interpreters can be found in Chapters 7 and 11.)
Unlike Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the theory of reconciliation I construct relates not only to drama, but to the entire aesthetic domain. Like Aristotle, however, theorize about how the arts help people learn about and feel others’ suffering, in ways that engender moral sensibilities and diminish impediments to moral action. I share with him a usage of the term ‘poetics’ that invokes moral purposes. Also like his *Poetics*, this dissertation is primarily a conceptual, rather than empirical, study. It does, however, include illustrations of aesthetic forms and processes crafted to engage people’s sensibilities toward the particular moral ends of reconciliation. In a political and social climate that minimizes and demeans the importance of the arts, a poetics of reconciliation, like Aristotle’s theory, asserts a role for artists and the arts in the moral education of adults.

Bachelard’s *Poetics*

According to the French phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard (1994 [1958]), poetic images are those images that create reverberations within people who hear or see them. The poetic act is the sudden image, the “flare-up of being” in the imagination (xviii). “At the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions,” he writes (p. xv). To apprehend something poetically means to be receptive to it, to open ourselves to the reverberations it creates within us. We cannot understand a poetic image without attending to how it reverberates in our beings.

This kind of ‘transsubjectivity’ (xix) --the simultaneously deepening understanding of self and other, in relation to each other--that Bachelard identifies with the workings of poetry is also what Aristotle described at the level of dramatic action, through the evocation of pity and fear. We understand the suffering of the other when we feel it in ourselves, or when we fear its possibility in our own lives. And it is this kind of understanding, of oneself and the other, that is central to the work of reconciliation.

It is at first surprising to discover that coming to know an enemy is very much like coming to know a poetic image--in that both require us to re-examine our understanding of ourselves and to re-experience ourselves in new ways. In this dissertation, in Chapter 5, I
extend Bachelard's term 'transsubjectivity' to refer, in a general way, to the epistemological and ethical interrelatedness of enemies.

Aesthetic mediations of conflict strive to engender qualities of receptivity, so that enemies can feel both their own and each other's stories reverberate within their beings. Juxtapositions of stories, poems and pictures, plays and murals, songs and dances, invite their audiences into processes of reconciliation, through the deeply-felt reverberations of rhythms and harmonies, images and textures, tensions and resolutions. They ask of those who participate in and behold them to suspend the constructs that define their identities and their political positions--constructs that may be construed as "knowledge" but in fact are impediments to understanding.

Anthropological Poetics

In addition to the theories of Aristotle and Gaston Bachelard, the use of 'poetics' in this study draws on a third, related precedent: as the word is invoked by anthropologists and folklorists to refer to the poetic, literary and aesthetic dimensions of representing cultures. This relatively new body of work focuses on the inevitable links between political and aesthetic dimensions of cultural representation, as well as on questions of meaning-making, interpretation and pedagogy.

For instance, essays in Clifford and Marcus' (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* describe how the rhetorical and literary devices used in writing about cultures communicate assumptions about them. The book challenges those who describe cultures to "find diverse ways of rendering negotiated realities as multisubjective, power-laden and incongruent" (p. 15); and to encourage the reader's participation in the creation of meaning.

In another collection, entitled *Anthropological Poetics*, we find poetry written by anthropologists, based on their cultural research. The introduction to the anthology states that "some things said poetically about anthropological experience can't be said with equal effectiveness any other way....A mature poetics allows the use of various textual forms to
salvage much more from the meaningful realities of the people studied than is contained in
the standard text" (p. 5). While all ethnography entails a textual dimension, not a few
anthropologists have turned to poetry, novels and other literary forms to document their
cross-cultural inquiries, and to represent what they have learned about those of other
cultures. In reviewing the poetry of Stanley Diamond, for instance, anthropologist Dan
Rose (1991) writes that it fuses the

sensibilities of self and the cultural Other....Indeed a marriage of cultures has
been performed at the level of poetics. The collision of cultural realities has
within it the possibilities for a new nexus of feeling, insight, awareness, and a
new political statement about the politics of cultural differences—the politics of
reality" (p. 220).

Just as anthropologists can use poetic forms to understand and to represent what
they have learned about cultures other than their own, so those who are engaged in the
work of reconciliation, as participants and as facilitators, can use a whole array of aesthetic
forms to express and interpret cultural contexts and historical events in ways that are
uniquely "effective." To illustrate this possibility, in Chapter 14 of this study, I present an
example of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict, in which I render the narratives of
Palestinian and Jewish women into poetry. Not surprisingly, as I have sustained my own
poetic interest in each story, in some cases new images arose within me and found their
way into the poems. My hope is that the political significance of the poems is one of
"possibility for a new nexus of feeling, insight and awareness" and that my poetic
encounters with the stories invite readers to engage in poetic encounters of their own. My
intention is to engage readers with the historical and cultural dimensions of the stories with
the qualities of receptivity and self-reflection suggested by Bachelard's term
'transsubjectivity.'

The poetic renderings of the Palestinian and Jewish women's narratives are
presented as a script intended to be performed accompanied by images of folk art projected
onto screens. Performances of this work will aspire towards what Stephen Greenblatt

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(1991) refers to as "resonant wonder" (p. 54), in which viewers are invited into the interpretive space between word and image, poem and music, sound and silence.

In calling my dissertation a poetics of reconciliation, then, I am asserting something about reconciliation, about the theory I will construct, and about the aesthetic mediation I illustrate.

About reconciliation, I am suggesting that the sensibilities and qualities of attention required to understand one's self and one's enemy can be cultivated in uniquely effective ways through transactions between perceiver and perceived that we describe as aesthetic.

By describing the theory I construct as a poetics, I draw on the deep resonance that Aristotle's Poetics evokes as the foundational theory within Western literary tradition. Most important, like Aristotle's theory, a poetics of reconciliation asserts a strong relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical. Starting with a conceptual exploration of a particular kind of moral action, reconciliation, the theory I construct calls for the education of people in conflict through engagement with artistic forms and processes.

Finally, by calling my dissertation a poetics I am also referring to the use of aesthetic forms and processes in the mediation of conflicts. The aesthetic mediation illustrated in the final chapter of this study is meant to convey a reverence for life, an appreciation of its textures and of the intricate patterns of simple daily living. People's aspirations and identities are celebrated not in the language of national legitimacy and self-determination, but rather in the delicate ornamentation of the Bedouin coffee pot and the shtetl's sturdy mortar and pestle. It is in these small details that readers are invited to find themselves and each other, and to recognize that among war's casualties are the delicate, sturdy textures women weave daily in our homes and communities.

By rendering the women's narratives into poetic forms, and by interweaving their stories in a particular order and illustrating them with images of folk art, I hope to create an interpretive space into which audiences are invited—to be still, to reflect, to think and to
feel. I hope to engender a quiet urgency, a peaceful resolve towards action, a heart-felt yearning for reconciliation.

**Significant Contributions**

The theory constructed in this dissertation is an attempt to answer questions that emerge from a somewhat idiosyncratic practice of community cultural work, a practice that blends adult education, community arts, oral history and folklore with cultural resource development, intercultural alliance-building and feminist activism. Not surprisingly, to theorize meaningfully about such multifaceted work requires a multifaceted theory as well. Whatever the explanatory or prescriptive power to be found in the theory articulated here, then, I attribute to the touchstone formed by years of collaboration with artists, scholars and culture-bearers from diverse communities. In this section I highlight what I see as the unique or most significant contributions of this study, first in its conception of reconciliation, then in its conception of the aesthetic domain, and finally in the theory and examples that link the two conceptual analyses.

The conception of reconciliation proposed here makes significant contributions to the discourse surrounding conflict resolution theory and practice by virtue of the educational and moral philosophy on which it is based. In particular, this conception is unique in its articulation of the theoretical overlap between reconciliation and education—in that each of the two concepts require that transformative processes simultaneously enhance participants' capacities for integrity. Even when political leaders and activists may deem a conflict to be intractable, educators might see possibilities for change—at least in the restoration or enhancement of the interpretive, reflective and critical capacities of persons on all sides of a political divide.

The theory proposed here explicates the educational challenges to reconciliation inherent in the ethical and epistemic interrelatedness of persons, both within their own communities and with their enemies. Interventions in conflict situations must be designed, therefore, to help participants become aware, at a metacognitive level, of the webs of
shared meaning and ethical interdependence that can constrain as well as promote understanding and constructive action. These webs of shared meaning are embodied in gestures, languages, beliefs, anthems, flags, foods, narratives and rituals. Processes designed to help people make choices about how they wish to relate to these webs of shared beliefs must help people overcome emotional resistances to change, and, therefore, must engage them bodily, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

This study also makes an important contribution to the understanding of the educational challenges inherent in reconciliation by building upon the conceptual work of Elaine Scarry (1985). Her book, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, explores the political consequences of the complete or virtual inexpressibility of some kinds of human pain. Scarry's work sets the stage for three very important lines of this study's argument. First, she demonstrates that violence itself can impair expressive capacities; I argue that aesthetic forms and processes offer resources that allow us either to circumvent damaged capacities or restore capacities that have been lost. Scarry upholds the importance of human imagination—our creations must first be made up before they can be made real. Aesthetic forms and processes, because of specific ways they integrate the sensuous with the rational in pre-conceptual schemata, can cultivate creativity and innovation. These are very important capacities in the work of reconciliation, because adversaries must imagine and create new social configurations and a new moral framework for their relationship. Finally, Scarry convincingly demonstrates that in the case of war, the wounded body functions as a sign, allowing human communities to believe in the realness of our large-scale human creations, such as nation states, before they can be substantiated (or realized) through the creation of buildings, maps, political institutions, economic relationships, etc. Those involved in the work of reconciliation also need to substantiate their large-scale creations—but must find ways to do so that are both convincing and non-violent. I argue that rituals and other collective expressive forms can
structure viscerally-felt processes through which human communities can substantiate the constructs we imagine, until we have the opportunities to make them real.

The conception of the aesthetic domain developed in the chapters that follow is also an original one. Its most significant contribution is its attempt to embrace the expressive forms and patterns of response of all the world's cultures, ranging from preliterate tribal groups to modern and postmodern elites.

The conception of 'the aesthetic' articulated here is probably also unique in its simultaneously sympathetic and critical reading of Western philosophical aesthetic theory. Unlike many critics of Western aesthetic theory, I believe there is educational and ethical value in the nonutilitarian response it celebrates, especially because such responses cultivate sensibilities needed to empathize with and respect others and to gain reflective awareness of the self. Unlike most who work within the frameworks of Western philosophical aesthetic theories, however, I believe that to use 'disinterestedness of response' as a criterion of the aesthetic is unacceptable, because it devalues the expressive forms and related patterns of response of most of the world's people and overlooks important similarities among seemingly divergent expressive forms. I propose here that we take as the defining feature of aesthetic experience a kind of pleasure that can be felt in perception itself, when there exists a reciprocity between the elements of a form to be perceived and the perceptual sensibilities of the perceiver(s). With this understanding, passionate, embodied and committed participation, which is the hallmark of the expressive forms of nonliterate collectivities, also falls within the domain of 'the aesthetic.' Furthermore, there is ethical and educative value in these aesthetic transactions as well, especially in light of our need for viscerally real but non-violent ways to substantiate large-scale human creations, noted just above.

The conception of 'the aesthetic' proposed here attempts to join the conceptual clarity of philosophical analysis with an anthropological respect for the diversity of distinct cultural patterns. Reconciling the imperatives and the conventions of these two intellectual
and discursive traditions has been a challenge worthy of conflict resolution experts with many more years of experience than I. I would be gratified if any aspect of this analysis proves useful to those working in the fields of Anthropology, Folklore, Performance Studies, or Aesthetics.

The overarching theory articulated in this dissertation—i.e., the linking of the qualities of reciprocity of subject and object associated with aesthetic pleasure, on the one hand, with the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation, on the other—may prove to be of greater significance than either of the conceptual analyses out of which it is constructed. The theory is itself built on metaphoric thinking: that is, in the noticing of similarities between the work of reconciliation and the educative potential of aesthetic forms and processes, domains that would otherwise be seen as different.

Among the similarities between 'reconciliation' and 'the aesthetic' is the importance of receptivity. In the creation and appreciation of art, like in the understanding of others with whom we disagree, engaged listening is key. Transformation, in both domains, depends upon the qualities of presence with which we seek to understand.

In both reconciliation and in aesthetic apprehension, how we inquire is at least as important, perhaps more important, than what we know. The qualities of presence we bring to our inquiry influence both what we and our enemies can understand and also how we and our enemies can act. We can say, then, that in each sphere, transformative possibilities are created in the nexus of the epistemic and the ethical.

We recall that Gaston Bachelard uses the word 'transsubjectivity' to refer to the shimmering of attention between poetic image and self that characterizes understanding a poem. A significant contribution of the theory developed here is the insight that the same kind of shimmering of attention takes place when we try to understand an enemy. In each case, our understanding of ourselves and the object of our perception are reciprocally informed. The more we truly understand, or the more clearly we perceive, the other (whether our enemy or a poetic image), the more we come to understand and the more
clearly we perceive ourselves. Conversely, the deeper our awareness of our own thoughts and feelings, the more clearly will we understand the other.

In Section Three of this study, I propose that the reciprocity between subject and object that characterizes aesthetic engagement is inherently other-regarding. We might even say, I argue, that aesthetic transactions are characterized by respect. Any kind of non-violent conflict resolution has at its core a decision on the part of former adversaries to respect each other, at least in the minimal sense of respecting each other's right to exist. In reconciliation, the commitment to respect the other is quite profound: we respect our former enemy not only in her right to exist, but in her need to grieve, her capacity to learn and her desire to become more trustworthy. When former enemies' learning about each other's history and culture is mediated through aesthetic forms, the process of their engagement embodies the respect they are striving to achieve. In other words, the ends are embedded in the means.

Aesthetic forms and processes are characterized not only by an other-regarding reciprocity. They also integrate the sensuous and the rational. Because of this, learning that is mediated through aesthetic forms and processes can also cultivate other sensibilities former enemies need in order to reconcile with each other. For instance, aesthetic engagement can lead to awareness (including awareness of suffering) that is feelingful. It can also structure processes that invite us to become metacognitively aware of our own meaning-making and interpreting of symbols.

The general point here is that aesthetic forms and processes--both by virtue of their intrinsic characteristics and by virtue of how they can be crafted--are uniquely well-suited to accomplish the educational tasks, and meet the educational challenges, inherent in the work of reconciliation. Both reconciliation and aesthetic transactions are inherently educational, in that they simultaneously engage people in transformative experiences while respecting the integrity of all parties. Also, the sensibilities required for the work of reconciliation--receptivity, respect, empathy, creativity, vitality, and metacognitive...
alertness—are precisely those cultivated by engagement with the aesthetic. In fact, we might even say that reconciliation is a way of living in relationship that is itself informed by aesthetic sensibilities. It has aesthetic qualities because it seeks to create, in the moral framework of relationships, a structure that can hold tensions and their resolutions, a form in which disparate elements are brought into relation, a unity that embraces conflict. In these ways, reconciliation itself is like a work of art.
The purpose of this dissertation is to construct a poetics of reconciliation, a theory that explains why and how aesthetic forms and processes can be crafted to further the ends of reconciliation. In this section, which consists of chapters two through six, I define reconciliation in terms of criteria, or standards, that conflict resolution processes must meet to be considered reconciliation. I then assess the interrelated ethical and epistemological implications of those criteria. Finally, I analyze the effects of violence on the various capacities required to engage in the work of reconciliation. Taken together, these chapters argue of a notion of reconciliation in which education plays a central role. They also reveal the daunting educational challenges inherent in the work.

This chapter begins with a description of those circumstances that call for reconciliation, making distinctions among the related phenomena of conflict, violence, injustice, and coercion. I argue that it is not conflict itself, but rather alienation—understood as moral estrangement from other human beings and from one’s own values—that is the problem that reconciliation seeks to address.

Next, I undertake a conceptual analysis of 'reconciliation' that clarifies several concepts central to the term. 'Trust' emerges as a key distinction between 'reconciliation' and a related concept, 'tolerance.' The proposed conception of reconciliation also incorporates, as an important element in both the means and ends of conciliatory processes, a notion of 'justice' consistent with 'trust.' It is unlikely that this conception of reconciliation, therefore, could be used, as some fear, to support a kind of peace that reifies unfair political or institutional structures. This chapter concludes with a definition of
reconciliation as a process in which adversaries create a moral framework for their relationship.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, opens with five criteria that, according to the proposed definition, conflict resolution processes must meet in order to qualify as reconciliation. Then, I stand back from the proposed conception of reconciliation to consider the kind of concept that it is—namely, a concept that is both educational and ethical. In assessing the usefulness of moral philosophy as a framework for understanding reconciliation, questions of cultural bias are addressed.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I consider two sets of epistemological and ethical relationships with particular salience for the educational work of reconciliation. Chapter 5 proposes 'intersubjectivity' as a framework for understanding the interembeddedness of both the understanding and the capacities for agency of individuals and the groups with which they identify. Chapter 6 presents 'transsubjectivity' as a corresponding relationship, in this case between entities that relate to each other as adversaries or enemies. Taken together, 'intersubjectivity' and 'transsubjectivity' explain why violent conflicts between adversaries of different cultures often seem intractable, and why the educational work of reconciliation often depends upon mediation by third parties.

The final chapter of this section considers the likely effects of violence—including the structural violence of oppression as well as assaults on persons and property—on the very capacities required by the work of reconciliation. By analyzing the negative effects of violence on people's capacities to think, listen, feel, imagine, create and trust, we can begin to appreciate the magnitude and the subtleties of educational challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation.

The Problem Reconciliation Seeks to Address

On some days it seems that our planet is circumscribed with a river of tears. I step into the river in the foothills of New Hampshire, where the battered women's shelters and prisons are full, and where the rate of teenage suicide has been on the rise (Kachur, 1995).
The river cascades through the neighborhoods of Boston, where an eight-year-old's future has just exploded in the cross-fire of a war between children not much older. It churns its way across the ocean, to the neighborhoods of Belfast, subway stations in Paris, and the markets of Sarajevo. The river surges south to the refugee camps near Rwanda and branches north through Chechnya and the Armenian enclaves in Azerbaijan. You can taste its salt near a mosque in Hebron, and hear it roar in Sri Lanka and Tibet and Cambodia and beyond. It is almost impossible to hold in one's heart an awareness of the human faces that hide behind the headlines of a single daily newspaper. To imagine those faces, to envision what has been lost in the conflicts that have ruptured those lives, can fill one's being with a yearning for reconciliation.

With the newspaper as a guide, it seems that conflict, in itself, is bad—inextricably linked with violence and coercion. Very seldom do we read about disputes that have been resolved constructively. Even our families, our courts, and our legislative chambers frequently devolve into combative exchange. Yet democracies are dependent upon the refinement of conflicting ideas through dialogue; and learning itself requires us to engage with opposing points of view. A growing body of literature and dispute resolution practice recognizes conflict as inevitable, useful, and "potentially creative" (for example, see Wehr, 1979, p. 8; Diamond, 1994, p. 2; Burton, 1995, p. 88).

Furthermore, the absence of overt conflict can indicate injustice in the extreme: the disenfranchised group has been so thoroughly beaten down, so suppressed, that its members have lost even the consciousness of their own oppression. In situations where people can not name their own experience, where they have internalized aspects of a dominant ideology into their own self-image, conflicts can not be identified, much less engaged. When we remember, for example, the struggles waged in this country to end child labor, and to win suffrage for women and for African-Americans, we can see that while the confrontations to end these problems may have been painful, even greater suffering would have resulted had the structural inequities remained unchallenged.
So if some conflicts are constructive, and if the absence of conflict is sometimes merely an indication of oppression, what is it, specifically, about the conflicts described in our newspapers that might call forth a yearning for reconciliation? Competing nationalist claims wouldn't be so frightening if they could be resolved without the injuring of bodies, the dislocation of lives, and the breaking of spirits. What hurts most about Sarajevo isn't that there are seemingly incompatible opinions (i.e., conflicts) about who should control what land, and with what systems of symbols its inhabitants should create meaning, but the violent coercion and the disregard for life through which the contenders have sought to determine the outcome. What hurts about Tibet isn't a conflict over borders or belief systems, it is the coercion, humiliation and exploitation of the Tibetan people caused by Chinese imperialism. What hurt about the stalemate between the United States and the former Soviet Union wasn't the conflict between two systems of political economy. Had that conflict been engaged meaningfully, perhaps the world would now enjoy an innovative social order with a more beneficent mix of individual freedom and distributive justice than either U.S.-style capitalism or Soviet-style communism provided for its citizens. What was damaging about the Cold War was the long-standing threat of mutual annihilation accompanied by the reciprocal demonization of two groups of people.

When I began this inquiry, I thought that conflict was the problem that gave rise to the need for reconciliation. In my mind, the idea of 'conflict' was conflated with violence (as in the war in the former Yugoslavia), coercion, repression, and injustice (as in the colonial relations between China and Tibet), and estrangement (as in the divisions between U.S. and Soviet people during the Cold War.)² I've come to believe that the problem is not conflict, per se, but rather how conflicts are conducted, how adversaries frequently relate to each other when they perceive that potential solutions can accommodate the needs, values and interests of only one party.

In such circumstances, we often work towards our own goals in ways that ignore or diminish our opponents' capacities for agency. We come to see our adversaries as less
than human, or even as demons, so that injunctions against killing and lying no longer apply. We become alienated from each other, in the sense that we no longer relate to each other as though we were part of the same human community. This alienation both contributes to and results from the violence, coercion and estrangement that characterize many conflicts. I have come to understand this reciprocal dehumanization and demonization, or what I refer to as moral alienation, in all its manifestations, as the problem that gives rise to the need for reconciliation.

Defining Reconciliation

'Reconciliation' is a term that has uses in everyday language and in several academic disciplines. I begin this analysis by considering certain features of the concept based on its everyday uses: Then, I refine this understanding, drawing on conceptions of reconciliation developed by ethologists, theologians, social philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists and practitioners of dispute resolution.

The Integration of Apparent Opposition--Gains and Losses, Means and Ends

By considering how we use the word in everyday language, we can see that 'reconciliation' refers both to a process (or action) and a state that is the outcome of the process. For instance, when we talk about bringing our checkbooks into balance with a bank statement, the 'reconciliation' is both the process through which this alignment is created and the record of the account in which the two sets of figures have been aligned. Similarly, in the domain of conflict resolution, a statement of forgiveness or the release of prisoners, for instance, might be understood as a gesture of reconciliation, a step in a process of peacemaking; the entire process is designed to achieve a state of reconciliation between conflicting parties.

Reconciliation processes and outcomes seem to be embedded within each other, an embeddedness reflected in A. J. Muste's admonition "there is no way to peace; peace is the way." Writings on the subject often suggest that steps taken toward a state of reconciliation must, themselves, reflect the qualities of relating (such as mutual respect and honesty) we
associate with the outcome; and furthermore, because conflicts are an inevitable dimension of interpersonal and inter group relations, a state of reconciliation necessarily will involve ongoing conflict resolution processes.

In the English language, 'reconciliation' is used to refer to two different kinds of acceptance or "coming to terms." When the word is followed by the preposition to it generally indicates that its object is seen in a negative light. For instance, a person might become "reconciled to" the untimely death of a loved one, or to a perceived unfavorable change in the supervisory structure at work. A quality of submission or resignation is implicit within the acceptance that is part of becoming reconciled to the unfavorable event.

On the other hand, when 'reconciliation' is followed by the preposition with it refers to happier or more just circumstances. For instance, following a period of estrangement, we might say that two family members achieve a state of reconciliation with each other. Christian theology is based on the possibility of humans, in spite of being tainted with sin, achieving reconciliation with God by embracing Christ. Reconciliation with implies an acceptance imbued with qualities of affirmation and embrace (Hardimon, 1994, p. 87).

In either understanding, 'reconciliation' evokes instances of acceptance that include both gains and losses. When I become reconciled to an unfortunate, painful or unjust circumstance I gain a modicum of equanimity, but only through the loss of cherished hopes, the unfortunate compromise of important values, or the lessening of a standard. I shrug my shoulders, turn my palms upward, and acknowledge that, under the circumstances, this was the best I could accomplish, the most I could hope for. I'm not happy about the state of affairs, but I won't fret over it either. When I become reconciled with an old friend, gaining a relationship of renewed vitality and possibility, chances are I've also incurred losses along the way: I've let go of unreasonable expectations, rigidly held interpretations of past events, or the illusion that the friendship could evolve in the absence of pain. The difference is that what's been lost was not fully reasonable or
justified in the first place; I've come to see the rightness of letting it go. When I think of moments when I've become reconciled with old friends, I feel a simultaneous smile and welling up of tears, happy for the return of warmth, saddened by awareness of the pain we've caused each other, and humbled by the vulnerability that inevitably accompanies trust.

In summary, then, considering its significance in general use, we see that reconciliation is a concept that integrates or embraces apparent oppositions—of both ends and means, and of gains and losses. The philosopher Michael Hardimon describes the acceptance that accompanies reconciliation as a wholeheartedness that acknowledges imperfections, "a positive attitude that contains within it a moment of negativity" (1994, p. 91). The concept itself seems to integrate opposites, acknowledge complexity and embrace paradox.

Reconciliation versus Tolerance: Engagement as a Prerequisite for Trust

Ethologists, scientists who study animal behavior, have studied aggressive and conciliatory behaviors among primates, in part to understand the evolutionary and biological aspects of these tendencies in humans. One Dutch scientist, Frans de Waal (1989), focuses on how the animals who are our "closest relatives" form "stable social relationships." Animals in cooperative groups must contend with both rivalry and dependency, and with the reality that "sometimes they cannot fight without losing a friend" (p.1). They respond to this circumstance either by "reducing competition," a strategy de Waal calls "tolerance," or by "repairing the damage afterwards," a strategy to which de Waal applies the term "reconciliation." Interestingly, de Waal's research suggested that those primates who fight and make up have stronger bonds than those who, through strategies of tolerance, avoid conflict.

De Waal finds considerable evidence of primate instincts towards peacemaking.4 I refer to de Waal's work, however, not to assess the strength of his conclusion that "making peace is as natural as making war," (p. 7) but rather to build upon his understanding of the
word 'reconciliation.' The distinction he draws between tolerance and reconciliation is an important one for our purposes. Like 'reconciliation,' 'tolerance' is a condition characterized by acceptance. Also like reconciliation, tolerance can have positive and negative connotations. In a positive light, we use the word to refer to respecting the opinions and practices of others, to accept those who are different in a spirit of good will. Tolerance also refers to "putting up with" negative circumstances (as in, "I learned to tolerate the pain"). Tolerance implies acceptance without struggle; we tolerate something whether we like it or not.\(^5\)

'Tolerance' might describe that attitude of the homeowners in an all-white neighborhood who cause no problem for the African-American or Viet Namese newcomer who moves in on their block. They might enact their tolerance through polite greeting, or simply even by avoiding contact. To become reconciled with one another, however, there would need to have been a conflict, acknowledged and jointly resolved by both sides. As this example illustrates, reconciliation is a form of desirable coexistence that embraces the inevitability, the usefulness, and the vitality of conflict itself, a "conflict-embracing higher unity" (Hardimon, 1994, p. 94).

In contrasting 'tolerance' with 'reconciliation,' we can see that because it embraces engagement, conflict and resolution, 'reconciliation' lays the groundwork for the establishment of trust. According to the philosopher Annette Baier (1994), trust "is accepted vulnerability to another's power to harm one, a power inseparable from the power to look after some aspect of one's good." (Baier, 19914, p. 133) In other words, 'trust' involves placing ourselves or something we value at risk of being hurt or damaged, believing both that the other party could inflict harm but will choose not to. It stands to reason that trust more likely develops in relationships that are able to weather disagreements, where disputants "fight and make up," than in relationships where aggression is avoided by maintaining distance. A defining feature of reconciliation is that
parties previously in a state of mistrust have resolved (or are resolving) their differences in ways that enhance their trust of each other.

If it is true that 'trust' is a central element of the concept of reconciliation, we must seek to understand, precisely, the processes that move people in conflict closer to trusting each other. What are the kinds of things that can be done or said by parties to conflicts to resolve them in such a way that the resulting relationships will be characterized by reciprocal, and warranted, trust? In other words, how do we create the conditions in which people who have been untrusting adversaries become willing to take risks with each other, and become justified in believing that although a former adversary could inflict harm, he or she will not choose to do so? In the next four sub-sections I describe how different conceptions of reconciliation provide for the re-establishment of trust: (1) through the discursive practice of apology and forgiveness, (2) through rituals of other kinds, (3) through the acknowledgment of injustice and (4) through the understanding of suffering.

Re-establishing Trust through Apology and Forgiveness

Part of the answer to the question of how to re-establish trust may be found by considering the role of apology and forgiveness in achieving reconciliation. Several scholars from different fields make apology (or penitence) and forgiveness central to, in fact nearly equivalent with, reconciliation. I'll consider here the work of two: the Christian theologian Vincent Brummer (1992), and the sociologist Nicholas Tavuchis (1991).

Both Brummer and Tavuchis assume that 'reconciliation' refers to the reintegration of a moral community that results when the party that has violated a moral imperative or caused harm (1) acknowledges the wrongdoing and the suffering it caused, (2) apologizes or repents, including an expression of sorrow, and (3) is forgiven. ('Moral community' refers to a community in which moral values are shared, and where participants acknowledging each other as deserving of moral consideration, manifested through respect, care and just treatment.)
Brummer understands reconciliation as applying primarily to relationships of "fellowship," a state of reciprocal love, in which two beings "identify with each other by treating the other's interest as his [or her] own" (p.440). From his perspective as a Christian theologian, he takes as a paradigm of reconciliation the restoration of relationship between a person and God that occurs when a sinner repents and is forgiven. Brummer also uses the term 'reconciliation,' however, to apply to relationships among people, to refer to a return to the norms of fellowship after relating in manipulative or contractual modes.

Tavuchis' work, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (1991), on the other hand, is a study of apology in all kinds of relationships, whether or not they can be construed as meeting the moral standards associated with 'fellowship.' For example, Tavuchis analyzes instances when presidents refuse to apologize for misdeeds, customers ask merchants to apologize for defective goods, criminals apologize to victims, and minority groups seek from private and public institutions apologies for injustice and humiliation. Considering conflicts among individual members of the same moral community (a friendship, family, a school, for instance), in offering an apology (as opposed to an excuse, defense, or justification) the wrong-doer acknowledges the violation of the norm, the suffering caused and the sorrow felt. Because an effective apology entails an accurate assessment of one's actions, an understanding of the relevant moral norms, and a heartfelt expression of sorrow, in a very succinct way it communicates to the offended party important information about the wrong-doer's capacities for responsible participation in the moral community.

In choosing to forgive the offender, the offended party in essence agrees with the offender's assessment of the nature of the breach and the damage that was done. This can be seen most clearly by contrasting forgiveness with condonation. When we condone someone's action, we deny that any harm was done or that any norms were breached.
Forgiveness acknowledges the breach, and in effect invites the offender to return to community.

Although Tavuchis' and Brummer's works differ substantially, they concur in asserting a moral framework for the concept of reconciliation. They understand the breach that gives rise to a need for reconciliation as a violation of ethical standards or norms. Furthermore, both apology and forgiveness can be offered only by moral agents acting freely and responsibly. A meaningful apology cannot be coerced, and we can request forgiveness but we cannot force a victim to forgive. As parents and teachers, we can cajole or demand a child to say "I'm sorry," but a more educative sort of engagement is required to help children understand their violation and feel sorrow at the harm they have caused. Interestingly, the appropriate words delivered without feeling will do little to heal the breach. In order to warrant the trust of someone we've hurt, we must understand, in a feelingful way, the harm that we have caused. It is through feeling the other's suffering (and, therefore, suffering to some degree ourselves) that we become determined not to repeat our hurtful actions. It is our heartfelt understanding that allows for the sincere and convincing expression of sorrow and remorse and of our commitment not to repeat such hurtful behaviors.

Paradoxically, it is the freely chosen expression of the fact (and our understanding of the implications) of our own wrong-doing that is a step towards rejoining the moral community from which those same transgressions have alienated us. By apologizing, we are acting in accordance with what is expected of a member. In offering forgiveness (as opposed to condoning the behavior), the offended party agrees with the violator about the hurt that was caused and the norms that were transgressed, discursively recreating a sense of alignment.

In focusing on the moral and emotional dimensions of the discursive sequence of apology and forgiveness, Brummer and Tavuchis add several important ideas to our growing understanding of reconciliation. Up until now we've come to see that
reconciliation is a concept that incorporates within it the integration of factors that are often understood as separate or opposite: means and ends, gains and losses. It is a kind of peacemaking that can occur only after a conflict has been expressed or enacted; in which, rather than keep a safe distance, parties "fight and make-up." In contrast with 'tolerance,' we see that the engaged quality of reconciliation lays the groundwork for the establishment (or re-establishment) of trust. Tavuchis and Brumner help us understand that what reconciliation seeks to accomplish is the establishment or re-establishment of a moral order. It accomplishes its work through processes that both acknowledge the suffering that was inflicted, and affirm or reaffirm the norms of that community-in-the-making. Tavuchis and Brumner also make it clear that the work of reconciliation can be undertaken only by individuals or entities that have the capacity for moral agency--i.e., the ability to act and speak freely and responsibly. And, as we demonstrated, apologizing also requires the capacity to experience and express feelings.

Reestablishing Trust through Rituals Other than Apology and Forgiveness

Brumner and Tavuchis analyze in detail one strategy through which trust might be reestablished after a breach: through the mutual affirmation of moral principles implicit in apology and forgiveness. Both Brumner and Tavuchis write as if this particular discursive strategy were inevitably and inextricably linked with reconciliation. Does reconciliation, in other accounts, necessarily involve apology and forgiveness?

Several conceptions of reconciliation suggest that it need not. Here I consider the work of two scholars: the anthropologist P. H. Gulliver, in particular his volume entitled *Disputes and Negotiations: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1979); and the German educator Bjorn Krontorfer (1995), who engages young non-Jewish Germans and American-born Jews in understanding each other's relationship to the legacy of the Holocaust. Both scholars make reference to role of ritual in the work of reconciliation, but in neither's work is apology and forgiveness a central factor. To the contrary, Krontorfer makes the case
that apology and forgiveness are at least inappropriate, and perhaps impossible, in the kind of reconciliations he facilitates.

Gulliver's study entails a conceptual analysis of 'negotiation' as well as a cross-cultural inquiry into negotiation strategies.\(^7\) Gulliver uses the words 'conciliation' and 'reconciliation' to refer to those aspects and stages of dispute resolution processes, including both negotiations and arbitrations, that establish or reaffirm the norms upon which the disputants will base their future relationship. In his conception, this aspect of dispute resolution is distinct from ascertaining blame, responsibility and compensation for past actions.

Among the Arusha of Tanzania, for example, ritual reconciliation occurs when former disputants drink beer from the same gourd and feed each other meat from a goat sacrificed for the occasion. These actions are witnessed by relatives and neighbors and are understood to invoke supernatural powers. These ritual reconciliations often occur at the conclusion of negotiated settlements. Although such rituals might include symbolic reference to blame and forgiveness (through the determination, for instance, of who would supply the goat and the beer), they certainly don't follow the discursive pattern of an apology. But they do seem to serve a similar purpose: they reaffirm a set of shared beliefs and values on the part of two members of a moral community who have become alienated from each other due to a violation of norms (Gulliver, 1979, pp. 234-251).

What about reconciliation among disputants who do not, to their knowledge anyway, share a set of beliefs and values that they can reaffirm? Is reconciliation a possibility for people who have not previously perceived themselves to be a part of the same moral community? The theologian and educator Bjorn Krondorfer develops such a conception of reconciliation in his educational work with young non-Jewish Germans and American Jews. In their initial encounters, his students find themselves suspicious of each other, mistrustful, and constrained by a discourse that reduces them to one-dimensional categories of "victimizer" and "victimized." Their initial attempts at communication often
fail, as the imperative towards remembrance felt by the Jewish participants clashes with the
denial, silence, and desire for forgiveness that inscribe the young Germans' presentations
of self. The very words used by each group seem to place them outside of the other's
moral community.

Krendorfer facilitates month-long encounters between non-Jewish German and
Jewish American young people in which they simultaneously transform their relationships
with each other and their understandings of their own identities: a central aspect of his
pedagogy is to engage them in the collaborative creation of rituals, interactions Krendorfer
defines as "deliberate, embodied, performed, condensed, patterned and somewhat
symbolic or stylized" (1995, p. 15). After distinguishing his students' rituals from the
highly regulated religious and political ceremonies that represent and perpetuate pre-critical
understandings of history, Krendorfer explains that:

reconciliation is a ritual practice or experience that strives toward
transformation. It liberates Jewish and German young people from the
stalemate of current discursive practices and encourages them to seek new
ways of relating to each other without neglecting the history and memory of
the Shoah. It requires a willingness to take risks. Reconciliation is not a
monument but a process, not a museum, but a "growing inventory of an
active memory", (Maier, 1988:121) not a theory but an experimental
practice....Genuine reconciliation,... is a creative transformation that does not
simplify the issues at stake (p.16).

Krendorfer takes as a sign of successful reconciliatory work the capacity of
German and Jewish young people to comfort each other during a three-day visit to
Auschwitz. Their ability to give each other comfort depends upon both their security in
their understanding of their own feelings and history, and their awareness of the other's
pain. The community is able to hold the perspectives of both groups.

In Krendorfer's sense, reconciliation describes the processes through which
members of two groups who previously had been alienated from each other by a painful
historical legacy, by lack of contact, and by rigidly held discursive categories, come to
understand each other's feelings and history. Because of that understanding, they become
able to relate to each other honestly, compassionately, and with an increasing sense of

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trust. This reconciliation is both created and acknowledged through ritual. Since these two groups are not members of the same national, religious or cultural community, they cannot rely on existing rituals. Rather, they construct their own. Meaningful rituals, in which members of both groups can participate with integrity, emerge only after the students have confronted each other, struggled over differences, and created "communitas." The presence of both groups allows for a kind of transformation that neither group could accomplish alone.

It is important to note that the rituals created by the German and Jewish young people do not include statements of apology and forgiveness. Forgiveness in this context is seen as inappropriate—in part because the young people themselves were neither the perpetrators nor immediate victims of the crime, but even more important, because the Holocaust was an evil that defies both the language and the comprehension that are required for apology and forgiveness to be meaningful. Reconciliation, in this case, requires an understanding of the impossibility of forgiveness.

The impossibility of forgiveness, however, does not render reconciliation unreachable or inappropriate. Krendorfer describes how the communitas his students created allowed them to struggle over their differences, but to remain present to each other, in spite of intense feelings of shame and despair, rage and horror. Their participation in a moral community offered students sufficient safety to take the risks associated with this kind of transformative learning. Their rituals created and embodied a moral community where none had previously existed. (Krendorfer, 1995, pp. 209-220) It becomes clear that trust based on shared norms and heartfelt understanding, not necessarily apology and forgiveness, is the central element of reconciliation.

The Problems of Inequity and Injustice

To establish trust based on shared norms and heartfelt understanding is difficult to accomplish following any conflict, particularly when the dispute has been prolonged, violent, and/or when the disputants have had little contact with each other. The difficulties
are even more pronounced in conflicts between groups of unequal power, in which one
group has been in a position to impose its will on the other. In analyzing a conflict to
assess what approaches to resolution are feasible and appropriate, it is important to ask
whether the conflict exists between the interests and/or constructs of two or more groups
each equally capable of asserting its will, or whether it is a confrontation between parties of
unequal strength.

Strong arguments have been made against the appropriateness of reconciliation in
conflicts characterized by gross inequities. The fear is that any peace achieved in such a
case will be the

peace of the master slave relationship. In situations where there is an
asymmetry of power between the parties and gross iniquity in terms of
humanistic values, conciliation or integration does not solve the conflict, but
only reinforces the unjust situation. Such basic conflict can only be solved by
structural change. For this, polarization is necessary, confrontation inevitable
(Schmid, summarized in Yarrow, 1978, p. 286).

Mindful of criticisms of this sort, people involved in extensive Quaker conciliation
projects decided, in the 1960's, to limit their efforts to conflicts in which the opposing
forces were relatively symmetrical in terms of power. A key leader in Quaker peace
efforts, A. J. Muste, asserted that justice must be achieved before peace: "In a world built
on violence, one must be a revolutionary before one can be a pacifist" (in Yarrow, 1978,
p. 289).

The problem of inequity and injustice can be described in terms of two different
kinds of violence: behavioral and structural. Behavioral violence refers to actions that
cause "apparent injury to persons and things" (Wehr, 1979, p. 14). Included in this
category are war, of course, and also child abuse, riots, murder, suicide, and vandalism.
Structural violence refers to unjust, repressive and oppressive social and political structures
that diminish life chances for groups of people. Starvation and high infant mortality are
among the consequences of structural violence.

Peace researchers debate among themselves about the relationship between these
two forms of violence, and between strategies for ending both. "Behavioralists" claim that
the acute problems of war and civil violence must be resolved or else we will not survive to deal with the chronic inequities that characterize structural violence. The Quaker re-evaluation of its own work, referred to above, reflected a "structuralist" stance: with the understanding that the roots of behavioral violence are in existing structures, the latter must be changed before attempting to reduce the former.

Are there kinds of conflicts in which reconciliation is inappropriate? The answer, of course, depends upon one's conception of reconciliation. The Quaker's understood their 'conciliation' work as efforts to "harmonize opposing perspectives" (Yarrow, 1978, p. 290). That seems quite different from the conception we are developing here, of reconciliation as a "conflict-embracing unity" in which adversaries become increasingly trusting and trustworthy. Several leaders of oppressed peoples seeking justice through nonviolent means use the word 'reconciliation' to describe the approach of their movements or aspects of their work. By studying their understanding of reconciliation, we may be able to ensure the conception we are developing here will not contribute to the "peace of the master-slave relationship."

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963), for instance, identified six steps for non-violent social change: (1) information-gathering; (2) education (informing others, including one's opposition, about one's position); (3) personal commitment (including preparing oneself to accept suffering if necessary); (4) negotiations (including using grace, humor and intelligence to confront the other, while looking for ways to call forth the positive in one's adversary, and looking for ways in which the opponent can win); (5) direction action (actions taken to morally force the opponent to work with you in resolving injustices); and (6) reconciliation, defined in this way:

Non-violent social change seeks friendship and understanding with the opponent. It is directed against evil systems, forces, policies, and acts, not persons. Reconciliation includes the opponent saving face. Through reasoned compromise, both sides resolve injustice with a plan of action. Each act of reconciliation is a step closer to the beloved community. Both the individual and the community are empowered, leading to new struggles for justice and a new beginning. (Martin Luther King, 1963; summarized by Fellowship for Reconciliation, 1991, p. 17).
King's notion of reconciliation clearly avoids the relativism that seems likely if the notion of "harmonizing opposing perspectives" were to be applied indiscriminately in contexts of oppression. It makes a distinction between the oppressive actions and policies of the opponent, on the one hand, and the person who is the opponent, on the other. King's reconciliation reaches for the positive, the just, within each person; it simultaneously keeps in view both moral clarity and compassion.

This same clarity and compassion can be found in the writing of Maha Ghosananda (1992), the Cambodian Buddhist peace-maker:

I do not question that loving one's oppressors--Cambodians loving the Khmer Rouge--may be the most difficult attitude to achieve. But it is a law of the universe that retaliation, hatred, and revenge only continue the cycle and never stop it. Reconciliation does not mean that we surrender rights and conditions, but rather that we use love in all of our negotiations. It means that we see ourselves in the opponent--for what is the opponent but a being in ignorance, and we ourselves are also ignorant of many things. Therefore, only loving kindness and right mindfulness can free us (p. 69).

The only way to interrupt the cycle of revenge is to bring into one's negotiations, even with one's own oppressor, the moral principles and the qualities of heart and mind envisioned for the new social order. For Ghosananda, reconciliation entails a mixture of moral clarity and humility, a willingness to take a stand at the same time as acknowledging the limitations of one's own knowledge.

Recognizing limitations on any particular human understanding of truth is also at the core of satyagraha, the philosophy underlying Gandhi's movement to end British imperialism in India. Conflict is conceived as a "truth-seeking process in which the objective is not to win, but to achieve a fresh level of social truth and a healthier relationship between antagonists...The escalating commitment is...to the discovery of the truth of social justice, a commitment that admitted the possibility of the opponent's truth." (Wehr, 1979, p. 64). Satyagraha creates a dialectical process that seeks synthesis, not compromise.

The distinction between compromise and synthesis is crucial for our conceptual analysis of reconciliation. Like satyagraha, reconciliation seeks a kind of agreement, but

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not an agreement based on concession. "There is no 'lowering' of demands, but an aiming at a 'higher' level of adjustment which creates a new, mutually satisfactory, resolution" (Bondurant, 1965, p. 197). In situations characterized by inequity and a history of injustice, reconciliation requires more than a solution that rests on "the middle ground." In order for the process to deserve the trust of the parties with less power, disputants must work together not towards compromise, but towards a more just moral order.

With this conception, it seems appropriate to engage in the work of reconciliation even in relation to conflicts characterized by inequities and injustice. The steps disputants must take to achieve reconciliation in the context of inequities may be different than processes between disputants of equal power, regardless of the degree of violence. For instance, disputants must come to understand each other's perceptions of the dynamics of power, and must seek a common assessment of the nature of the inequities.

However, disputants who engage in reconciliation in contexts of inequity realize that there is suffering even for the party benefiting from greater power and privilege. This realization makes it possible for those with greater power to consider the possibility of trusting both the process and their adversaries. The understanding of suffering is central to the Buddhist conception of reconciliation, which we consider in the next section.

The Buddhist Conception of Reconciliation as Awareness and Understanding of Suffering

The understanding and awareness of self and other that are required in satyagraha are also at the core of the Buddhist conception of reconciliation, encapsulated by Thich Nhat Hanh's brief definition: "Reconciliation is to understand both sides, to go to one side and describe the suffering being endured by the other side, and then to go to the other side and describe the suffering being endured by the first side" (1987, p. 70). For Buddhists, reconciliation is based on awareness--of the complex social, political and psychological forces manifested in different conflicts, and of the interconnectedness of all beings and things. In his explication of understanding, Thich Nhat Hanh emphasizes the same kind of
engaged and bodily awareness that Krondorfer's students enacted in their rituals.

"Understanding," writes Thich Nhat Hanh, involves

the ability to recognize the physical, material and psychological suffering of others, to put ourselves 'inside the skin' of the other. We 'go inside' their body, feelings, and mental formations, and witness for ourselves their suffering. Shallow observation as an outsider is not enough to see their suffering. We must become one with the object of our observation. When we are in contact with another's suffering, a feeling of compassion is born in us (1992, p. 82).

It is relatively easy to acknowledge the suffering of someone who is ill or oppressed. But as Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us, even those with more than enough material comforts suffer. And with disciplined meditation, we can come to see and understand the suffering even of those who caused us harm. When we understand the reasons for the hurtful action, perhaps inadequate parenting, "we will no longer blame him for making us suffer, because we know that he is also a victim. To look deeply is to understand. Once we understand, we will long for him to suffer less" (Hanh, 1992, p. 83).

Thich Nhat Hanh's compassion extends to those who have abused positions of power, including the whites in South Africa, American veterans of the Viet Nam war, even to the pirates who rape young girls fleeing from Viet Nam:

When you first learn of something like that, you get angry at the pirate. You naturally take the side of the girl. As you look more deeply you will see it differently....In my meditation I saw that if I had been born in the village of the pirate and raised in the same conditions as he was, I am now the pirate. I cannot condemn myself so easily. ...Many babies are born along the Gulf of Siam, hundreds every day, and if we educators, social workers, politicians, and others do not do something about the situation, in 25 years a number of them will become sea pirates. That is certain. If you or I were born today in those fishing villages, we might become sea pirates in 25 years. If you take a gun and shoot the pirate, you shoot all of us, because all of us are to some extent responsible for this state of affairs (1992, p. 62).

Like satyagraha, the Buddhist notion of reconciliation, however, does not equate all suffering to the point that it obliterates distinctions between the poor and the privileged,
oppressor and oppressed. In fact, cognizance of such differences are a prerequisite for true understanding. Thich Nhat Hanh makes it clear that the mental anguish experienced by many westerners because their lives feel meaningless is real suffering; but we still enjoy the material benefits of a world economic order that each day allows 40,000 children to die from hunger. We can remain in touch with the world if we allow ourselves to feel both our suffering and the suffering of the hungry child (Hanh, 1987 p. 4). Awareness allows us to make choices to live, act and speak in ways that lessen the suffering, and to refrain from acting and speaking in ways that perpetuate the inequities that create the suffering. It is our resistance to the feelingful awareness of suffering that keeps us out of touch, alienated.

In the previous four sections, we have considered aspects of conflict resolution that promote warranted trust between former adversaries: the practice of apology and forgiveness, rituals of other kinds, the recognition of inequities and the understanding of suffering. Before attempting to synthesize these into a definition of reconciliation for the purposes of this inquiry, we will consider two additional ideas that are central to some concepts of reconciliation: the overcoming of alienation, and conflict resolution as transformation.

Overcoming Alienation and Transformation

On several occasions, our analysis has drawn on a study of reconciliation by the philosopher Michael O. Hardimon, Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation (1994). According to Hardimon, Hegel's entire social philosophy can be understood as a project of reconciliation in which the concept of alienation is central. (p.84) Hegel argued in favor of the reconciliation of the individual with modern, capitalist, industrial society. In his philosophy, reconciliation referred to the process of overcoming the "felt experience of alienation" that occurs when people feel "split" from institutions, "regarding them as foreign, bifurcating, and hostile or indifferent to their needs. Many people also feel split within themselves, divided by the conflicting aims of realizing their individuality and being members of the community" (Hardimon, 1994, p. 1).
Like Hardimon and Hegel, I also understand reconciliation to be a concept that finds its opposite in a conception of alienation. But my use of the terms 'reconciliation' and 'alienation' are distinct from Hegel's in two important ways. First, I am concerned about reconciliation not between the individual and society, but as a reciprocal process between individuals and/or members of groups, each of which is capable of understanding the other, and each of which undergoes a transformation. Second, the alienation to which I refer is not the division within a person because of the conflicting imperatives of individuality and community membership, nor the experience of being split from the social, institutional world. My interest is in the estrangement from other human beings and from one's own moral principles that accompanies prolonged periods of enmity, partisanship, oppression and/or violence. In this context, 'alienation' refers to the kind of estrangement we feel from another person when we perceive them to be outside of a community of shared moral values and norms. It describes the state of mutual disregard that almost always accompanies war, when enemies "dehumanize" each other to the point that moral injunctions against taking life and inflicting harm no longer seem applicable. This kind of separation from another as a thinking, feeling being worthy of fairness and respect seems both to allow and to result from on-going violence of many kinds, including direct injury to property and person, as well the structural violence of economic exploitation, colonialism, and sustained oppression.

An interesting and important feature of this kind of alienation from the other is that it appears to be accompanied by corresponding splitting within oneself, a separation from one's own moral sensibilities. The effects of rigidly held, hostile attitudes towards others is noted by bell hooks (1993), who fears for the corrosive effects of bitterness towards whites on African-Americans themselves:

Healing inner wounds makes reconciliation possible. Reconciliation... evoke[s] our capacity to restore to harmony that which has been broken, severed, and disrupted....To be at peace, black women, especially those among us who have been deeply wounded and hurt, must release the bitterness we hold within us. Bitterness is like a poison. When it's inside us, it spreads even to the parts of the self that allow us to feel joy and a spirit of
celebration...Our capacity to forgive always allows us to be in touch with our own agency (that is the power to act on our own behalf to change a situation). Enslaved black people clearly understood the need to remain in touch with all those aspects of the self that enabled them to experience agency. Without agency, we collapse into passivity, inertia, depression and despair (pp. 163-167).

Reconciliation is a concept that recognizes two sites of alienation and seeks to overcome them both. This feature of alienation--i.e., that it is characterized by estrangement from both an other and from one's own moral sensibilities--contributes to the imperative towards self-transformation that is a part of reconciliation. For Krondorfer (1995), the German theologian who works with Jewish and German young people, reconciliation is strongly associated with the notion of transformation. As with bell hook's conception, the transformation he seeks is based on an increased understanding of the other that simultaneously deepens one's relationship to and awareness of oneself. In Krondorfer's view, reconciliation implies overcoming mistrust and animosity; it represents an end to alienation--from the other and, therefore, from aspects of one's self.8

The fundamental nature of the changes required by reconciliation also is highlighted by peace activist and mediator Louise Diamond (1994), who refers to her work as 'conflict transformation.' For Diamond, the transformation occurs not only in people's relationships with each other and their understandings of themselves, but also in their understanding of the conflict itself. Once the conflict has been analyzed, disputants often discover that their actual needs are not mutually exclusive, as they first appeared to be. Disputants must seek solutions that address the underlying needs of all parties. These may be quite different, of course, than the "positions" that are first brought to the table. Diamond's description of conflict transformation suggests a systemic change that engages people intellectually, emotionally, physically and spiritually:

Discovering peace requires the transformation of the conflict-habituated system. Transforming conflict is different from managing or resolving conflict. To transform conflict is to work systemically to change the very assumptions, beliefs and perceptions of the parties in conflict, as well as to open the doors to creative solutions and new behaviors. To transform conflict is to deal with the root issues and needs being expressed in the conflict situation, not just to bridge different positions. To transform conflict...
is to release the energy bound in the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual patterns of thought and action that have built up over time, and to reshape that energy into new and more positive patterns of relationship. To transform conflict is to discover peace (p. 2).9

A Conception of Reconciliation for this Study

To summarize then, we understand reconciliation to refer to both the means and ends of creating a relationship based on shared moral principles following a period of alienation. Central to the concept are notions of respect, trust, justice, awareness of suffering, and transformation. The following definition seeks to incorporate the key elements of the concept:

Reconciliation refers to the re-creation and/or creation of the moral framework of a relationship through which individuals and groups overcome alienation by engaging in transformative processes that in themselves embody the norms of respect and fairness intended for their new relationship.

As they engage in on-going processes of reconciliation, i.e., as they understand each other's suffering, acknowledge injustices, and strive to address both unresolved and emerging conflicts in ways that meet their underlying needs, the parties to conflict become increasingly trusting and trustworthy.

The definition refers to two distinct situations: (1) the re-creation of a moral framework among people or groups who have previously considered themselves to be part of such a community; and (2) to the creation of a moral framework among people who do not perceive themselves to be part of a moral community. Although these two kinds of reconciliation have much in common, the quality of the change inherent in each is somewhat different.
In the case of conflicts that have alienated from each other members of a previously existing moral community, (i.e., the re-creation of a moral community) reconciliation might represent a return--to a familiar order, to the expected, normative roles. The reintegration will enjoy a quality of transcendence: we may be returning to previously held values, but we now understand that our relationship is strong enough to withstand conflict. We understand each other better, and know more about each other's needs, fears, capacities and limits. The fact that we've witnessed each other choose reconciliation over our own particular cause may also create conditions for greater trust.\(^{10}\) We will have learned about ourselves and each other, but reconciliations of this sort do not require us to re-examine fundamental beliefs.

The remainder of this inquiry will focus on reconciliations of the latter sort: the creation of moral frameworks for relationships among groups of people--such as Israelis and Palestinians; or Jewish-Americans and Palestinian-Americans; or Bosnians, Croats and Serbs; or Catholics and Protestants in Ireland; or African-American and white communities in Boston--who differ substantially in culture, religion and/or language. In terms of learning, such reconciliations represent challenges of a much higher order. They require disputants to imagine the possibility of an agreed upon moral framework for their relationship, where one has never before existed, or at least where they believe one has never before existed. They also require parties to conflict to call into question their own beliefs and understandings, to critically assess the constructs through which they perceive what is real, what is meaningful, and what they believe to be true.

'Reconciliation' refers to processes that are on-going. It is not an end, to be achieved, but a way of relating, to be lived. As Adrienne Rich (1979) writes about "truth," similarly reconciliation "is not one thing, or even a system. It is an increasing complexity" (p. 187). Reconciliation integrates means and ends, justice and mercy, tradition and transformation. It is an ideal that can seem unreachable, but that paradoxically creates itself in moments of its becoming.
CHAPTER 3

THE EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION

In this chapter, I propose a set of criteria that conflict resolution processes must meet to be considered 'reconciliation.' Embedded within these criteria are references to enhancing understanding and the restoration of capacities, making the education of disputants central to this conception of reconciliation. The criteria also refer to concepts with ethical import, such as 'trust,' 'fairness,' 'integrity,' 'agency,' and 'justice.' They establish reconciliation clearly as a concept with both educational and ethical significance.

In the second section of this chapter, I assess the relationship between 'reconciliation' and 'education' on a conceptual level. A commitment to participants' and students' integrity creates an important theoretical link between the two concepts.

In the third section, I consider the implications of using the methods and concepts of moral philosophy to guide this inquiry into reconciliation. Specifically, I consider whether using a discourse of 'morality' limits the usefulness of the proposed conception of reconciliation in the context of cultures other than Western.

The Criteria Implicit in Reconciliation

There are infinitely many possibilities for structuring the processes of reconciliation; every conflict situation will require and help shape its own response. The term 'reconciliation' does not refer to certain strategies for resolving conflicts, or certain outcomes. Rather, it invokes a set of criteria that constrain both processes and outcomes; in other words, in order to qualify as 'reconciliation,' efforts to resolve conflicts must fall within certain parameters. This section proposes five criteria that conflict resolution processes must meet in order to qualify as reconciliation.
Understanding that reconciliation refers to the transformation of conflicts between individuals, members of groups, or collectivities that have been alienated from each other, in the sense that they perceive each other as outside of the group to which normal moral considerations apply, to be considered 'reconciliation,' conflict resolution processes must:

- embody norms of mutual respect and fairness intended to characterize the adversaries' future relationship;
- enhance disputants' capacity to trust and be trustworthy, however gradual that process might be;
- expand disputants' understanding of their own and each other's suffering, as experienced and interpreted by those who suffer;
- engage adversaries in acknowledging and when possible and appropriate, redressing, past injustices; and
- recognize participants' integrity as moral agents and when necessary, restoring the moral capacities required for the work of reconciliation.

In the rest of this section, I will consider how the learning implicit in these five criteria contributes to the creation of a moral framework for a new relationship among former enemies.

Embodying Norms of Mutual Respect and Fairness Intended to Characterize the Adversaries' Future Relationship

The significance of this criterion can be grasped by comparing reconciliation to methods for settling conflicts that fall on the opposite end of the spectrum, such as the winning of a war or the coercive imposition of a settlement either by a contender or by an outsider. These activities can be seen as transformative--if not of people's consciousness, then certainly of realities on the ground. But they are far from reflecting the kind of fairness and reciprocity of respect that would characterize a relationship following a reconciliation.
Violence and oppression often leave the participants unequally prepared for the work of reconciliation. The two communities may, for instance, have had unequal access to educational opportunities, and, therefore, their skills in debate, their knowledge of history, their access to technology, etc., may be extremely disparate. Participants may enjoy different degrees of freedom and have unequal access to resources needed to travel, communicate with constituencies, build alliances, etc. The processes of reconciliation must account for these differences, in part by incorporating ideas from participants themselves about measures that would "level the playing field." Within the boundaries of conflict resolution workshops, rituals, or other activities, it may be possible to realize an approximation of fairness that would not yet be possible in the societies at large.

Although participants themselves will decide how to define and enact respect and fairness, two particular ideas about respect from the Western philosophical tradition may be useful for our purposes. 'Respect' entails relating to others not only as means to our own ends, but as people who have purposes, intentions and projects of their own. To respect someone is also to recognize that they have potentials that may not yet be developed; we respect others when we treat them as capable of learning and growing.

Embodying norms of mutual respect and fairness can represent a particular challenge in efforts at reconciliation across cultural differences. Participants' might hold quite disparate understandings of fairness and respect and how commitments to them can be enacted. The moral philosopher Dwight Boyd (1989) has addressed a related issue by calling for meta-level conversations among members of various cultural communities in pluralistic societies to resolve the intellectual and ethical paradoxes inherent in constructing an overarching moral order while still respecting the integrity of each sub-group. He argues that preparing present and future citizens for participation in such conversations is a responsibility of educators. Similarly, mediators must often engage the various parties in learning about each others' values and sensitivities, in order to be able to create processes...
that they mutually agree to be fair. This often can be the stage of the reconciliation process most difficult to accomplish.

In establishing norms of fairness and respect to govern the processes of conflict resolution, and in deciding on the substance of those norms, previously alienated adversaries begin the process of creating a new moral framework for their relationship. A process agreed to be fair and respectful can also contribute to the establishment of trust, the topic to which we turn next.

Enhancing Disputants' Capacity to Trust and Be Trustworthy

As we noted previously, according to Annette Baier (1994), to trust someone is to place ourselves or something we care about in a position to be injured, knowing that the other party could inflict harm, but believing they will choose not to do so. It is difficult to engender trust in a situation where people are filled with mistrust and, in fact, have behaved in ways that warrant distrust. In situations in which people have become alienated from each other, it is often the case that they mistrust each other not only because of hurtful behaviors, but because they have come to perceive each other as the kind of person (or the kind of people) who cannot be trusted. Challenging these perceptions is difficult because in violent or repressive conflicts, each group is likely to fulfill the other's most negative stereotypes. They fulfill these stereotypes in part because of hostile actions, and in part because even non-hostile actions and words are perceived through the filter of the other as "evil," "demon," "enemy," etc. Mediators can minimize the distorting effects of stereotypes to interrupt cycles of mistrust by clarifying adversaries' meanings and interpreting, to each other, their intentions.

The conceptions of reconciliation held by Gandhi (1961), Martin Luther King (1963), Ghosananda (1992) and Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) pay particular attention to interrupting cycles of mistrust. By separating out the evil policies from the persons, and by insisting on relating (even) to the oppressor with love and respect, they create a possibility for the establishment of trust, even across differences in power. In the single act of
insisting on the potential trustworthiness of their oppressor, these leaders' of
disenfranchised peoples simultaneously present both themselves and their adversaries as
the "kind of persons" who could be trusted.

However, trusting itself is not a sign of reconciliation; it is possible to trust naively
and open oneself to further injury or abuse. The trusting must be warranted, or, in other
words, the person being trusted must become increasingly trustworthy. How do people
previously in conflict increase their capacity to be trustworthy? It seems that the first step is
to risk seeking a resolution to the conflict in ways that are respectful and fair, or, at least,
that do not violate the integrity of the other party. It is difficult to enact such a commitment
when one is unsure whether the other party will reciprocate. For this reason, conflict
resolution processes often include "confidence-building measures." Each party takes
risks, perhaps small at first, but growing in intensity as agreements are kept and trust is
built. Hostility and violence can spiral in rapid intensity, but trust usually must be rebuilt in
slow, incremental steps.

However, even after our intentions not to harm the other are firm, further steps are
required to warrant a former adversaries' trust. To avoid offending or violating the other
unintentionally, we must learn about the other's systems of meaning (i.e., the myths, the
narratives and symbol systems that inform and reveal the perspective of the other.). To
become worthy of the trust of someone who has been an enemy requires coming to know
them and to understand the world through their eyes. In contexts of violent conflict, in
which people suffer injuries and losses of all kinds, becoming trustworthy means being
willing to understand our adversary, including her suffering. And developing the capacity
to be present to another's suffering often means learning first how to be present to our
own.

Expanding Disputants' Understanding of Their Own and Each Other's Suffering

Suffering is a complicated phenomenon, with physical, emotional, cognitive and
cultural dimensions. To understand our own suffering—including ways in which we
ourselves might exacerbate it—is no simple task. Often parties to violence and oppression have rigid perceptions of their own suffering: they become stuck in either denial and repression, on the one hand, or in attachment to the status of victim, on the other. The processes of reconciliation must help people gain the kind of understanding of their own suffering that allows for the possibility of change.

Understanding the suffering of one’s own group—and mourning its losses—can be critical in creating the possibility of change in a conflict-habituated system. The psychological work of grieving is often required before victims can look to the future rather than try to recoup past losses (Montville, 1989, p.305).

To attend only to the losses of one’s own group, however important, is insufficient for reconciliation. In her book *A Strategy for Peace*, the philosopher Sissela Bok (1989) describes the dangers of partisanship, when people in conflict to attend exclusively to the suffering on their own side. She quotes Stephen Spender describing his growing awareness of the implications of his own partisanship, during the Spanish Civil War:

> When I saw photographs of children, murdered by fascists, I felt furious pity. When the supporters of Franco talked of Red atrocities, I merely felt indignant that people should tell such lies. In the first case I saw corpses, in the second only words. [Gradually it became] clear to me that unless I cared about every murdered child impartially, I did not care about children being murdered at all (Spender, 1949, pp. 253-254, cited in Bok, 1989, p. 9).

The Pakistani anthropologist and scholar of Islam Akbar Ahmed (1992) similarly acknowledges that the moral risks and dilemmas... are as terrible for the persecutor as the persecuted, the aggressor as the victim... When we see reports from Israel on television showing a mother with tears streaming down her face, crying in grief for her dead child, do we really pause to enquire whose side it was on, Arab or Jew? A mother’s grief is universal and we pray that the killing ceases; if we cannot, something is already dead in us” (pp. 73-74).

To acknowledge that my former enemies’ suffering matters is to expand the circle of those about whose welfare I care. And understanding their suffering, in a feelingful or empathic way, helps to create a moral framework for our relationship, because it reaffirms my capacity as a moral being (i.e., I am capable of feeling another’s suffering) as well as...
my former enemies' status as a sentient being (i.e., therefore worthy of moral consideration).

The idea that understanding suffering should play a major role in the resolution of conflicts is not without its opponents, a topic to which we will return later in this chapter. For now it is sufficient to imagine the various kinds of learning involved in the understanding of suffering, and to acknowledge that this criterion exists in tension with the next, which focuses our attention of the matter of justice.

Engaging Adversaries in Acknowledging, and When Possible and Appropriate, Redressing, Past Injustices

Like the understanding of suffering, mutual recognition of past injustices similarly contributes to creating a new moral framework for the relationship among former adversaries. All agree that offending behaviors, however perceived at the time, are unacceptable now. A common assessment of past events can lay the groundwork for agreements about the future.

Agreeing about the justice of past actions, or about a sense of justice to inform future institutional arrangements, however, can be difficult and complicated. Noam Chomsky explains, for instance, "that when conflicting parties speak of peace, the definition of what they mean is usually similar. When they speak of justice, however, matters are not so simple as justice is much harder to define. The just demands of conflicting nations often seem incompatible" (cited in Kazak, 1994, p. 227).

'Justice' is a concept with many dimensions. The word can refer to a sense of fairness in many different arenas, including in relation to economic equity (distributive justice), punishment (retributive justice), access to power (political and social justice), and legal processes (procedural justice). Adversaries may bring to the processes of conflict resolution opposing sensibilities about which arena of injustice requires more attention; and they may represent cultures that differ in beliefs about justice, for instance about whether reason or revelation is understood to be the source of judicial authority (Khadduri, 1984).
In practical terms, historians of non-violent justice struggles note that in contexts of extreme inequities often the dominant group is guilty of acts that, by any reasonable standard, are criminal and deserving of punishment. Still, it is much easier to resolve conflicts if a settlement is offered that all parties can live with. If the goal is vengeance or punishment, rather than a relatively simple end to injustice, the dominant group is more likely to harden its resistance. This tendency suggests that there may be a trade-off between demands for punishment and the speed with which one moves towards a more just society (Burgess and Burgess, 1994, p. 275).

However, the question of what role 'justice' plays in the work of reconciliation requires considerations beyond those of expediency. To eschew concern about justice is to risk imposing the "peace of the master-slave relationship." It could lead to a settlement that reifies inequitable structures or legitimizes past aggression; to do so would undermine the possibility of trust.

But too stringent a notion of justice will make our conception of reconciliation irrelevant to many conflicts—conflicts, for example, in which, adversaries cannot agree on a conception of justice, or when the violence has been so extensive and prolonged that a truly 'just' solution is no longer tenable. Justice understood as retribution, for instance, especially if untempered by care or compassion (Baier, 1994, p. 18), can be totally antithetical to the integrative intentions of reconciliation (Cordella, 1991). A sense of justice that focuses attention solely on assigning blame can deny the complexity of the forces that contributed to the injustice, and preclude much of the learning necessary for reconciliation (Hanh, 1987; Houston, 1992).

A way out of this dilemma can be found in conceptions of justice invoked by those committed to reconciliation. As we noted above, Martin Luther King Jr. advocated resolving "injustices with a plan of action." Gandhi conceived of social justice as the unattainable "truth" towards which we continually reach. For both of these leaders, then, reconciliation recognized and resolved injustices not through punishment, but through action designed to change the conditions that gave rise to the injustice and to ameliorate, if
not eliminate, its effects. Similarly, South Africa's experiment with the 'Truth and Reconciliation' commission places a higher value on truth than on punishment.

Feminist activists working simultaneously on prison reform and the reduction of sexual violence make use of a notion of 'restorative justice' that has African origins:

[W]e need a new system of restorative justice based on social and economic justice and on concern and respect for all victims and victimizers, a new system based on remedies and restoration rather than on prison punishment and victim neglect, a new system rooted in the concept of a caring community....The victimizer must take responsibility for his sexual crimes. But the community also must examine its responsibility for the behaviors--must uncover the societal roots of sexual violence, understand them, and find ways to reduce the potential for such violence to occur (Knopp, 1991, p. 184, 192).

Acknowledging injustice is important in reconciliation because it can interrupt cycles of revenge. 'Restorative justice' does not eliminate the possibility of punishment, but it challenges all parties to agree on the norms of justice that will guide their relationship in the future. 'Restorative justice' is a conception of justice that is consistent with other criteria of reconciliation, namely respect for all parties, enhancing adversaries' capacities to trust and be trustworthy, and an understanding of the suffering on all sides. It promotes a broad sense of responsibility for injustices, reflecting and engendering an interdependence among members of a community. As parties to a conflict determine a response to past violations, restorative justices emphasizes inclusion rather than exclusion, reinterpretation rather than adjudication, compensation rather than retribution, and learning on all sides (Cordella, 1991, p. 30). 14

Recognizing Participants' Integrity as Moral Agents and When Necessary, Restoring the Moral Capacities Required for the Work of Reconciliation

After twenty-two years in South African prisons, Nelson Mandela was offered "freedom" if he would renounce the use of violence. Not wanting to shift world attention away from the violence inherent in the apartheid system, he refused the offer, and remained imprisoned for five additional years. His reasons for refusing the offer were read by his daughter in a speech delivered to a cheering crowd:

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What freedom am I being offered while the organization of the people remains banned? What freedom am I being offered when I may be arrested on a pass offense? What freedom am I being offered to live my life as a family with my dear wife who remains in banishment in Brandfort? What freedom am I being offered when I must ask for permission to live in an urban area? .... What freedom am I being offered when my very South African citizenship is not respected?

Only free men [sic] can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts....I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free (Mandela, 1995, p. 523).

Reconciliation requires that those who engage in its processes be moral agents. According to traditional Western conceptions of agency this means that they be autonomous, rational individuals capable of making choices, and speaking and acting freely and responsibly. In addition to those associated with standard notions of agency, reconciliation requires other moral capacities, such as the ability to experience and express emotions, and to imagine circumstances more just and more peaceful than those present. We saw earlier how even the simple acts of apology and forgiveness, to be effective, require freedom of choice: the appropriate words, spoken without heartfelt understanding, will not suffice. Barriers to the capacities required for reconciliation can be institutional, in the case of Mandela, or subjective, as suggested by bell hooks in the passage about the insidious effects of unresolved bitterness cited above.

Violence is sometimes defined as the intentional undermining of another's capacity for agency. It is not surprising, therefore, that people who have been involved in long-standing violent conflicts must recover capacities that have been eclipsed. As we shall see, the restoring of damaged capacities contributes to the educational challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation. (This idea is developed more fully in Chapter 7.)

This criterion calls for the recognition of participants' integrity as moral agents. At first glance, the notion of 'integrity'--often understood to imply an unwavering commitment to a particular set of values--may appear in conflict with the quality of transformation inherent in reconciliation. This apparent dilemma can be resolved with help from the feminist philosophers Victoria Davion (1991) and Maria Lugones (1990). They argue it is possible to maintain a sense of integrity even while changing radically. To do
so, we must monitor our own processes of change, and ensure that various dimensions of
our selves (or our various selves) do not undermine each other.

The term 'reconciliation' refers to a process that takes place over time. Every step
of that process may not meet all these criteria; for instance, a gathering of disputants may
begin with trust-building activities that do not, in themselves, increase people's
understanding of past injustices. But over time, an entire process of reconciliation must
meet all five criteria. Its sub-processes must embody norms of fairness and respect;
enhance disputants capacity to trust and be trustworthy; increase adversaries understanding
of their own and each others' suffering; acknowledge, and if appropriate compensate for
past injustices; and recognize the integrity of the moral agency of all parties, and, when
necessary, restore moral capacities that have been impaired by violence. Participants
themselves, with help if they choose, must agree to the sequence and balance of activities.
Drawing from the resources of their own cultures, they must decide through their actions
how to give substance to each of these criteria.

By insisting participants' integrity be respected, we disallow from consideration as
reconciliation techniques of indoctrination or manipulation. We also increase the likelihood
that the processes of reconciliation themselves will warrant participants' trust. The
commitment to the integrity of participants creates a strong conceptual link with education,
a subject we consider in the next section.

The Relationship between Reconciliation and Conceptions of Education

In the previous section, we saw that reconciliation is a concept that refers not to a
particular set of processes, but rather to the criteria such processes must meet. In this
regard, the concept of reconciliation is like the concept of education, as it is understood by
R. S. Peters (1966), a philosopher whose conception of education has been particularly
influential in the English-speaking world. (Houston, 1977, p.1) Education, Peters argues,
does not refer to specific activities, such as lecturing, or even more general concepts, like
training, or even teaching. Rather, 'education' refers to certain criteria to which such

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activities and processes must conform (Peters, 1966, p. 22). In brief, according to Peters, 'education' refers to the intentional transmission of what is worthwhile; being initiated into the practice of torture would not qualify as education no matter how broad and deep one's understanding. 'Education requires' that learners gain a cognitive perspective on their knowledge and understanding; in other words, they must not only come to believe certain facts, but they must come to understand the nature of the evidence that leads to their beliefs, and the procedures through which those beliefs can be criticized and revised. Also, to qualify as 'education,' students must participate willingly and voluntarily in their learning; the processes through they become initiated must be morally unobjectionable.

In addition to being a similar kind of concept, reconciliation has other affinities with the concept of education. In distinguishing 'education' from 'training,' for instance, Peters refers to the cognitive breadth and the ability to take a critical stance towards one's own beliefs. It is clear that the capacity and willingness to take such a critical stance and to understand deeply is a centerpiece of the work of reconciliation—not just about the beliefs one holds by virtue of one's academic orientation (i.e., as a scientist, or philosopher, or literary critic) but also about the beliefs one holds by virtue of being a member of a particular community, or religious faith, or nationality. We must become committed to seek that which is truly worthwhile, not accept without question those values and character traits deemed worthwhile by those who socialized us. (Houston, 1977, p.43 ) The processes of reconciliation must meet the criteria of education in these ways, then: they must initiate disputants in the practice of reflecting critically on their beliefs, and seeking depth and breadth of understanding (at least of the historical, cultural and political circumstances that are relevant to the conflict.)

There are other ways in which our conception of reconciliation requires processes of learning and teaching that meet Peters' standards of education. For instance, our requirements that reconciliation processes recognize participants' integrity and enhance disputants' moral capacities and embody the norms of fairness and respect mean that, of
necessity, Peters' requirements for voluntariness and wittingness will also be met. Also, our requirement that the reconciliation enhances people's capacities to trust and be trustworthy echoes Peters' concern that learning not be 'inert': in order to become trustworthy, one must not hold one's learning detached from how one lives daily life. Trust requires that our newfound perceptions inform our actions.

Feminist educational philosophers including Jane Roland Martin (1981) and Nel Noddings (1992) have critiqued Peters' conception of the 'educated man' (or 'educated person') on the grounds that it emphasizes the cognitive to the exclusion of emotional and intuitive faculties, and that it emphasizes caring about knowledge more than caring about persons. They argue that Peters' (and related) conceptions of education disregard the capacities required for the reproductive activities that, broadly understood, have, in most cultures, been understood as 'women's work.' The criteria implicit in our conception of reconciliation do not suffer from this shortcoming. Reconciliation requires a feelingful understanding of suffering; it requires that we use our knowledge and understanding in service of our caring--for others and ourselves. (The link among thinking, caring and peacemaking is the centerpiece of Sara Ruddick's work, *Maternal Thinking*, which argues that the sensibilities required for peace-making evolve from the thinking required by the work of mothering [Ruddick, 1989, p.242]). Reconciliation as an educative concept embraces both rationality and emotions, both critical thinking and empathic awareness.

Regarding its engagement of the "whole person," reconciliation is consistent with yet a third conception of education: that of the philosopher Martin Buber (in Cohen, 1983). Buber argues that adult education, in particular, should focus not so much on the acquisition of new information or skills, but rather on the adaptation of knowledge in "intellectually independent and purposive" ways so that students are "able to form personal opinions that are soundly based on the reality of both their own lives and the life of the group" (Cohen, 1983, p. 230). His entire philosophy is based on the possibility of an authentic encounter of one being with another, of a relationship of mutuality in which one
enters into straightforward relationships, when an other becomes an actual presence. Buber rejects as an educational goal the tolerance of ideologies other than our own, arguing that it is not neutrality that is demanded of us, but rather "to enter into union, into a life of shared responsibility for one another and reciprocal influence" (Cohen, 1983, p. 241). Such authentic encounters are central to both reconciliation and education.

Buber's emphasis on the educational implications of authentic, trusting encounters helps us see that just as in most cases reconciliation has embedded within it processes we would call educative, in many circumstances, the relationships upon which education depends must entail processes of reconciliation. Consider contexts in which teachers, on the one hand, and students and their families, on the other, identify with different communities, each in conflict with the other, or one in a position of dominance over the other. In such cases, it will take work for students, parents and teachers to come to trust each other, to be genuinely open to the virtues of each other's systems of symbols and values. Similarly, reconciliation may be a prerequisite to achieving a true community of inquiry among students who are alienated from each other because of identities based on gender, sexual orientation, class or race. When efforts at school reform require the integration of alienated factions (of teachers, administrators and parents, for instance, or supporters of opposing educational philosophies and practices) their success will likely depend on some processes that resemble reconciliation. Resolving differences will include the building of trust, an understanding of inequities and suffering, and the engagement (or in some cases repair) of each party's agency. These processes would likely meet the standards we have come to associate here with reconciliation.

Reconciliation engages participants cognitively, emotionally, creatively and spiritually in the understanding of both self and other. It requires trust and imagination, yet often takes place in circumstances that have undermined people's capacities to trust and imagine. The educational tasks associated with reconciliation are daunting.
Reconciliation is an educational concept, in that it refers to a set of criteria that protect and nourish learners' integrity throughout processes that are designed to be transformative. In our conception, incorporating as it does notions of fairness, respect, trust, integrity and agency, reconciliation is also an ethical concept. Explicating this assertion is the task of the final section of this chapter.

Assessing Moral Philosophy as the Framework for Understanding Reconciliation

Although I have drawn on insights from anthropology, political psychology, theology and other disciplines, by defining reconciliation as "overcoming moral alienation" and the "creation of a moral framework for a relationship" and by using the tools of philosophical analysis, I have placed this inquiry squarely within the field of moral philosophy.

Some conflict resolution practitioners warn against using the language of 'morality.' It evokes fears about the imposition of values and of moral judgments that would be unhelpful and unnecessary to the processes of reconciliation. "'Morality' is such a value-laden term," wrote one practitioner in response to an earlier draft of these chapters. She noted, for instance, that when facilitating conflict resolution processes between opponents on the abortion issue, many mediators have concluded that engaging people's beliefs about the morality of abortion is counterproductive. Another concern is that for people in developing countries, a discourse infused with the language of morality might be resisted as yet another Western imposition.\textsuperscript{15}

Several helpful precautions are embedded within this critique. There are kinds of judgments, evoked for many people by the notion of 'moralizing,' that are counterproductive to the intentions of reconciliation; as educators, mediators and participants in the processes of reconciliation we must take care to avoid them. For instance, judgments we make about our adversaries prior to attempting to understand salient aspects of their experience--including, for instance, the various pressures that influenced and constrained their choices, the emotional and interpretive frameworks in
which they operated, their intentions—such judgments are likely to engender defensive reactions and cut short the communication required for reconciliation. However, reconciliation does not require us to altogether eschew making judgments about the actions of our adversaries or our own group; in fact, rituals of apology and forgiveness, often central to reconciliation, depend upon such judgments. It does require us to temper our judgments with understanding, and to balance our recognition of injustices and inequities with an awareness of the suffering on all sides.

Another important critique is that moral judgments (particularly of a dominant group) can be used in efforts to control others (particularly members of the subordinate group). "Ethics itself," writes Sarah Hoagland, "has been a tool of control" (1989, p. 246) Colonial systems, for instance, which have been supported through notions of moral superiority and the imposition of norms designed to protect the status quo and subvert rebellion. Paul Salem (1993), the political scientist working on issues of conflict at the American University in Beirut, argues that the prevailing paradigm of conflict resolution, in emphasizing peace over justice, unconsciously reinforces both a Christian worldview and the West's dominant position in the global economy. "All successful 'empires' develop an inherent interest in peace" (p.365), he writes, whereas from the outsider's perspective what matters is the success of the struggle. In Arab contexts, the Western emphasis on peace itself is perceived by some as a moralizing imposition.

It appears that the framework of moral philosophy, and, in particular, using the terms 'moral' and 'morality' could be significant liabilities in accomplishing the work of reconciliation. To decide whether it makes sense to revise the language and/or the framework of our analysis we consider three questions:

(1) Is reconciliation necessarily a matter of morality?

(2) Even if reconciliation is understood to entail moral questions, must the words 'moral' and 'morality' be used in defining, analyzing and presenting concepts?
(3) By grounding this analysis in the framework of moral philosophy, are we not risking that a) it will be perceived as culturally biased, and b) its usefulness will, in fact, be constrained by culturally biased assumptions?

Reconciliation as a Concept with Ethical Significance

In the preceding chapters, we have developed a definition of reconciliation that refers to "overcoming moral alienation" and "establishing a moral framework for relationships." 'Moral alienation' refers to the conditions of dehumanization, demonization or estrangement, in which the constraints that generally govern interactions among people--i.e., injunctions against killing and lying, for instance--do not apply. While not all conceptions of reconciliation refer to "overcoming moral alienation" and "creating a moral framework for relationships," all make some reference to the establishment of conditions that do, in fact, have ethical significance. They refer, for instance, to the establishment of trust, willingness to take risks, the reclaiming of individual and collective identity, the mutual acknowledgement of past injuries, the importance of respect. As we noted in Chapter 3, it is its insistence on the establishment of trust that distinguishes 'reconciliation' from 'tolerance.' And what allows former adversaries to begin to trust is that, in the process of resolving their conflicts, adversaries are, either overtly or in effect, jointly deciding the moral principles upon which their future relationships will be based, and revealing their willingness to abide by those principles. Often in incremental steps, former adversaries agree to take the risks associated with being in relationship.

Whatever the language used to describe the circumstances reconciliation seeks to redress and the condition it seeks to create, 'reconciliation' inevitably refers to the moral framework of the relationship, i.e., the values that inform how people will relate with each other. This is true even in the case of efforts at reconciliation between adversaries who might (as in the case of abortion debates) choose to refrain from discussing their moral judgments about the issue per se, but agree to respect each other as persons, for instance by
listening, by seeking to understand each other's intentions, and by refraining from referring
to each other with demonizing epithets.

Because reconciliation inevitably entails trust, and because it establishes a
relationships based on the values that allow for trust to be warranted, then, regardless of
the language used to describe it, 'reconciliation' is in fact a concept with ethical
significance, and refers to processes that have moral implications. However, because the
discourse of morality evokes concerns about unnecessary judgments and the imposition of
values, it is important to clarify more precisely what is meant by this assertion.

The word 'moral' has two broad uses. In the categorial or classificatory sense, the
word refers to issues or questions that are matters of a particular kind of judgment,
distinguishing such judgments from those of science, law, etiquette, etc. Its opposite is a-
moral, or non-moral. On the other hand, if we advocate for a particular position by
claiming that it is the moral thing to do, we are using the notion of 'morality' in the sense of
appraisal, to refer to a judgment about what is right or good. The opposite of 'morality' in
this sense is immoral, or morally wrong (Houston, 1977, pp. 16-17)

When referring to 'reconciliation' as a moral notion, we are asserting that how
people choose to resolve conflicts is, in the categorial sense, a moral choice (i.e., a choice
with ethical significance.) We leave open the question of whether, in any given conflict,
one ought to engage in reconciliation. (Our purpose is to describe reconciliation, and then
explain how and why, given its educational challenges, once reconciliation has been chosen
as an approach to resolving conflicts, aesthetic forms and processes can be useful.)

The conception of reconciliation we have constructed does propose ethically
significant criteria (in the appraisal sense) that conflict resolution processes must meet in
order to qualify as reconciliation. The processes must (1) embody norms of mutual respect
and fairness; (2) enhance former adversaries' capacities to trust and be trustworthy;
(3) expand disputants' understanding of their own and each other's suffering; (4) engage
adversaries in acknowledging past injustices; and (5) recognize participants' integrity as
moral agents and, when necessary, restore moral capacities. However, the substantive normative moral questions about whether to engage in reconciliation, and if so, how the concepts of trust, fairness, understanding and injustice are to be interpreted must be decided by the parties to the conflict, with help from mediators if all agree. The central intention of reconciliation is precisely to allow, support and facilitate these negotiations about substantive moral issues.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Referring Directly to 'Morality'

According to the moral philosopher Mary Midgley (1993), the term "moral judgment" is often used in a "lopsided, highly selective way" to refer to judgments about others, rather than oneself; to disapproval and blaming assessments rather than favourable judgments; to uncharitable judgments rather than assessments that allow for mitigating circumstances; to past rather than future actions; and to judgments made by detached outsiders (perhaps even superiors or subordinates) rather than by sympathizers or insiders (p. 30). It is for these reasons, in part, that the notion of 'morality' evokes fears of control, imposition, arbitrariness and harshness.

As we have demonstrated, reconciliation calls for many kinds of judgments, including those that, according to Midgely, are less frequently invoked by the terms 'moral judgment.' These include judgments of oneself, judgments that are charitable, judgments that are favourable, and judgments about actions yet to be taken. Reconciliation asks us to focus on understanding the complexity more than on assessing blame--yet acknowledging responsibility is often integral to the processes of reconciliation, as we see in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As much as moral judgments of various kinds are inevitable and useful in the work of reconciliation, it is not necessary in every circumstance to use the word "morality." It may be preferable to refer to dehumanization and demonization of the enemy, rather than moral alienation; or to trust and mutual respect rather than the creation of a moral framework; to values, perhaps, rather than moral judgments. In relation to this and many
other issues, the vocabulary used to describe the theory of reconciliation, and to engage former adversaries in its processes, must be chosen with sensitivity to the understandings and resonances of the people and groups involved.

For the purposes of this theoretical inquiry, however, I believe there is value in forthright and overt reference to categories such as 'moral alienation' and 'moral community.' The framework of moral philosophy suggests several generative and important questions, in particular about individual and collective moral agency and capacities, about integrity, and about the relationships among reconciliation, education, and aesthetic and moral sensibilities. In particular, situating this analysis within the framework of moral philosophy leads to interesting questions about relationships between ways of knowing, or qualities of apprehension, on the one hand, and ethical intentions and capacities for agency on the other. These insights might not have emerged within a different overarching framework.

Although the language of 'morality' might be seen by some as an imposition of Western moralizing, conflict resolution paradigms that minimize judgment also have been criticized as imposing western amorality, psychologizing and secularism (Salem, 1993, p. 366). It is in part because reconciliation requires that adversaries from distinct moral communities create an (implicit or explicit) overarching framework, at least to govern their relations with each other, that its educational challenges are so daunting. We might argue, along with Akbar Ahmed (1992), that it is not moral philosophy, but conversely its absence that creates the greater danger. "The problem with [Western] civilization is the hole where the heart should be, the vacuum inside; there is no moral philosophy or set of principles that drives it. What gives it its dynamic energy is individualism, the desire to dominate, the sheer drive to acquire material items, to hoard..." (p. 109).

No analysis, no discourse, is culturally neutral. Our intention, however, is to create a conception of reconciliation that is useful both in a variety of cultural contexts and to facilitate reconciliations among peoples whose cultures differ from each other. We next
turn to a brief consideration of the usefulness and limitations of our conception of reconciliation as an endeavor with both ethical and educational significance.

Concerns about Cultural Bias

In a recent book, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (1995), Paul Lederach offers a critique of the prevalent paradigm of conflict resolution training, which, he asserts, addresses cultural differences merely through small adjustments to pre-packaged conflict resolution models. He proposes that trainers instead use an "elicitive model," based partly on Freirian techniques that "build from cultural resources within a given setting" (p. 5). His concern is to find conflict resolution strategies and processes that are sustainable in diverse cultural and multicultural settings, and that empower people by fostering "awareness-of-self-in-context" and validating "discovery, naming and creation through reflection and action."

Lederach's work is part of a recent trend within the field of conflict resolution, in which practitioners and theorists are questioning both the adequacy of their methods in addressing conflicts between adversaries of different cultures and the risks of imposing Western approaches on communities in developing countries. The question for this inquiry is whether the conceptual account of reconciliation outlined in these chapters is culturally biased and, if adopted, would represent an imposition of Western values.

There is no doubt that ideas central to Western philosophical traditions inform this conceptual analysis of reconciliation. It includes the notion of individual moral agency, and values the capacity for individuals to reflect not only on the beliefs and values of their cultures but also on their own psychological processes. This analysis also reflects a (Western-style) optimism about the possibility for change and even transformation, and a belief that human suffering, to a degree, can be ameliorated. It values emotional openness and vulnerability—values held more strongly in American and Western cultures than in many traditional societies. These, and perhaps other values of which I am less aware, may
limit the contexts in which this conception is useful; attempts at applying it in diverse situations will likely lead to revisions.

However, while this analysis inevitably reflects aspects of the Western philosophical tradition, as well as proclivities that grow out of my particular social and political identities, I do not believe that the framework of moral philosophy, in itself, diminishes its application in various cultural contexts. We do not propose that adversaries to conflicts themselves engage in moral argumentation, a style of discourse that would be inaccessible to many. To the contrary, as will become clear, our conception of reconciliation emphasizes much more the quality of presence with which former enemies engage each other, rather than concerns about justification or the strength of logical arguments. We intend to show that an array of expressive modes, including a variety of non-linear, aesthetic forms (with diverse cultural roots) be used to engage former adversaries—emotionally as well as cognitively.

By proposing a set of criteria that conflict resolution processes must meet in order to qualify as reconciliation, rather than proposing a sequence of steps or activities, in effect, we invite participants and mediators to interpret these criteria according to the particularities of their contexts, including the values and norms of the cultures represented. Participants themselves will make decisions about the modes of expression, the sequence of activities, the extent to which differences are addressed explicitly or through symbolic forms. Participants and facilitators will choose how to go about establishing trust, mourning losses, and how to balance the focus on historic injustices with attention to the suffering of all parties. The sense of 'justice' that will inform their interaction is up to the participants to choose or to create. The success of the effort will depend to a large extent on participants' abilities to interpret the criteria of reconciliation in terms of the symbolic, conceptual and practical resources of their own cultures.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have proposed five criteria reconciliation processes must meet to qualify as reconciliation according to our conception. These criteria reveal reconciliation to be a concept with both ethical and educational significance. The extent to which these two dimensions of reconciliation are intertwined will become increasingly apparent.

Creating an overarching moral framework to guide relationships among adversaries of different societies, through means that respect the integrity of all parties, is an endeavor inscribed with challenges both ethical and educational. In the next two chapters, I consider these challenges in terms of two sets of ethical and epistemological relationships: (1) between individuals and the groups with which they identify and (2) between two or more adversaries, each comprised of both individuals and collectivities. Once these relationships are clear, we will be in a better position to understand the strong interrelationships among the ethical and educational aspects of reconciliation. This understanding will contribute to assessments of the qualities of the communicative and expressive forms and processes necessary to engage adversaries in the work of reconciliation.
Within the traditions of Western moral philosophy, moral agency is a status that has generally been reserved for individuals. The conception of reconciliation proposed here, however, simultaneously refers to participants as moral agents and as collectivities (as well as individuals). We must examine, therefore, whether, and how, meaningful reference can be made to collectivities engaging in the work of reconciliation. In this chapter I consider the capacities of persons and various kinds of groups, including both informally structured groups such as ethnic communities, and formally structured entities such as nation-states. I describe the ethical relationship between persons and the groups with which they identify, as well as the capacities and responsibilities of each.

Can nation-states and religious or ethnic groups rightly be said to engage in the work of reconciliation? Can collectivities, either formal or informal, be understood as moral agents? Can they understand suffering in a feelingful way? Answers to these questions will help us understand at a deeper level the educational and ethical challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation.

Moral Capacity in the Work of Reconciliation

As we noted in the previous chapter, the conception of agency that has predominated within Western philosophy is "the capacity of rational, autonomous individuals to make decisions and act." As we have seen, this understanding of agency is useful for reconciliation, in that reconciliation requires members of groups to transcend the beliefs into which they were socialized, in order to make decisions and act in ways that are at odds with the commonly accepted beliefs of their communities. Even the basic
discursive strategy of apology and forgiveness assumes that individuals can rationally assess behaviors against a set of moral standards or norms, and, without coercion, acknowledge wrong-doing.

When we think of the counter-examples, of soldiers so addicted to violence that they seem unable to choose to stop it, of young girls so confused and so fearful of retribution that they are unable to confront boys sexually harassing them, of Nelson Mandela unwilling to engage in negotiations while imprisoned, we see the importance of rationality, freedom and independent action for the work of reconciliation.

Without entering into debates about definitions of agency, our conception of reconciliation makes it clear, however, that the moral capacities assumed by traditional understandings of the phrase "moral agency" are insufficient for these sorts of peace-making efforts. Reconciliation requires us not only to rationally analyze behaviors in moral terms, but also to experience and articulate our own feelings, and to understand, in a feelingful way, the suffering of others. In this regard, reconciliation requires capacities that are consistent with the conceptions of morality and epistemology articulated by feminist philosophers, who emphasize the importance of "caring," (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984), and the conceptual reintegration of the emotional with the rational (Baier, 1994; Hoagland, 1989; Noddings, 1984, 1992; Nussbaum, 1986). At the very least, we must acknowledge that reconciliation requires disputants to be sufficiently capable of experiencing, acknowledging and articulating feelings that their capacity for transformation (for changes in consciousness) is not impaired by emotional rigidity.

Because reconciliation of the kind we are examining refers to the creation of new moral frameworks where none existed previously, it requires disputants to engage their imaginative, as well as rational and emotional, faculties. The importance of imagination for moral reflection and action, noted by many philosophers, is summarized by Sissela Bok (1989):
In order to resist... failures of perspective and the abuses to which they can lead, imagination is indispensable, along with the attention it demands and the compassion it can generate. Without the ability to imagine oneself in the place of others, the Golden Rule loses all meaning and efforts to extend the scope of one's perspective falter. By "imagining foreign states of mind," as William James recommended, one can experience threats not only to oneself and those with whom one is personally linked but to all others as well, whether compatriots or adversaries. Imagination can likewise enable us to extend our perceived horizon not only in space—from ourselves toward the entire human species and all that is endangered along with it—but also in time. We can then try to envisage how present conflicts may affect beings not yet even born, and consider our responsibility toward the past as well—what many have called our stewardship of resources that are not ours to use up or destroy at will (pp. 27-28).

Reconciliation requires imagination to generate visions of a new, more compassionate and just relationship, and also to generate innovative solutions to many intransigent, practical problems. The capacities required by reconciliation, then, extend beyond the rationality invoked by traditional conceptions of moral agency, to involve the whole person, including rational, emotional and imaginative faculties. In addition, because such conflicts are likely to be about shared beliefs and values, and the institutions that embody them, it is insufficient to think of reconciliation only in terms of autonomous individuals. In the next several sections of this chapter, we will consider whether, and in what ways, groups can be understood to have the capacities to engage in the work of reconciliation.

Intersubjectivity in the Relationships among Individuals and Groups

To explore the capacities, responsibilities and limitations of persons and collectivities in the work of reconciliation, we must first develop a clear picture of the relationships that exist between individuals and the groups with which they identify. At first glance, it seems that the parties to reconciliation can be either individuals or collectivities. On closer inspection, though, we see a more complicated picture.

Consider the alienation experienced by the young non-Jewish Germans and American Jews who worked with Bjorn Krondorfer, described in the previous chapter. In that case, the transformations that occurred took place within individuals, but the
individuals participated as members of larger religious and national groups. In a sense, by virtue of their socialization into their respective communities' discourses and cultures, initially each student carried within himself or herself the patterns of meaning, thought and feeling that were microcosms of the collective cultural and national constructs.

Cultural patterns are manifested within the language, the consciousness and even the bodies of their members. The depth and duration of the impacts of the collectivity on the person are noted by the literary scholar Elaine Scarry (1985):

The extent to which in ordinary peacetime activity the nation-state resides unnoticed in the intricate recesses of personhood, penetrates the deepest layers of consciousness, and manifests itself in the body itself is hard to assess; for it seems at any given moment "hardly" there, yet seems at many moments, however hardly, there in the metabolic mysteries of the body's hunger for culturally stipulated forms of food and drink, the external objects one is willing to habitually put into oneself; hardly there but there in the learned postures, gestures, gait, the ease or reluctance with which it breaks into a smile; there in the regional accent, the disposition of the tongue, mouth and throat, the elaborate and intricate play of small muscles that may also be echoed and magnified throughout the whole body, as when a man moves across the room, there radiates across his shoulder, head, hips, legs and arms the history of his early boyhood years of life in Georgia and his young adolescence in Manhattan....

The political identity of the body is usually learned unconsciously, effortlessly, and very early—it is said that within a few months of life British infants have learned to hold their eyebrows in a raised position. So, too, it may be the last form of patriotism to be lost; studies of third and fourth generation immigrants in the United States show that long after all other cultural habits (language, narratives, celebrations of festival days) have been lost or disowned, culturally stipulated expressions of physical pain remain and differentiate Irish-American, Jewish-American, or Italian-American.

What is "remembered" in the body is well remembered... (pp. 108-109).

The psychological mechanisms by which the individual comes to identify with ethnic groups and nations are studied by political psychologists. A leader in that field, Vamik Volkan (1990), argues that children come to identify with ethnic symbols at a very early age, as part of psychological, developmental processes of differentiation and integration. In order to create integrated images of oneself and others, i.e., images that integrate both the pleasurable and unpleasurable, he theorizes, children learn to externalize wholly good feelings onto "reservoirs" or "targets," the symbols of one's own ethnic, cultural and/or national groups. (Wholly bad feelings are externalized to the symbols of the
groups that are adversaries or enemies.) Since within any ethnic group, parents "are likely
to offer the same targets of externalization to their children...these become the building
blocks for the children's subsequent structuring of ethnic, cultural and national identity"
(Volkan, 1990, p. 33).

Clinical professor of psychiatry and scholar of international relations Rita Rogers
(1990) argues that parents often make irresponsible choices about how to transmit to
children notions of identity:

Parents don’t seem to question their right to transmit prejudice, hostility, and
anger from one generation to the next. Schools, the military, and other
institutions base their *raison d'être* on inoculating the new generation with
group hostility. While parents know that their feelings of animosity toward a
group will be transferred to their children, they feel entitled to the process and
don’t question their right to do so...Adults the world over use and abuse
children for the expression, activation, and vindication of causes. We adults
don’t know, or circumvent finding out, how youngsters really feel about the
issues which remain unresolved for us (p.91).

When adolescents and post-adolescents seek a degree of social independence from
their parents, the symbolic structures of their group (and the social relationships and
institutions associated with them) offer security and continuity. One's sense of self
becomes bound up with the identity of the group--to the extent that attacks on the symbols
of the group and incursions into territorial boundaries can be experienced and/or interpreted
as assaults on personal integrity and security. Such phenomena are considered by political
psychologists to be manifestations of "psychogeography."

In emphasizing the ways that the groups with which we identify are manifested
inside of what in some cultures are understood to be the boundaries of the person, I do not
mean to imply that the attitudes or actions of individuals are wholly or unchangingly
determined by their group. Nor do I wish to relieve the individual of responsibility for her
action. I do, however, wish to acknowledge the complicated relationships between
persons and groups, in order to create an understanding useful for our discussion of moral
capacities required by reconciliation. This complication can be seen from the opposite
perspective as well: groups function, in large part, by virtue of the actions of individuals.
For instance, when we speak of peace between "Israel and her Arab neighbors", we are referring to changes in governmental policies and territorial boundaries: changes that can only be enacted only through the structures of the nation. The language of diplomacy sometimes obscures the fact that governments are human creations, and changes in relationships among them result from the initiative of persons, acting as citizens and/or as government officials. In history of the contemporary peace process in the Middle East makes it clear that, however limited and flawed they might be, the policies now being enacted by governmental entities reflect transformations that first occurred within the consciousness of individuals, who exerted influence from positions both inside and outside of government.16

The relationship between an individual and her group resembles a hologram, or a fractal: the pattern of the whole (the culture, in this case) can be discerned within each part (the individual members). The inter-embeddedness of individuals and the collectivities to which they belong is described by Jurgen Habermas (1993) in terms of 'intersubjectivity' and the use of language:

Linguistically and behaviorally competent subjects are constituted as individuals by growing into an intersubjectively shared lifeworld, and the lifeworld of a language community is reproduced in turn through the communicative actions of its members. This explains why the identity of the individual and that of the collective are interdependent; they form and maintain themselves together. Built into the consensus-oriented language use of social interaction is an inconspicuous necessity for participants to become more and more individuated. Conversely, everyday language is also the medium by which the intersubjectivity of a shared world is maintained (p. 199).

Another image that captures the complexity of the relationship between the collectivity and its individual members is presented by Patsy Schweickert (1995) in an essay on feminist understandings of moral agency and the nature of the moral subject:

...imagine that all of us are in a room, working together on an enormously complicated "novel"--the "story" of feminism. Together we are trying to write ourselves into history. But at the same time, each of us is also engaged in her own personal project of realizing herself as subject--of writing her own
personal story. The entire process of production is complicated because: 1) each personal story has to be inserted into the collective text, and the collective text has to be inserted into each personal text; 2) the collective and the personal texts are being written concurrently, and since the collective text is the interactive totality of personal texts it is constantly undergoing revision and this in turn necessitates the revision of individual projects; and 3) the collective text and the personal texts are reflexive--they include the story of their writing. In other words, the collective and the personal novels are conditioned by intertextuality. ...[However] writing does not encompass all the activities that constitute either collective or the personal projects; it is only a model we have adopted for the sake of its heuristic possibilities. Intertextuality, in other words, really indicates intersubjectivity--social interaction and political negotiation (p. 245).

An example will help ground, in the real world of conflict and reconciliation, these understandings of intersubjectivity and individual and collective capacity for agency and transformation. It is taken from a study of the Norwegian nonviolent resistance to Nazi occupation during World War II, and the subsequent reconciliation between those Norwegians who resisted and those who collaborated. The study was conducted by the sociologist and peace researcher Paul Wehr (1979), based on historical documents and interviews with leaders of the resistance.

Wehr found that the resistance based its efforts on the strongly shared democratic values of the Norwegian people--reason, justice, autonomy and nonviolence--and also upon an existing, highly articulated network of occupational and avocational voluntary associations. When the occupying administration tried to coopt the structure of the voluntary associations for the purposes of the Nazi state, several leaders, prominent in their own voluntary associations, met to coordinate a clandestine structure for communication and resistance. The purpose was to create a "nationwide network of reliable contacts...to distribute directives and organize local resistance to nazification" (Wehr, 1979, p.76).

The leaders of the resistance created an ingenious infrastructure consisting of four channels of communication. In addition to using underground newspapers, couriers, and, when possible, broadcasts of messages smuggled out to the BBC, they developed a system of regional contact persons and local face-to-face contacts. The network allowed them to send directives to the Norwegian population about how to respond in a coordinated way to
Nazi rules and regulations. These *paroles*, or directives, were typically written in invisible ink, sometimes between the lines of correspondence that appeared to be a personal letter, sometimes between the lines of Nazi propaganda itself. The effectiveness of the communications was demonstrated when, in 1942, the occupation's Ministry of Church and Education required teachers to become members of a national union, implying willingness to teach Nazi ideology in their classrooms. The resistance leadership issued a *parole* to the 14,000 teachers urging them "to protest the requirement by mailing in a standard letter of resignation on a certain day. Twelve thousand letters arrived at the ministry, most of them on the same day" (Wehr, 1979, p.86). After declaring a month-long school holiday based on a "fuel shortage" the Ministry capitulated, agreeing that the teachers' union would remain apolitical. According to Wehr, "other [vocational] groups were subsequently attacked but the example of moral resolve set by the teachers was replicated many times" (p. 88).

Throughout the war, the leaders of the resistance mobilized support in part through the polarization of attitudes. The underground press, for instance, sharpened moral distinctions between those who participated in the resistance and those who collaborated with the Nazis. This polarization was understood to foster immunity to "nazification," and to offer a vision of moral clarity amidst the ambiguity created by the military occupation and the upheaval of normal social relations and structures. As the war drew to a close, the resistance leadership worked to "depolarize" public sentiment. "People had to be resensitized...for reconciliation with the enemy among them. This resensitization involved a conscious effort in resistance literature to reorient readers away from the oversimplifications upon which *holdningskamp* [the battle of the wills] had necessarily been based" (p. 93).

This brief history demonstrates how the capacity for moral action is animated in the interplay between the individual and the collective and, correspondingly, within a creative tension between innovation and tradition. The German occupation of Norway, relatively
benign as it at first appeared, actually represented an assault on cherished values and norms. The traditional value placed on collectivity informed the response of Dr. H. J. Ustvedt, who issued the first invitation to several association leaders (Wehr, 1979, p. 76). Working in a small group, they analyzed the situation and made crucial strategic decisions that would impact the course of Norwegian resistance. For instance, they chose NOT to mount a violent underground campaign in order to win back turf or even disrupt the Nazi administration. Building on cultural values of nonviolence and reason, they imagined a nonviolent resistance effort that was based primarily on coordinated communication, which individuals could join simply by participating in the network.

The existence of the communications network and the recommendations (and later directives) from the resistance, made available to individual Norwegian citizens choices very different than had no such network existed. Not only did the paroles serve to remind them of traditional values and the convergence of individual, associational and national interests, the directives allowed them to make choices knowing they would not be acting alone. The risks to any individual teacher submitting a letter of resignation would have been magnified many times had thousands of teachers not simultaneously made the same choice. The coordination of the association not only reminded them of their own values, but also minimized the risk of acting in accordance with them. According to Wehr (1979), the logic of the paroles

rested on a moral undergirding carefully fashioned from a deeply rooted socio-political ethos. Playing on such values as patriotism, self-determination, nonviolence, and professional responsibility was a powerful technique. The fact that the initial paroles were successful with those occupational groupings considered to be the guardians of national morals (i.e., teachers, clergy, judges) greatly influenced the parole's later success an appeal to national conscience and professional integrity.

Observers who recall that period say that there were no sharp distinction of class, personality type, or sense of national loyalty differentiating Norwegians who fell victim to nazification from those who did not. Often it seems to have been largely chance. Had the KK, with its communications network and paroles not existed to sharply define the right/wrong and good Norwegian/traitor dichotomies ... nazification might well have succeeded (pp. 85-86).
The leaders of the Norwegian resistance would acknowledge, I think, that during the war, their communications not infrequently crossed the line from education into indoctrination and propaganda. Their deliberate decision near the conclusion of the war to "resensitize" their readers to the complexities that confronted the Norwegians who did collaborate indicates an awareness of the dangers of propaganda, even for an obviously just cause. Resistance required clarity, discipline, and a steadfastness made necessary by the upheaval of the war itself; reconciliation required sensitivity, complexity, and flexibility. Each could be seen as appropriate in its own time. Both resistance and reconciliation were accomplished by an interplay of individuals and collectivities. Drawing on the values of the group, leaders made conscious choices to create structures to prevent individual Norwegians from succumbing to the isolation and disorientation that otherwise would have constrained their choices in favor of the Nazi occupation. As individuals chose to follow the paroles, they legitimated the resistance, including its values, its structures, its strategies and its leadership. So at every level, the individual and collective processes were deeply embedded within each other.

In this section, I have explicated the relationship between individuals and collectivities in terms of intersubjectivity, using as lenses both linguistic and psychodynamic theories. We have seen that, in terms of capacity for moral action, individuals and collectivities are interdependent. In this analysis, however, we have not made distinctions among different kinds of groups. Groups vary along many dimensions: they differ for instance, in size, in the formality of their structure, in the nature of the commonality that binds members to one another, in their purpose. Importantly, given the kinds of transformation implicit in reconciliation, groups differ in the structures and procedures through which they change. In the next section, we will consider the capacities and limitation of two kinds of collectivities particularly salient in the work of reconciliation: informal social groups such as ethnic groups, and a particular formal organization, the nation-state. We will also reflect on the capacities of individuals. After completing this
analysis, we will consider what combination of individual and collective capacities will allow for the balance of innovation and tradition required by the transformative processes of reconciliation.

Capacities of Individuals and Groups Relevant to the Criteria of Reconciliation

**Nation-states:** Can nation-states be understood to take part in the work of reconciliation? There are arguments on both sides of this question. Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of nation-states having the capacity to engage in the work of reconciliation is how necessary their involvement appears. It seems obvious that peace can only be created through the participation of the entities that have, in fact, been in conflict. In the case of Israel and Palestine, for instance, many small groups of individuals have engaged in dialogue groups and encounter sessions of various kinds. These conciliatory processes have been important in challenging governmental leaders to pursue peaceful strategies towards resolving differences, and in generating possible solutions for seemingly intractable problems. A just and lasting peace, however, will require rapprochement on the part of the two peoples and the governmental entities that represent them. This reconciliation would be created by and reflected in, for instance, mutual respect for political sovereignty, and agreed upon policies about water rights, boundaries, access to sacred places, official statements of apology, joint economic initiatives, education about the history and cultures of both peoples in both school systems, etc. These policies must be enacted through the structures of institutions, by people in relationship with each other, supported by an array of non-human resources as well.

Meaningful reconciliation seems to require the policy-making and -enacting capacities, i.e., the effectiveness, of nation-states. There are examples of nation-states engaging in at least reconciliatory gestures, when, for instance, the United States government decided to give monetary compensation to Japanese citizens who had been interned in camps during World War II, and when the Japanese prime minister issued a statement of apology to the Korean people for the suffering caused during Japan's
conquest. However, embedded within the criteria for reconciliation laid out in Chapter 4 are requirements for moral agency, and for rational, emotional and imaginative abilities, capacities we most readily associate with individuals. Furthermore, reconciliation assumes transformation on the part of the disputants. Are nation-states the kind of entity that can engage in reconciliation, as we've defined it?

Several scholars, working in different disciplines, might lead us to a negative conclusion. For instance, the philosopher Larry May (1987, 1992), in considering the moral responsibilities and liabilities of individuals and groups, declines to grant collectivities such as corporations the status of full moral agency. He argues that there is a sense that both formally and informally structured groups can be understood to choose and to act, but, as organizations, they do not have the equivalent of a conscience, and cannot feel remorse. (May, 1987, p. 104) Similarly, the sociologist Nicholas Tavuchis (1991) notes the limitations of corporate structures to feel. Corporations can issue apologies, he suggests, and might even use the language of "feeling remorse," but the meaning of their apology lies more in setting the record straight than in the expression of feelings (Tavuchis, 1991, p. 97). Vincent Brummer (1992), the Christian theologian, argues that reconciliation (among individuals) is a possibility only for relationships that can be described as enjoying the status of fellowship. In his conception, it is when relationships devolve into manipulation or contractual reciprocity--modes of relating typical of nation-states--they involve an objectification of the other, a using of the other, that is itself antithetical to reconciliation (Brummer, 1992, 437).

These theories about the limitations of bureaucratic, corporate organizations suggest that while nation-states might necessarily be involved in the work of conflict resolution, nation-states understood as political organizations, as the mechanisms of government, do not have the capacities to feel and to enter into the worlds of the other that we now associate with reconciliation. Martin Buber describes this limitation in terms of the quality of communication between nation-states. He believed that it is the loss of trust, a precondition
of dialogue, that leaves man so "imperiled by hot and cold wars" (Cohen, 1983, p. 87).

Buber writes:

The disputations of the representatives of states which reach us through the medium of broadcasts are in no aspect similar to human colloquy: they do not speak with one another but to a faceless crowd. Even the assemblies and conferences which are convened in the name of concord among nations lack the one element which alone can raise bargaining to the level of dialogue: the directness of call and response between men [sic] which is free from any alien motive or design (quoted in Adir Cohen, 1983, p. 87).

Nation-states are unlikely candidates for the work of reconciliation, therefore, because of their inability to feel empathy and shame, and because their mode of relating is contractual and impersonal, lacking in the give-and-take that can, under propitious conditions, characterize dialogue between individuals. Furthermore, according to Joan Bondurant, a political philosopher who has written extensively on Gandhi's satyagraha, for their most difficult conflicts, nation-states, including even liberal democracies (the form of political organization best suited to handle change) resort to means of resolution that are inconsistent with reconciliation. Compromise, the prevalent way of resolving conflicts in democracies, tends to devolve into a kind of bartering that is devoid of principle; it can engender resentment and the desire for political revenge. Unlike the syntheses sought through processes of satyagraha, which aim to persuade all parties of the rightness or truth of a particular path, compromise too often involves coercion and manipulation, an avoidance of the underlying conflict rather than a constructive grappling with it.

Even more important, violence is woven into the fabric of the nation-state system. In circumstances of challenge from without or risk of subversion from within, nations still resort to force. In the systems of norms and sanctions which found and inform every state, violence is the operative force and coercion constitutes the ultimate process. It is the legal sanction of violent force applied by agents of the community against delinquent members that supports the political order, in both liberal democracies and other forms of polity. In international intercourse the ultimate sanction is war, a method legitimized in international law (Bondurant, 1965, p. 219).
At least since World War II, relationships among nation-states have been understood and conducted primarily within a paradigm of power politics, a framework often attributed to Hans Morgenthau, an international lawyer. Based on the idea of the inherent aggressiveness of human nature, states have been taken to be inevitably aggressive, and, therefore, requiring military power for their defense. Achieving superior power, or at least the capacity for mutual deterrence, has been understood as a prime goal of states (Burton, 1995, p. 84)

In relation to the capacity of nation-states to engage in the work of reconciliation, we have identified an important dilemma. On the one hand, reconciliation seems to require the effectiveness that nation-states alone enjoy: the capacities to make policies, to coordinate resources, to educate citizenry, to agree to shifts in boundaries, etc. On the other hand, nation-states seem incapable of engaging in relationship in ways that are consistent with the standards we have established for reconciliation. Their purpose seems more aligned with stability than with transformation, and, in making changes, they rely on means that are inconsistent with the ends of reconciliation. As political structures, they are capable of inflicting great harm, but not capable of feelingful awareness of the suffering they have caused. It is the threat of violent coercion, and defense against such threats, not trust, that forms the basis for their security; the threat of violence as the ultimate sanction taints the less extreme, less overtly violent steps that precede it.

I believe that a way out of this dilemma can be found in the notion of intersubjectivity, through recognizing that nation-states are human creations, comprised not only of governmental structures but also of persons and associations of all kinds. If we wish to create a world in which conflicts are more often resolved through reconciliation than through war, we may need to transform principles that inform both the structures and the practices of our large-scale political entities. We may need to construct nation-states with greater moral capacity, with the ability to make decisions as if they were feelingfully aware of the pain caused by their policies. This idea is consistent with emerging trends in
political psychology. Harold Saunders (1990), former undersecretary of State of MidEast affairs, for instance, advocates a new paradigm that emphasizes the relationships among states, rather than the old paradigm based on force. In his view, "national interests" should be redefined to recognize the coincidence of interests and needs--both practical and psychological--that bring people or nations together. "Learning people's real interests," he writes, "requires probing the deep-rooted human fears, hopes, wounds, perceptions and cultural values that form human beings' sense of what is threatening and what is vital in protecting their identity" (Saunders, 1990, p. 15)

In addition to reconceptualizing the frameworks through which international affairs are conducted, we may need to clarify and expand our understanding of the moral responsibilities of individuals in relation to the nations of which they are citizens (and from which citizenship they benefit.) The responsibility for individual action can be understood by the gap that exists between the effectiveness of nation-states (especially to inflict harm) and their limited capacity for transformation, for empathic awareness of suffering, and for trust. Perhaps it is understanding the limitations on the capacities of nation-states that motivates recent efforts at citizen-to-citizen diplomacy.

With this second possibility in mind, we will now consider the capacities and limitations of persons in relation to the work of reconciliation.

Persons: Understanding, within the framework of intersubjectivity, that individuals have incorporated within them aspects of the nation-states and other groups with which they identify, it is still meaningful to think about the particular capacities and limitations of persons for the work of reconciliation. As much as individuals must use the linguistic and conceptual tools of their communities, and as much as we are shaped by the cultures of which we are part, we still enjoy substantial potential for innovating on cultural patterns, for critical assessment of the actions of our governments, and for imagining that which has not been before. When we consider the range of capacities required by the work of reconciliation--the ability to trust, to maintain emotional presence in the face of suffering, to
rationally assess actions in light of moral standards, to imagine justice in its absence, to maintain a sense of integrity amidst transformations in consciousness—it is inspiring to remember that human beings have demonstrated their ability not only to engage in this work, but to lead whole groups through reconciliation efforts.

Psychologically-based theories about the sources of violence often attribute it, at least in part, to the innate "aggressive tendencies" of human beings and to compulsions to construct our worlds dichotomously, with in-groups and out-groups, friends and enemies, those worthy and unworthy (Montville, 1989, 1990, 1995; Moses, 1990; Volkan, 1990; etc.) However, the psychologists, neuroscientists, geneticists, anthropologists, and political scientists who met in Seville, Spain, in 1986 to examine the roots of war, concluded that:

there was no scientific basis for considering human beings innately aggressive animals, inevitably committed to war on the basis of biological nature. Rather, they said, war is a result of socialization and conditioning, a phenomenon of human organization, planning and informational processing that plays on emotional and motivational potentialities. In short, the Seville Statement implies that we have real choices and that a new kind of responsibility in the conduct of human group life is possible (Mack, 1990, p. 58).

For our purposes, it is sufficient to recognize that to whatever extent biological and psychodynamic factors contribute to violence and to demonization of the other, it is an interplay of cultural norms and individual consciousness that influences how and whether such impulses are encouraged, expressed, directed, shaped, and/or suppressed. The political psychologist Robert Moses (1990) emphasizes the importance of the cultural and social context, and therefore the responsibility of those whose silence or inaction might be taken as condonation of dehumanizing actions:

We must dare to examine publicly what it is that makes certain human beings or groups commit dehumanizing acts. We should be aware that such acts are not due to the evil of any one individual. If we stress the fact that dehumanization can only occur—or be hushed up—with our support or connivance, then the next person to be tempted will reflect more than once before he [or she] acts. If, however, he can get away with both the act and the illusion that this was done for the sake of his country, whether in "self-defense" or revenge, or to obtain victory, then we will have to accept the
responsibility... The fact that only a few commit such acts does not, I maintain, reduce by one iota the burden of our responsibility. Were it not that we, their society and their fellow citizens seem to condone it, they could not act on their latent readiness to become dehumanizers (Moses, 1990 p. 117).

Like the psychologist Robert Moses (1990), Gandhi (1961), Buber (1970, 1992), and Thich Nhat Hanh (1987, 1992) all place tremendous importance on the interdependence of people and on the importance of community for nurturing moral sensibilities. However, each of these three emphasizes the moral sovereignty of the individual as of paramount importance for the work of reconciliation. For each, the kind of integrity required for reconciliation is linked with a power that derives from the life of the spirit.

Gandhi's satyagraha was based upon the power of individual reason, which he believed could operate in any social milieu. He believed that when the state fails to establish conditions under which individuals can realize their fullest potential the individual has a responsibility to challenge its authority of the state. In Gandhi's ethic, the key to individual integrity is reason, supported by the willingness of people to choose self-suffering rather than either succumb to illegitimate authority or to inflict harm on one's opponent.

Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist philosophy, as strongly as it emphasizes interdependence among all of life, still recognizes the importance of individual agency. Individual integrity and effectiveness is associated with inner peace, with the ability to "smile for oneself," and the capacity to focus one's energy, to perceive with calmness and clarity. "If even one person aboard" a refugee boat caught in rough seas, writes Thich Nhat Hanh, "can remain calm, lucid, knowing what to do and what not to do, he or she can help the boat survive. His or her expression--face, voice--communicate clarity and calmness, and people have trust in that person.... We need people who can sit still and be able to smile, who can walk peacefully.... Mahayan Buddhism says that you are that person, that each of you is that person" (Hahn, 1987, p. 12).
Similarly, although Martin Buber's (1992) philosophy is based on the idea that we can become full human beings only in authentic relation with another, he writes that

...all knowledge [including knowledge about social justice] is an ascetic act. At the moment of knowledge the knower must bring something paradoxical to pass; certainly he must enter into the knowledge with his whole being, he must also bring unabridged into his knowing the experiences his social ties have presented him with. But he must free himself from the influence of these ties through the concentration of spiritual power. No one becomes a sociological thinker if his dream and his passion have never mingled with the dream and passion of a human community; but in the moment of thinking itself, as far as it stands in his power, he must exist only as person, the person open to the subject of thought. If this relation is maintained, he need not unduly trouble himself with the question of how far his knowledge was determined against his will by his membership in a group. In the relationship of a man to the truth that he has discovered, freedom and obligation, vision and blindness, are always merged. Our concern is only this -- to will with all the power of our spirit to achieve free vision (p. 220).

If, as we asserted above, what nation-states can uniquely contribute to the work of reconciliation is the capacity to enact policies with far-reaching impact, individuals have the potential to contribute our capacities for the critical thinking, the feelingful awareness and the creative imagination that must inform governmental policies. Persons can enter into relationships with others, including their enemies, and come to understand wholly different perspectives on the same historical phenomena. As Victoria Davion argues, persons can, without violating their integrity as persons, engage in and monitor their own transformations (Davion, 1991, pp. 190-191). The extent to which these capacities are present in any one person depends on many factors, including both the impacts of violence and the nature of his or her education.

Social groups: Social groups are distinct from collectivities such as nation-states or corporations in that they are less formally structured, have more fluid boundaries, and often foster relationships more often through face-to-face communication than through official statements and policies. They can contribute to the work of reconciliation some of the effectiveness of the coordinated action of nation-states, but still enjoy some of the flexibility of the individual. Social groups--families, communities, organizations and associations,
local ethnic groups, etc.—themselves human creations, also constitute a stage on which human creativity comes to life.

Social groups are of so many different kinds, and serve so many different purposes, it is difficult to generalize about their potential contributions to the work of reconciliation. Yet they are important players in their own right, with capacities that exceed the aggregate of their individual members, a circumstance with important moral consequences. Individuals are enabled by groups to be effective (for both good and for harm) in ways and to degrees they could not, or would not, on their own. The increment in effectiveness can be accounted for in part by the advantages of coordination, group morale, shared learning, strategic deployment of resources, synthesis of various kinds of expertise, the motivational impact of shared symbols, and collective recognition from the systems with which the group must interact. This increment in effectiveness can be readily understood by comparing the well-intentioned but unorganized efforts of individuals to make a neighborhood safer, or challenge a government’s foreign policy, or fight world hunger, on the one hand, with the coordinated efforts of neighborhood chapters of a national safety organization, a social protest movement, or an international relief effort on the other.

Individuals, like Gandhi, who wish to influence the policies of governments, create social movements and organizations. These associations nurture the development of alternative frameworks and supported their members to take risks and remain steadfast in their commitments. Similarly, as with the Buddhist sangha, or community, social groups can support individual members to make moral choices.

Because human consciousness is so vulnerable to the discourses and structures in which we participate, social groups are important in providing opportunities for engaging in liberatory or reconciliatory dialogues and conversations, as we saw in the case of the Norwegian resistance. Without minimizing the importance of personal moral insight and courage, the social group can be important in supporting individuals to resist hegemonic
discourse and to continue collaboratively to develop their alternative viewpoints. This is especially important in the modern context, where dominant ideologies are perpetuated through extensive systems of mass communication.

Social groups can lend support to violent, coercive actions and beliefs as well as to benevolence. The moral philosopher Larry May (1987, 1992) points out that participation in groups often blunts individuals' moral sensibilities. Individuals who participate in only one step of a harmful action—researching how to construct a weapon, or buying one of several supplies, or providing transportation to the one who will set off the device, or writing the propaganda that recruited members and expressed racist values, for instance—may be sheltered by the very collective nature of the action from feeling responsibility or remorse for the suffering caused. Participation in groups can at times lead individuals to be negligent, to refrain from taking action to stop harms that some other member could interrupt with equal ease.

Identity groups are a kind of social group that have particular salience for the work of reconciliation, because, according to conflict resolution expert John Burton (1995), they have "real power, power that has the capacity to resist authority and to effect change" (p. 87). Burton argues that groups that meet "human societal needs" cannot be controlled by national authorities, because "identity, security of the identity group, recognition, political and distributive justice... are values that are not negotiable, not repressible, for which persons and communities will make endless sacrifices" (p. 87). The contemporary proliferation of regional and ethnic conflicts supports Burton's claim that ethnic groups are powerful political forces with particular salience for peace-making efforts.

In what sense can we say that social groups (including both amorphous group such as identity groups, as well as non-governmental organizations) have the capacity to engage in the work of reconciliation? According to Larry May, social groups can be said to decide and to act, two capacities most frequently associated with moral agency. Whether we accept his argument or not, if we think of social groups, as we did above in relation to
nation-states, as consisting not only of the structures and shared beliefs and values that define the group but also the individuals who comprise the group, then it seems possible to say that social groups can, in some sense, be understood as having moral agency. This understanding places responsibility on the individual members of groups to share with their groups the insights that result from their critical thinking, creative imaginings and feelingful awareness of suffering. This sharing of insights presents a particular challenge in the many contexts, such as ethnic communities, or groups based on region or gender, where there are no formal decision-making structures.

Social groups have important roles to play in reconciliation—in part because they can be in conflict with each other, in part because conflicts between nation-states and individuals are often in fact conflicts over the shared beliefs that define social groups, and also in part because social groups are the locus for generative, creative, collaborative human activity. Marshaling the resources of social groups towards the ends of reconciliation, and, in fact, creating groups and small institutions for the explicit purpose of engaging in the work of reconciliation, are becoming increasingly common in the world of conflict resolution.

Summary of the Contributions of Nation-States, Social Groups and Individuals to the Work of Reconciliation

Although our conception of reconciliation includes capacities that we normally associate with individuals—the capacity for rational autonomous action traditionally associated with moral agency, along with capacities for feelingful awareness and creative imagination—we can reasonably think of individuals, social groups and nation-states as able to engage in reconciliation. This makes sense because of the intersubjective nature of individuals and groups: the groups are comprised not only of the formal and informal structures that define them, but also the individuals that create, revise and modify those structures; and individuals, whose capacities for critical consciousness and innovation are
impressive, still can be understood to have the constructs of their groups embedded within their psyches and their bodies.

With this understanding, we can see that each of at each of these levels, unique contributions to the work of reconciliation can be made. Persons contribute their capacities for moral integrity (i.e., the ability to monitor themselves through processes of change, seeking alignment among their beliefs, values, and actions), for empathic understanding of the suffering of others, for assessing critically assessing behaviors against norms of justice, and the ability to imagine peaceful, just, dynamic social orders where violence and mistrust have been prevalent. With education, persons have the ability to reflect to a considerable extent on the symbolic systems and psychodynamic processes that were established during their early socialization. Social groups contribute their capacity to nourish, support and coordinate the moral creativity of their members. They offer the effectiveness of joint action, coordination, and organization. Nation-states contribute to the work of reconciliation their capacities for policy-making: the actions of nation-states can have far-reaching, "reality-creating" impacts on the lives and institutional relations of millions of individuals. Nation-states, resting as they do on the threat of violent coercion, and existing as they do to preserve stability and order, are less than ideal participants in the work of reconciliation. The moral limitations of nation-states, coupled with their irreplaceable contributions to the work of reconciliation, place additional responsibilities on both the individuals and social organizations that enjoy the benefits of membership within them.

The intersubjective nature of the relationship between individuals and the groups with which they identify establishes the scope of the educational effort of reconciliation as both deep (within individuals and human relationships) and broad (engaging whole communities and nations.) The notion of intersubjectivity begins to describe the relationship between epistemological concerns--i.e., the constructs through which persons and groups make sense of their world--and ethical concerns--specifically, capacities for
moral action. Our inquiry into the relationship between ways of understanding and moral capacities is complicated further in the next chapter, when we consider the epistemological and ethical relationships among enemies.
CHAPTER 5

TRANSSUBJECTIVITY: THE ETHICAL
AND EPistemOLOGICAL INTERRELATEDNESS OF ENEMIES

Violent conflicts are conducted as though people have become invisible to each other as moral beings. They relate to each other as if basic moral precepts--such as injunctions against killing, injuring and lying--do not apply. Reconciliation requires that former enemies become morally "visible" to each other, i.e., understood as beings who deserve justice and respect. In this chapter we consider what it means to come to know an other, particularly an other who is or has been an enemy, and even more particularly, an enemy who is suffering and in whose suffering we are implicated. With the reciprocal understanding of suffering as a paradigmatic example, we discover a rich epistemological and ethical interrelatedness among enemies, with substantial implications for the educational work of reconciliation.

To perceive another's suffering is, according to Elaine Scarry (1985), simultaneously to wish it away. Inherent in pain's aversiveness, she claims, is the desire to be rid of it, both in ourselves and in anyone else whose pain we perceive:

If one imagines one human being seeing another human being in pain, one human being perceiving in another discomfort and in the same moment wishing the other to be relieved of the discomfort, something in that fraction of a second is occurring inside the first person's brain involving the complex action of many neurons that is, importantly, not just a perception of an actuality (the second person's pain) but an alteration of that actuality (for embedded in the perception is the sorrow that it is so, the wish that it were otherwise). Though this interior event must be expressed as a conjunctive duality, "seeing the pain and wishing it gone," it is a single percipient event in which the reality of pain and the unreality of imagining are already conflated. Neither can occur without the other: if the person does not perceive the distress, neither will he wish it gone; conversely, if he does not wish it gone, he cannot have perceived the pain itself (he may at the moment be experiencing something else, such as his own physical advantage, or his own resistance to having to attend to another person, but he cannot be perceiving
the pain, for pain is in its essential nature "aversiveness," and thus even within technical medical definitions it is recognized as something which cannot be felt without being wished unfelt (p. 290).

Is the wishing-away-of-pain the response to each other's suffering that educators and mediators seek to evoke in former adversaries who enter into processes of reconciliation? Does the sentence 'I know you are in pain and I wish you weren't' describe the quality of compassionate understanding necessary for the work of reconciliation? If not, how might we describe the epistemological and ethical relationships among adversaries, both when they are enemies and when they seek to reconcile? We begin our response to these questions by considering briefly, in general terms, the challenges of coming to know another person.

Coming to Know An Other

Under the best of circumstances, coming to know others—in the sense of imagining the world as they interpret it—represents a difficult challenge. Many philosophers have made the distinction between perceiving others insofar as they meet our own needs or fit into our own constructs, on the one hand, and perceiving others as the centers of their own universes of meaning, on the other. Buber (1970), for instance, makes the distinction between "experiencing the It" and "being in relation" with a "Thou." The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas makes a similar distinction:

I can see another as someone I need in order to realize certain wants of mine. She or he is then a useful or enjoyable part of my world, with a specific role and function. We all belong to different communities in which we function more or less well on the basis of reciprocal needs. I can also observe another from an aesthetic perspective, for example, by looking at the colors of her eyes, the proportions of his face and so on. But none of these ways of perception allow the otherness of the other to reveal itself. All aspects manifested by a phenomenological description that starts from these perspectives are immediately integrated by my self-centered, interested and dominating consciousness. These ways of looking at them transform those phenomena into moments of my material or spiritual property. The sort of phenomenology based on these and similar observations is a form of egology.

Another comes to the fore as other if and only if his or her "appearance" breaks, pierces, destroys the horizon of my egocentric monism, i.e., when the other's invasion of my world destroys the empire in which all phenomena are, from the outset, a priori, condemned to function as moments of my universe. The other's face (i.e., any other's facing me) or the other's
speech (any other's speaking to me) interrupts and disturbs the order of my ego's world; it makes a hole in it by disarraying my arrangements without ever permitting me to restore the previous order. For even if I kill the other or chase the other away in order to be safe from the intrusion, nothing will ever be the same as before (Levinas, summarized in Perperzak, 1991, p. 440).

In Levinas' philosophy, then, encountering an other implies an obligation to imagine their world—even to the point that we allow their constructs to penetrate or interrupt our own. In Nel Noddings' (1984) terms, we have an obligation to meet the other as "one caring." These encounters might take place between members of a family, or between a teacher and student, but they nevertheless require effort, and, in Levinas' view, inevitably infringe on the ego's unfettered rights to pursue its own interests and desires.

In the context of reconciliation, the work of coming to know the other is made several degrees more difficult than in an ordinary encounter with an individual who is not one's former enemy. The others with whom we seek reconciliation are generally of different cultures, likely to be different from us in ways that challenge our ability to communicate. We may speak different languages or dialects, we may have disparate styles of communicating, we may follow different customs even for greeting guests. The norms governing each encounter, such as the ways in which we reveal or hide our emotional responses, may cause us to misunderstand each other. The frameworks and references we use to make sense of ethical dilemmas are likely to be different, and possibly, in some ways, antithetical.

When we come to know former enemies, we must understand the plausibility and internal coherence of a cultural construct, a narrative, that they intersubjectively share with member of their own group. The constructs of the other almost always come into conflict with aspects of our own beliefs, the understandings of the world we intersubjectively share with members of our own communities. The extent of the intrusions of an "other" into the "ego's" world, described by Levinas, can perhaps be understood by imagining the reciprocal interruptions that occur between Israelis and Palestinians when they encounter each other's discourses on 'Jerusalem,' or 'Zionism,' or 'Holocaust,' or '1948.'
To come to perceive enemies as deserving of moral consideration involves many things. It can mean coming to know them as people with values and norms, and as capable of and willing to assess past and future actions in light of those values and norms. It can mean becoming aware of the history and culture of the other group—to understand the accomplishments and the aspirations through which their moral sensibilities are represented and engendered. In the context of reconciliation, where people strive to see each other as moral beings after a period of reciprocal dehumanization, moral visibility always entails understanding each other's pain and suffering. In order to comprehend what is involved in enemies coming to understand each other, then, we must inquire, at least briefly, into the nature of pain and suffering.

The Paradoxes of Pain

Pain is present at birth but it can warn of death. It can indicate changes in a system that are both growthful and destructive. Pain is aversive, but unchosen numbness to pain can be “life-threatening for an organism and morally hazardous for a society” (Morris, 1991). The psychologist and philosopher David Bakan (1968) writes that “pain is entirely intertwined with the question of human existence. Its very salience precipitates questions about the meaning of life” (p. 57).

Pain is a phenomenon that finds its meaning at the intersection of mind, body and culture. Historically, attempts to classify the phenomenon of pain have resulted in a range of conceptions from those that take it to be a sense (Aristotle) or emotion (Spinoza), to stimulus or response (physiological psychologists) (Bakan, 1968, p. 63). Until recently, with the advent of “pain clinics” in response to an apparent epidemic of chronic pain, the medical establishment generally treated pain as though it were entirely physiological. It is clear, however, that pain is also contingent upon a dimension of consciousness, and therefore the engagement of the mind: the body of a person in a coma or under general anaesthesia may be penetrated or cut, but because he or she is not conscious, we would refrain from using the word 'pain' to describe her condition or experience. When
experienced with prolonged intensity, physical pain can cause mental anguish; conversely, in many people, prolonged and intense mental anguish finds expression in physical symptoms.

A central feature of pain is its aversiveness, or unpleasantness (Scarry, 1985, p.31; Zborowski, 1969, pp. 28-29). It is the very aversiveness of pain, however, that seems to have made it biologically adaptive. One of its primary functions appears to be to warn, bringing to consciousness an injury or disease that represents a threat to the organism's integrity. For instance, in an injured body part the pain threshold usually is lowered, resulting in a decrease in movement, and, therefore, often, the promotion of healing.

Although pain is universally experienced with a degree of aversiveness, its meaning is evaluated by human beings according to its function as defined by human culture (Zborowski, 1969, p. 27). In fact, many contemporary thinkers, even within the medical establishment, understand pain not as sensation, but rather as perception, a form of experience in which consciousness, emotion, meaning and social context all play a part. In its extreme forms, pain can obliterate the capacity for language, a topic to which we return in the next chapter. But, in general, whether individuals tend to seek expression for their pain or keep it silent and hidden may have more to do with cultural or situational norms than with the severity of the injury. In certain cultures and eras, pain has been associated with beneficent qualities. Mystics and visionaries have believed that the pain of the body "inspires a pain of the soul that expands rather than contracts the soul's power of vision" (Morris, 1991, p. 192). In some cultural settings, pain has been associated with redemption, beauty, passion and truth.

The extent and limits of the interpretive dimension of pain become apparent in an extreme case: the conflation of pain and pleasure that characterized the vision of Marquis de Sade. David Morris (1991) writes that this conflation "depends on a paradoxically deadening of the emotions in order that cruelty might be enjoyed to the utmost....The
libertine is paradoxically both hypersensitive and numb....Sade shows us what can happen in any culture when pain -- redefined as a mere shuttle of electrical impulses--has lost all memory of the tragic" (p. 210).

For purposes of this inquiry into reconciliation, it is sufficient to be aware that pain is a phenomenon with interacting physiological, cognitive and cultural dimensions. To understand a former enemy's expressions of pain will require knowledge of cultural conventions that govern its expression, alertness to the interplay of its emotional, physical and cultural manifestations, and openness to the evolving meanings our former adversaries make of their pain.

The Meanings of Suffering

'Suffering' is a concept that has an even stronger interpretive dimension than does 'pain.' It refers to "thoughts about pain," or "a kind of damage that afflicts mind, soul or spirit as well as the body" (Morris, 1991, p. 246). Behaviorists or clinicians who refer to pain as a purely physiological phenomenon define suffering as "our emotional response to pain" (Morris, 1991, p. 143). The Buddhist teacher Charlotte Joko Beck (1993) illustrates the distinction between pain and suffering with a story about a friend who had had an operation. She found that in the days immediately following surgery, her pain was "clear, clean and sharp; it was no problem." But, as she became stronger, and her mind began to work, all her thoughts and fears about her circumstances began to appear. It was then that her suffering began (Beck, 1993, p. 105).

It is a delicate matter to suggest that individuals, especially those who are victims of violence or oppression, contribute to their own suffering. Such a perspective can be abused to blame victims rather than the perpetrators of crimes, as, not infrequently, has been done in instances of racial and gender-based oppression. It also can be used to deny the extent of a victim's disempowerment, or the multifaceted nature of the assaults on integrity that occur in contexts of violence and oppression. To recognize that suffering is in part a matter of interpretation can divert people's attention away from the necessary,
difficult work involved in making economic and political structures more just. The educational work of reconciliation must not fall into these traps.

Nevertheless, to ignore the ways in which suffering is frequently, in part, a matter of interpretation, is to forego the degree of power that people in pain can assume in relation to their condition. Psychological attachment to the status of victimhood is a circumstance that can have devastating consequences for both the victim and for efforts at reconciliation. The importance of making a conscious choice about how we approach our own pain and suffering is the centerpiece of the philosophy of Viktor Frankl (1984), a survivor of Auschwitz and a writer and psychoanalyst. It is the quest for meaning, he claims, the creates the possibility of survival, even in the face of an "intolerable abyss of suffering."

According to the political scientist Paul Salem (1993) the assumption that pain and suffering are bad (and, conversely, that pleasure or comfort are good) is an attitude that derives from the philosophical tradition of Utilitarianism, and underlies many Western approaches to conflict resolution. In other cultures, he writes, "the justice or morality of the cause" may "strike a more resonant philosophical chord" (p. 363). Except in the middle and upper economic strata of post-war Western societies, discomfort and suffering are "familiar companions of life. ...The suffering or discomfort associated with conflict ...blends in with a fabric of discomfort and suffering that embraces most aspects of life...Where discomfort is widespread, people give...more importance to the justice or outcome of the dispute" (p. 364). Salem argues that in the Arab world, physical pain is not necessarily worse than nonphysical losses like "loss of honor, loss of patrimony, loss of face, etc." (p. 365).

The Buddhist tradition offers a particular conception of suffering. According to this view, we all inevitably suffer because life is constantly changing. We know that we can't hold on to pleasant things, and we know that even if unpleasantness disappears, it can come again (Beck, 1989, p. 106). Human suffering is implicit in life; to resist awareness of it is to condemn oneself to ignorance and deception. Furthermore, by recognizing
suffering's universality, we can relieve a certain amount of anxiety associated with it; recognition of the fact of suffering, therefore, is paradoxically "the first step towards its mitigation" (Sivaraksa, 1992, p. 64.)

Some human suffering, however, such as that caused by economic exploitation and war, is susceptible to relief. According to Thich Nhat Hanh (1992), it is the disciplined use of the contemplative power of the mind that holds the key to reducing not only our own suffering, but others' as well. Our willingness to be present to the depths of suffering, "to become one with the object of our observation," (p.82) he writes, can lead to a quality of understanding and compassionate action that might alleviate another's suffering.

For the educational processes of reconciliation, it is important to remember that suffering is an experience that has physical, psychological, cultural, spiritual and emotional dimensions. It is a phenomenon which allows for, and often seems to call for, the ascription of meaning. Whether and how we are present to our own and each other's suffering is, in part, a matter of choice. And what our own or another's suffering might "mean," as well as the course it might take, are not independent of whether the pain can be expressed and how the suffering is perceived, and responded to, by others.

Suffering for the Suffering of Someone Else

Reconciliation requires disputants to make choices about whether, and how, to be present to suffering. It offers former enemies the possibility to influence the course and the meaning of their own and each other's pain.

Emmanuel Levinas (1988) grappled with the meaning of suffering, a phenomenon that, initially, he found to be "useless." Although he considered suffering, in its "extreme passivity, impotence, abandonment and solitude" to be "evil," he noted that suffering presents the possibility that wherever a moan, a cry, a groan or a sigh happen there is the original call for aid, for curative help, for help form the other ego whose alterity, whose exteriority promises salvation. It is the original opening toward what is helpful, where the primordial, irreducible, and ethical, anthropological category of the medical comes to impose itself--across a demand for analgesia, more pressing, more urgent in the groan than a demand

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for consolation or postponement of death. For pure suffering, which is intrinsically meaningless and condemned to itself without exit, a beyond takes shape in the inter-human....

In this perspective a radical difference develops between suffering in the Other which for me is unpardonable and solicits me and calls me, and suffering in me, my own adventure of suffering, whose constitutional or congenital uselessness can take on a meaning, the only meaning to which suffering is susceptible, in becoming a suffering for the suffering--be it inexorable--of someone else. It is this attention to the Other which, across the cruelties of our century--despite these cruelties, because of these cruelties--can be affirmed as the very bond of human subjectivity, even to the point of being raised to a supreme ethical principal--the only one which it is not possible to contest--a principle which can go so far as to command the hopes and practical discipline of vast human groups (p. 158).

In Levinas' view, a purpose and meaning for suffering can be found when we suffer for the suffering of another, when, in other words, we choose (without any assumption of reciprocity) an attitude of compassion toward, and responsibility for, the other. It is in this altruism that the "ethical position of the self as self" is inscribed (p. 165).

What transforms us, writes David Morris (1991), is our choice to open ourselves to the ethical claims of the others' suffering: for our compassion, our aid, our response. In contexts of reconciliation following violent conflicts, where suffering is likely to have been experienced by all parties, we can choose to use the experience of our own suffering to enhance our understanding of the suffering of our former enemy. It takes effort to do this, especially because our enemies are implicated in our suffering (as we are in theirs).

Suffering, in itself, does not naturally lead to compassion; but, compassion is an attitude toward suffering that can be nourished. With intention and effort--that often includes healing our own wounds and mourning our own losses--our own experiences of suffering, and our reflections upon them, may enhance our capacity to choose a skillful and compassionate response to the suffering of others.

Presence to Pain, Suffering and Loss

Understanding the cultural and interpretive dimensions of pain and suffering helps us to critique Scarry's assertion that to perceive pain is automatically to wish it away. In spite of, and in some cases because of pain's aversive nature, there are situations in which
it is tolerated, welcomed and even sought: to provoke the transformations of consciousness
that are part of religious rituals, for instance, or as the signal of a needed separation, as in
the instance of childbirth. By the very intensity of its sentience, in some contexts pain
brings the (at least momentary) reassurance of life. Since pain can be a sign of growth as
well as death, to automatically wish it away might mean removing an important impetus to
development.

Ironically, Scarry’s insistence on the wishing-away of pain may interfere with the
most benevolent and useful response we can have towards another’s suffering: to be
present to its depths with the paradoxically paired qualities of feelingful awareness, alert
calmness and engaged detachment. To understand another’s suffering requires us to
understand its physical, emotional, cultural, political and spiritual causes and
manifestations. This awareness is not based primarily on a desire to change something; it
is based, first, in a willingness to acknowledge and be present to what is. The capacity to
be receptive, to listen, is at the heart of feelingful awareness.

"To be present to what is" requires an engagement of more than rational faculties.
Our awareness will be incomplete if it ignores the emotional and bodily dimensions of
suffering, dimensions that can be apprehended most readily when our own feelings are
engaged. Furthermore, an unwillingness or inability to feel can have the effect of blocking
or distorting perceptions. To be feelingfully aware means to be open to the apprehensions
of our senses and our intuitions. It allows us to bring to consciousness information that
often eludes language, rational acknowledgement and appraisal.

In terms of the work of reconciliation, when we seek to understand an enemy’s
suffering, we are bound to encounter within the other’s explanations ideas with which we
disagree, interpretations that might be based, in fact, on historical inaccuracies and negative
or even hostile impressions of symbols we, ourselves, cherish. Being present to another’s
suffering requires us first to understand the suffering as it is configured—and as it evolves--
within the interpretive world of the other. If we begin by trying to "set straight" the record,
or correct inaccuracies, our interventions likely will be perceived as attempts to invalidate the other's pain.

However, receptiveness to the set of meanings and interpretations constructed by the other does not mean that we must relinquish our own point of view. We may need temporarily to suspend our own point of view, in order to understand a perspective that is different, and often, in conflict with our own. Reconciliation requires us to be feelingfully aware of our own evolving interpretations as well as those of the other--so that, at the appropriate time, we can present our own perspective, engage in dialogue, and work with our former enemies to construct a shared understanding of the relevant history, or, at least, a shared understanding of our different points of view.

Dori Laub (1992), a psychoanalyst and oral historian of Holocaust survivors, describes a quality of vitality and energy that listeners must bring to testimony of great trauma in order to keep alive the witnessing itself. In describing the quality of presence required for reconciliation as "alertness" I refer in part to this quality of vitality. I also wish to evoke a sense of active understanding, of eagerness to hear, of openness to the implications of the stories, of seeking to understand the interconnections among what may at first seem to be disparate experiences. Alertness allows us to attend to silences as well as to speech. Reconciliation requires us to be alert to the meanings our former enemies make of their experiences, to support their processes of meaning-making (and meaning-revising), and, simultaneously, to be engaged ourselves in an on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation of both our own and the others' stories.

Although it may at first seem to be a contradiction, reconciliation is best served when the mental action of this alertness can take place within a framework of calmness. The calmness is important because it allows for a responsiveness, an openness into which other's pain and suffering can be expressed, explored, reconsidered and transformed. We can cultivate the capacity for calmness within ourselves by remaining aware that, as
Sivaraksa (1992) writes, "crisis, tension, misunderstanding and discomfort"—and, we would add, suffering itself--"are a part of life" (p. 88).

What is the quality of presence to our own and each other's suffering required by the work of reconciliation? Since implicit within our conception of reconciliation is the notion of transformation, our presence to ourselves and our adversaries must be sufficiently flexible to allow for the possibility of change. At the very least, then, our presence towards our own and each other's suffering must not be rigid—either in avoidance of the suffering, nor in attachment to it. It is imperative that we understand each other's suffering, but without becoming so overwhelmed that we are paralyzed by shame or numbed by despair. In other words, we must find a balance of engagement and detachment: a presence that makes room for our own and the other's feelings, experiences and interpretations, and allows for transformation.

The state of "feelingful awareness" includes the realms of both thought and emotions, cognition and sensation, contemplation and inquiry—directed both toward the self and the other. The paradoxical qualities of feelingful awareness, alert calmness and engaged detachment characterize a way of being present that can enhance our understanding of—and in some cases transform—suffering, both our own and our enemies'.

The idea that we can choose to use our own experiences of suffering to understand the suffering of our former enemies illustrates one way in which adversaries' understanding of themselves and each other are intertwined. The understanding of suffering also illustrates that how we know—both how deeply we comprehend, and the qualities of presence we bring to our inquiry—in itself has ethical implications. In this case, how we understand another's suffering can alter its course: at least by relieving the aversiveness of isolation, perhaps by creating the possibility for an expression of the suffering that is, itself, transformative.\(^\text{20}\)
There is an interdependence between enemies' understanding of themselves and each other, and also between these understandings and both parties' capacities for moral action. We refer to this ethical and epistemological interdependence as 'transsubjectivity.'

Transsubjectivity

'Transsubjectivity,' we recall from Chapter 1, is a word used by Gaston Bachelard (1994) to refer to the ways in which poetic images "react on other minds and in other hearts, despite all barriers of common sense....At the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions" (p. xix).

To understand a poetic image, we must pay attention to how it reverberates within us. Our attention "shimmers" back and forth between our own response and the image itself, constructing new meanings out of those reverberations. The image in the poem allows us to experience, perceive or understand something previously unknown about ourselves; and, conversely, it is by attending to what is evoked within us that we are able to understand the poetic image. Being present to and understanding a poem can, in itself, alter a reader, who enters into a state of receptivity to the poetic image, to its resonances and reverberations within her, and to the "unceasingly active" inversions between them.

In a comparison that may at first seem peculiar, coming to know an enemy is in some ways like coming to know a poetic image. To understand how this might be a useful metaphor, we first must consider recent theories about the nature of enmity. As we noted in the previous chapter, political psychologists theorize that children's sense of ethnic or national identity is created in part through the "externalization" of pleasurable and wholly good impulses onto symbols of the in-group. In a parallel process, unpleasurable phenomena, or impulses labeled as 'bad' are attached to symbols associated with the other, and, in particular, with the enemy. Volkan (1990) writes that "since our enemies serve as a reservoir of our unconscious selves, they are unconsciously seen to some extent as being like us, although on a conscious level they should not seem like us since they contain our
unwanted aspect—those characteristics we vigorously reject" (p. 38). Images enemies hold of one another are often mirror images: "each side attributes the same virtues to itself and vices to its enemy" (Stein, 1990, p. 73).

Because our impressions of our enemy are at least in part determined by our own projections, to come to know the enemy on its own terms threatens to confront us with those aspects of ourselves we wish most passionately to hold at a distance. Furthermore, our own group's self-definition is "often achieved in opposition to the enemy ... [and] intragroup stability is often purchased through intergroup hostility" (Stein, 1990, p. 71).

To maintain an "enemy system" both adversaries are "locked into a permanent dance," in which their apprehension "of each other is governed largely by projections" (Stein, 1990, p. 71). Especially in cases of overt aggression, the stereotyped enemy is devalued through demonizing and dehumanizing attitudes and behaviors that allow us to avoid feeling guilty about inflicting injury and destruction. To justify our violence, we convince ourselves that the enemy is not only sub-human, but threatening—a force from which we must defend ourselves. Single incidents are taken as evidence that the total fabric of the enemy group is demoniacal. These beliefs are supported by members of our family, our friends, the media, and, generally, political leaders (Moses, 1990, p. 53).

If, as psychoanalytic theorists of conflict assert, enemies become receptacles for the projection of negatively valued attributes of ourselves, to perceive our enemy more completely does entail coming to know ourselves as well. The psychological anthropologist Howard Stein writes that

transcendence of group-isms can only be accomplished, and always incompletely, as we are able to relinquish and integrate the inner splits between "goodness" and "badness" that have led us throughout history to dichotomize between idealized and disparaged groups.... Only by grieving over our own imperfectability and mortality, can we begin to permit ourselves and others to be ambivalently, more fully, "human all too human," and not people the social and supernatural world with saints and demons. Liberation begins with an understanding of what we need and use our indispensable enemies for (p. 87).
Stein's description of how we begin to transcend the seemingly "permanent dance" of adversarial symbiosis captures the interplay of the understanding of self and other that informs the notion of 'transsubjectivity.' Like the shimmering or iridescent quality of coming to know oneself through a poetic image (and a poetic image through its reverberations within us), coming to know an enemy inevitably confronts us with new perceptions of ourselves; those new perceptions, in turn, may allow for an even greater understanding of the other.

The interrelationship among former enemies' capacities both to understand and to act morally, are exemplified by the dynamics that surround the phenomenon of mourning, the grieving of losses that is central to the work of reconciliation. The former diplomat Joseph Montville (1989) argues that "oppressors" can help "to heal the wounds of their victims and facilitate their ability to mourn by the simple process of asking and receiving forgiveness" (Montville, 1989, cited in Volkan, 1990, pp. 43-44). In "normal mourning," those who suffer losses move (albeit in a non-linear, reiterative fashion) through stages of denial, bargaining, anger, sadness and acceptance. If groups or individuals fail to mourn, their self-esteem is bound up with images of what has been lost; circumstances which they then try to recoup, often through violent aggression. Losses that haven't been mourned may also be passed on to future generations. If the circumstances of the losses generate intensive anger, rage can interfere with the ability to complete the cycle of mourning, in turn leading to more violence. What can make a crucial difference in a group's ability to mourn is recognition on the part of the world community and particularly from their oppressor--of the harm inflicted. By helping each other mourn past losses, former enemies can relieve each other of the need to attempt to "recoup ancient losses" (Volkan, 1990, pp. 43-44).

The interdependence inherent in transsubjectivity can also be seen in Buber's theory of I and Thou: the "I" that enters into relation with a being on its own terms is different from the "I" that objectifies the other. And what of the "I" that dehumanizes and
demonizes the other? Several theorists of conflict resolution (Julius, 1990, p. 101; Moses, 1990, p. 53) suggest that it is not possible to dehumanize an other without becoming dehumanized ourselves, at least to some degree. As Julius writes,

in the process of walling off strong feelings and compartmentalizing ourselves, of denying the humanity of others and generally losing touch with our powers of empathy, we become more like that cold, calculating, and emotionless enemy than the so-called enemy himself! As we deny dignity and respect to the other, we begin to lose our own humanity and self respect (p. 101).

The interrelatedness of adversaries' images of each other and their respective abilities to act ethically is the central theme of Akbar S. Ahmed's (1992) book *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise*, whose study of the impact of mass media on the relations between Western and Islamic societies is itself a gesture of reconciliation. Although clear in his acknowledgement of injustice and excesses, he brings a breadth of historical and cultural knowledge to his generous understanding of the suffering on all sides. He challenges both Muslims and Westerners to look to their own traditions to discover resources for the work of reconciliation. Ahmed notes the effects of the one-dimensional picture of Saddam, and by extension, of all Arabs, created during the Gulf crisis. It therefore dehumanized Arab civilization, reducing it to a nonsense. Arabs where shown either as playboys squandering money in European casinos, or bully-boys terrorizing smaller neighbours. For the American GI on the Arabian peninsula there was little difference between the Arabs he was defending and those he was to attack. Both were 'desert niggers'; and he had contributed a racist neologism. When the GI on television said 'I'm here to kick ass', it was difficult to predict which posterior--friend or foe--was destined to receive the imprint of his undoubtedly large boot (p. 229).

Islam is essentially the religion of equilibrium and tolerance; suggesting and encouraging breadth of vision, global positions and the fulfillment of human destiny in the universe. Yet the non-Muslim media, by their consistently hammer-headed onslaught, have succeeded in portraying a negative image of it. They may even succeed in changing muslim character. Muslims, because of their gut response to the attack--both vehement and vitriolic--are failing to maintain the essential features of Islam (p. 48).

On the threshold of the twenty-first century the confrontation between Islam and the West poses terrible internal dilemmas for both. The test for Muslims is how to preserve the essence of the Quranic message, of *adl* and *ahsan* [balance and compassion], *ilm* and *sabr* [knowledge and patience], without it being reduced to an ancient and empty chant in our times; how to participate in the global civilization without their identity being obliterated...The challenge for those in the West is how to expand the Western idealistic notions of justice,
equality, freedom and liberty beyond their borders to include all humanity and without appearing like nineteenth century imperialists; to reach out to those not of their civilization in friendship and sincerity. In both cases a mutual understanding and working relationship are essential (pp. 264-265).

A Comparison of Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity as Epistemological and Ethical Concepts

'Intersubjectivity' and 'transsubjectivity' are terms that refer to two sets of epistemological and ethical relationships that have important implications for reconciliation. 'Intersubjectivity' refers to the relationship between persons and the groups with which they identify; 'transsubjectivity' to the relationship between two or more entities (each comprised of persons and/or collectivities) that are different from, yet in relation to, each other. Both of these sets of relationships are epistemological, because they refer to how the perceptions, understandings and constructed meanings of one entity in a relationship affect the perceptions, understandings and constructed meanings of the other. The relationships are also ethical, because they describe how each party's capacities for moral action of each party to the relationship are, at least to a degree, dependent upon the actions of the other party. Furthermore, the ethical and the epistemological dimensions of these relationships are not distinct: there are ethical implications to the qualities of presence adversaries bring to their efforts to understand each other, and, conversely, the moral dimensions of adversaries' actions affect each other's capacity to understand.

As concepts, both 'intersubjectivity' and 'transsubjectivity' are epistemologically and ethically neutral, in the sense that they can refer to morally abhorrent as well as morally virtuous actions, and to perceptions that are simplistic or misleading as well as understandings that are clear and insightful. Considered together, these two concepts help to explain why conflicts between identity groups (including both ethnic groups and nation-states) can seem so intractable.

'Intersubjectivity' refers to the interembeddedness of individuals and the groups with which they identify, in terms of both the conceptual frameworks used to interpret the
world and capacities for agency. Although there is a sense in which reconciliation depends upon the possibility of persons taking independent moral action and adopting critical stances towards the beliefs of their own groups, intersubjectivity focuses our attention on the ways that individuals carry within our minds and bodies the discourses (which include both conceptual frameworks and the moral sensibilities) of the groups with which we identify. Particularly powerful are those frameworks into which we were socialized at very young ages. In relation to moral capacities, the extent of group solidarity and support for an action, whether it be benevolent or harmful, will influence the action's feasibility, its effectiveness, and the risk to the individual in undertaking it.

Conversely, 'intersubjectivity' also focuses our attention on the ways in which the policies and framing assumptions of collectivities are in part constructions of individuals. Collectivities enjoy authority in large measure through the tacit or explicit, willing or reluctant, acceptance of individual members. Change in groups occurs when individuals educate other members of the group, influence policies of organizations, or present an imaginative and captivating re-interpretation of a traditional symbol. Hologram-like, the person is comprised in part by patterns of meaning incorporated from the group, and the group is comprised in part of individuals, each manifesting the cultural patterns within his or her consciousness and even within processes of growth and change.

These bundles of intersubjectivity--collectivities and their members--do not exist in isolation. To the contrary, they exist and are defined in part in relation to other bundles of intersubjectivity. In concrete terms, for instance, one's sense of being white, or Christian, or male is partly constructed through one's sense of being different from the qualities associated with being Black or Hispanic, or Jewish or Muslim, or female.

In cases of enmity and oppressive relationships, collectivities define themselves partly in opposition to each other. As we noted above, it is not unusual for enemies to perceive each other as exact mirror images, each attributing the same set of favorable values to their own group, and the same set of negative values to the other. To more completely
understand our enemy, therefore, requires us to be willing to accept our own less desirable traits, and to grieve over our own imperfections.

The interdependence of adversaries' understandings of themselves and each other—both in the case of the distorted perceptions of enmity and the more complete understandings associated with reconciliation—is one aspect of transsubjectivity. Although at first glance, enemies may seem other, different or separate, on closer inspection we see that enemies' capacities to understand both themselves and each other, and their capacities for moral action (towards themselves and each other) reside partly inside of each other. For instance, to understand the "meaning" or the moral significance of the actions or policies of one's own nation, it is not sufficient to assess those actions or policies only in terms of the ambitions of that nation. We can only understand the moral significance of actions and policies in light of their impacts on all those affected, including those whose voices may have been silenced or diminished by the action in question. For example, the significance of the western expansion of the United States, presented to schoolchildren under the rubric of 'manifest destiny,' can be more fully understood if the analysis gives weight to the harms done to Native American peoples and cultures. To assess the morality of Israel's 'law of return' it is insufficient to consider only the increment of security it may provide to Jews throughout the world; it is necessary to acknowledge its implications for Palestinians exiled from their homes.

The interdependence of enemies' capacities for moral action is clearly illustrated in the effects that oppressors can have on their victims by the relatively simple process of asking for forgiveness, as we noted above. Oppressors' apologies offer victims a degree of recognition and safety that can facilitate their ability to mourn losses, rather than seek to recoup them by violent means. Apology and forgiveness is one way for enemies to interrupt escalating cycles of violence and revenge.

We see, therefore, that enemies' capacities to understand themselves and each other, and their ability to act morally, are influenced by each other's understandings and
actions. Furthermore, we see that the ethical and the epistemological are not easy to separate: part of what we seek to understand is the moral significance of our own and each others' actions, and our choice to deepen our understanding has, in itself, ethical consequences. Because recognition of one's identity group appears to be such a powerful social need (a need for which individuals appear willing to make enormous sacrifice), the willingness and ability of adversaries to understand each other and to validate each other through their understanding, is an epistemological phenomenon with tremendous ethical implications. And because knowing enemies involves understanding how they have suffered (within their own interpretive framework), the qualities of presence we bring to our inquiry--present or aloof, open or defensive, compassionate or reluctant--affect what our former adversaries can reveal--and transform--by expressing their pain. Although there are many aspects of enmity systems over which individuals have little or no control, in many circumstances, persons can choose an attitude of compassion towards, and a measure of responsibility for, each other's suffering. They can use their own experiences of suffering to help them choose a skillful and compassionate response to the suffering of their former enemy.

To understand the educational implications inherent in these last two ideas--the importance of mutual recognition and the possibility of choosing a compassionate presence towards an enemy's suffering--we must return to the notion of intersubjectivity. Each of the parties to this epistemological and ethical encounter, as both knowers (or seekers) and as persons to be known, are to some degree embodiments of the discourses, the patterns of meanings and values, that inscribe their groups. Their perceptions of each other to some degree are shaped by the constructs of their groups. We qualify these assertions as being "to some degree" because, although the constructs of identity groups may reside permanently within the recesses of personhood, people can increase their ability to choose which of those constructs to embrace and which to minimize, which to preserve and which
to transform. The educational work of reconciliation is directed towards the possibility of expanding people's abilities to make such choices.

Conclusion

To come to know our enemies—in the sense of knowing others that Levinas (1988) and Buber (1970) describe—requires us to take a critical stance towards the construction of reality that intersubjectively binds us to members of our own group. It requires us to confront our fears about ourselves, powerful fears we have invested considerable energy in avoiding. As our image of the dehumanized other begins to soften, as we start to feel empathy towards the adversary whose suffering we ourselves have sought, we must confront feelings of remorse and guilt.

This chapter refers to two choices that parties to reconciliation must be supported to make: (1) the degree to which they wish to apply the constructs of their own group to their efforts to understand their adversary, and (2) whether, and how, to use their own experiences (of suffering, in this case) to understand their former adversaries' experience. Part of the educational task of reconciliation is to enhance participants' capacities to understand these as matters of choice.

In this chapter, we have analyzed the understanding of the suffering of one's enemy, one of the five criteria of reconciliation. By examining in some depth the nature of suffering, and the qualities of presence required to apprehend and transform it, we discovered the extent to which enemies' ethical capacities are intertwined with each other. We adapted Gaston Bachelard's (1994) term 'transsubjectivity' to refer to the iridescent qualities of enemies' perceptions of themselves and each other, as well as to their ethical interdependence. The complicated intersections between intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity—between the ethical and epistemological interembeddedness of an individual with his or her own group, on the one hand, and the ethical and epistemological interdependence of former enemies, on the other—shape the educational challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation.
To come to understand a former enemy, to come to perceive a former enemy as a being deserving of moral consideration, requires many cognitive skills and emotional sensibilities, and, importantly, meta-level awarenesses of these skills and sensibilities. To engage in reconciliation also requires moral imagination and a willingness to trust. Many of these capacities, however, are impaired by the very violence and oppression that reconciliation seeks to address. In the next chapter, the final one in this section on reconciliation, we consider the effects of violence on the moral capacities required for this difficult work.
CHAPTER 6

THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON THE MORAL CAPACITIES REQUIRED FOR THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Violence, as noted in Chapter 2, is sometimes defined as the intentional undermining of another's capacity for agency. It is not surprising, therefore, that people who have been involved in long-standing violent conflicts must recover capacities that have been damaged or eclipsed. In this chapter, I consider how violence can impair the capacities of both victims and perpetrators. This inquiry explains why, so often, the educational agenda of reconciliation must include not just the recognition, but the repair, of moral capacities. It also demonstrates why linguistic modes of expression often prove insufficient to the expressive and communicative challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss how violence can become addictive, erasing the thoughts and feelings that might lead perpetrators to refrain from inflicting more harm. Then, in the next three sections, I assess the likely effects of violent conflicts on victims, including their capacities for linguistic expression, physical and emotional integrity, imagination and creativity. These three sections draw heavily on Elaine Scarry's (1985) analysis of torture and war, as explicated in her work *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. The final section of this chapter returns to a theme central to our conception of reconciliation: the capacity to trust. In some cases, violence can impair victims' capacities to trust, and even to assess when situations warrant trust.

This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the educational challenges inherent in reconciliation, as we have come to understand the concept in Chapters 2 through 6.
The Addictive Nature of Violence

When we think of violence diminishing people's capacities, our attention may naturally be drawn to effects on victims. But engaging in violence can also impair the moral capacities of those who perpetrate it or who bear its legacy. Feelings of guilt and shame, or rigidly held defensive postures can interfere with flexible thinking and compassionate response. This was at first the case, for instance, among the German students who worked with Bjorn Krondorfer (1995) in the reconciliation efforts we described in Chapter 2.

In this chapter we consider how one particular quality of violence can interfere with perpetrators' moral capacities: violence can become addictive, perpetuating itself through the very misery it causes. Sissela Bok (1989) makes the following commentary on Simone Weil's understanding of the intoxicating quality of violence. Violence can:

numb both feelings and reason, so that those in its sway no longer make room for what she called "that halt, that interval of hesitation, wherein lies all our consideration for our brothers in humanity." It is this interval of hesitation, of reflection, that permits us to think of the moral dimensions of what we as human beings do to and for each other; of what we owe to ourselves, to members of our own groups and communities, and to others, even our adversaries....Violence calls out for still greater violence, not only in retaliation against those who have killed one's comrades but also in self-protection, for it helps block out the thoughts that would otherwise 'tear at the soul' (pp. 10-11).

Weil (1956) writes of the Greeks and Trojans, so worn down by years of fighting, that they still believed that liberation could be possible only through further carnage:

Any other solution, more moderate, more reasonable in character, would expose the mind to suffering so naked, so violent, that it could not be borne, even as memory. Terror, grief, exhaustion, slaughter, the annihilation of comrades--is it credible that these things should not continually tear at the soul, if the intoxication of force had not intervened to drown them? (Weil, quoted in Bok, 1989, p. 11).

Weil and Bok describe violence as a kind of self-perpetuating addiction, that compels those who participate in it to continue. The only way to avoid experiencing the suffering, the devastation, that one's violence has wrought is to continue the violence itself. Being numbed to the suffering caused by violence is, in a sense, the opposite of being
"feeling fully aware." It is this numbing, a choice not to know, (or not to know feeling fully) that allows one to continue to perpetrate violence.

Becoming addicted to the numbing effects of violence illustrates one way in which the moral capacities of perpetrators can be impaired. The rest of the chapter focuses on how violence can impair the capacities of victims.

The Effects of Violence on Capacities for Linguistic Expression and for Listening

"Outside of the continuing conversation of community," writes the philosopher Charles Taylor (1985) "human agency would be not just impossible, but inconceivable" (p.8). Language (understood as shared systems of symbolic expression) is the medium through which human beings create meaning, think thoughts, interpret feelings and communicate with each other. Since human interpretations of self are drawn from the interchange the community carries on, language is inherent to the notion of intersubjectivity and indispensable to moral agency.

The work of reconciliation depends on communication. Disputants must come to understand the constructs that give meaning to each others' words. They must understand not only each other's injuries, but also the meanings they ascribe to their losses. They must learn about each others' history, and their similar and different interpretations of the history they share.

However, the physical pain and emotional suffering caused by violence can destroy or infringe on victims' capacities to use language to describe their experiences. In this section, I focus on three forms of violence—bodily injury, psychological trauma, and the long-standing structural violence of oppression—and how each can impair disputants' capacities for linguistic expression.

The Relative Inexpressibility of Physical Pain

The expression of the physical pain that accompanies bodily injury can be critical to the related processes of healing and communication, both necessary for reconciliation. For the sufferer, the expression of physical pain may be the only, or the most important,
avenue she or he has for reducing her own suffering. While we may not be able to control
the pain itself, we reclaim a portion of our selfhood by shaping the form of our expression.
The act of expression itself reasserts a modest degree of power in relation to one's
experience. Expressions of suffering also minimize one of pain's most aversive features:
the extent to which it isolates us from others, from human beings who could respond with
compassionate presence. Adequate expression of pain—adequate enough to assist medical
personnel in treating it correctly,23 or to convince the jury in a personal injury trial to
award compensation, or to stir the consciousness of the world's citizens to protest the
torture of a prisoner—can contribute to pain's amelioration or even elimination.24

However, because pain exists in the interior of our bodies and has no object in the
material world, we have little direct language for physical pain. It "passes much of its time

Furthermore, in its extreme forms, pain can actually obliterate the capacity for
language, as speech devolves into moans and cries. Scarry writes (1985):

[One] dimension of physical pain is its ability to destroy language, the
power of verbal objectification, a major source of our self-extension, a vehicle
through which the pain could be lifted out into the world and eliminated.
Before destroying language, it first monopolizes language, becomes its only
subject: complaint, in many ways the nonpolitical equivalent of confession,
becomes the exclusive mode of speech. Eventually the pain so deepens that
the coherence of complaint is displaced by the sounds anterior to learned
language....

[Another] element of physical pain, one that overlaps but is not quite
coterminous with the previous element, is its obliteration of the contents of
consciousness. Pain annihilates not only the objects of complex thought and
emotion but also the objects of the most elemental acts of perception.... Pain
begins by being "not oneself" and ends by having eliminated all that is "not
itself." At first occurring only as an appalling but limited internal fact, it
eventually occupies the entire body and spills out into the realm beyond the
body, takes over all that is inside and outside, make the two obscenely
indistinguishable, and systematically destroys anything like language or world
extension that is alien to itself and threatening to its claims. Terrifying for its
narrowness, it nevertheless exhausts and displaces all else until it seems to
become the single broad and omnipresent fact of existence (pp. 54-55).

It is unlikely that people who are in physical pain so intense that they have lost all
capacity for language will at that moment be participating in reconciliation efforts.

However, such intense physical pain is "remembered" in the body, and it will likely still
defy linguistic expression later, when words are readily available to describe other domains of experience. To help disputants' both regain the capacity for self-definition associated with language, and also to understand each other's suffering, efforts at reconciliation will have to help restore, or else circumvent, these impaired capacities for linguistic expression.

Psychological Trauma and Silence: Insights from Laub's work with Holocaust Survivors

The simultaneous near-impossibility and critical importance of the expression of extreme physical pain is also true for some victims of psychological traumas (that may, or may not, include bodily injury). Like extreme physical pain, life-shattering traumas can also defy language, in this case because the events, though real, take place outside of the normal categories that allow them to be linked with other experiences, comprehended, and recounted. This phenomenon is explored in detail by Dori Laub (1992), a psychoanalyst and documentor who works with survivors of the Holocaust. The ambivalence that survivors feel about bearing witness to their experience is explained by Laub in this way:

[The trauma survivor] profoundly fears such knowledge, shrinks away from it and is apt to close off at any moment, when facing it...Such knowledge dissolves all barriers, breaks all boundaries of time and place, of self and subjectivity. ..Speakers about trauma on some level prefer silence so as to protect themselves from the fear of being listened to— and of listening to themselves...While silence is defeat, it serves them both as a sanctuary and as a place of bondage. Silence is for them a fated exile, yet also a home, a destination, and a binding oath. To not return from this silence is the rule rather than the exception (p. 58).

As is the case with those who experience physical pain, to refrain from speaking of psychological trauma has serious consequences. Laub (1992) presents cases of survivors who, unable to speak of their experiences, construct and interpret their on-going relationships in ways that recreate the emotional isolation of the original trauma. The experiences they cannot speak in words instead leave their mark in the patterns of their domestic, social and vocational lives. Often, survivors' reticence or inability to speak of their experiences creates a "black hole" of silence between them and their children, a silence that insinuates itself into future generations.25
David Morris (1991) considers the cultural significance of "the suffering of a community or the brutalization of an entire race" (p. 51). The traumas of this century, he argues, continue inevitably to "affect how we think, how we interact, how we feel. Pain on such an immeasurable order of magnitude will very likely defeat or cancel thought. The mind simply blocks what it cannot comprehend, casting us back as a culture on doomed escapes into amnesia, repression and denial. Quite literally, we can make nothing of it" (Morris, 1991, p. 51).

It is likely that many candidates for the work of reconciliation will have witnessed the death of loved ones, sometimes by brutal means. They may have been assaulted sexually and/or wounded physically. They may have lost their homes and been torn from their communities. This sort of violence destroys not just individual human lives, or relationships, or the material artifacts that people create together. It can also severely damage the ability to trust and to create trusting human relationships (Mack, 1990, p. 121). Furthermore, the uprooting of communities, an occurrence not uncommon in the violent conflicts of this century, can also destroy the systems of symbols that previously gave meaning and direction to lives, that otherwise might have provided frameworks for the telling of stories, the witnessing of the violence itself.

It is not surprising, then, that victims of such traumas may at first be unwilling or unable to speak of their experiences, to break through the silence Laub describes as both "sanctuary" and "bondage." When we design educational strategies for the work of reconciliation we must keep in mind not only the ways in which physical pain can limit linguistic expression; we must address the silences that often accompany psychological trauma as well.

The Infringements on Linguistic Agency in Context of Oppression

Limits on the expressibility of suffering that both characterize and extend the injuriousness of intense physical pain and extreme psychological trauma also feature centrally in contexts of oppression, the structural violence that inscribes the personal and
institutional relationships between dominant and dominated groups. Whether such oppressive relationships are based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation or other category of difference, part of what defines oppression, and what allows oppressive structures to operate with minimal overt violence, is that the suppressed group takes on the ideology of the dominant group. Through this ideological imposition the worker comes to believe that she or he is less creative, less deserving of the benefit of labor than the entrepreneur, and the woman comes to believe that her opinions are less worthy than those of her husband or male colleague.

This "mystification" (Bartky, 1995) takes place in part because the oppressed group comes to perceive the world, including their images of themselves, through the language of the oppressor. Sarah Hoagland (1989), in her book *Lesbian Ethics*, writes that "language is the tool of oppression," because

we remain trapped in oppression when we perceive only what the oppressors perceive, when we are restricted to their values and categories. Language interests me because of its insidiousness as a means of maintaining a political perspective, and because of its susceptibility to change. However, language use has a contradictory dynamic for those under oppression--it is a matter both of agreement and of coercion: in using language we participate in a consensus, often unwittingly; but our participation is also coerced (p. 14).

Hoagland (1989) considers the linguistic hegemony of the dominant group to be an important aspect of the "de-moralization" that occurs when we, as members of oppressed groups "go on" and "make choices under oppression." In the process, we internalize the values of dominance and subordination. In such circumstances, because we make choices, we can still be considered moral agents, Hoagland writes, but our "ability as moral agents is being undermined" (p. 213).

In some instances of oppression, the imposition of a dominant ideology through language is overt, as when colonizing powers forbid indigenous people to speak their own languages. For instance, Native American children were punished when they spoke native languages at the mandatory boarding schools run by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs. Similarly, during the period of slavery, African people who spoke the same
languages were often separated from each other. They were forbidden to use drums to communicate from one plantation to another.

Other oppressive linguistic impositions take place through commonly accepted usages and meanings that subtly but insidiously influence perception. For instance, until recently, the ubiquitously accepted convention of distinguishing between "Mrs." and "Miss" in addressing women, in contrast with the single title "Mr." for both married and unmarried men, reflected and reproduced patriarchal ideology and relations. A similarly insidious example is the association of blackness with the negative qualities of evil and sadness, an association that pervades Western literature.

"To exist, humanly," writes Paulo Freire (1970), "is to name the world, to change it." In contexts of oppression, in which a dominated group has internalized the constructs of the more powerful group, the work of reconciliation often begins with consciousness-raising, a process Freire describes as 'conscientization.' The educational processes of reconciliation must reflect a critical awareness of both the transformative and the oppressive potential of language. In some cases it will be appropriate to elicit and amplify the indigenous oppositional discourses.

The Importance of Listening

However, the understanding of suffering and the acknowledgment of injustice does not depend only on the expression of experience, whether in linguistic or other forms. It also requires disputants, including those who may themselves have suffered substantially, to listen to each other as they give voice to their experiences. Sensitive, patient, and engaged listening can sometimes help those who are reluctant or terrified to speak and help others to create or re-create language that is adequate to their experience. However, this listening can be difficult for several reasons. Based on his experiences gathering testimony from Holocaust survivors, Laub (1992) writes that the person who listens to the testimony of survivors of trauma:
must listen to and hear the silence, speaking mutely both in silence and in speech, both from behind and from within the speech. He or she must recognize, acknowledge and address that silence, even if this simply means respect--and knowing how to wait. The listener to trauma needs to know all this, so as to be a guide and an explorer, a companion in a journey onto an uncharted land, a journey the survivor cannot traverse or return from alone...

There is so much destruction recounted, so much death, so much loss, so much hopelessness, that there has to be an abundance of holding and of emotional investment in the encounter, to keep alive the witnessing narration; otherwise the whole experience of the testimony can end up in silence, in complete withholding. Paradoxically enough, the interviewer has to be, thus, both unobtrusive, nondirective, and yet imminently present, active, in the lead (pp. 58-59, 71).

According to Laub, the demands of such listening, even for a trained psychotherapist, are likely to give rise to a number of defenses within the listener, who seeks to protect him- or herself from the images of trauma and from the onslaught of existential questions inevitably raised by such narratives. These defenses range from paralysis and numbness, to anger at the narrator, to a kind of hyperemotionality which might at first look like compassion but can simply "drown" the survivor in "the listener's defensive affectivity" (Laub, 1992, p. 73). How much more difficult it must be to achieve empathetic awareness of the other in contexts of violence, when one's own people are suffering, when to acknowledge another's suffering may be interpreted as legitimating their political claims, when propaganda may have led us to regard their statements as untrue, and when, in fact, the opposing side may have exaggerated claims of its suffering for political ends.

As educators and mediators working in contexts of conflict, a recognition of the importance and difficulty of the listening, as well as of the telling, must be kept in mind as we design the processes of reconciliation. Disputants may need help to expand the repertoire and power of their listening skills. In many cases, the mis-match between the needs of the teller and the capacities of their former adversaries as potential listeners contributes to the need for mediation and/or facilitation. Members of the American Psychiatric Association's Task Force and Committee on Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs, who have facilitated workshops with Israeli, Egyptian, Palestinian and other Middle
Eastern antagonists for several years, have discovered that groups that have suffered repeated victimization become seemingly incapable of empathizing with the suffering of another group. Analogous to the narcissism of individuals who can attend only to their own needs, members of victimized groups seem to "have little capacity to grieve for the hurts of other peoples, or to take responsibilities for the new victims created by their warlike actions" (Mack, 1990, p. 125). To break the cycle:

a fundamental attitude of healing or transcending conflict must be present in the third party conveners, who must constantly have their own ethno-nationalist pain and identifications well in hand. Second, all sides must do a great deal of listening to the telling of history, especially of each group's hurts and its version of where responsibility has lain. Little by little, acknowledgment of the victim experience of another group can occur, first by the third party conveners, and finally, by the adversaries themselves in relation to each other. In this way bonds can be forged between groups, so that they can begin to substitute mutual empathy for the egoism of victimization (p. 126).

To summarize then, the expression of pain and suffering is important for the work of reconciliation. It is important for the teller, the one who is suffering, and the listener, the one who may have participated in causing the pain. The expression of suffering is important to the teller because it may help alleviate the pain and enhance capacity for self-definition; and it is important to the listener, who must gain feelingful awareness of the other's experience and relate compassionately to the former adversary. There is a dialectical relationship between this communication about suffering and people's visibility to each other as trustworthy moral beings: the more we see each other as moral beings, the more we understand each other as vulnerable to sentience and capable of compassion; conversely, the more we understand each other's vulnerability and feel the warmth of each other's compassion, the more likely it is that we will endow each other with the status of moral personhood.

Expression is important not only in terms of the understanding of suffering. Disputants' must be able to tell their stories, to represent their cultures and, especially, their understandings of the history relevant to the dispute. They must become visible to each
other as moral beings—not only in their ability to feel pain and offer compassion, but also as persons capable of creating meaning and acting in the world.

For these reasons, if the capacities necessary for these communicative exchanges have been impaired through the conflict, or are absent for another reason, the processes of reconciliation must, in their initial stages, begin to restore them. This might mean that at first, facilitators work separately with each group. Alternatively, the educational processes of reconciliation can account for some reduced capacities by circumventing them, by, for instance, engaging disputants in non-linguistic forms of expression and/or making use of mediating persons and structures to facilitate communication.

The violence of war and oppression infringe on people's moral capacities by diminishing disputants' abilities to express their experiences in language and to listen to each other's experiences of suffering. In the case of physical pain, this infringement of voice is directly linked to the violation of people's physical integrity. The reduction of capacities for verbal expression is only one way, however, in which physical injury has important ramifications for the work of reconciliation. In the following section, we will consider other implications of the embodied nature of violent conflicts.

The Injured Body As Sign

As we saw in the discussion of intersubjectivity, the constructs that define cultures find their way into the recesses of a person's physical being—for instance, in our accents, our culinary preferences, and in the subtle ways in which we construct facial expressions and hold tensions in our bodies. It is not surprising, then, that in conflicts over competing cultural constructs the body is altered, used, and invested with meanings beyond its physical substance and processes. Bodies are important in conflicts and in the work of reconciliation not only in their physical existence, but because of their functions as signs.

The relative inexpressibility of physical pain, a notion we considered in the previous section, is the centerpiece of Elaine Scarry's (1985) theory about the uses of the body in torture and war. The difficulty we have in finding language to express extreme
physical pain, coupled with the simultaneous certain realness of pain for the sufferer and lack of certainty for the observer, have profound political consequences. It is possible, she claims, for the "felt-attributes of pain"—i.e., its "compelling vibrancy or its incontestable reality or simply its certainty ... to be lifted into the visible world" but attached not to the actual person in pain, but rather to beliefs or constructs that lack "substantiation," or some material basis of authentication (Scarry, 1985, p. 13).

This linking of the body's certainty and realness to otherwise unsubstantiated human constructs was perhaps first practiced in rituals of human sacrifice, in which the opened body was brought into proximity with beliefs (in gods, for instance) that could not be verified in the visible world. In the history of cultural development, in most cases human sacrifice has been replaced by animal sacrifice, and then later with other forms of substantiation (in edifices, rituals and texts, for instance). In some religious rituals, such as the piercing of the body in Native American rites, beliefs are given credibility through the wounding of the body. An obvious and morally important difference between these rituals and the practice of human sacrifice is, of course, whose body is used in the substantiating, and under whose direction.

Torture, a practice currently used in some one hundred countries, represents a gruesome and contemporary case of physical pain being misappropriated away from its original site in the body, to lend an aura of realness to an otherwise unsubstantiated construct. Illegitimate regimes, i.e., regimes lacking recognized legitimacy, seek to appropriate to themselves the certainty of the pain of the tortured body. The regime controls the "reference" for the pain, i.e., the construct to which the pain will lend substantiation, because its agents inflict pain so as to obliterate, intentionally, the victim's capacity for language. The victim is made inescapably aware of his or her body; and the torturer appropriates to himself the power of the voice, the capacity to name. By engaging in the act of torture, the regime communicates its realness to itself. The injured body of the prisoner is "read" as a sign of certainty, vibrancy and power. According to Scarry (1985):
the failure to express pain—whether the failure to objectify its attribute or instead the failure...to refer them to their original site in the human body—will always work to allow its appropriation and conflation with debased forms of power; conversely the successful expression of pain will always work to expose and make impossible that appropriation and conflation (p. 14).

War is another circumstance in which wounded human bodies are sought as signs in order to legitimate cultural constructs. In this case, advocates of two (or more) competing fictions seek to legitimate themselves and de-legitimate each other. Like torture, war seeks to appropriate the "realness" and "certainty" of the open, wounded body to a political fiction, in this case to the as-yet-uncertain status of a construct, for instance, of nationhood. What makes the outcome of war "abiding," according to Scarry, is not, as is commonly believed, that one side loses its actual capacity to continue to fight. The outcome of war "is believed to and hence allowed to carry the power of its own enforcement" (Scarry, 1985, p. 108) because of the nature of "injuries-as-signs": they memorialize an activity that has occurred in the past, and, confer reality to a future-in-the-making.

The dispute that leads to war involves a process by which each side calls into question the legitimacy and thereby erodes the reality of the other country's issues, beliefs, ideas, self-conception....The injuring not only provides a means of choosing [a winner] but also provides, by its massive opening of human bodies, a way of reconnecting the derealized and disembodied beliefs with the force and power of the material world....

If the Ireland 'for which one dies' existed, an Ireland independent of British rule, one would not be dying; if the Israel 'for which one kills' existed, an Israel secure within boundaries acceptable to her population and population of her neighbors, one would not be killing....[T]he United States that in 1861 one 'dies for,' a geographically and morally unified nation, does not exist; the Northern boy kills because it does not exist; he brings it into being by his acts which are productive of the thing; just as the country for which the Southern boy dies, one securely separate and autonomous from the North, does not exist and he brings it into being by his death. In this and every war, the injuring contest is a contest to see which one of the two not-yet-existing countries will be produced in the outcome....

[I]njuries produce the radical material base for the winning issues, investing them with the bodily attribute of reality until there is time for both populations to consent to them, enact them, make them real (Scarry, 1985, pp. 128-132).

Injuries can fulfill this function because of the "compelling and vivid reality" of the human body, and, because that realness can be referred away from the body, lending
credibility to a fiction that, in the case of torture, is often fraudulent, or, in the case of war, has not yet been made real.

In their attitudes toward violence, trust, suffering and injustice, war and reconciliation could not be more different. But in one regard, they are similar. War and reconciliation both seek legitimacy for large-scale human fictions, or creations. Unlike in war, however, where these frameworks are determined in a contest of winners and losers, reconciliation seeks to engage all parties in processes designed to meet the underlying needs of each.

It is interesting, in light of Scarry's theory about the role of the injured body in substantiating fictional constructs, to note how efforts at reconciliation and non-violent resistance also take into account the role of the body lending authority to as-yet-unrealized constructs. For instance, many contemporary theorists and practitioners of reconciliation, including Bjorn Krondorfer (1995) whose work with German and Jewish young people was described in an earlier chapter, emphasize the importance of ritual. One of the defining characteristics of rituals is that action is embodied: participants stand, sit, walk, eat, touch, dance, chant and move.

Gandhi's experiments with satyagraha also relied on the altered human body for substantiation—but it was Gandhi's own body that he made vulnerable, in the form of extensive fasts (Gandhi, 1961, pp. 310-324). In Viet Nam, several Buddhist monks burned their own bodies to demonstrate the urgency of peace. The willingness to suffer among many practitioners of non-violent resistance can perhaps be understood as the willingness to use one's own body to lend legitimacy to one's beliefs.27

Educators involved in the work of reconciliation must take into account the importance of the body in several ways. We must recognize that the framing constructs under revision are likely to be held not only in the language and consciousness of those who have been in conflict, but in their bodies as well. Therefore, the "transformative processes" that comprise the work of reconciliation will be most effective when they reach
out to people in the recesses of their personhood, toward the gestures, postures, rhythms
and accents that embody their earliest learning.

Also, the revisions of large-scale fictions that are accomplished through
reconciliation (such as the constructs that define nations) will require substantiation. If this
authentication or legitimization is not to take place through war, then we will need
alternatives that can move people as primally, as viscerally, as the sight and feel of a
wounded body.

Finally, educational efforts at reconciliation must take into account the effects of
trauma on the body—both how difficult it is for survivors of intense physical and
psychological pain to find language to express their suffering, and how traumas can be held
in bodily and psychological rigidities that become impediments to both thinking and
feeling.

War and Torture as Deconstructions of Human Creating

In its "massive fact of itself," according to Scarry (1985), war is "a huge structure
for the derealization of cultural constructs and, simultaneously, for their eventual
reconstitution" (p. 137). This "eventual reconstitution," the re-ordering of large-scale
framing assumptions, is one way of understanding war's purpose, an understanding that
has made it difficult to achieve consensus on the immorality of war. In Scarry's summary,
political philosophers and military scholars have argued that "the world that has permanent
peace" would be "less just' than one in which peace can be interrupted by war" (1985,
p. 141). The fear is that a world without war would freeze boundaries, trade
arrangements, markets and ideological patterns into formations that would inevitably favor
certain groups of people over others. This argument is supported by the fact that it is often
the more powerful adversary in the conflict who, ignoring the structural violence that is
implicit in the institutional arrangements of systemic oppression and colonialization,
clamors for "peace."
The morality of war, I believe, should not be assessed in comparison to unchallenged and unchanging structural inequities, but rather in comparison to other processes, many perhaps yet unimagined, that groups could use to revise the large-scale framing assumptions, the "master narratives" that define and legitimate relationships among nations, land, beliefs ethnic groups and persons. In its modern forms, in which civilians often have become primary targets, in moral terms war may have more affinity with torture than with justice. One of those commonalities with particular salience for the work of reconciliation, is that both torture and war deconstruct the creative work of civilization.

The purpose of the interrogations that accompany torture, according to Scarry (1985), is not to gather information, but rather to deconstruct the prisoner's voice. Torturers typically first distort language, for instance by using the vocabulary of comfort and domesticity to refer to its barbarisms: the torture room is called the "guest house" in Greece and the "safe house" in the Philippines, for instance. Items that were created to sustain life and relieve suffering are used instead to inflict pain, torturers thereby subverting the meaning of the objects of consciousness. They invert the purpose of civilization's artifacts: a room is used not for shelter, but for isolation and secrecy; verbal and material reminders of the institutions of law, for instance, are used not for justice, but rather to contrive "evidence" in support of injustice; the language, tools and even persons associated with the institution of medicine are used not to heal, but to injure. Torturers inflict pain so aversive that it obliterates all other aspects of consciousness. It is when their victims have lost contact with their universe of meanings that interrogators subvert the prisoner's own voice, forcing her or him to "confess," and often, to betray comrades and loved ones. Finally, the pain of torture obliterates prisoners' capacities for language altogether (Scarry, 1985, pp. 27-59).

Torture deconstructs civilization, as civilization is held in the consciousness of its victims. It not only subverts the meaning of artifacts and language, it destroys that capacity for creating the meaning of those objects of consciousness, the human capacity to name and
to imagine. It is in this sense that the body in pain represents the "unmaking of the world," half of the subtitle of Scarry's work.

In war, the contested cultural constructs are attacked not only in their embodied form, i.e., in the bodies and consciousness of human beings, both soldiers and civilians, but also in the artifacts of civilization: the buildings, homes, farms and cities that are the physical manifestations that represent and recreate culture itself. Scarry (1985) writes that:

the declaration of war is the declaration that "reality" is now officially "up for grabs," is now officially not only to be suspended but systematically deconstructed, a deconstruction that will be carried far enough on both sides so that either one, if designated the loser, will have less difficulty reimagining itself as "without" its disputed aspect of self-definition than it would immediately prior to the war. The lies, fictions, falsification, within war, though authored by particular kinds of speakers in any given instance (government officials, journalists, generals, soldiers, factory workers) themselves together objectify and extend the formal fact of what war is, the suspension of the reality of constructs, the systematic retraction of all benign forms of substance from the artifacts of civilization... (p. 137).

Like torture, war also reveals the structure of "unmaking"; its structure is the mirror image of the structure of creating, which is, according to Scarry, a defining feature of civilization. It is the work of civilization to relieve the body of the aversive aspects of sentience: first to imagine, and then to create, objects and non-material constructs that allow the individual to attend less to the exigencies of the body, and more to a larger, more expansive world. Human beings first "make up" and then "make real" clothing, for instance, to stabilize the body's temperature; houses, to create a zone of safety; furniture, to relieve the body of the problem of weight. Civilization involves not just these processes of making up and making real, but the on-going re-making of the very processes of making, so that maker, once relieved of the immediate vulnerabilities of the body, can create for the pleasure of creating, to fashion objects of beauty, and to celebrate and substantiate other creations.

In torture and war, the objects of civilization are used not to relieve pain, but to inflict it; the intention is not to expand the torture victim's or enemy's world, but to constrict it, so consciousness is once again consumed with the exigencies of survival and
the relief of pain. Civilization's creations and its forms of creating are deconstructed, sometimes at the site of the "making up" and sometimes at the site of the "made real."

In furthering its purpose, rearranging of the framing assumptions that define international relations, war assaults the physical, cultural, and political integrity of people and groups on all sides. It should not be surprising, therefore, that often people's capacity for integrity will need to be restored in the early stages of reconciliation processes. Just as violence deconstructs human creating, destroying not only our creations but our capacity to create, reconciliation must reconstruct creating, by helping survivors not only to create new frameworks, but to restore and recreate creativity itself. Educators and mediators who seek to engage people in reconciliatory processes following violent conflicts must take into account the extent to which the massive destruction of the artifacts of civilization are likely to have destroyed or eclipsed the various capacities necessary for reconciliation. As people witness the destruction of the objects of their cultures—the demolition of Palestinian homes, the bombing of the library in Sarajevo, the defiling of Buddhist temples and shrines in Tibet—they are experiencing an assault on the symbols that have imbued their personal and communal lives with meaning. These symbol systems comprise the constructs through which they perceive their worlds. The confusion that results from the shattering of such formative constructs can impair people's ability to think and feel with coherence and openness. Efforts at reconciliation may need to create opportunities for people to revive and revise traditional symbols, or invent new symbolic constructs through which to perceive and give meaning to their unfamiliar, and perhaps frightening, new circumstances.

Victimization and Infringements on the Capacity to Trust

"[T]orture has an indelible character," wrote Jean Amery (1980), a Belgian Jew who had been captured by the Nazis during his years in the Belgian resistance. "Whoever was tortured, stays tortured. Torture is ineradicably burned into him, even when no clinically objective traces can be detected" (p. 34). "[W]ith the very first blow that descends on him he loses something we will call 'trust in the world'" (pp. 28-29).
The ability to trust, to establish trusting human relationships and to believe in the possibility of a safe and meaningful life, are moral capacities so basic that they are often overlooked. Yet without the ability to trust—or at least to believe that trust is possible—the work of reconciliation would be virtually impossible. This chapter ends with a brief inquiry into the effects of violence on victims' abilities to trust, drawing on insights of political psychologists who have studied the roots of terrorist violence. We will see that, like many who have experienced torture, those who become perpetrators of terrorism have themselves been violated in ways that have undermined their capacity to trust.

According to Joseph Montville (1990) "ethnic victimization is a state of individual and collective ethnic mind that occurs when the traditional structures that provide an individual sense of security and self-worth [are] shattered by aggressive, violent political outsiders. Victimhood can be characterized by either an extreme or persistent low-level sense of mortal vulnerability" (p. 169).

Individuals identify with ethnic victimhood when they suffer personally from an episode of physical violence. A sense of victimization ensues when the violence directed against them or their group is clearly unjustifiable, when the assault represents a continuous threat, and when it generates a basic fear of annihilation. Just as torture can leave a psychological scar that is "indelible," so the experience of victimization can lead to seemingly permanent effects, including a "readiness to commit violence without remorse." (Olsson, 1990, p. 189). According to the clinical psychologist Jeanne Knutson (1981), who interviewed hundreds of victims of political violence, in the United States, Ireland, Iran, Cyprus and the Middle East:

[O]ne never erases the identity of a victim. The first blows make the victim permanently on guard for the next attack by the victimizer. Even if the latter—a tribe, another ethnic group or nation—loses power or the ability to mount a credible threat, the victim's fear continues even if diminished. A life-preserving, primitive belief in personal safety has been breached. Once having been terrorized, a victim thus simultaneously grieves over the past and fears the future. At base, this intense anxiety over future loss is driven by the semi-conscious inner knowledge that passivity ensures victimization. The
genesis of political violence ... is the belief that...only continued activity in
defense of one's self (one's group) adequately serves to reduce the threat of
further aggression against the self (Knutson, 1981, cited in Montville, 1990,
p. 170).

The political psychologist Rona Fields (1986) studied the cognitive, affective and
moral development of children in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and Africa. She found
that children growing up in conditions of ongoing violence have a very strong sense of
right and wrong, but "seem to become truncated at the second level of moral
development....at which right and wrong [are viewed exclusively] in terms of their identity
group" (Fields, 1986, p. 5). Such children grow up with a prevailing sense of
helplessness, "not ameliorated through observations of parental efficacy," and become
grow up in contexts of protracted ethnic violence and the apparent powerless of the adults
of their own group, the world does not warrant their trust. It cannot meet their most
fundamental needs for safety and for a sense of justice. The psychological scars of such
violence lead some of those children to assert their personhood, their identity, through acts
of terror. And so begin intra-psychic and inter-ethnic cycles of fear, rage and aggression--
cycles that are difficult to interrupt, even when "objective" circumstances change.

Joseph Montville (1990) believes there are some long-term strategies for healing
such tragedies:

To deal with the violence of peoples who have been victimized solely because
of their ethnic identity requires processes of analysis, recognition of historic
injustices, contrition by the authors of the injustices or their successors, and
the completion of mourning of historic losses. These tasks are truly
awesome, but the ever-emerging knowledge of human psychology points the
way to strategies of healing that hold out previously unimagined hope for
mankind's future. To ignore this knowledge in the nuclear age also holds out
the possibility of unimaginable disaster for mankind (p. 179).

Conclusion

As we have noted throughout these chapters on reconciliation, at its core,
reconciliation is about the moral restructuring of relationships between former adversaries.

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It requires and is constituted by processes through which people become visible to each other as moral beings.

Violence is a form of resolving conflicts in which adversaries seek to "win" by damaging and/or destroying each others' capacities for agency. In the context of violence, including both overt, physical destruction and the on-going structural violence of oppression, individuals and groups assault each others' worlds: their bodies and their constructions and the systems of symbols that give meaning to personhood in the context of community. These reciprocal attacks on physical, cultural and political integrity often leave both persons and groups impaired—in their capacities to speak, listen, think, feel, act, imagine and create. In conflicts characterized by the asymmetrical distribution of power, the nature of these infringements on moral capacity may differ in quality and degree for those with more and less, and different kinds of power. However, it is a likely possibility that all parties to conflicts may come into the process in need of restoration of some of the capacities required by reconciliation.

Reconciliation is also a form of resolving conflicts. But in reconciliation, adversaries seek not to "win," but rather to create a new moral framework for their relationship, in which conflicts are addressed in ways that recognize and, in fact, enhance each others' integrity.

In this chapter, we have considered why, so often, reconciliatory processes must be designed not simply to acknowledge disputants' moral capacities, but to restore them. We have examined how physical suffering, psychological trauma and long-standing oppression can impair abilities for linguistic oppression, and also how violent conflicts in fact deconstruct the creative processes of civilization, intruding on the very symbol systems that disputants may need make sense of, and articulate, their experiences. We also have hinted at what kinds of processes, and what modes of expression, might serve to restore disputants' capacities for agency. The educational processes of reconciliation will find special uses for modes of representation and expression that do not rely exclusively on
discursive language, and that in themselves animate the whole person, revitalize emotions, and engage the imagination.

In these chapters on reconciliation, we have emphasized how people become morally visible to each other in part through the recognition of each others' suffering and compassion. To consider each other as worthy of respect also requires adversaries to appreciate each other as creators of meaning, as tellers of stories, and as inventors of material and cultural artifacts that imbue life with significance. This is an important reason why the processes of reconciliation must help adversaries appreciate each others' representations of history and culture. Sometimes the traditional rituals and artifacts are incorporated directly into the educational processes of reconciliation. In cases of cultural dislocation, in which the salience or flexibility of traditional systems of symbols has been diminished, educational efforts may need to help victims of such dislocations to revitalize, reinterpret and/or invent useful symbolic constructs through which to make meaning of their experiences.

Just when the shattering of one's world calls forth despair, reconciliation requires an attitude of hope for the future. To engage in reconciliation following prolonged violent conflict requires believing in the possibility of trust. Many people whose childhood identities are infused with experiences of victimhood will need to engage in the painstaking work of rebuilding their capacity to trust.

After participating in the deconstruction of civilization, the deconstruction not only of the made world, but the very processes of creating, people who engage in reconciliation will likely need reminders of the benevolent potential of human creativity. It has been the history of civilization that human creations (most especially language and tools) re-create the processes of imagining, substantiating and constructing. Reconciliation offers the possibility that we can recreate the processes of revising our largest fictions, the framing assumptions that define nations, cultures, boundaries and beliefs. Its ends are furthered

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when its processes help people remember the potential vitality, generativity, and benevolence of the human capacity to imagine.

After witnessing the deconstruction of civilization through war, those who engage in reconciliation may need practice in both imagining and creating, in "making up" and "making real." Reconciliation, after all, asks those who engage in it to imagine and give form to the fiction we call "peace."

Summary of the Educational and Ethical Challenges Inherent in Reconciliation

Reconciliation is an educational and ethical concept. We have conceptualized it as a set of criteria that conflict resolution processes can aspire to meet. These criteria reflect one of the primary distinctions between reconciliation and many other ways of resolving conflicts: the ends (of a relationship characterized by mutual respect, reciprocal understanding and commitment to work towards a shared sense of justice) are embedded within the means, the processes of reconciliation themselves.

As an educational concept, reconciliation reflects a commitment to the restoration of impaired capacities and to a kind of understanding that embraces both rational and emotional sensibilities. As an ethical concept, it emphasizes the establishment of relationships based on warranted trust. Former adversaries agree to recognize and support each other's integrity as moral agents and to create, collaboratively, a moral framework for their relationship. That framework, then, creates a context for the constructive, on-going resolution of conflicts as they emerge.

Reconciliation requires a kind of understanding that in itself has ethical consequences. I have proposed conceptual frameworks of 'intersubjectivity' and 'transsubjectivity' to describe the complexity of the epistemological and ethical relationships between individuals and the groups with which they identify, on the one hand, and among adversaries, on the other. Whether we choose to understand, how deeply we understand, and the quality of presence we bring to our quest for understanding:
in themselves these choices can influence the course and meaning of our own and our
enemies' suffering, our ability to act in ways that lessen the likelihood of further violence,
and, therefore, even the outcome of a conflict.

Mediators and mediating forms and processes are often required to help adversaries
perceive each other outside of the constructs of their own communities' discourses and the
mutual suspicions of enmity. Mediating forms and processes can also play a role in
restoring the capacities that may have been damaged by violence, and in engendering the
qualities of feelingful awareness, alert calmness and engaged detachment that, I have
argued, allow for the transformations implicit in our conception of reconciliation. One
educational and ethical challenge of reconciliation is to support adversaries to participate in
such transformative processes in ways that also protect and nourish their integrity—as
individuals, as members of their own communities, and as citizens of the larger, inclusive
human "community" of which we are all a part. A second challenge with both educational
and ethical implications is to recognize injustices and past hurts in ways that acknowledge
responsibility, without heightening defensiveness. We proposed the notion of 'restorative
justice' to refer to the kinds of acknowledgement that support the collaborative invention of
a new moral framework to guide relations in the future. An understanding of
transsubjectivity, or how both parties to a conflict contribute to each other's capacities to act
ethically, supports the notion of 'restorative justice.'

Reconciliation engages every facet of the human beings who participate. It
recognizes and requires the interanimation of cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and
imaginative faculties. It asks those who participate to think, feel, act and imagine informed
by a tension between their status as unique, autonomous moral agents and as beings who
share the symbolic structures and patterns of meaning of the groups with which they
identify. Reconciliation is furthered when people become aware of and make conscious
choices about how to relate to the intersubjectivity that characterizes individual and
collective capacities for understanding and for action--choosing, for instance, which of the
groups' traditional symbols to emphasize, when to innovate on cultural patterns, when to join in and when to stand apart from popularly held beliefs. Reconciliation asks those who participate to recognize their epistemic and ethical interdependence and to make choices based on the recognition that the ability of each group to meet its most basic, underlying needs—for recognition and security, for instance—is greater when former enemies' underlying needs are also addressed.

Reconciliation engages people in processes where the paradoxical (paradoxically) can become expected. Those who participate in and/or facilitate reconciliation processes must contend with seemingly contradictory imperatives towards mean and ends, justice and mercy, attention to individual and systemic change, empowerment and interdependence. Competing and even contradictory narratives lay claim to legitimacy, often with equally compelling vibrancy. The ability to maneuver within the realm of paradox and ambiguity is central to the educational work of reconciliation.

We have seen that, for several different reasons, the medium of discursive language is likely to be inadequate to the educational work of reconciliation. As we have seen in previous chapters, the discourses of adversarial communities often have embedded within them stereotypes and other constructs that emerge out of and perpetuate the conflict. Furthermore, disputants' capacities for linguistic expression may have been impaired as a consequence of the conflict. As we argued in Chapter 7, it is unlikely that discourse alone will allow people to reach beneath defenses, or move them at the visceral level that we humans apparently need when we seek to substantiate new framing constructs.

The processes of reconciliation must reach deeply into the "recesses of personhood" and broadly, out to communities and nations. They must acknowledge the potential limitations of discourse and help participants make sense of paradox and ambiguity. They must recognize, augment and/or restore capacities to think, feel, trust, imagine and act, both independently and collaboratively. Reconciliation requires the re-presentation of historical narratives and cultural symbols within a tension between innovation and tradition,
and in ways that engender feelingful awareness, alert calmness and engaged detachment. Understanding these educational challenges lays the groundwork for our inquiry into the usefulness of engaging aesthetic forms and processes in the work of reconciliation, to which we turn in the next section.

Perhaps the greatest educational challenge of the work of reconciliation occurs prior to any negotiations or workshops in non-violent conflict resolution. As educators, our greatest challenge may be to help the "children of violence" (Lessing, 1969) develop not only the skills but the willingness to engage in reconciliation. We and our children need the capacity even to imagine reconciliation as a possible approach to resolving conflicts and to consider its benefits. Our inquiry into the nature of aesthetic forms and processes may suggest strategies to meet this challenge as well.
CHAPTER 7

WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE AESTHETIC Domain

The Aesthetic Domain: Overview of Section II

Anyone who dares to contrive a theory of the aesthetic is challenged not just to accommodate plurality, as any theory must, or to tolerate diversity, as liberal social theories profess to do, but to embrace that very ground of confusion—indeed to increase and intensify it....Aesthetic theory is inherently grounded in paradox and has been so recognized by all major aesthetic theorists from Plato to the present (Hein, 1993, p. 4).

As the feminist philosopher Hilde Hein suggests, theories of the aesthetic are "contrived" from a ground of confusion and paradox, and the conception proposed in this dissertation is no exception. Philosophical debates within aesthetic theory are abundant, and they generally remain unresolved paradoxes. To these philosophical paradoxes, there recently has been added a layer of contentious political struggle, some differences debated explicitly, some merely implied by the appropriation of language by groups whose expressive forms have been marginalized by the categories of Western philosophy and the practices of the elite art world. As different disciplines and constituencies debate meanings of the word 'aesthetic,' the precision and clarity that are the hallmarks of conceptual analysis seem elusive and unreachable.

I have entered into this conceptual terrain reluctantly, unsure whether conceptual clarity is possible, and indeed, whether precision at this level of abstraction is necessary to provide a theoretical rationale for the contributions to reconciliation of specific aesthetic forms—narrative, or folk arts, or poetry, for example. However, given the purpose of the dissertation—to understand the unique contributions of aesthetic forms and processes to the educational work inherent in reconciliation—a conceptual analysis of the aesthetic domain has been unavoidable. If I am to claim that aesthetic forms and processes are uniquely well suited to the educational challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation, then there must
be some way of deciding whether or not a particular expressive form or pattern of response reasonably can be described as 'aesthetic.' So with Hilde Hein's warnings of confusion and paradox close at hand, we proceed.

The word 'aesthetic' derives from the Greek word *aisthesis* or 'sensory perception.' It has been used to refer to a quality of human perception or a particular attitude of response, and in some cases, to the objects, events or scenes that apparently evoke such perceptions and responses. In relation to human capacities, the word 'aesthetic' is used adjectivally to specify qualities of a range of phenomena, including perception, pleasure, attitude, response, judgment, taste, expression, ideas, and experience.

'Aesthetics,' as a branch of Western philosophy, in the past has been understood as the study of beauty and taste; in recent decades, it has referred more narrowly to the study of art. At least one American philosopher, Nelson Goodman (1968), claimed that since the arts enhance understanding, aesthetics (which, he claims, should explain how they do so) is a branch of epistemology. In either case, as a field of philosophical inquiry, aesthetics devotes considerable attention to defining the appropriate object for its own study--in some instances focusing on acts of artistic creation, in some cases on the created object, and in yet other instances on aspects of the experience of receiving, or beholding, works of art and/or other phenomena (most commonly scenes of natural beauty).

In recent years, post-modern and feminist philosophers have challenged the logical and ethical foundations of the entire philosophical inquiry into 'aesthetics.' In his introduction to a collection of essays entitled *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays in Post-modern Culture*, Hal Foster argues "that the very notion of the aesthetic, its network of ideas, is in question here.....'Anti-aesthetic' signals a practice, cross-disciplinary in nature, that is sensitive to cultural forms engaged in a politic (e.g. feminist art) or rooted in a vernacular --that is, to forms that deny the idea of a privileged aesthetic realm" (Foster, 1983, p. xv). Arthur Danto argues that what distinguishes 'art' from non-art objects resides in
designations by the institutions of an elite 'artworld' (1964). Feminists, with related concerns about issues of power, contend that the positive value placed on 'disinterested perception,' a concept central to most Western philosophical notions of the aesthetic, is necessarily domimative, in part because it directs attention away from the perceiver's social and political position (Donovan, 1993, p. 53). Advocates for the world's tribal cultures, as well as some contemporary anthropologists and non-Western scholars argue that western societies have used their own culturally constrained aesthetic values to denigrate the expressive forms of non-Western peoples throughout the world. David Sobrevilla, a Peruvian aesthetic scholar, for instance, notes that Hegel examined Asian art

from the perspective of being an art form in its infancy....Until well into the nineteenth century, the prejudice that all art is European is maintained. Along this line, Ruskin thought that "there is no art in all of Africa, Asia and America." (cf Rubin 1977:77) Later, Martin Heidegger based his philosophy of art on the consideration of the "great art" of the Greeks and Europeans which lasted until the nineteenth century (1962:39) "Great art" for Heidegger was that which fulfilled the decisive task of revealing, by way of the work of art, what the totality of being is (1985:98). And the totality of being revealed itself only in the West (Sobrevilla, 1991, p. 218).

Some feminist theorists argue for an explicitly 'feminist aesthetic'—one that emphasizes process, elevates collective and participatory expressive forms, and integrates ethical and political concerns. Scholars of African history and culture have proposed a distinctly African conception of 'aesthetics,' the defining tenets of which contrast sharply with defining aspects of Western philosophical notions.

To complicate matters further, Philosophy is not the only academic discourse that offers definitions of 'the aesthetic,' nor is the West the only civilization to have produced an aesthetic theory. The disciplines of Folklore and Anthropology describe the aesthetic sensibilities of various collectivities. Performance Theory also refers to aesthetically-marked performances that are linked with cultural identity.

With several competing conceptions vying for consideration, to determine the boundaries of the aesthetic domain is no simple matter. This circumstance creates a challenge for the present inquiry. How are we to choose one conception over another?
How are we to avoid choosing or constructing a definition of the aesthetic that is so aligned with reconciliation that it begs the very question we are considering?

Our challenge is to construct a definition that (1) can be understood within the traditions of the disciplines that make use of the term; that (2) includes the range of experiences, forms and processes that cohere around this category; but that (3) avoids being so broad as to be unhelpful in distinguishing between aesthetic phenomena and those that do not fall within the domain. Furthermore, we must assess whether exclusivity and domination are necessary elements of the aesthetic, or whether it is possible to construct a useful definition of 'the aesthetic' that both is consistent with the disciplinary traditions that have contributed to its meanings and also avoids these qualities. If aesthetic forms and processes are by definition dominative and exclusionary, they are unlikely to be effective forms for mediating the learning required by reconciliation.

I proceed as follows. The balance of the present chapter focuses on 'the aesthetic domain' as the concept has been used by several Western philosophers to demarcate a domain of individual human experience related to the apprehension of beauty and the creation of art. Since some philosophers of the aesthetic limit their inquiry to matters related to art, and others include experiences of nature and of non-art human fabrications such as artifacts, the first task is to clarify, for the purposes of this inquiry, a way of conceptualizing the relationship between 'the aesthetic' and 'art.' With this accomplished, I then offer an explication of philosophical notions of the aesthetic in some detail, drawing on a sampling of analytic, pragmatic and phenomenological philosophical texts. The analysis focuses on three clusters of concepts, which can be summarized briefly as (1) the integration of the sensuous with the rational; (2) form and the apprehension of formal qualities; and (3) qualities of non-utilitarian response, including the notion of 'disinterestedness.'

In the chapter that follows, Chapter 8, I present challenges to the Western philosophical view of the aesthetic domain from several sources. The Darwinist Ellen
Dessanayake (1988, 1992) claims that the individualized nature of artistic expression in the contemporary art world and related notions of 'the aesthetic' are anomalies brought about by transformations in the organization of human sense perception associated with widespread literacy. Her analysis leads me to consider two theories of the 'aesthetic' that are based on the expressive forms and patterns of response typical of non- and pre-literate cultures: a 'matriarchal' or 'gynecentric' aesthetic, based on the collective expression of relatively egalitarian cultures; and a theory about expressive forms indigenous to Africa, referred to by the Kiswahili phrase *kugusa mtima*, meaning 'to touch the heart.' By using the term 'aesthetic' to refer to the utilitarian expressive forms of collectivities, feminist and Africanist scholars present a significant challenge to the conception of 'the aesthetic domain' that emerges from Western philosophical traditions, which refer nearly exclusively to the experiences of individuals or ensembles of individuals.

Chapter 9 analyzes the Darwinist, feminist and Africanist theories of the aesthetic discussed in Chapter 8 according to the same three clusters of ideas that emerge from Western aesthetic theory. I conclude that the patterns of expression and response of non-literate cultures are sufficiently similar to those described in Western philosophical literature to be understood as part of the same domain. They are different enough, though, to highlight several important limitations in the Western approach.

In Chapter 10, I briefly consider another trajectory from which to assess the adequacy of the Western philosophical conception of the aesthetic domain--namely, the aesthetic theories that emerge from non-Western but scholarly traditions. Specifically, I present brief overviews of Japanese and Indian aesthetics. These two Eastern theories focus attention on the inevitably intersubjective nature of aesthetic experience, and, present categorial challenges to Western views. Chapter 10 closes with the articulation of an integrative theory of the aesthetic domain, that generalizes from the individual, collective and intersubjective views considered to that point.
The entire section on the aesthetic domain concludes with Chapter 11, in which I present an assessment of the inter-related ethical and epistemological possibilities and risks associated with the very complex and multi-faceted domain called 'the aesthetic.'

We turn first to a conception of 'the aesthetic domain' that emerges from Western philosophical analytic, pragmatist and phenomenological literature.

The Relationship of 'Art' and 'The Aesthetic Domain'

Western philosophers disagree about whether 'aesthetics' as a discipline refers to a theory of art, or whether it inquires more broadly into other experiences of beauty and form. A first step for this inquiry, then, is to clarify whether 'the aesthetic' refers only to experiences of art, or whether it refers also to experiences of other phenomena—most particularly of nature, but also perhaps of other human endeavors, such as athletics, and perhaps even to some instances of (artfully conducted) rational discourse.

The debate in the field polarizes in relation to, on the one hand, Kant's assertion that the purest aesthetic experiences can be enjoyed in relation to natural scenes (because, he asserts, they can be appreciated without interference from constructs imposed by the rational mind) and, on the other hand, the theories of Marxists, who contend that it is only through our interaction with human-made art objects that we learn to have aesthetic responses, which we can then apply to natural and social domains. This latter position is articulated, for instance, by Ellen Dessanayake (1992), who asserts that a defining feature of aesthetic pleasure is the mental appreciation of the role of a human creator in fashioning and embellishing elements to achieve intended results in an object of art. (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 29) She holds that "aesthetic experience is an imposition of culture on nature" (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 131).

It is not necessary, for our purposes, to resolve the question of whether the capacity for aesthetic appreciation ought to be associated paradigmatically with the perception of nature or of art. Rather, it is sufficient to understand that it is possible to engage aesthetically with both nature and objects of art (as well as with other human
constructions). The feminist aesthetic theorist Hilde Hein (1993) contends, in fact, that anything can be experienced aesthetically (or not), and that, "aesthetic experience is quintessentially qualifying, or adverbial. The manner of experiencing—not the object—is modified." (Hein, 1993, p. 8) This understanding is consistent with that of John Dewey (1934), who argues that the very act of composing or defining 'an experience' out of the ongoing stream of experience—i.e., giving structure and closure to an interaction or series of events—in itself confers an aesthetic quality onto events. (Dewey, 1934, p. 38)

Further, there are both common and distinguishing features of our aesthetic responses to art and to nature. In asserting this, I draw on the analysis of Paul Crowther, a contemporary British philosopher of the arts, who argues for a conception of the aesthetic that embraces a diversity of aesthetic responses (Crowther, 1993a). Both scenes of natural beauty and artistic renderings of them can evoke in viewers responses that are receptive and heightened, for instance, but only in relation to the artwork will we marvel at the human capacity to create illusions through the arrangement of elements into forms. The aesthetic appreciation of nature, on the other hand, challenges us to integrate a seemingly irrelevant elements (such as sounds). As the philosopher R. W. Hepburn (1984) observes, we are sometimes enveloped in the natural scenes we observe: surrounded by trees, ringed by hills, or held within the expanse of a plain.

We have not only a mutual involvement of spectator and object, but also a reflexive effect by which the spectator experiences himself in an unusual and vivid way.... The effect is not unknown to art, especially architecture. But it is both more intensely realized and pervasive in nature-experience -- for we are in nature and a part of nature; we do not stand over against it as over against a painting on a wall (p. 13).

To clarify the relationship of 'the aesthetic' to 'art,' then, we can conceptualize them as overlapping domains. In some instances, it is art that evokes an aesthetic response, but we can have aesthetic responses to non-art objects as well. Similarly, some of our responses to art are aesthetic, but we can also have other, non-aesthetic responses to art. (These would include pragmatic responses as, for instance, when we estimate the monetary value of a sculpture or measure the size of a portrait to determine whether it can fit the
empty wall above the fireplace.) It seems likely that the distinct aspects of our aesthetic responses to art and nature, might, in some cases, influence our perceptions of the other.

This understanding of the relationship between the aesthetic and art precludes us from accepting one common definition of the aesthetic: namely, to refer to those kinds of responses that are evoked by art. This does not represent a significant loss, because such analyses tend to be circular: What is art? Objects that evoke aesthetic responses. What is an aesthetic response? Those kinds of responses evoked by art.

In order to distinguish conceptually between aesthetic and non-aesthetic responses, then, we will consider three clusters of concepts that are central to most philosophical theories of the aesthetic. Nearly all Western philosophical definitions of 'aesthetic' refer to perception via the senses, using words such as 'feeling,' 'sensuous,' 'embodied,' or 'emotion.' (Whether or not such perception must also be contemplative, or, alternately, must exclude cognition, is a matter of debate that we will consider directly.) Nearly all definitions of 'aesthetic' also address the notion of 'form,' referring to the composition of distinct elements into a bounded whole that exhibits a unity of relation, or intentionality of relation, among the parts. Finally, nearly all definitions of the aesthetic discuss non-utilitarian response, a transformation in the attention or attitude that we bring to, or is evoked in us by, our responses to the formal qualities that present themselves to our senses. The transformed mental state is sometimes referred to as 'distinterested,' 'detached,' or 'receptive,' or, alternatively, is characterized by 'heightened attention.'

These three clusters of concepts--pertaining to (1) the integration of the sensuous and the rational, (2) form and attention to formal qualities, and (3) transformations in the qualities of attention related to non-utilitarian response--are related in complex ways. For the sake of clarity, we will consider each cluster separately. My intention is to understand how the aesthetic domain has been described and demarcated within the Western philosophical tradition with sufficient clarity to allow us an evaluation of the educative potential of aesthetic forms and processes for the transformative work of reconciliation.
The Sensory and the Rational

In this section, I consider how aesthetic forms and processes—including both perception and expression, as well as the art symbol itself—integrate sensory and rational modes of apprehension and understanding. First, I resolve a conceptual puzzle created by the tension between Kant's (1966 [1790]) assertion that aesthetic perception is free of all concepts, and Dessanayake's (1988) claim that all aesthetic processes involve some form of mental mediation. Are there non-conceptual or pre-conceptual mental formations that serve to mediate our sensory impressions? Kant's own theories about pre-conceptual image schemata are supported by insights from both C. S. Peirce (1960) and Mark Johnson (1987, 1993), a contemporary moral philosopher. Next, drawing on the work of Jerrold Levinson (1996), I consider a kind of integration between the sensuous and the rational that is associated with the pleasure of aesthetic response, when we focus our cognition on the impressions of our senses. Finally, with help from Merleau-Ponty (1995) and Nelson Goodman (1968), I note the metacognitive integration of sensuous and rational faculties that can occur in creating works of art and by virtue of the "density" with which art symbols convey meaning.

Pre-Conceptual Schemata

As we noted above, the word 'aesthetic' derives from the Greek word for 'sensory perception.' Its use by contemporary philosophers traces back to Alexander Baumgarten, a rationalist in the tradition of Descartes and Leibniz. In contrast to his mentors, however, Baumgarten believed that sensations and perceptions were valuable forms of consciousness that should not be excluded from conceptions of 'knowledge' (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, p. 6). In a 1735 study of poetry, he argued that poems communicate content "in sensory form" (Baumgarten, 1974 [1735]).

'The heresy of paraphrase' is a notion that captures the centrality of sensory perception to the concept of the aesthetic. It is used to communicate the necessity of immediate or direct sensation in apprehending the meaning of works of art. No summary
of the plot of a literary text, for instance, or description of the objects in a painting, can replace a direct encounter between the work and the senses of the perceiver. We can't judge the success of a play by knowing what themes it develops or what story it portrays. We must witness it being performed, or at least read its dialogues, and experience how its rhythms— for instance, its tensions and resolutions, its variations in mood and intensity—work within us. As John Dewey (1934) writes:

Only as these rhythms, even if embodied in an outer object that is itself a product of art, become a rhythm in experience itself, are they esthetic. And this rhythm in what is experienced is something quite different from intellectual recognition that there is rhythm in the external thing; as different as is the perceptual enjoyment of glowing harmonious colors from the mathematical equations that define them for a scientific inquirer (p. 162).

The sensuous nature of aesthetic experience is emphasized by many theorists. For example, the literary theorist Louise Rosenblatt (1991) uses the term 'aesthetic' to refer to the emotional, bodily experiences of the reader while reading: "attention is focused on what is being lived through, the ideas and feelings being evoked and organized during the transaction." In her theory, 'aesthetic' engagement with the text is contrasted with 'efferent' readings, which emphasize analysis, criticism and/or the acquisition of information or knowledge to be used in the world beyond the text (Rosenblatt, 1991, p. 60).

We can be clear, then, that the experiences, perceptions, judgments and pleasures that we describe as 'aesthetic' necessarily engage the senses. But what, if any, cognitive or rational dimension does the aesthetic entail? To qualify as 'aesthetic,' must a perception be devoid of the "intellectual recognition" to which Dewey refers? Might aesthetic perception also include a cognitive, or contemplative, or rational dimension? Must it include some engagement of the rational?

In his Critique of Judgment, Kant frequently asserts that 'pure aesthetic judgment is one without concepts.' It is an issue about which he is "emphatic" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 69). Kant writes that, "aesthetic judgment is quite unique, and affords no, absolutely no (not even a confused) knowledge of the object, but only the final form in the determination
of the powers of representation engaged upon it" (Kant, 1966 [1790], cited in Crowther, 1993a, p. 69).

The British aesthetic theorist Paul Crowther (1993a) argues that the "possibility of de-conceptual perception" (p. 69) as articulated by Kant (as well as by Croce and others) finds little support among contemporary thinkers. One formulation of the apparently inevitable constraints that concepts place on perception can be found in Languages of Art by Nelson Goodman. Incorporating insights from the art historian Ernst Gombrich, Goodman (1968) writes:

... there is no innocent eye. The eye comes always ancient to its work, obsessed by its own past and by old and new insinuations of the ear, nose, tongue, fingers, heart, and brain.... Not only how but what it sees is regulated by need and prejudice. It selects, rejects, organizes, discriminates, associates, classifies, analyzes, constructs... reception and interpretation are not separable operations (pp. 8-9).

We might argue that not all sensation involves interpretation: a baby being cuddled by her parent, for instance, might sense and respond to the warmth and familiarity of sounds, smells, touch, and taste. But as Dessanayake (1992) convincingly argues, not all sense experience is considered to be 'aesthetic':

It has been demonstrated that cows and suburban shoppers are both measurably more relaxed when their barns and malls are supplied with piped-in recorded music. Yet we do not say these physical effects are "aesthetic." Whatever the good or bad quality of the music, the subjects are not consciously listening to or even necessarily aware of the sounds they are "hearing." And, in an opposite kind of example, discotheque patrons, who are overpoweringly aware of hearing sounds, similarly cannot be said to be responding aesthetically to the pulses and insistent chords that bombard their bodies and provoke uninhibited, almost reflexive, physical reaction. Sheer sense experience, whether unconscious or conscious, without mental mediation, is aesthetically meaningless. It is what the mind makes of the physical sensations that is interesting and relevant. Hence, to anyone who stops to consider the subject of aesthetic response, the mind (or soul or spirit) seems to be the relevant vehicle for the experience of art (p. 28).

How are we to reconcile Kant's apparent rejection of any form of conceptual knowledge within "pure" aesthetic experience and Dessanayake's insistence that sensory experience without "mental mediation" is irrelevant to aesthetic response? Should we accept theories of the aesthetic that suggest that art functions to link the rational and the
sensuous, or, as Hegel puts it, "art is a mode of understanding which is half-way between the concrete particularity of material phenomena and the abstract generality of pure thought" (cited in Crowther, 1993a, p. 5).

Baumgarten (1979 [1735]) originally used the word 'aesthetic' to refer to 'sensory perception.' We have agreed that the aesthetic necessarily involves the senses. To answer our questions about the nature of the 'mental mediation' that Dessanayake claims is integral to the aesthetic, i.e., to discover whether mentality necessarily presupposes the imposition of conceptual constructs, we need to look more closely at the second term in Baumgarten's formulation, namely 'perception.'

According to Dewey (1934), perception involves "an act of reconstructive doing," in which "consciousness becomes fresh and alive" (p. 53). To "take in" an experience, we must do more than place it "on top of consciousness over what was previously known. It involves reconstruction which may be painful" (p. 41). Perception, in this view, is yielding but active. It is comprised of "the going out of energy in order to receive" (p. 53).

Does this "going out of energy" indicate that the object of perception is framed in terms of a previously held concept? In distinguishing between 'perception' and 'recognition,' Dewey (1934) implies that this is not the case:

Recognition is perception arrested before it has a chance to develop freely. In recognition there is beginning of an act of perception. But this beginning is not allowed to serve the development of a full perception of the thing recognized....In recognition we fall back, as upon a stereotype, upon some previously formed scheme.... Sometimes in contact with a human being we are struck with traits, perhaps of only physical characteristics, of which we were not previously aware. We realize that we never knew the person before; we had not seen him [sic] in any pregnant sense. We now begin to study and to "take in." Perception replaces bare recognition...Recognition is too easy to arouse vivid consciousness. There is not enough resistance between new and old to secure consciousness of the experience that is had.... [A]n act of perception proceeds by waves that extend serially throughout the entire organism....The perceived object or scene is emotionally pervaded throughout (pp. 52-53).

Perception, then, involves an active organization of sensory information. It requires some degree of "mental mediation," sufficient patterning of information, so that sensory inputs acquire the degree of coherence required for consciousness. In contrast
with 'recognition,' however, 'perception' appears to preclude at least the immediate imposition of pre-existing concepts. This suggests the presence of some sort of pre-conceptual organizing structures that mediate between sensation and conceptual understanding.

We can find conceptions of just such mediating structures within several theories of cognition, including Kantian notions of imagination, C. S. Peirce's theory of signs, and recent developments in cognitive science.

Kant refers to the mediating function of imagination in terms of structures that mediate between images and concepts. In his theory, sense experiences are rendered into specific images or mental pictures by the reproductive dimension of the imagination. Concepts are abstract rules or sets of criteria, that specify which objects, events or experiences qualify as, or fall under, that concept. "In our experience of physical objects, the material component is given to our senses from outside us, while the formal component is given by the structure of our understanding and of our capacity for having sensation. The form is something we impose on our experience" (Johnson, 1987, p. 148). In Kant's view, the structure that mediates between sensation and concept is a schema. A schema is neither sensation nor concept, but

some third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet at the same time, while it must in one respect be intellectual, it must in another be sensible (Kant, 1966 [1790], cited in Johnson, 1987, p. 152).

According to Kant, when we make sense of something we perceive, or "understand" or "know" something, we use schematic structures to organize the apprehension of our senses. In ordinary (i.e., non-aesthetic) perception, we use these schematic structures to link sensory apprehensions with concepts. In aesthetic experiences, we create or apprehend new organizations of schemata, giving form to patterns of experience that have not yet been conceptualized or that may elude representation by way of concepts. Kant defines an aesthetical idea as "that representation of the imagination which
occasions much thought, without however any definite thought, i.e., any concept being capable of being adequate to it; it consequently cannot be completely compassed and made intelligible by language" (Kant, 1966 [1790], cited in Johnson, 1987, p. 162).

C. S. Peirce's theory of signification is another map to the same terrain, i.e., the pre-conceptual structuring of sensory data into patterns of increasing complexity and meaning. According to Peirce (1960), human intelligence results from the generation of interpretants, or signs created by our minds, that mediate all understanding.28

Peirce posits three levels of signs, designated as firstness, secondness and thirdness. Firstness refers to the impact of things in our environment—colors, sounds, temperature, etc.—that affect us without our awareness. When we describe the experiences of firstness in language, we transform the sign (i.e., the thing in the environment) into an interpretant, usually an emotion. "If a sign produces any further significate effect [beyond the emotional interpretant] it will do so through the mediation of the emotional interpretant" (Peirce, 1960, p. 5.475) In Peirce's theory, firstness is the basis of all knowledge, experience and thought, although only a small fraction of impressions at the level of firstness evolve into other forms of meaning.

When we do become conscious of something external to ourselves, we enter the realm of secondness. In this realm, there is a consciousness of polarity, but it is a pre-conceptual awareness, as of force and resistance. It is only at the level of thirdness, however, that there exists language and reflection, in which thought becomes symbolic and subject to consciousness. Thirdness allows us to interpret experience in relation to more general meanings. Since, according to Peirce's theory, linguistic symbols are created through a process that involves signs at the levels of firstness and secondness, all conceptual thinking is inevitably imbued with emotion.

Both Kant's understanding of the imagination and Peirce's theory of signification are parts of distinct and comprehensive theories about the nature of human cognition. For the purposes of this inquiry, it is sufficient to note that both Kant and Peirce posit
structures of mentality that mediate between sensation, on the one hand, and interpretation through concepts, on the other. Both theories also account for the possibility of the meaningful and creative, yet pre- or non-conceptual, patterning of such mediating structures. They refer to this non-conceptual mental activity in terms of the aesthetic.

A third theory that negotiates this same terrain is that of the contemporary moral philosopher Mark Johnson, who integrates elements of Kant's notions of the imagination with recent developments in cognitive science. Like Kant, Johnson's theory is based on schematic structures that mediate between sensory experience and conceptual understanding. Johnson's theory is unique in its claim that these schematic structures arise from the embodied interactions of a person with his or her environment.

Johnson proposes that human meaning-making occurs by way of metaphoric application of image schemata. These schemata are structures in which patterns from a "source domain...typically some aspect of bodily experience" are mapped "onto a more abstract or less highly articulated target domain" (Johnson, 1996, p. 51). For instance, our bodily experiences of balance, developed from feeling the dynamic equilibrium of our anatomical systems as well as experiences of learning to sit and walk upright within a gravitational field, cohere into prototypical schemata. Johnson's (1987) primary claim is that

the metaphorical projections move from the bodily sense (with its emergent schema) to the mental, epistemic or logical domains. On this hypothesis, we should be able to see [for instance] how it is that our experience of bodily balance, and of the perception of balance, is connected to our understanding of balanced personalities, balanced views, balanced systems, the balance of power, the balance of justice, and so on (p. 87).

As in Peirce's signs at the levels of firstness and secondness and Kant's mediating schema, Johnson's image schemata are not conceptual or propositional. They operate as general constraints on, but not as precise determinants of, the perceptions, meanings and concepts that are built upon them. Johnson uses the language of metaphoric projection to refer to the intrapsychic activity that Peirce describes in terms of the generativity of the semiotic process, in which each level of interpretant can itself become a sign, subject to
further interpretation. Johnson's theory of image schemata is quite similar to Kant's, with the important exception that for Johnson, all such schematic structures develop out of bodily experiences.29

In Peirce's epistemology, the integrative aspect of intrapsychic preconceptual activity is referred to as "abduction," or the construction of explanatory hypotheses. Abduction is a creative process, generating new insights, or explanations that reduce "manifold[s] to unity" (Peirce, 1960, 5.276, cited in Davis, 1972, p. 47). Abduction functions in "ordinary" perception, as when "the mind struggles to get a grasp on a scene, and finally, as in a flash, the connection and harmony become apparent....During the period of confusion, all of the data were present; all that was lacking was an hypothesis, an interpretation of the data" (Davis, 1972, p. 47). We can infer that, in Peirce's vocabulary, aesthetic engagement involves abductive, pattern-finding processes at the levels of firstness and secondness--levels of apprehension that are close to sensation and emotion, and prior to conceptualization.

To return, then, to the dilemma about how aesthetic engagement can require "mental mediation" as Dessanayake (1992) claims, but without concepts, as Kant stipulates (at least for "pure" aesthetic experience), we are now in a position to understand that, according to several different conceptions of human mentality, there are many layers of pre-conceptual, and perhaps non-conceptual, mental processing. One way to distinguish between engagement or perception that is aesthetic and that which is discursive or analytic or "regular" relates to the nature of the mental mediation involved. We can think of non-aesthetic apprehension as the imposition of pre-existing structures, elaborated as concepts, onto sensory data, or the reciprocal 'fitting' of concepts with patterns of sensory impressions. Efforts to categorize and to fit particular cases to a general rule fall into this non-aesthetic, or logical, mode. Aesthetic response, alternately, refers to an openness to new configurations of coherence among the elements sensed, making use of schemata that are non- or pre-conceptual. Kant would say that the mind is engaged in "playing over"
various percepts, images and concepts in search of novel ways of ordering them, thereby generating new meanings.

Does this mean that in order to qualify as aesthetic, a perception, experience or judgment must be entirely devoid of concept? I think not. There may be some acts of perception and interpretation (i.e., from one non-linguistic medium to another) that are virtually free of conceptual patterning. It is likely, however, that many complex acts of perception involve both the novel configuration of schema and the imposition of pre-existing conceptual patterns. We might say that such interpretive processes have an aesthetic dimension—referring to the aspect of the process in which new configurations of coherence and meaning emerge. It is also possible that, as Croce (1964 [1902]) argued in his explication of intuition, concepts "lose their autonomy," and become elements of an innovative structure of coherence. This would be one way to understand flashes of scientific insight, when, for instance, paradigms shift to reconfigure the array of concepts that comprise a theory or discipline.

One way, then, in which to understand the aesthetic as integrating the rational and the sensuous is that it refers to sensory input being organized into coherent patterns—schema or interpretants—that can be used to make meaning. Although these schematic configurations do not have all of the characteristics of the conceptual constructs most often associated with rationality, they nevertheless can become elements of complex symbolic expressions and representations that invite engagement and interpretation. What power such symbols may lack in precision, they may offer originality, and in the depth of feeling and the richness of resonance with which they communicate.

Conscious Alignment of Sensory and Cognitive Energy

Another understanding of how the sensuous and the rational are integrated in the aesthetic domain derives from investigations into the nature of 'aesthetic pleasure.' In Kant's aesthetic theory, the ascription of 'beauty' to an object refers actually to the harmonious interaction of the subject's faculties of imagination and understanding; aesthetic
judgment emerges from the free play of the cognitive faculties over the formal qualities of the object of attention.\textsuperscript{30} Johann von Schiller adapted Kant's theory to assert that human beings reach their fullest potential when engaged in 'aesthetic play,' employing both "sense and reason in a recreative harmony" (Schiller, 1967 [1795], letter 26; cited in Paton, 1996, p. 382).

In a contemporary analysis of aesthetic pleasure, Jerrold Levinson (1996) argues that "pleasure in an object is aesthetic" when it results from attending to its "forms, qualities and meanings for their own sakes" (Levinson, 1996, pp. 331-332) and also attending to "the way in which all such things emerge from the particular set of low-level perceptual features which define the object on a non-aesthetic plane" (p. 332). In relation to art, for instance, in a case where a work has a "prominent intellectual or moral or political content," aesthetic pleasure results from "appreciation of the manner in which ... these are embodied in and communicated by the work's specific elements and organization" (p. 332). Viewing a scene in nature aesthetically is similarly "a multi-level affair" in which we attend to appearances \textit{per se} "coupled with a vivid awareness" of the interrelations of the scene's observable structure, its experienceable aspects, and even of the concepts under which we identify the objects. For instance, to appreciate "the luminosity of the sun's color at sunset is to enjoy such luminosity as the upshot of a particular shade and brightness of yellow, and as somehow appropriate to the heavenly body which is the source of all life" (Levinson, 1996, p. 333).

In other words, in Levinson's conception of aesthetic pleasure, our attention and conceptual reasoning are focused on the same object as our senses, and on the processes of sensation and interpretation themselves. This accounts for the qualities of "focus" and "rapt attention" often associated with aesthetic experiences, wherein all of one's sensory and cognitive energy is aligned and consciously directed. Awareness shimmers between the object of our attention and our own processes of sensing and interpreting. We become
aware of the world as well as of our own sensing, interpreting, perceiving, understanding, questioning and wondering, at levels both immediate and meta-cognitive.

The foregoing discussion about the relationship between the sensuous and the rational in the aesthetic domain focuses primarily on the experience of the witness, the beholder of the beautiful vista or the recipient who enjoys the work of art. How are we to understand the relationship of sensuous to rational in the realm of artistic expression and creation?

Metacognition and the Sensuous Immediacy of the Art Symbol

One answer to this question can be found in the theory of art of the French phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1995). His understanding of the genesis of artworks develops from a theory of perception consistent with Johnson's theory of embodied image schemata, outlined above, that stresses the bodily engagement with the world. In Merleau-Ponty's framework, our engagement with the world results in 'carnal formulae' -- "structures constituted from the sensory and affective life of the subject...[T]he body articulates the world into meanings by grasping it through the integrated operation of the senses, and relating what is thus grasped to its past and future life" (Merleau-Ponty, summarized by Crowther, 1993b, p.42). In "primary expression," new perceptual meanings are brought into existence, whereas meanings derived from already familiar "carnal formulae" are attached to objects in "secondary expression." In many cases, the new meanings of "primary perception" are incorporated into our perceptual structure, and used to inform future perceptions.

But in some cases, especially when the perceiver is familiar with the possibilities inherent in an artistic medium, she will feel a need to articulate further the new impressions. Engaging with the medium allows the artist to attain a fuller grasp on the meanings encountered in perception. Working in a medium enables the body to continue the creative stylizing process begun in the artist's perception itself, in order to concentrate the 'scattered' meanings found there, and make them exist in a unified concrete form. It brings
his [sic] own perceptual style to a point of consummation" (Merleau-Ponty, summarized by Crowther, 1993b, p. 45). And importantly, by rendering a bodily perception in an artistic medium, the artist simultaneously imprints the medium with something of her own style, her own way of being in the world, her own "relationship to being" (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, p. 51; cited in Crowther, 1993b, p. 45). Artworks, then, use signs in a richer way, seeking to construct or reconstruct some aspect of the world in its sensuous immediacy, similar to how it might be encountered in perception itself. In this way, works of art make the workings of imaginative perception and reconstruction publicly accessible.

The work of art expresses the artist's personal relation to a shared world. According to Crowther (1993b),

In Merleau-Ponty's theory ... the artwork is defined and given its rich meaning by virtue of occupying a unique half-way position between perception and reflection. Unlike ordinary language and abstract thought, it has a sensuous immediacy that comes close to that of our fundamental perceptual contact with the world. Unlike perception itself, however, it preserves and articulates the most crucial 'invisible' scaffolding of the specific situation it is expressing (p. 51).

Although the term 'art' may exist only in certain cultures, there are artifacts in every culture whose purpose is to complete the stylizing process begun in perception itself. According to Merleau-Ponty, it is by virtue of its roots in human embodiment that art can facilitate transcultural understanding. (Crowther, 1993b, p. 47)

In our attempt to understand the nature of various possible intersections between the sensuous and the rational within the aesthetic domain, Merleau-Ponty's theory focuses our attention on the creation and perception of symbolic forms, i.e., to that sector of the aesthetic domain that refers to human-made artifacts, and, with an even greater specificity, to those artifacts considered to be art. At least one theory of art, that of the philosopher Nelson Goodman (1978), in fact demarcates the aesthetic domain in terms of the ways in which symbols function. (This approach contrasts with definitions of the aesthetic that take the quality of perception or the nature of artistic creation to be defining.) Goodman proposes several "symptoms" of symbols, attributes that, when present, point towards (or
"diagnose") the condition of "the aesthetic." His criteria include: syntactic and semantic density (in which small differences in symbols may constitute a significant difference in meaning); relative repleteness (referring to symbols in which many different aspects are significant); exemplification (in which a symbol confers meaning by virtue of its own characteristics--as when a sculpture's actual symmetry refers to abstract qualities of harmony or balance); and multiple and complex reference. This last criterion refers to works in which "symbols perform several and interacting referential functions, some direct and some mediated through other symbols. Rather than having a simple unambiguous meaning, ... the symbol carries a penumbra of overlapping and difficult-to-separate meanings". According to Goodman (1978), "these properties tend to focus attention on the symbol rather than, or at least along with, what it refers to" (pp. 71-89).

Because "aesthetic symbols" tend to draw attention to themselves as well as their referents, they invite moments of metacognition, in which we become aware of ourselves as interpreters and of the nature of our processes of perceiving and interpreting. In an explication of Merleau-Ponty's theory of painting, Crowther offers an eloquent and succinct contrast between "everyday" (i.e., non-aesthetic) and "aesthetic engagement" precisely in relation to this notion of metacognition:

> Our everyday engagement with the world usually immerses us in things which are, visually speaking, simply 'there.' We have no time or inclination to attend to that rich visual texture of light, colour, shape and so forth, which is inherent in things and the visual background. Yet it is precisely this texture which enables the visible to be seen. Hence, in so far as the painting is a self-contained portion of the world which invites us to contemplate its sensuous particularity, both it and the texture which enables it to be seen are given full manifestation. Indeed, one can say that here we see what it is to see. Vision becomes visible to itself (Crowther, 1993a, p. 113).

Meta-cognition, i.e., the meta-level awareness of our perceptive and interpretive capacities, is one additional way in which we can understand the integration of the sensuous and the rational within the aesthetic domain.

To summarize this section then, I have elaborated upon three different ways in which the sensuous and the rational can be integrated within aesthetic forms and processes.
The first occurs when we engage in mental mediation by way of non- or pre-conceptual intrapsychic structures (schemata, interpretants, or carnal formulae) that place constraints on our patterns of meaning-making and apprehension, but which do not, in themselves, rise to the level of concept. The second takes place when we focus our conscious attention, our rational capacities, on the same objects as our senses. Here we discover a distinct kind of pleasure in the harmonious interplay between our thinking and our sensing (or, as Kant would say, between our understanding and our imagination). The third way in which the sensing and thinking are integrated in aesthetic processes involves the meta-cognitive level. In this instance, because of the complexity, density and sensuous immediacy of the symbols we seek to understand, we become aware of an interplay among the symbol, its various possible referents, and our own processes of thinking, sensing and feeling.

That these three modes of apprehension all integrate the sensuous with the cognitive, but do so in slightly different ways, may actually point to variations in the kinds of aesthetic experiences. In all three cases, however, we are led to ask: What is it about the nature of the objects perceived, and/or the quality of our attention, that gives rise to these interplays between the sensuous and the rational? I will look for an answer to this question in an examination of two additional and related clusters of concepts that demarcate the aesthetic domain: namely form and non-utilitarian response.

Form and the Apprehension of Formal Qualities

The word ‘form’ itself derives from the Greek word for ‘shape.’ It is a notion at the center of many theories of the aesthetic and of art, referred to in terms of ‘structure,’ ‘coherence,’ ‘dynamic equilibrium,’ ‘patterns of elements,’ ‘sensuous manifold,’ or ‘unity in diversity.’ Aesthetic experience is often understood to be engendered by attention to the ‘formal qualities’ of an object or event. What is form? And what, precisely, is meant by the phrase ‘attention to formal qualities?’ This section addresses these questions.

‘Form’ is a concept that has been called “inescapably ambiguous and vague” (Morawski, 1974, p. 104). It has many different referents, some significantly different
from others. For instance, Plato is perhaps best well known for his notion of *Forms*, understood to be idealized patterns of organization of "the good things of their kind" that are more real that the instances of those patterns that are accessible to our senses (Eldridge, 1996, p. 159). Aristotle, in contrast, referred to an "indwelling form" exists like a kernel in every organism. He used 'form' to refer to the patterns that govern the development and growth of every organism, revealed to human comprehension through action (Schechner, 1977, p. 5).

**Formal Relationships of Elements in a Whole**

One straightforward and general conception of 'form' is that it refers to a "patterned relationship of elements" (Armstine, 1970, p. 32) in which the parts are perceived in relation to each other and to the whole. 'Elements' of form include lines, shapes, and masses; colors, shades and textures; tones and timbres. This idea that elements are perceived in relation to a relevant whole is expressed in relation to works of art by the philosopher R. W. Hepburn (1996):

A work of art is, characteristically, a complement (of notes, instrument timbres, brush-strokes, colour patches, words, images, speech rhythms, and so on) whose elements do not impinge on us as isolated units, but are determined in their perceived qualities by the context of all the other elements and their relationships. The character of the whole, as a function of the individual components and their interrelationships, in turn modifies, controls these components as we perceive them (p. 423).

In describing the formal qualities of a whole--a natural scene, or a work of art, or an event, for instance--art critics and aesthetic theorists make use of concepts such as 'harmony,' 'balance,' and 'rhythm,' concepts that refer to the relationships of parts to each other and to the whole. D. E. W. Gotschalk (1953), a theorist of art, refers to 'harmony' as the repetition of elements that are completely or partially similar. Harmony contributes to unity within a work of art because items echo each other, either partly or wholly, sometimes repeatedly, throughout a work. When elements appear in harmonic relationship with each other, we perceive unity in diversity. 'Balance' can be understood as the converse of harmony. Balance, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, engenders unity by
way of contrast, by items opposing and equilibrizing each other. "Opposing items form a system of complementary and neutralizing tensions, resulting in a complete and stable unity." When elements in a work of art are in a state of balance, we perceive the diversity that is possible within a structural unity. Rhythm emerges from the interplay, or, as Gottschalk puts it, the "collaboration" of balance and harmony. A rhythm is an organization of materials so they possess or suggest patterned movement.

Some contemporary theories of art emphasize the importance of a different set of formal relationships, including, for instance, dissonance and randomness (Townsend, 1996, p. 182). Oppositions, disharmonious systems, and dynamic structures are as "valuable and necessary" (Morawski, 1974, p. 100) as the "full agreement of all elements" that constitutes harmony. The effectiveness of such dissonant elements nevertheless rests upon the existence of a formal structure, set apart from its environment, which frames the work, and allows the dissonance to appear to the senses. When Brecht, for instance, invokes the Verfremdungseffekt, or estrangement effect, by having his actors distance themselves from their own roles, the jarring effect can only be realized within the context of the formal unity of the play as a whole (Morawski, 1974, p. 102). The importance of the unifying effect of the form itself is emphasized by Paul Crowther (1993a) in this way: "[N]o matter how violent or tragic the style or subject-matter, our experience of the work will not be complete unless we can appreciate the way such potentially disruptive non-aesthetic material is integrated in a unified formal structure" (p. 26).

In part, then, 'formal qualities' are those qualities of a whole that emerge because of the boundedness of an object or event, as well as because of the relationship of its parts to each other and to the whole.

On some accounts, 'form' can be understood in its contrast with content. For instance, Morawski (1974) outlines how this opposition would work in relation to a variety of art forms:
with respect to non-representational art, I understand by content the means of expression, while form in this context is the organization (the structure) of the material; with poetry or song, content is what provides the pattern of meaning in the verbal media, while form is both the sound (or graphic) patterns and the organization of material as a whole; with the presentational arts, content consists of the ideas, persons, objects events and their relationships given by the iconic surface or the patterns of images, and by form we can understand the iconic surface, the patterns of images, plus the organization of the material a whole; and finally with the applied arts (including architecture) I would suggest that by form we understand the textures, the surfaces and their shape, while by content we understand the function....With regard to performing arts, I abandon the above terms and speak rather of "design" (e.g. score or script) and "execution," each of which in turn possesses the aspects of form and content (p. 104).

Not everyone accepts so strict a dichotomy between form and content, however. Paul Crowther softens the polarity by proposing two levels of structural relations: the infrastructural and the superstructural. According to Crowther, we apprehend form—whether in nature or in art—by attending to how an object presents itself to our senses, or, where appropriate, to the imagination. "Formal aspects .... arise from those qualities which pertain to the structure of appearance alone—as opposed to those dispositional qualities which determine the essence, or whatness, of that which is appearing" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 18). 'Infrastructural qualities' refer to qualities of the "basic units of the phenomenal fabric" (1993a, p. 20): the relationships of light, shape, texture and color that, for instance, constitute the visual appearance of a mountain (and of a painting of a mountain); or the patterns of tone, timbre, melody and harmony that inform our perception of a melody. In reading a text, when we pay attention not to the content but to how something is said, we are attending to the infrastructural qualities. 'Superstructural qualities' emerge when we attend to the patterns of these formal elements in relation to the work as a whole, including its content. We can appreciate the forms created not only by the textures and colors and shapes in a painting; we can also marvel at how clouds can be made so luminous, or how a tree appears to reach toward the sky.

Aspects of content can become formalized, then, when we attend to them in relation to patterns of tensions and resolutions, or their resonances with other formal elements and
qualities. Crowther (1993a) offers *Hamlet* as an example. We are enlightened by what he refers to as the "infrastructural felicities" of the text, including prose, rhyme and metaphor, and, we might add, its blank verse. But, he explains

we are equally, if not more, alive to the development and evolution of the narrative for its own sake. Our interest in Claudius's guilt, for example, is not purely moral but rests on how it echoes and increases in proportion to *Hamlet's* actions. Within the context of the plot, in other words, Claudius's moral guilt is formalized, and takes on, thereby, aesthetic significance (1993a, p. 20).

To summarize this section so far, then, we can assert that a logically distinctive feature of the aesthetic domain is attention to the patterned relationships of elements in which the parts of a phenomenal fabric are perceived in relation to each other and to the whole. These patterns present themselves to our senses (and sometimes to our imaginations) at both the infrastructural and superstructural levels. The objects of such attention can be human fabrications or natural scenes and events.

**Form and Genre**

To this point, we have considered the notion of 'form' in relation to individual works of art or solitary acts of perception. There is another, related understanding of 'form,' as the word is used in phrases such as "the sonata form," or "the form of a sonnet." Here, the word refers to a genre--a group of works that resemble each other in terms of the arrangement of their elements and generate more or less of a similar effect on those who perceive them.

Philosophers have emphasized the relationships between genre and generic form and different elements of the aesthetic experience. Plato, for instance, understood the form of an artistic expression as the most stable, unified and integrated exemplar, or, as we noted above, "a good thing of its kind." In his view, the unruly or transgressive gesture of an individual artist would always diminish the quality of the work. Aristotle, on the other hand, focused primarily on the relationship between forms and their audiences. His *Poetics* is devoted partly to an analysis of the genre of tragedy, indicating what elements are necessary in order to induce the desired (cathartic) effect. Unlike Plato, Aristotle is
somewhat tolerant of individual transgressions in the form: "error [in the form] may be justified, if....the effect of this or any other part of the poem is thus rendered more striking' (cited in Eldridge, 1996, p. 159). Collingwood, among other more recent philosophers, has considered generic form in relation to the emotional needs of the artists—who, he asserts, create works of art in part to clarify and discharge emotions that build up in response to recognition and to thought. Effective forms will serve this function for their makers, and as if by coincidence, for their audiences as well—since contemporaneous audiences, at least, are likely to be in need of discharge of similar psychic burdens.

In general, according to aesthetic theorist Richard Eldridge (1996), artists attend to the formal demands of their individual creations, but also consider the context of the genres in which they choose to work. As Kant pointed out, excellence in art requires both originality—i.e., expressions of the unique sensibilities of the particular artist, often in a way that is somewhat transgressive of the expectations that historically have been built up in relation to a particular genre—and exemplariness—i.e., "admitting of useful, elucidatory comparisons with other works" of the same genre. Such works "suggest that our individuality and autonomy may be consistently and intelligibly housed in the sorts of things that we do along with others" (Eldridge, 1996, p. 161).

The formal qualities of works of art seem to respond to the human needs both "for self-recognition and for identity with fellow-beings" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 99). Creating and attending to formal qualities, then, appears to mediate needs for innovation and conservation, to balance the impulses to improvise and transgress with the impulse to refine and sustain. The pleasure we take in noticing the formal qualities of things—especially in instances of organic forms, whether these occur in nature or in works of art—allow (or entice) us to notice with a quality of attention that has both epistemological and ethical implications. It seems that part of what is valued so highly about an aesthetic experience is the quality of consciousness that such integrated forms make possible. For instance, in
relation to perceptions of natural forms, Crowther (1993a) describes how pleasure in a perfect specimen of a natural kind works to stimulate cognition:

Our pleasure in the perfect specimen of a natural kind...is founded on a felt harmony between our concept of the object and the sensible manifold which instantiates it. There is a sense of fit or cohesion between our capacity to attend to the thing's sensory particularity, and our capacity to comprehend it in more general conceptual terms. The fit between the concept and the manifold which instantiates it embodies qualitative completeness—a totality of articulation—which cognition in general aspires towards. This exemplary function stimulates both sustained cognitive exploration of the object itself, and the general interaction of our capacities to attend and comprehend (p. 159).

Hepburn (1996) describes a similar extension of cognitive capacities in relation to perceptions of the formal qualities of works of art. "The intricacy of an artwork's structure can challenge and stimulate our perceptive powers, making its appreciation both a strenuous and rewarding activity," he writes. Because of the interconnections of the elements of objects of aesthetic attention, we are able to synthesize "a far greater totality than in any other context. Whereas consciousness can often be attenuated, meagre, sluggish, here it is at it most active and zestful...Elements of experience normally disparate and distanced are brought into a vivid relation, and our experience is given new vitality" (p. 423).

The epistemological significance of attention to the formal qualities of integrated wholes, then, is that such attention appears to revitalize our cognitive powers, infusing consciousness Hepburn suggests, with the energy of activity and zest. The ethical implications of this kind of attention will be addressed later, in Chapter 11.

Paradoxically, aesthetic response also has been associated paradigmatically with quieter forms of cognition, such as contemplation, and more distant attitudes, sometimes referred to as 'detached,' or 'disinterested.' It is to an explication of these defining features of the aesthetic that we turn next.

The Qualities of Aesthetic Response

In the previous two sections of this chapter, we have considered two clusters of ideas that have been used by Western philosophers to describe defining features of the
aesthetic domain: the integration of the sensuous with the rational, and attention to formal qualities. We now consider the third cluster of concepts central to many definitions of the aesthetic: special attitudes and qualities of response that we bring to, or are evoked in us by, certain objects and events. These special attitudes and qualities have been described as 'disinterested,' 'contemplative,' 'heightened,' and 'receptive.'

It may be helpful to start by indicating the kinds of attitudes or responses that aesthetic theorists have agreed are outside of, and in some cases opposite from, those that fall within the aesthetic domain. With considerable consistency, aesthetic responses are understood to be different from responses that are exclusively utilitarian or analytic. If, for instance, in noticing a maple tree in my field, my attention is focused on when and where to tap it to collect the largest amount of sap, or on where it should be placed in a taxonomy of genus and species, it is unlikely my response would fall within the domain of the aesthetic.

As we noted earlier, however, the concept 'aesthetic' can be an adverbial one, modifying other categories of behavior. For instance, in analyzing the elements of a tree in order to determine its taxonomic relationships, I might pay special attention to the forms created by the patterns of its branching and take pleasure in its sturdiness and symmetry, or notice the efficiency of the veining patterns reflected in the shape of the leaf, and, in those moments, appreciate the beauty of the tree. As I become aware of the formal features of the tree, as I focus my cognitive attention on sensory impressions, I would experience delight in the tree's beauty. This awareness, then, would contribute an aesthetic dimension to my otherwise analytic task of scientific categorization. Similarly, I might, while tapping a tree to collect its sap, pause for a moment to reflect on the tree's plenitude, or become aware of the rhythm of my year as it is punctuated by the rituals of sap-gathering in the spring. We could consider these awarenesses as contributing an aesthetic dimension to an otherwise practical task.

As these examples illustrate, in at least some cases, we use the term 'aesthetic' to refer to those aspects of an experience in which we appreciate something for its own sake,
distinct (at least momentarily) from our own purposes. When we bring such an attitude to an object of our attention, our will and our desire are in abeyance. Kant refers to this quality of apprehension as 'disinterested.'

Kant (1966 [1790]) writes that in pure aesthetic perception, the subject is "merely contemplative... indifferent as regards the existence of an object." We take pleasure in forms as they appear, whether the object is real or imagined. Our enjoyment is disinterested, as Crowther (1993a) writes in his explication of Kant, because it is based in qualities that are 'ontologically neutral....From the viewpoint of strictly formal appreciation a hallucinated or illusory appearance will do just as well as one that is real or veraciously cognized. [B]ecause of its non-practical and ontologically neutral grounds, the enjoyment of formal qualities as such is, in a logical sense, absolutely disinterested. It entails no reference to that natural attitude which enables us to cope with the practical vicissitudes of living; and it is, indeed probably just this feature which is responsible for that feeling of 'timelessness' or 'transport to a higher plane which is so often reported in the context of formal appreciation" (p. 21).

In Crowther's view, however, apprehension does not have to meet the standard of absolute disinterestedness to qualify as aesthetic. To the contrary, we often require background knowledge of an object to fully appreciate it. For instance, in the case of a work of art, our appreciation of it is enhanced when we know that it is a human creation, and even when we are familiar with the genre from which it emerges. It is this knowledge that allows us to appreciate its originality. Crowther (1993a) classifies these experiences as relatively disinterested, because they "presuppose not only a concept of their object but also an interest in the real existence of the object" (p.23). This kind of perception is still somewhat disinterested, however, because the "background knowledge required or belief which mediates our appreciation...is not itself of a necessarily practical nature" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 23).

The idea of 'disinterestedness'—understood as perceiving something separate from our own interests, needs and desires, or perceiving something for its own sake—is one of the most pervasive in the writing of Western philosophies of the aesthetic. It figures
prominently in most Western theories of the aesthetic since Kant (Whewell, 1996, p. 250). Schopenhauer wrote that in aesthetic perception, there is a "withdrawal from our usual practical, willful engagement with things" (summarized in Cooper, 1995, p. 24). We become contemplative, but in his view, our attention is directed not towards appearances, as Kant claimed, but "towards Platonic ideas or forms which lie behind 'appearances' themselves." Schopenhauer believed that a proper attitude towards works of art would reveal reality better than our everyday manner of encountering the world. The notion of disinterestedness was re-interpreted in the early twentieth century in an influential essay by the psychologist Edward Bullough (1957), who referred instead to the related notion of 'psychical distance.' As an example of an aesthetic apprehension, he described the circumstance of being confined on a fogbound ship, and, rather than attending to the practical dangers of navigating with low visibility, becoming interested in the eerie beauty of the shapes and forms that emerge from the fog (Bullough, 1957, p. 93).

In this century, the notion of disinterestedness has been interpreted in an extreme way by formalist theorists of art to justify their claim that the proper viewing of art should not consider its content or meaning. Employing an understanding of 'disinterestedness' akin to what Crowther terms 'absolute,' they hold that "concern for content and meaning would contradict the required indifference to matters of existence and conceptualization" (Cooper, 1996, p. 24). Aestheticists argue that art exists for its own sake and should be perceived purely in terms of its formal qualities. In this view, "art" is something quite removed from life, and its value is precisely in its separation from the everyday.

The eschewal of all extrinsic value for aesthetic experience by formalists and aestheticists appears to extend Kant's understanding of disinterestedness far beyond the meaning he himself intended. In fact, although the primary thrust of Kant's theory makes strong distinctions between moral reasoning and aesthetic judgments, he does acknowledge that aesthetic experience is "purposive in reference to the moral feeling" since it prepares us to "love disinterestedly" (Kant, 1966 [1790], p.108; cited in Cooper, 1996, p. 24). In
other words, there is ethical significance in our ability to suspend our own individual purposes as we apprehend objects in the world.

The philosopher Robert Hepburn (1984) suggests that there are two different conceptions of the aesthetic. "The study of aesthetic experience," he writes, "tends to move between a narrower and a broader conception of its subject-matter. For the narrower conception, the proper focus of study is taken to be the rapt contemplation of particular objects of art or of nature, where the spectator is wholly absorbed in the immediately given perceptual qualities of the object, and his attention is quite confined to these—or as near as can be...[I] work with a very much wider and more complex conception of aesthetic activity. That activity cannot, in my own view, be reduced to an absorbed attention to the surface qualities of the object before one. Rather the object is also the centre of, and is the occasion of, many possible lines of reflection or movements of the mind, transformations of perception, attitudes and feelings that may affect a person's life and modify the quality of his experience long after he has ceased to contemplate the particular object itself. No doubt, some trains of reflection prompted by works of art or contemplated natural objects can be aesthetically irrelevant, idiosyncratic, fortuitous. But others can be highly relevant, part of what makes the object worth contemplating, part of what gives seriousness to the aesthetic dimension of human life (pp. 1-2).

The word 'disinterestedness' by itself seems inadequate to describe the richness and variety of aesthetic responses suggested by Hepburn. It may be a defining feature of at least a certain type of aesthetic response, but what gives the aesthetic perception its character are the positive qualities of attention that fill the space once our utilitarian intentions are suspended. And, as we have seen above, the 'aesthetic attitude' does not refer to only one quality of attention: it includes both receptivity and inquisitiveness, contemplativeness and active mind. This make sense when we remember that aesthetic experience integrates the sensuous and cognitively, and that at times our energy or conscious attention might be focused on one aspect or the other. We are receptive in those moments when we allow the object of our attention to register itself on our sensations (to create what Merleau-Ponty refers to as 'carnal formulae.'). Then, as we scan these impressions seeking patterns of coherence, our mind might become more active, as images and configurations stir us to recall experiences or impressions from many different periods and domains of our life.
David Cooper (1996) suggests that the aesthetic appreciation is marked by the spectator's readiness to employ imagination in attempting to satisfy the interrogative interests with which he approaches the work. Imagination incorporates that peculiar blend of will and receptivity, that oscillation between an imposition of structure or meaning and a readiness to be 'taken over', which is so characteristic...of our best moments in the presence of art (pp. 26-27).

The "oscillation" to which Cooper refers, is related I believe to the qualities of 'resonance' and 'reverberation' with which Gaston Bachelard (1994) describes our response to poetry. To understand the distinction between them, we must first note that Bachelard distinguishes between the soul and the mind (of both poet and reader.) "A consciousness associated with the soul is more relaxed, less intentionalized than a consciousness associated with the phenomena of the mind" (p. xxi). In poetic reverie, however,

the mind is able to relax, but... the soul keeps watch, with no tension, calm and active...[In this way] forces are manifested in the poem that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge...[T]he image comes before thought" so that "poetry, rather than being a phenomenology of the mind, is a phenomenology of the soul (p. xxi)." To understand the workings of a poem, Bachelard argues, we must follow two perspectives--"towards the outpourings of the mind and towards the profundities of the soul." When the images of a poem reverberate within us, they bring about a veritable awakening of poetic creation, even in the soul of the reader, through the reverberations of a single poetic image...Through this reverberation, by going immediately beyond all psychology or psychoanalysis, we feel a poetic power rising naively within us....The reverberations bring about a change of being. It is as though the poet's being were our being (pp. xxiii, xxii).

The multiplicity of resonances then issues from the reverberations' unity of being...After the original reverberation, we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past. But the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface...The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it" (p. xxiii).

With this introduction to the notions of 'reverberation' and 'resonance,' we can understand more fully a concept of Bachelard's that we cited in Chapter 1, namely that "[a]l
the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions" (p. xix). Aesthetic perception involves, as Cooper noted above, a willingness to be taken over, to be transformed by the object of our perception, oscillating with the "imposition" (or creation or discovery) of structure and meaning. However, we can only "enter into the poetic space," writes Bachelard (1994), by abandoning ourselves to the image "without reservations" (p. xxviii). As a reader or listener, we allow an image to enter into us and transform us, and then we attend to its repercussions within us--how it reverberates in our being, and what resonances it sets in motion in our minds. Our attention "shimmers" between self and object, each awareness making possible new awarenesses of the other.

Perhaps the aesthetic attitude best can be characterized by this very tacking back and forth between the object of perception (the poem) and ourselves (our feelings, questions, thoughts). The 'disinterestedness' and focus of our attention enhances our capacity to perceive the other in its integrity, (i.e., to enter into the poetic space without reservation). It also creates a space for us to then wonder about ourselves in a new way. In the imaginative interplay of the working of our minds and our souls (Bachelard, 1994), or our cognitive and sensuous faculties (Kant, 1966 [1790]), emerge new possibilities of perceiving both ourselves and the other more clearly. This "complex cast of mind," as Martha Nussbaum (1995) argues, is key to the moral significance of literature. Whether considering the tragic drama which informed Aristotle's poetics, or contemporary novels, it is not just the content that engenders moral sensibilities, but the very form construct compassion in readers, positioning them as people who care intensely about the sufferings and bad luck of others, and who identify with them in ways that show possibilities for themselves. Like tragic spectators, novel-readers have both empathy with the plight of the characters, experiencing what happens to them as if from their point of view, and also pity, which goes beyond empathy in that it involves a spectatorial judgment that the characters' misfortunes are indeed serious and have indeed arisen not through their fault. Such judgments are not always available within the empathetic viewpoint, so the novel-reader, like a tragic spectator, must alternate between identification and a more external sort of sympathy. What the ancient pity tradition claims for epic and tragedy might now be claimed for
the novel: that this complex cast of mind is essential in order to take the full measure of the adversity and suffering of others, and that this appraisal is necessary for full social rationality (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 66).

In this section on non-utilitarian response we have seen how, in aesthetic perception in general (Kant, 1966 [1790]; Hepburn, 1984), as well as more specifically in responses to literature (Nussbaum, 1995), and poetry (Bachelard, 1994), there is some kind of oscillation, or tacking back and forth, between the object of our attention and our experience of ourselves, others and the world. We have begun to consider the interrelated epistemic and ethical implications of aesthetic attitudes, i.e., the range of ways we apprehend objects in the cognitive/emotional/psychological/spiritual space created by stepping back from our own interests and purposes. We will take up this investigation into the ethical significance of the aesthetic domain again in Chapter 11.

Summary of Philosophical Demarcations of the Aesthetic Domain

We are now in a position to summarize a conception of 'the aesthetic domain' that incorporates elements from several Western philosophical traditions: the Kantian analytic tradition, the pragmatist tradition associated with Peirce (1960) and Dewey (1934), and the phenomenological tradition associated with Merleau-Ponty (1995) and Bachelard (1994). In the conception of the aesthetic domain that we have constructed from these sources, a conceptual pattern emerges of a dialectical integration of opposites, or tendencies toward the mean, along three different dimensions. The first is the integration (at a higher level of complexity than either affords us singly) of our rational and sensuous apprehensions of the world. We create this integration in one or more of several ways: by suspending the constructs of pre-existing concepts to allow something to emerge as it appears to us (by using pre-conceptual schemata to organize sensory data); by focusing our conscious attention and our rational minds on our sensory impressions; by becoming metacognitively aware of the processes through which we symbolically interpret our sensations.
The second dimension is that of **formal organization**. Our senses and cognitive faculties are brought into focus on an object or event when the organization of its elements falls somewhere between a chaotic or random array, which we would experience as overwhelming, and a rigid structure of uniform elements, which we would experience as boring. We are able to perceive these relationships among elements—including harmony, balance, dissonance, etc.—in most cases because the object of our attention is bounded or framed in some way. We take pleasure in perceiving objects and events in which the organization appears to be organic, i.e., in which every element appears in relation to the whole. The resulting unity in diversity that is sometimes considered definitive of beauty.

The third dimension along which the aesthetic appears to provide a kind of integration of extremes is that of **focus of attention**. When we suspend our own utilitarian purposes to apprehend the formal qualities of an object of our attention, when we engaged both sensuously and rationally in this apprehension, we attend both to the object and to ourselves. Our understanding of the object depends upon our noticing the resonances and reverberations that it sets in motion in our being; and our understanding and experience of ourselves shifts in the light of the impressions made as we allow the object of our attention to enter our being.

The conception of the aesthetic domain that emerges from the traditions of Western philosophy is understood by many to have important ethical implications. We will return to these in Chapter 11. First, however, in the next three chapters (8, 9 and 10), I will present contrasting views of the 'aesthetic.' The first refers to the experiences and sensibilities not of individual creators and perceivers, but to the experiences and sensibilities of collectivities.
CHAPTER 8

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN NON-LITERATE CONTEXTS

In the previous chapter, I presented an analysis of 'the aesthetic' domain that emerges from several strands of Western philosophical literature. The analysis incorporates several different views, but as we saw, they cohere around three clusters of ideas: the integration of the sensuous with the rational; the apprehension of formal qualities; and non-utilitarian response sometimes referred to as disinterested, or as response in which attention oscillates between self and other.

Western philosophical literature on 'the aesthetic' assumes that 'aesthetic experience' refers to the experience of individuals. In the present chapter, I consider three theories that challenge this implicit consensus. First I summarize the theory of Ellen Dessanayake (1988, 1992), who presents the sociobiological view that art-making is a universal species trait. She argues that, from the long perspective of human evolution, the individualist art-making traditions that gave rise to the Western philosophical notion of 'the aesthetic' are anomalous. Collective expressive forms and patterns of response, typical of pre- and non-literate cultures, she claims, have been the norm, and are better suited to the needs of human beings.

Dessanayake's use of the term 'aesthetic' is contradictory, sometimes reserved for the disinterested individual response typically valued in literate societies, sometimes used to refer to the patterns of collective expression and response typical of non-literate cultures. Several other theorists, however, make unambiguous (if implicit) claims for using the term 'the aesthetic' to refer to the expressions of collectivities. In this chapter, I presents sets of two such theories, one by feminist scholars, and the other by scholars of African history and cultures.
The chapter following this one consists of an analysis of the collective expressive forms and the related patterns of response described by Dessanayake and the feminist and Africanist scholars, based on the three clusters of ideas that emerge from Western aesthetic theories just explicated in Chapter 7. There I demonstrate that—as different as collective participatory forms may be from the individual works celebrated by the contemporary art world—conceptions of the aesthetic that relate to the expressive forms and patterns of response of individuals, on the one hand, and of collectivities, on the other, can deepen and enrich each other in important ways.

_Homo Aestheticus:_ Dessanayake's View of Art as a Universal Human Capacity

According to the Walter Benjamin (1978), an aesthetic theorist associated with the Frankfurt School, "during long periods of history, the mode of human perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well" (Benjamin, 1978, p. 222). Benjamin wrote these remarks as part of a study on the effects of photographic reproduction on human sense perception, but they serve equally well as an introduction to the transformations in human sense perception that accompanied an earlier technological innovation: the development of widespread alphabetic literacy. The transformations in the organization of human sensory perception that accompanied the innovation of literacy are at the center of Ellen Dessanayake's theory of art.

In her books _What is Art For?_ and _Homo Aestheticus_, Dessanayake argues that art is a universal human behavior that evolved because it offered a selective advantage to those groups that used it to draw focused attention to objects and events necessary for survival. She defines "the behavior of art" as the making and appreciating of formed objects and events for the purpose of "making special." According to Dessanayake, because art fits the general pattern of evolved biological proclivities—it is a human behavior that (1) is universal; (2) occasions intense involvement, in terms both of the amount of time and the
quality of energy; and (3) generates pleasurable feelings—the behavior of art probably evolved through natural selection. Therefore, "art can be plausibly considered a biological need that we are predisposed to want to satisfy, whose fulfillment gives satisfactions and pleasure, and whose denial may be considered a vital deprivation" (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 38).

Dessanayake clarifies that the behavior of art is similar to, but not identical with, either play or ritual. Like play, art is nonutilitarian and involves an element of pretense; 'art' and 'play' share a "metaphorical nature" in which something stands for something else. Like ritual, art is compelling, non-ordinary and stylized; both art and ritual share the qualities of being formalized, socially reinforcing, bracketed, symbolic and universal. Furthermore, art and ritual were generally linked in practice. For Dessanayake, what makes art distinct from play and ritual, is that its way of "making special" is "aesthetic," defined as "the intention to appeal to (that is, to attract and, if successful, to satisfy) another's appetite for apprehending and appreciating a specialness" (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 55). Underneath the apparent circularity of her definition lies an idea central to many notions of the aesthetic: elements are organized in space and time for the purpose of engaging attention and/or evoking a particularly desired kind of response. Each of the arts, she illustrates, can be understood as "cultural control (shaping and elaborating) of natural material that in its raw state is unfinished and unseemly" (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 107). For most of human existence, those activities now associated in the West with the category of 'the arts,' although experienced as sacred, were also a part of every day life.

Why is such "making special" behavior adaptive? Through engagement with aesthetic sensibilities and pleasures, as defined above, early human groups assured "willing participation in, and accurate performance of, the ceremonies that united" their members (Dessanayake, 1992, pp. 59-60). For the thousands of generations in which groups' collective wisdom was passed down primarily through oral performances and participatory rituals, ensuring the attention of group members was critical.
Dessanayake also argues that engaging in the behavior of art nourished bonds among group members. She summarizes recent neurobiological research to propose a concept of "aesthetic empathy," through which works of art and rituals inscribe the bodies of participants with kinesthetic patterns that can be understood to create embodied dimensions of the very unity they celebrate. "In premodern societies, where arts and ceremony are joined," she writes, "aesthetic empathic means are invariably used to express the group's perception of the world" and, therefore, to create feelings of unity and belonging among group members (Dessanayake, 1992, pp. 140-193).

From Dessanayake's vantage point as a student of human evolution, the conceptions of 'the aesthetic' that emerge from Western philosophy and the art-making practices of the elite art world are extremely anomalous. "Until the Enlightenment," she writes,

no other society had considered art to be an entity in itself, to be set apart from its context of use (usually in ceremony or entertainment) or the content that it portrayed or suggested....They found no reason to assume that [forms such as paintings, sculptures, poems, motets, an cantatas] belonged in a nameable superordinate category, "art," that suggests a special mode of working or noteworthy social identity (being an "artist" rather than simply someone who paints) or a special result (a "work of art" rather than an altarpiece of ancestor figure) (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 197).

Why is it that Western-style modernity has produced art that is separate from everyday life, an art-world of elite institutions, and patterns of apprehending art that are individualized, cerebral, and perhaps most confusing of all, 'distinterested'? According to Dessanayake, the primary factor that accounts for these difference is the development of broad-based alphabetic literacy, and the myriad changes that resulted from that development. In keeping with her evolutionary view, Dessanayake emphasizes how recent a development is literacy, especially mass literacy: of an estimated 1600 generations of human beings, only 20 generations have had even the opportunity to read and write. Literate cultures--where most people know how to read and write, and social practices revolve around the expectation of literacy--is only three or four hundred years old, for only a fraction of the earth's population (Dessanayake, 1988, pp. 171-173; 1992, p. 196).
To understand how the development of literacy accounts for changes in the conceptions of art, as well as in the practices that surround art's creation and reception, we must first consider how literacy changes the organization of human sense perception and patterns of thought. While acknowledging that her dichotomized analysis of oral and literate societies is somewhat oversimplified, Dessanayake (1988) nevertheless convincingly argues that "learning to read and write is an initiation to a state of mind from which one cannot return" (p. 173).

When information is written down, it is possible to analyze data, to notice analogies, to think reflectively. Written texts, unlike oral narratives, for instance, are available to be studied and reviewed; information can be classified, quantified with exactness, and organized hierarchically. In oral cultures, by contrast, meanings tend to be implicit rather than explicit, received simultaneously rather than in linear fashion, discontinuous rather than uniform (Dessanayake, 1988, p. 173). Verbal arts are public and participative, and language must be vivid, inspirational, and, literally, memorable; (p. 174) whereas literacy, by contrast, provides opportunities for detached, mediated and isolated experience. Furthermore, not only is the time we spend reading and writing inherently solitary. Literacy changes the patterns of our sense perception because we pay attention differently when we know that we can return to a cookbook or a map rather than rely on memory. Non-literate persons have "no choice but to watch or listen and remember," writes Dessanayake, so their participation in events, and their engagement with people, is much more direct and focused.

Literate persons become easily accustomed to and thereby dependent upon external devices for amusement and distraction -- mechanically produced sights, sounds, and events that are selected and provided by someone other than themselves, usually a stranger. To the nonliterate, the notion of boredom has little meaning; existence itself demands neither justification nor cultivation. If nothing is distracting it, the mind finds occupation in its inner life or directly in the surroundings. The immediate world is more likely to be noticed -- colors, smells, sounds, appearances of things, as well as their relationships to each other and to the mental and imaginative life (Dessanayake, 1988, p. 176).
In contrast with the "vast and multiform, but often disconnected" bits of knowledge characteristic of literate people, nonliterate people are immersed in bodies of integrated, useful "knowledge," or "lore," beliefs mediated by intimately known people and expressive forms including proverbs, folktales and ritualized formulations. Dessanayake (1988) argues that where there are fewer words and less reliance on language, those aspects of life for which there is no precise description are not lost, ignored or dismissed but instead (coded in other, non-linguistic ways) tend to be integrated in socially shared symbols. In pre-literate culture, a pictorial or visible symbol becomes a fact: it simultaneously stands for, defines, and manifests its referent (Otter, 1971). In such cultures, ritual rather than books serves as the locus of knowledge and operates on many levels....[P]reliterate people have conceivably been sensitized to apprehend and respond to many kinds of information that are never verbalized but only expressed in action--in rituals, emotional gestures, and so forth....For post-traditional humans whose thinking--and even fantasy and daydreams--is largely occupied with instrumental, pragmatic concerns, it is perhaps difficult to appreciate the more embedded, enactive, and symbolic type of thinking that is characteristic of nonliterate (pp. 177-178)

Alphabetic literacy--the decoding of symbols each of which stands for a sound, rather than an idea or object as in pictographic systems of writing--allows for information to be absorbed with little awareness of symbolic mediation. "One of the features of alphabetic literacy," Dessanayake writes, "is its transparency, the way it seems to give, without laborious deciphering, instant and direct access to its subject" (1992, p. 204). Although reading poems and other texts shaped into formal patterns can, of course, draw attention to the linguistic symbol itself, it is important to note that in much reading, the symbol disappears from focus. In other words, we can take in information and perspectives from written texts with minimal awareness of the meaning-making process itself.

On the other hand, writing makes it possible to see words as things, as separate from their referents--much different than in oral language, in which the unit of comprehension tends to be the utterance, rather than the word. In literate (and hyperliterate) cultures attention is focused on the meaning of the word, rather than the meaning of an object, event, or experience (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 208).
Dessanayake argues that it is literacy, and its concomitants as she describes them, that shape contemporary attitudes towards art. She writes that the required response to art in modern times is not direct psychophysical reaction to rhythm, tension and release, or associated with powerful cultural or biological symbols (the "ecstasy of communal participation") but a detached, cognitively mediated "appreciation" of its internal relationships, its place in a history and tradition, and its implications and ramifications outside itself ("the aesthetic experience") (1988, p. 183).

As the subject of aesthetics developed...a startling and influential idea took hold. This idea held that there is a special frame of mind for appreciating works of art: a "distinterested" attitude that disregards any consideration of one's own personal interest in the object, its utility, or its social or religious ramifications. This unprecedented idea led to still another: the work of art is a world-in-itself, made solely or primarily as an occasion for this kind of detached aesthetic experience, which was considered to be one of the highest forms of mental activity.

"Disinterest" implied that one could transcend the limitations of time, place, and temperament, and react to the artwork of eras far removed from one's own--whether or not one understood the meaning they had had for their original makers and users. In this sense, art was "universal." Another key idea that gradually developed in the field of aesthetics was that works of art were vehicles for a special kind of knowledge--a knowledge that, with the waning of religious belief, often took on the spiritual aura and authority once restricted to the church. Still another corollary was the idea of art for art's sake (or life for art's sake), suggesting that art had no purpose but to "be" and to provide opportunities for enjoying an aesthetic experience that was its own reward, and that one could have no higher calling than to open oneself to these heightened moments (Dessanayake, 1992, p. 197).

From the long perspective of evolution, the solitariness of modern and postmodern cultures worries Dessanayake. The emphasis on "self-knowledge, self-development, self-fulfillment," characteristic of contemporary life in general, as well as literacy and artistic engagement in particular, deny us the support of "socially shared significances" which appear to have been central to the viability of our species. In this context, those members of contemporary societies who are involved in the arts often seek to fill the needs that society cannot meet: connection with the natural world; direct, immediate and unself-conscious experience; and the integration of fragmented lives:

With the lack of coherence in our lives, we are all called upon to be artists--to shape, find significant aspects of, impose meaning upon, discern or state what is special about our experience. Response to the mystery of life becomes a personal aesthetic gesture rather than acting out of community and confirmatory ceremony (Dessanayake, 1988, p. 190).
Paradoxically, in contemporary society art becomes either totally segregated from
the every day, transformed into inaccessible sacredness; or, among the avant garde, all of
life is aestheticized, every juxtaposition a potential significance in an unending quest for
coherence. In these modern formulations, Dessanayake (1988) sees "reactions to the
changes brought about when literacy replaced art-ritual as the means of embodying and
transmitting communal knowledge and values" (p. 192).

One need not be convinced of all of the details of Dessanayake's evolutionary
theory to recognize the value of her insight about the anomalous nature of art-making and
-appreciating in modern and postmodern literate cultures. The capacity to organize
elements into spatial and temporal forms designed to give pleasure and attract attention
appears to be universal; many ethnographic studies document cultures in which all
members are expected to participate in collective expressive forms. It is likely that a theory
of 'the aesthetic' that arose in anomalous circumstances would be inadequate to describe the
manifestations of these capacities in all linguistic and cultural contexts.

However, Dessanayake's use of the term 'aesthetic' is frustratingly inconsistent.
Sometimes she uses the term to refer to her notion of "making special," i.e., enactment of
forms, usually collective, that evoke a response of specialness within a participant. By the
end of her theorizing, however, her use of the term is consistent with usage by the art
world elite and formalist and aestheticist thinkers: she associates 'aesthetic' with
disinterestedness of response, art for art's sake, and the separation of art from everyday
life--and, therefore, disparages it.

Other theorists, however, unambiguously use the category of 'the aesthetic' to refer
to the kinds of collective expressive forms Dessanayake attributes to non- and pre-literate
cultures. They do not argue that the term is appropriate; rather, their use of it is implicit in
the names they give their theories: 'feminist aesthetics' and 'African aesthetics.' We will
consider these two bodies of theory in the remaining two sections of this chapter.
Feminist Challenges to Western Philosophical Conceptions of 'The Aesthetic'

In an essay entitled "Re-enfranchising Art: Feminist Interventions in the Theory of Art," Estella Lauter (1993) proposes a feminist aesthetic, based on assertions that art is gendered and that responses to it are embedded within cultures (as opposed to separate from everyday life, or somehow universal, as some Western philosophical theories have argued or assumed). Lauter's claim that art itself is gendered arises from the sexist biases of the art world, including its distinction between art and craft, and, she claims, its unfair and ungrounded devaluing of the work of specific women artists. Lauter also writes in sympathy with Arthur Danto's warning that in the post-modern context, philosophy has dis-enfranchised art by absorbing it into thought "so that virtually all there is at the end is theory, art having finally become vaporized in a dazzle of pure thought about itself" (Danto, 1986, p. 111). "Feminist theory," writes Lauter, "re-enfranchises art by revisioning its complex relationships to cultures." It does this by acknowledging the difference gender makes in "the creation, reception and evaluation of art" (p. 22).

Lauter defines her feminist theory in contrast to formalism (a conception of the 'aesthetic' that emphasizes non-utilitarian and disinterested attention to the formal qualities of works of art) along several different dimensions. Whereas formalism defines art in terms of "formal properties, qualities and principles and arranges those element in a hierarchical order to privilege those least useful to daily life," feminist theory describes art as everexpanding and seeks to identify it through exemplars and models instead of trying to define it. Boundaries between art and culture or art and nature are identifiable but shifting. [Art's] status depends on its effectiveness in making life sensible to an audience for which it is produced or by which it is received. Good art reaches beyond its society of origin to suggest alternative ways of being. Its aesthetic value arises in relationship to moral and cognitive values (Lauter, 1993, p.31).

Unlike the artist of the formalist paradigm, who strives to "disguise relationships between his art and his personal life to make his art seem universal," feminist artists strive toward authenticity for themselves and for their audiences." This idea is embedded in a poem 'Transcendental Etude' by Adrienne Rich (1978):

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The longer I live the more I mistrust theatricality, the false glamour cast by performance, the more I know its poverty beside the truths we are salvaging from the splitting-open of our lives. The woman who sits watching, listening, eyes moving in the darkness is rehearsing in her body, hearing-out in her blood a score touched off in her perhaps by some words, a few chords, from the stage: a tale only she can tell (p. 74).

In contrast with the disinterestedness that characterizes the attitude of response valued in the formalist paradigm, "in feminist reception theory," writes Lauter (1993), [o]ptimal response involves political, social, religious, economic, and aesthetic sensitivity, which may come from formal education or from experience. [The art critic] evaluates art according to its potential to empower people to live more effective, moral and satisfying lives in a world increasingly characterized by differences. The critic's likes and dislikes are foregrounded as stumbling blocks or starting points for the process of increasing understanding... (p. 32).

Members of the art world have argued long enough about the interpretation of works as if they were autonomous objects. Let us now study how art embodies, enacts, and changes cultures (p. 33).

The embeddedness of art in culture is the hallmark of Lauter's feminist aesthetic. However, it is important to understand that Lauter theorizes well within the general categories of the Western philosophical tradition: she imagines a world of art-making and art critics, apparently related to but nevertheless distinct from "daily life." She lists 'aesthetic sensitivity' as separate from religious and political sensitivity. We could say that Lauter's aesthetic, in a normative sense of the word, identifies the ethical and transformative with the beautiful. But in categorial terms, she still maintains a distinction between the aesthetic and ethical, political and religious domains. While she argues for an appreciation of 'art' embedded in diverse cultures, her own categories are derived from the discourses of Western philosophy and the elite art world.

The work of another feminist theorist, Renee Lorraine (1993), challenges Western philosophical notion of the aesthetic at the deeper, categorial level. Lorraine grounds her theory of a 'gynecentric aesthetic' not on a critique of the male-defined art world (as did...
Lauter), but rather on the forms of cultural expression that appear to characterize societies in which women enjoy relatively high status in relation to men. Starting from an entirely different point of inquiry than Lauter, Lorraine's study points to the importance of culture in defining characteristics of various different aesthetics. Lorraine compared the work of Heidi Gottner-Abendroth (1986), a German feminist and scholar of interpretive theory, and Alan Lomax (1968), an American folklorist who, among many other endeavors, studied the relationship between the structures of dance and music forms, on the one hand, and, on the other, patterns of social organization. Lorraine discovered that the work of both scholars points towards common features in the forms of artistic expression in ancient and contemporary cultures in "complementary societies," i.e., cultures in which the status of men and women is relatively equal.

Based on her studies of the structure of myth and ritual, Gottner-Abendroth articulates "Nine Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic" (Gottner-Abendroth, 1986, p. 81). These principles are in some ways consistent with, and in some ways contradictory to, the notion of the aesthetic that emerges from the Western philosophical tradition. According to Gottner-Abendroth, one major difference between 'matriarchal' and 'patriarchal' art is that in the former, all participants are simultaneously authors and spectators. Because of this, analysis of the relationships among the author, text and reader (or artist, object or performance, and audience), so prevalent in Western understandings of the aesthetic, are irrelevant. The focus of this theory is on the process of the creating, (not on the object created). The proper attitude for those involved is one of "total commitment."

In matriarchal societies, Gottner-Abendroth claims, the primary expressive form was the dance, which, with its attendant rituals and multi-modal sensory stimulation, functioned not as separate from reality, or as a part of reality, but as transformative of reality. In healing rituals, for instance, shamans used symbolic forms to augment the patient's hope for recovery, trust in the witch doctor, and belief in the cure. This shift in belief contributed to a new "psychosocial reality," i.e., to the healing of the patient, and his
or her reintegration into the community. Gottner-Abendroth distinguishes matriarchal aesthetic from the patriarchal by arguing that patriarchal art has existed only since the aesthetic sphere was separated from the rest of life. Matriarchal art, by contrast, is "the ability to shape life and so change it; it is itself energy, life, a drive toward the aestheticization of society" (Lorraine, 1993, p. 37).

Gottner-Abendroth's matriarchal aesthetic is intended as both (1) a description of an aesthetic sensibility that historically has arisen in cultures in which women's status is relatively equal to that of men, and that informs some contemporary artistic creations; and (2) a utopian vision of a "complex, socially subversive praxis"...that seeks to "dissolve the divisions within the aesthetic and so aestheticize the whole of society," and to define 'art' as "the universal ability to shape a worthwhile life, both personally and socially (Gottner-Abenroth, 1986, p. 94). The following paragraphs offer a critical view of these two dimensions of her theory.

The notion of matriarchy has been criticized from several directions. As Renee Lorraine (1993) writes, "to speak of 'matriarchy' and of nature, magic, emotion, love, and the erotic in the same context may seem...dangerously close to sexist essentialism" (p. 37). Positing a single 'matriarchal aesthetic' could obliterate important differences among the aesthetic sensibilities of women, based on geographical, cultural, economic and historical differences among them. Early research on prehistoric matriarchy has been questioned; and anthropologists, including feminist anthropologists, are "nearly unanimous in their dismissal of a universal matriarchy as 'pure conjecture,' and many deny that there is evidence of any matriarchy at all" (Lorraine, 1993, pp. 38-39). Furthermore, 'matriarchy' appears to suggest an inversion of the domative relationships that define patriarchy, whereas evidence suggests that even in cultures where female figures were worshipped, or where women contributed a large share of the food supply and participated in decision-making structures, power was not concentrated in one gender as has been the case in patriarchal settings. (We can assume that it is at least partly for this reason that Renee
Lorraine chose to refer to a 'gynecentric' rather than Gottner-Abendroth's 'matriarchal' aesthetic.)

Leaving aside questions about whether at some prehistoric time women universally enjoyed greater equality with men than we do now, and leaving aside concerns about the term 'matriarchy,' folklore research suggests that there are distinct features of the expressive forms of nonauthoritarian cultures where the status of women is high, features that correlate closely with those that comprise Gottner-Abendroth's 'matriarchal aesthetic.' The lack of clear distinction between the domains of 'art' and 'life' appears to be typical of preindustrial societies in general, a claim made by Marxist as well as feminist theorists (Lorraine, 1993, p. 44). As Dessanayake (1988, 1992) noted, the use of the term 'art' to define an overarching category began as recently as The Enlightenment. In preindustrial societies also characterized by relative gender complementarity, both ethnographic studies (Begler, 1978; Krige & Krige, 1947; Lee, 1979; Marshall, 1959; Turnbull, 1961) and cantometric and choreometric analyses of the relationship between the forms music and dance and the structure of social organization (Lomax, 1968; Lomax & Berkowitz, 1972) suggest that expressive forms are more inclusive of all members of the community, both women and men. In these societies, for instance, the vocal music is generally sung with several parts of equal importance, rather than having some voices subordinate to others. The dance style "is described as flowing, curved ... and erotic, with multipart trunk action and accentuated hip, pelvis and breast movements." The presence of such characteristics is correlated with the degree to which women contribute to the subsistence needs of the group (Lomax, 1968; Lorraine, 1993, p. 40). Lorraine (1993) summarizes the congruent findings of Gottner-Abendroth's studies of myths and ritual, ethnographic studies of relatively complementary societies, and Lomax's quantitative analysis, by noting that all of the cultures described stress integration and inclusion rather than fragmentation, a unity of equal voices rather than hierarchism and stratification. Emotion, magic and the dance serve to unite the individual, society and nature; there is an integration of religion, art, healing, and life; emotion, intellect and action combine to achieve an ecstatic state; process and continuous creation is stressed over objectification; there is a synthesis of the
arts, and no divisions in the aesthetic sphere; the continuous cycle of life takes precedence over a focus on individual death; sexuality is (responsibly) free rather than exclusive; and everyone is included in aesthetic and other social activities. Significantly, however, this emphasis on synthesis, integration, and unity is not so total as to eliminate the self: the group consciousness and harmony with nature do not limit or repress individual consciousness but seem rather to nurture and support it. (This is not paradoxical but analogous to the harmony of individual themes in a piece of music.) Relationships between individuals and with the natural world are subject to subject rather than subject to object (pp. 44-45).

Lorraine finds support for the idea that such an aesthetic is not only egalitarian but gynecentric because of its tendency toward integration, a tendency associated with femaleness in the psychological theories of Nancy Chodorow (1978), the moral theories of Carol Gilligan (1982), and the aesthetic theory of Julia Penelope Stanley and Susan J. Wolfe (1978), among others.

I do not wish to contend that tendencies toward integration among women are biologically determined, for they are not peculiar to women, not all women exhibit them, and cultural factors may be responsible for them and can diminish them. Yet it is significant that these tendencies are strong in the societies [in which women enjoy relatively high status.] For because the women in these societies are relatively autonomous of men, their actions and expressions are likely to be authentic, to be based on female experience rather than to be imitations of men or acting out of male conceptions of the feminine (Lorraine, 1993, p.45).

In addition to proposing an aesthetic as a description of sensibilities that emerged from egalitarian societies, Gottner-Abendroth and Lorraine present their 'matriarchal' and 'gynecentric' aesthetics as ethically prescriptive, both as a utopian vision of the future and as a means for transforming patriarchal society. "In the gynecentric culture envisioned here, everything made would be made with beauty, everything done would be done with beauty. Art would not be separate from the rest of life, and the entire society would be aestheticized" (Lorraine, 1993, p. 48). In Gottner-Abendroth's view, distinctions between the ethical and the artistic apparently would disappear. Aestheticising the whole of society, she writes, would constitute "creating a meaningful social life together. Seen from this perspective, art is no longer a specialised technique, an exclusive know-how but the
The question of whether or not there are distinct qualities of the expressive forms associated with relatively egalitarian patterns of social organization, or typical of each gender, may be relevant to the practical work of structuring conflict resolution strategies. It is possible, for instance, that women of enemy societies will find in their folk arts commonalities that facilitate reciprocal communication, understanding, and even respect for each other's humanity. Practitioners might find in the forms of women's folk expression models of inclusiveness useful in structuring workshops, rituals and other activities. The theories of Lomax, Gottner-Abendorth and Lorraine suggest that it is at least worth considering these possibilities. However, for the purposes of our conceptual understanding of the aesthetic, it is not necessary to resolve questions about the gendered nature of patterns of artistic expression and response.

It is necessary, however, to note that Gottner-Abendroth's and Lorraine's 'matriarchal' and 'gynecentric' notions of the 'aesthetic' differ categorically from the Western philosophical conception. In other words, they are proposing not just that the ethical implications of a work of art ought to influence a beholder's sense of an object's beauty, but that collectively constructed rituals created to shape communal life by evoking feelings of passionate commitment, not just individual works of art created to evoke disinterested responses within individual viewers, ought to be the subject of aesthetic inquiry.

They are claiming as 'aesthetic,' therefore, expressive forms that would be excluded from the category as understood in the traditions of Western philosophy. For instance, participation in the rituals they claim as definitive of their gynecentric or matriarchal 'aesthetic' is clearly utilitarian. In this regard, Gottner-Abendroth's and Lorraine's critique of the Western philosophical conception of 'the aesthetic domain' is more radical than Lauter's.
A similar radical claim is made by several scholars of African cultures, whose theories we consider in the next section. We begin with a critical review of a recent article in the New York Review of Books, which reveals how the tensions between the aesthetic conception of the Western art world and those implicit within the expressive forms of pre-literate tribal cultures manifested themselves in the context of a Guggenheim exhibition of arts and crafts created in Africa.

Kugusu Mtimatu (To Touch the Heart): An African Conception of 'Aesthetics'

The complications of understanding and appreciating the expressive forms of a particular tribal culture through the linguistic categories of Western aesthetic theory and the forms of display of the Western art world are revealed in an April, 1997, NY Review of Books article about a recent display at the Guggenheim museum entitled "Africa: The Art of a Continent." The reviewer, K. Anthony Appiah, grew up the capital of an old Akan kingdom now in the center of the republic of Ghana, surrounded by his mother's collection of figurative goldweights: small figures that had been used for weighing gold dust, their surfaces inscribed with symbols familiar from textile motifs. The artifacts "depict people and animals, plants and tools, weapons and domestic utensils, often in arrangements that will remind an Asante who looks at them of a familiar proverb" (Appiah, 1997, p.46). A large selection of goldweights comprised a major component of the Guggenheim exhibition. Appiah, obviously educated in Western philosophy and aesthetic theory, was in the rather unique position of appreciating the objects in the exhibition both through their familiar cultural resonances, and through the sensibilities of someone educated in the ways of the Western art world.

In his review, Appiah noted with some irony that the displayed objects, while "among the splendors of African creativity," were produced by people who saw them neither as an expression of African culture nor as art, especially not in the sense of 'art' as it has been used in the West since the early nineteenth century (i.e., to designate a special domain of creativity distinct from craft and technology) (Williams, 1983, pp. 41-42). Their

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makers identified, not with constructs of nations or the continent, but with local groups. They made and assessed the gold weights for their functional significance as well as for their detail, humor and artisanry. "Their decorative elegance was something prized and aimed for...but it was an ornament, an embellishment," writes Appiah, "on an object that served a utilitarian function" (p. 46).

Their utility notwithstanding, the makers of many of the objects in the exhibit "had notions of form that the object needed to meet if it was to be judged a well-made artifact." (p.48) Similarly, as an ethnographer wrote in relation to masks made to be used in masquerades and rituals in Sierra Leone--also displayed in the Guggenheim exhibit--in order for a mask to be accepted by the society, the mask "must first and foremost be beautiful, enchantingly beautiful in Sande eyes." The problem here is that in the language of Sierra Leone, the word nyande, roughly translated as 'beauty,' actually can be understood only through a cluster of English concepts, including "beautiful, good, kind, nice" (p. 48). Appiah notes that in Asante-Twi, the African language of his father's people, the same word is used to describe "attractive people, ethical behavior and good manners" (p. 48).

Appiah writes that the curators of the Guggenheim exhibition invited museum-goers to "evaluate [the artifacts] in the manner we call aesthetic. This means we were invited to look at their form, their craftsmanship, the ideas they evoke, to attend to them in the way we have learned to attend to art museums." (p.50) (Emphasis added. Appiah's "we" obviously refers to the Western-educated visitors to the Guggenheim and readers of The New York Review.) Since the exhibit "decisively established that anyone with half an eye can honor the artistry of Africa, a continent whose creativity has been denigrated by some and sentimentalized by others, but rarely taken seriously," Appiah suggests that the display should engender questions about the past of Western culture, why it has had "such great difficulty learning to respect many of the artworks in the....show because they were
African." Members of Appiah's extended family, including people with both African and European cultural lineages, agreed that

the show was wonderful; and what made it wonderful was that the eye could linger with the pleasure on the forms, the shapes, and the surfaces, the patination and the pigment, and engage each object with whatever we happened to know of its materials, its history, its origin. In short, we found ourselves responding naturally to these African artifacts as art; which when all is said and done, was all that...the curator...had invited us to do” (emphasis added, p. 51).

Although we might question whether a response evoked by the rarefied environment of a Guggenheim gallery can appropriately be considered "natural," we can agree with Appiah that the exhibit at the Guggenheim, and others like it, allow members of non-African cultures to appreciate the skill and artisanry of peoples whose expressions have been deprecated and overlooked. If, as Appiah suggests, they invite their audiences to wonder about the factors that lead Western culture to dismiss the dignity of the creative expression of Africans for generations, such exhibitions can surely be said to serve an educative purpose. But what are the implications of taking an object from a cultural context in which museums are unknown, an object crafted to be appreciated for its usefulness more importantly than its form, and setting it off in vitrines, illuminated by museum lighting? (Even Appiah acknowledged that the gold weights "cried out from the museum's vitrines to be touched" [p. 46]).

The critical ethnographer James Clifford would say that the gold weights and masks on view at the Guggenheim had been elevated within the "aesthetic-anthropological" (Clifford, 1988, p. 209) or "art-culture" system, in which objects of non-Western peoples are appropriated, first to be contextualized as intriguing specimens of dying (or dead) cultures, and then, as worthy of the detached (and elevated) eye of art connoisseurs. (Clifford, 1991, p.214) The problem with the anthropological-aesthetic system as a way of understanding the creative expression of other cultures is that the system itself imposes upon those expressions the categories of the academic and art discourses current in the West, including a Western understanding of the aesthetic domain itself. What would it
mean to look beyond those discourses, into the conceptual frameworks of the various
cultures from which objects and temporal formal expressions emerge?

In an essay entitled, 'The African Aesthetic and National Consciousness,' the
scholar of African studies Dona Marimba Richards (1993) suggests one such approach.
Like the feminist theorists cited in the previous section, she calls for a conception of the
aesthetic that is transformational, that has both spiritual and political implications.
Eschewing the *utamawazo* (culturally structured thought) of the European tradition as
rationalistic, objectifying, and anti-spiritual, she calls for a reconceptualization of 'the
aesthetic,' that is true to African *uramaroho* (spirit-life). She seeks a conception that is
"uniquely suited to African sensibilities," that relates to "power of a spiritual-emotional
nature, which effects perception, thought and feeling" (p. 65).

Richards discovers such a conception in the Kiswahili term *Kugusa Mtim a* (to
touch the heart). *"Kugusa Mtim a,"* she writes,

is the African experience of being "touched," "moved," "affected" by a self-
consciously created form/phenomenon. These expressions are powerful
energies which act on reality and which act on us. They have the ability to
change reality as we have. The concept of *Kugusa Mtim a* takes "aesthetic"
beyond "beauty" and "pleasure," expands it and places it into the context of
the profound African understanding/experience of the universe. *Kugusa
Mtim a* deals with transcendence, transformation, human consciousness, and
the power of collective human will (Richards, 1993, pp. 65-66).

The *transcendent* qualities of this African conceptualization of something akin to
'the aesthetic' occurs through the vehicle of ritual drama. *"The modality of ritual allows us
as African people to both create and experience spiritual reality,"* Richards writes. It
carries people into an "eternal moment" in which time and space are joined in one sacred
totality.

The *transformative* power of *Kugusa Mtim a* is embodied in the mask, and in the
active and participatory process of masking:

The African mask is in essence not a representation. It is not life-less matter.
It is not a "work of art" to be admired on a wall. It is most certainly not a
"disguise." It is a force. It has being, and as such can be/should be powerful.
Its power lies in its ability to transform. Masks are used to transform young
boys into young men. The Sowo is used to transform young girls into Mende
women. Masks are used to assure the presence of the ancestors at ceremonial occasions and judicial procedures. They are used to heal, to frighten, to make fertile, to initiate, to bind in oath, to appease and to atone. They are used to harmonize, to give praise and to lament, most importantly they are used to energize, for the transformation of our consciousness and our being. We are no longer our ordinary selves, but become our more profound cultural selves (Richards, 1993, p. 67).

Dancing and drumming, "inseparable modalities," are the media through which African people express and experience the most complex, the deepest aspects of African philosophy. The drum translates to us the rhythm of the universe and the dance transports us to a phenomenal dimension in which we become a part of the connecting thread that binds all being, thereby making the universe whole. ...The power of the African drum is inescapable. In unison the drums become compelling, forceful. This is no academic, cerebral exercise; neither is it peripheral or detached. It is rather visceral and involved" (Richards, 1993, p. 68).

Similarly, Richards asserts, the "African symbol is spiritual truth, not its representation." Citing Wade Nobles (1986), she contrast European symbolism (representational, sequential and analytic) with the African understanding and experience of symbol (as transformational, synchronic and analogic). African symbols can "assault, neutralize, protect and teach." They are "spiritual energy manifested in the form or shape, pattern or design of sculpture, braided hairstyle, clothing, a melody-sound, a word, song or dance or the rhythm of the drum itself. Classical African writing is first of all symbolic and sacred" (Richards, 1993, p. 68).

Within African cultures, according to the Nigerian scholar Dele Jegede (1993), "art for art's sake" can barely be understood. "Art for life's sake" is the African imperative.

The description and explication of Kugusu Mtima, a distinctly African construction, to refer to a body of theory and practices that corresponds to what in the West is called 'aesthetic,' adds dimension to Clifford's criticisms of the West's imposition of the aesthetic-ethnographic system on the artifacts and expressive forms of other cultures. On the one hand, to move an artifact from an anthropological museum to a display in an art museum appears to elevate it, to dignify it as worthy of aesthetic appreciation, even to claim...
for its universal appeal. This "elevation" occurs, however, all within a context designed to transform the consciousness of the viewers, for sure, but in accordance with the values prized by the West, and in accordance with Western understandings of 'the aesthetic.' Specifically, by presenting artifacts devoid of context, by the very structure of display, which separates apprehension from use, museums run the risk of appropriating the expression of one culture in service of the values (of individualism and detached rationality, for instance) of their own cultural context.

There are obvious parallels between the matriarchal and gynecentric aesthetics articulated by Lorraine and Gottner-Abendroth, on the one hand, and Kugusu Mtima, described and illustrated by Richards, and the "arts-for-life's-sake" aesthetic articulated Jegede and others, on the other. The theories of both feminist and Africanist scholars propose a notion of 'the aesthetic' that is distinct—in the categorical sense—from the conception that has emerged from Western philosophical traditions. The participatory and collective nature and transformative purposefulness of artistic/aesthetic creation, and its close ties with cosmology, stand out as distinct from individual acts of creation and response associated with the aesthetic domain explicated within Western philosophical literature and enacted in the Western art world. Also, whereas many Western aesthetic theorists have labored to articulate the distinctions between the ethical, the religious and the aesthetic, African theories of the aesthetic appear to based on the intrinsic inseparability of these dimensions of experience. The rituals described by both African and feminist scholars as paradigmatic of their 'aesthetics' stand in sharp contrast to Western notions of the aesthetic by virtue of their utilitarian purposes and the committed—even ecstatic—responses they are designed to evoke.

It could be argued, and is in fact implied in the writing of many Western scholars, that the participatory expressive forms of collectivities, as intense and powerful as they might be, and as transformative as they are, nevertheless fall outside of the aesthetic domain. An individual transfixed in an ecstatic and trance-like state can hardly be engaged
in the non-utilitarian (disinterested, contemplative) oscillation of attention between self and other we came to see, in the previous chapter, as definitive of aesthetic response. Perhaps the feminist and Africanist scholars, while engaged in a laudable attempt to address inequities that have resulted from the domination of Western cultural forms, have nonetheless muddied the conceptual waters, expanding the concept of 'the aesthetic' so broadly that it ceases to have a distinct meaning.

Why not reserve 'the aesthetic' for those moments of oscillating attention, the non-utilitarian/disinterested response--and the forms that evoke it--and find other language to describe the particular power and resonance of collectively constructed expressive forms and the feelings of belonging and passionate commitment they are intended to evoke? The next chapter is devoted to an answer to this question.
CHAPTER 9

THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN AND THE EXPRESSIVE FORMS OF COLLECTIVITIES

In this chapter, I analyze several specific examples of the material and performative expressions of collectivities—and the patterns of apprehension related to them—in order to understand the extent to which the "aesthetic experiences" of collectivities are both similar to, and different from, aesthetic experiences of individuals (as these were explicated in Chapter 7). This analysis will help to address the question posed at the end of the preceding chapter, namely, why not reserve the terms 'the aesthetic' for those moments of oscillating attention and non-utilitarian/disinterested response paradigmatic of the aesthetic domain as that concept has evolved within the traditions of Western philosophy?

As outlined in Chapter 8, aspects of collective forms of expression—for instance their utility, the passionately committed responses they evoke, the absence of distinction between artist and audiences—locate them clearly outside the category of 'the aesthetic' as its meaning has evolved in three hundred years of Western philosophical discourse. In fact, the abandoned, passionate commitment evoked in collective ritual could be seen as the very antithesis of the non-utilitarian detachment (and the resulting oscillation of attention among self, symbol and referent) definitive of the aesthetic experiences of individuals.

For these reasons, the theorists and activists who use the terms 'gynecentric aesthetic' and 'African aesthetic' appear to be taking an oppositional stance. Their use of the term 'aesthetic' appropriates the power and political/economic value associated with the forms and sensibilities of the world's dominant cultures to the forms and sensibilities of groups that have been marginal to Western society and its academic discourses.

The Africanist and feminist scholars cited in Chapter 8 described the sensibilities of particular cultures; their critique of Western philosophical definition of the aesthetic is
implicit. In this chapter, I explicitly demarcate the aesthetic domain in relation to the experiences of collectivities. I will show that, despite initial impressions, the collective expressive forms and the patterns of response they evoke can be shown to bear a strong conceptual resemblance to the related forms and patterns of response demarcated as aesthetic in Western philosophy. In order to embrace the expressive forms of collectivities and the patterns of participation and response they evoke, the clusters of ideas we identified in Chapter 7—the integration of the sensuous and the rational, form and the apprehension of formal qualities, and the oscillation of attention associated with non-utilitarian and disinterested response—will need to be modified or enlarged, but not, I think, inappropriately. The result I believe is a richer conception of the aesthetic domain—a conception that, while still founded in the philosophical discourse through which the concept evolved, also incorporates meanings that have emerged from the fields of Anthropology, Folklore and Performance Studies. The richer conception offers a degree of redress for the culturally-based limitations of philosophical discourse about aesthetics, which has focused on the expressive forms and patterns of response of individuals only.

In the previous chapter, we encountered two different kinds of expressive forms typical of non-literate tribal cultures: (1) material objects such as the Akan paperweights described by Appiah (1997), and (2) rituals that incorporate, among other forms, music, dance, and masks, understood by both Gottner-Abendroth (1986) and Richards (1993) to be the paradigmatic expressive forms of the complementary and tribal cultures they studied. In keeping with Dessanayake's theory that literacy and the related transformations in the human perceptual apparatus account for the shift from collective to individual art-making, this chapter focuses on the material and ritual expressions of non-literate cultures in particular.

I consider the following questions. Do the expressive forms typical of non-literate collectivities (1) integrate the sensuous with the rational; (2) engage people in apprehension of formal qualities; and (3) evoke non-utilitarian and disinterested qualities of response? If
so, how do they do so: in ways that are similar to and/or different from the works that express the sensibilities of individuals? How must the cluster of ideas associated with Western philosophical theories of the aesthetic be expanded to incorporate the expressive and receptive patterns of collectivities?

As discussed in Chapter 7, Western aesthetic theory and the practices of the art world emphasize innovation. Even when works of art clearly represent a genre or a stylistic tradition, the qualities most appreciated are often novelty and originality. By contrast, collective expressive forms such as folk arts, crafts, and rituals, are often assumed to be conservative, perpetuating tradition. The analysis in this chapter challenges this assumption by considering both the conservative and innovative aspects of collective expressive forms.

The logic of this chapter's analysis of collective expression takes somewhat of a different form that the pattern of logical argumentation used in previous chapters. Although there has been a great deal written about the expressive forms of non-literate people, there has been little theorizing about the aesthetic (understood as an experience of collectivities) as a category. As a result, I begin my analysis from particular examples and work towards the abstraction of concepts. This is quite different than the form of the argument in Chapter 7, where I sought patterns among already articulated aesthetic theories.

To understand how collective experiences integrate the sensuous with the rational, and the relationships among their formal qualities and the responses they evoke, requires us to consider not only relationships among the formal elements (textures, colors, designs, shapes, etc.) that comprise an object or event, or even the relationships and transactions among producer, object and beholder. We must consider an array of relationships among a culture's systems of beliefs and values, on the one hand, and the production and functions of the object as well as its formal elements and symbolic resonances, on the other. This is an effort to be undertaken with considerable epistemic humility, remembering, as
Dessanayake warns, that it is virtually impossible for the literate, modern mind to imagine the meaning-making experiences of pre-literate people.

In keeping with this caveat, and in order to attempt to understand the relationships among cultural elements with sufficient depth, I present an analysis of the material expressions of one particular culture—the Yekuana, a non-literate tribal group living in Venezuela. Yekuana culture is the subject of a book-length ethnography by David Guss (1989), entitled To Weave and Sing: Art, Symbol and Narrative in the South American Rain Forest. The expressive forms of the Yekuana, including the visually expressive bichromatic baskets used in all aspects of daily life, are an appropriate focus for this inquiry, in part because Guss' detailed and nuanced ethnographic study gives us a degree of access to the consciousness of the people who produced them. Also, in spite of confrontations with the same European ideologies that have insinuated themselves more extensively into the other pre-literate cultures (including the other Carib-speaking tribes of Venezuela), the Yekuana have been unusually successful in maintaining the integrity and independence of their culture (Guss, 1989, pp. 14-15).

The relatively lengthy analysis of the material expressions of this one culture are then supplemented with a brief discussion of the conservative and innovative potentials of folk arts and crafts, with brief references to the collective expressive forms of several different cultures, both literate and non-literate.

Following the section on folk arts and crafts, I turn to an analysis of rituals, drawing examples from several different cultures and related theories. The chapter ends with a comparison of the aesthetic domain as it has been demarcated within the traditions of Western philosophical analysis and as it emerges from this chapter's analysis of the expressive forms and related experiences of collectivities.
Folk Arts and Crafts

The Painted Baskets of the Yekuana

While working among the Kabyle people of North Africa, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) made the following observation:

In a social formation in which the absence of the symbolic-product-conserving techniques associated with literacy retards the objectification of symbolic and particularly cultural capital, inhabited space—and above all the house—is the principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes; and through the intermediary of the divisions and hierarchies it sets up between things, persons, and practices, this tangible classifying system continuously inculcates and reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying all the arbitrary provisions of this culture (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 89; cited in Guss, 1989, p. 167).

Bourdieu might well have been writing about the Yekuana, who organize themselves in fiercely independent small villages, all members living under one very large roof. The circular form of the “atta,” or house, represents Yekuana cosmology in striking detail.

The conical roof is said to be the Firmament of Heaven and like its namesake is divided into two concentric circles. The upper section...corresponds to Akuena, the Lake of Immortality, which sits at the very center of Heaven, while the more ephemeral outer maahiyadi thatch may be said to represent the six houses of Kahuna, where the various spirit beings and animal masters live... (Guss, 1989, p. 22).

"Among the Yekuana," writes Guss, "every object, animate or inanimate, is said to possess an invisible double or akato that is both independent and eternal" (p. 31). A long post passes through the center of the roof of the atta, representing the center post of the universe, connecting the two worlds—the visible and invisible. The word for the center post, nenudu, is linguistically related to Yekuana words for 'tongue,' 'navel,' and 'eye.' The human eye is understood to be where "the most important of each person's six 'doubles' or akato is located. Identical to the center post of the village, it is the location of the celestial spirit dispatched by Wanadi from Kahuna to animate each individual" (Guss, 1989, p. 22).

On the floor of the house, surrounding the center post, are two concentric circles. The inner circle is reserved for sacred and ritual occasions; the outer circle is comprised of...
the living compartments for each extended family within the community. This pattern of two concentric circles, with the profane and ephemeral enclosing the sacred and eternal, is reproduced not only in the invisible landscape of heaven but also in the Yekuana image of the Earth.

The communal house, then, with its concentric circles, represents two interlocking realities: "an illusionary and material outer one encasing a more powerful and invisible inner one." But the house can be perceived either as comprised of two concentric circles--an inner sacred circle surrounded by an outer mundane ring--or as itself the sacred center of a the dangerous universe beyond. This is typical of Yekuana constructions, whose forms continually unfold upon one another, proposing "a world of constant movement and transformation, wherein no sooner is one's vision focused than it is forced to shift" (Guss, 1989, p. 33). For instance, in the house, the ritually pure center is the domain of the men; but in the garden, which recreates the concentric circular form of the house, the central space is the women's domain. And during certain rituals, women sometimes occupy the central space of the house, and men sometimes occupy the central space in the garden.

The "competing dualities" that are expressed in the structures of the house, the garden and their related rituals are recapitulated in adornments to Yekuana body. Bands of beads tightly applied to ankles and wrists, and knees and biceps, divide human bodies into two concentric rings; in the center resides the divine breath. The solar plexus, the center of the inner ring, serves as the "center post" of each individual, "granting him or her the same access to the invisible world provided to the group through the nunudu of the house" (Guss, 1989, p. 42). And if the torso and limbs recreate the floor plan of the house, the head is conceived of as both roof and firmament; adult Yekuana cut their hair into bowl-shaped circles, referred to by the same word that identifies the perfectly round edges of the roof and the "relentless effort required by women to keep the gardens free of the ever-encroaching jungle." In this way, "each individual in the form of his or her own person recapitulates the symbolic world of the tribe at large" (p.42).
The staple food of the Yekuana people is the yucca root, from which cassava bread and manioc meal are derived. In its raw state, the yucca contains a deadly acid, and Yekuana women, according to Guss, spend ninety percent of their working time involved in some aspect of yucca production (p. 29). The practical challenges of extracting poison from the yucca root, as rigorous as they are, are quite limited, in comparison with the far greater spiritual challenge underlying each encounter between the village and the world that lies beyond. In a universe where every object--animal, mineral, and vegetable--is animated with an independent and potentially destructive life-force, the problem of appropriation becomes less a practical than a spiritual one. The conversion of a poisonous tuber into a life-sustaining food is not only the result of an ingenious technology of graters and presses, but of ritual skills that enable the Yekuana to detoxify these plants of even greater malevolent forces. The challenge of Yekuana subsistence is in...the ability to transform the contaminated and impure into the culturally-infused and human. To do so...requires the mastery of ritual skills, along with a knowledge of the hidden world they are keyed to unlock (Guss, 1989, pp. 30-31).

With this partial introduction to the culture's cosmology and expressive forms, we are prepared, to consider the meanings incorporated into Yekuana "painted baskets."

Yekuana baskets are bold in design, ingenious in their stylized representation, perfect in their symmetry and exact in the smoothness of the outer edge. They are circular, with a central area marked off from an outer ring. Due to limitations of the technology--narrow strips of cane woven at right angles to each other--the division between the inner and the outer areas take the form of a square or rectangle, rather than a circle. Nevertheless, the baskets "share in the spatial symbolism found elsewhere in the culture" (Guss, 1989, p. 121).

Woven into the inner circle are abstract designs that symbolize aspects of Yekuana cosmology. The most frequently used patterns represent snakes and jaguars--animals feared for their poisons, "tamed," so to speak, in their representation on the baskets.

Virtually all aspects of Yekuana life--agriculture, cooking, hunting, eating--require the use of baskets. With the exception of one type, Yekuana baskets are made by men, who, in fact, must prove their skill in basket-making in order to be allowed to marry. Both men and women, however, tell stories and sing songs about the origins of the animals.
symbolized in basket designs. In this way, esoteric lore is passed on, an integral aspect of learning to weave more complex patterns.

The raw materials for the baskets must be gathered from the environment, and transformed--cut, dried, colored, fired, cut more finely--each step accompanied by ritual singing, in some cases involving the local shaman who may use hallucinogens to visit "the other world" to gain permission to cut the cane. The basic dualities--chaos and order, visible and invisible, being and non-being--that inscribe Yekuana cosmology, then, are repeated in the rituals surrounding the production, fabrication and uses of the basket, as well as in the designs represented in the weave of the baskets and the stories told as they are made and used.

In one additional way, important for our inquiry, the baskets of these rain forest peoples reproduce Yekuana cosmology. The images themselves are constructed to engage the eye in a "kinetic play of forms"--in which background and foreground images appear to jump in and out of focus. As Guss (1989) writes,

...depending on the way in which one views the design, one or another of the elements will always dominate. But to keep all of the elements in equal focus at the same time is nearly impossible....image and counter-image endlessly competing for the viewer's attention. The problem of where and how to focus one's eyes is much more than just a game, however. It is a metaphor for the same metaphysical challenge upon which every Yekuana's life depends (p. 121).

Yekuana cosmology is recapitulated, then, not only in the form and design of the baskets themselves, and the rituals surrounding their production and use, but--to use Walter Benjamin's (1978) phrase--in the organization of the human "perceptual apparatus" that is evoked when one engages over time with the created forms. The constantly shifting dualities are not only represented in the material object and re-enacted in its use, but inscribed in the patterns of perception of those who gaze upon and use the baskets throughout the course of their lives.
Analysis of Yekuana Expressive Forms as an Example of Collective Aesthetics

With this brief synopsis of the cultural patterns of one particular non-literate tribe we can now reflect on the extent to which their material expressive forms—their baskets and people's relationships with them—can be understood in terms of the three clusters of ideas used to demarcate the aesthetic domain in Western philosophical traditions. Is the concept of the aesthetic domain that emerges from literate societies sufficient to describe the forms of a preliterate group? (i.e., Do the material expressions of collectivities (1) integrate the sensuous with the rational; (2) elicit attention to formal qualities; and (3) evoke non-utilitarian, disinterested response? If so, how do they do so? If not, how must we expand these clusters of ideas to account for the collective experiences of the Yekuana people?)

In Yekuana culture, it appears that there is no meaningful distinction between the sensuous and the rational. On the one hand, they are integrated in the expressive forms. The rational elements (the cosmology, the narrative, the beliefs) are made available for apprehension through people's engagement with constructed space and time, and with the objects of material culture. On the other hand, the sensuous and the rational are integrated in the bodies and the perceptual apparatus of the Yekuana people themselves. The regions of the body, demarcated for instance by bands worn on the arms and legs, recapitulate the culture's central cosmological metaphors. The symbolic construction of the body is supported by linguistic references, for instance to the pupil and the solar plexus as analogous to the centerpiece of the house in their capacity to link the mundane and visible with the sacred and invisible. Furthermore, through life-long engagement with the material and temporal forms of the culture, the perceptual capacities and proclivities of the Yekuana people are themselves instantiations of the cosmology, as when the shimmering imagery of the baskets trains the eye to perceive shifting dualities.

Through the lens of anthropological analysis, we can say that the rational elements of the culture—its narrative, its beliefs and values, its cosmology—are inscribed on and in the bodies of the Yekuana people; they are ongoingly enacted and recreated through daily
routines as well as through rituals that mark seasonal and life cycle transitions; they are made accessible to people ubiquitously and through all of their senses. But if we attempt to imagine their world as it is experienced by the Yekuana themselves, we understand that 'meaning' and 'doing' are simultaneous, co-extensive, and inextricably interwoven. Apprehending the meaning is no different than engaging bodily and sensually with the material and temporal forms.

Because the expressive forms of Yekuana culture are so pervasive and because they are experienced through the bodies senses so thoroughly, the nature of the "apprehension" of the forms is somewhat different than that described in the individualist aesthetics theorized by Western philosophy. There, we recall, a demarcating feature of the aesthetic domain is attention to formal qualities, i.e., to relationships among elements of a whole or between elements and the whole. In the case of highly integrated cultures like the Yekuana, where all or most of the expressive forms can be understood as symbolic references to each other and to the whole cosmology, formal qualities are apprehended through embodied participation, not through detached appreciation. Virtually all dimensions of life--gestures, movements, words, songs, preparation and consumption of foods, shelter, clothing--stand in formal relationship to each other, as the ordering principles that define the whole are manifested also in each of its parts. Cosmology is recreated through the processes of creating and dwelling within the forms.

Yekuana baskets take on formal qualities, then, not only because of the relationships among the elements--the colors, textures, designs, shapes, etc.--of which they are composed. The baskets, and the processes involved in producing them, are elements of a larger whole, in this case, the patterns of beliefs and values that comprise Yekuana culture. Symbolically, the baskets are metonyms for the culture as a whole.

In Western aesthetic theory, one of the defining elements is the non-utilitarian appreciation of an expressive form, i.e., the ability to apprehend something for its own sake, for how it appears to the senses rather than for its value as a commodity or for its
functional use. In the space created by this non-utilitarian response, there can arise perceptual patterns that have been valued for the pleasure they entail and for the kinds of awareness they make possible. The oscillation of attention among self, symbol and referent, for instance, allows for layers of meaning-making, in which there can arise new understandings of both self and other.

A great deal of theorizing about "primitive art" draws attention to matters of function rather than form (Guss, 1989, p.90). Consideration of Yekuana basketry, however, points to the inadequacy of either a formalist or functionalist approach. The basketry is not made by one individual to evoke any kind of response (whether of detached contemplation or engaged reaction) on the part of others. The baskets are expressions of a collective sensibility. Every aspect of their production and their form resonate with the cultural symbol system. The baskets reflect the culture that produces them, and, at the same time, reproduce the culture by structuring the activities and perceptions of those who make and use them.

In cases of collective expressive forms, at least in stable and highly integrated cultures like the Yekuana, there is no real distinction between those who create and those who behold. The purpose is not so much to engender desired qualities of response, but to structure opportunities for participation--for the expression and recreation of the cultural system as a whole. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) theorizes about the nature of principles and values internalized, as in Yekuana culture, by the body. "The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness," he writes,

and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and therefore, more precious, than the values given body, made body by the transubstantiation achieved by the implicit persuasion of a hidden pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy through injunctions as insignificant as "stand up straight" or "don't hold you knife in your left hand" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 94; cited in Guss, 1989, p. 40).
Expressive Forms of Collectivities and the Mediation of Tensions between Innovation and Tradition

As noted above, the material expressive forms of collectivities, whose meanings after all are inscribed onto the bodies and perceptual capacities of those who make and use them, are often assumed to represent a conservative sensibility (Glassie, 1972, p.258), especially in contrast with the high value placed on innovation by the institutions of the Western art world. The emphasis on tradition is described, for instance, by folklorist Simon Bronner (1986), who writes that "the forms of folk objects are slow to change" (p.200). And through such objects

beliefs can be communicated. Haunted houses, are, in a sense, the objective correlatives of the fear and wonder of the supernatural. For Pennsylvania Germans, the New Year's day meal of pork and sauerkraut engenders good luck for the coming year. Among Jews, some mothers decorate a prayer shawl for their son's Bar Mitzvah. The shawl remains a visible and tangible reminder of the youth's status in the adult ritual community (Bronner, 1986, p.207).

In recent years, however, folklorists have begun to recognize how folk art forms not only conserve traditional forms and values, but also structure responses to and even themselves engender innovations. For instance, the folklorist Barbara Babcock (1993) writes that when the Pueblo Indian potter Helen Cordero fashioned the first ceramic "storyteller," the shape itself was an invention, but she drew on traditional techniques for working with clay, and made visible perhaps the most important mode of Pueblo cultural continuity: the intergenerational transmission of the oral tradition. However, by depicting what was traditionally a male activity (the telling of sacred stories) in a medium that was traditionally a female domain (pottery-making) Cordero's innovation served to consolidate an economic and cultural power base for women. It has also played a role in her community's transition from a subsistence to a cash economy.

Interestingly, many of the women who created their own versions of Cordero's sculpture fashioned storytellers of either female or ambiguous gender. "At home, no women are storytellers," said Helen Cordero. "But," wrote the folklorist Barbara A
Babcock (1993), "women are potters and with the transformative power of their hands, they have contrived to tell stories about storytelling, to subvert masculine discursive control, and profoundly to disturb the distribution of power. The struggle between the powerless and the powerful has been displaced quite literally onto the surface of things" (p. 90).

Under certain conditions, then, innovations on folk traditions can challenge social and political values as well as aesthetic conventions. In contexts of colonial relations, for instance, traditional forms can serve a counter-hegemonic function, and also serve as a vehicle for covert instructions and subversive commentary. During the 1920's, for instance, when the British first installed a military presence in Palestine, women expressed their protest through adaptations of traditional embroidery patterns, stitching inverted trees to depict the ecological disruptions they feared would ensue. During the period of slavery, African-Americans encoded instructions for escape routes to the north in folksongs like "Follow the Drinking Gourd." In another example, the Barbadian-American author Paule Marshall (1983) describes how her mother's friends, the "poets of the kitchen" who worked as domestics in white women's kitchen, healed themselves from the indignities of their days and reaffirmed their own cultural values by recounting their experiences with the ironic humor and rhythmic cadence of Barbadian dialect. "Soully-gal, talk yuh talk!" they were always exhorting each other. 'In this man world you got to take yuh mouth and make a gun!' They were in control, if only verbally and if only for the two hours or so that they remained in our house" (Marshall, 1983, p. 7).

To summarize this section, we considered a form of folk art of one particular non-literate tribal culture and analyzed the cultural patterns surrounding it according to three clusters of ideas that emerged from Western philosophical theories of the aesthetic. We found that Yekuana expressive forms do integrate the sensuous with the rational, and they do engage people in the apprehension of forms—but in ways differently that those described in individualist aesthetic theories. They do not evoke responses of disinterestedness and
non-utilitarianism. Rather, they express collective sensibilities, and they structure opportunities for participation. Finally, we reviewed recent literature from the field of Folklore, finding evidence that collective forms and processes, like those of individuals, do mediate tensions between innovation and tradition.

The final examples of innovative folk arts cited above shift away from material objects to expressions in performative modes. These brief examples will serve as a transition to the next section of this chapter, which focuses on ritual--collective expressions that involve multiple modalities, generally including music and dance. Rituals are ubiquitous throughout all the world's cultures, but seen by the Africanist and feminist scholars whose theories we reviewed in the preceding chapter as the paradigmatic expressive form of preliterate peoples. Theoretical and ethnographic literature on ritual offers a deeper understanding of the aesthetic domain as it refer to the experiences of collectivities.

Ritual

In this section, I analyze rituals--multimodal collective performative expressions--in terms of the integration of the sensuous and the rational, the relationships of engagement with forms and the evocation of desired states of participation and response, and the mediation of tensions between innovation and tradition. First, I present recent theoretical and neuropsychological research on ritual as explicated by the Performance Theorist Richard Schechner (1977, 1993). Then, using examples drawn from various preliterate cultures--visiting rituals of the Ilongot of the Philippines, exorcism rituals of the Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka, the carnival of Trinidad, and storytelling rituals of the Bedouin of the Sinai--I analyze rituals as aesthetic forms. (In other words, I consider rituals in terms of the now-familiar three clusters of ideas that emerged from Western philosophical discourse to assess both how they can be explained in terms of the now-familiar three clusters of ideas and also how the three notions must be expanded to include the experiences of rituals.) The section concludes with a discussion of Victor Turner's (1986) notion of the
potential for "plural reflexivity" (p.25) associated with the liminal states of rituals and other social performances—a possibility I compare with the kind of conceptual generativity we came to associate with individual aesthetic experience in Chapter 7.

The Integration of the Sensuous and the Rational Neuropsychologically and in the Forms of Ritual

In studying the ritualized behavior of animals, ethologists discovered that it consists of elements of ordinary behavior, "made into rhythms or pulses (often faster or slower than usual) or frozen into poses" (Schechner, 1993, p. 296). Human rituals are similarly comprised of elements (such as gestures, lights, colour, movement, voice, etc.) organized in patterns of "repetition, rhythmicity, exaggeration, condensation, simplification and spectacle" (Schechner, 1993, p. 301). What distinguishes human ritual from its animal counterpart is that the formal configurations and actions are "wrapped in a web of symbolism. Through ritual, beliefs about the universe come to be acquired, reinforced and eventually changed..." (Kertzer, 1988, p. 10).

This is one basic way, then, that rituals integrate the sensuous and the rational: the elements of rituals that engage our senses—the colors, lights, rhythms, smells, movements, etc.—are imbued with symbolic meaning, including, for instance, beliefs about cosmology and values about social relationships. Dessanayake (1988) refers to this integration of the sensuous and the rational when she asserts that in preliterate cultures, collective wisdom is passed down through oral performances and participatory rituals (p.177).

Rituals of the kind described in the previous chapter by Gottner-Abendroth (1986) and Richards (1993) are characterized by the highly coordinated organization of elements both formal and symbolic. Because of their intensity, theorists suggest they can provide unique kinds of aesthetic experiences, in which sensory stimuli perceived in one mode generate or stimulate sensations in another, such as when we hear sounds that cause us to visualize colors. Schechner uses the word 'synaesthesia' to refer to this kind of cross-
modal sensory stimulation. Rituals can lead to synaesthetic experiences, he argues, because they:

integrate music, dance and theater. The display of masks and costumes; the processions, circumambulations, singing, dancing, storytelling, food-sharing, fire-burning, incensing, drumming and bell-ringing; the body-heat, press, and active participation of the crowd create an overwhelming synaesthetic environment and experience for the audience, tribe or congregation (Schechner, 1993, p. 302).

Gottner-Abendroth (1986), we recall, writes that within rituals "emotion, intellect and action combine to achieve an ecstatic state." Recent neuropsychological research supports her view, providing evidence that because rituals are so powerfully resonant in both sensory and cognitive domains, we derive pleasure from them that results from rhythmic synchrony of right and left hemispheres of the brain (Schechner, 1993, p. 302). The pleasure of ritual, the feelings of ecstasy, well-being and relief, result in part from the "driving techniques employed in rituals that are designed to sensitize or 'tune' the nervous system and thereby lessen inhibition of the right hemisphere and permit temporary right-hemisphere dominance" (Lex, 1979, pp. 144-145; cited in Schechner, 1993, p. 309). The simultaneous stimulation of both left and right hemispheres results in states of "trance and other supremely affective states of flow (Lex, 1979, p. 120, cited in Schechner, 1993, p. 309).

It is beyond the scope of this inquiry to examine in detail the neuropsychological research associated with ritual. We will continue a bit further in this direction, however, because the theory surrounding ritual articulates a kind of integration of the sensuous and rational, aesthetic in nature, but distinct from the kinds of sensory-rational integration that emerged from our analysis of Western philosophical conceptions of 'the aesthetic domain.'

The rhythms, colors, movements and patterned array of people and objects that comprise rituals resonate within a framework that is cognitive, including sets of values and/or narratives. It is in these ways that "rituals embody cognitive systems of values that instruct and mobilize participants. These embodied values are rhythmic and cognitive, spatial and conceptual, sensuous and ideological" (Schechner, 1993, p. 302).
The narrative-cognitive stimulus works from the cerebral cortex down, while the movement-sonic stimulus works from the lower brain up. ...The performance of ritual is both narrative (cognitive) and affective; these working together comprise the experience of ritualizing. ...The affective states aroused by ritual are necessarily nested within a narrative frame. But from within—as a person performing a ritual—the narrative frame dissolves as the ritual action continues (Schechner, 1993, p. 309).

Rituals can offer a richly textured integration of the sensuous with the rational, in which whole sets of values are embodied in a coordinated array of forms that engage the senses. The rational element—the cultural narrative, the sets of beliefs and values—are manifested not through spoken ideas of discourse and argumentation, but bodily, through dances and songs, foods and incense, the felt heat of the fire or wetness of the water. In some cases, the narrative (rational) and sensory dimensions may resonate within the mental apparatus of individual participants causing an intense and pleasurable harmony of cerebral stimulation. However, the integration of the sensuous and rational does not necessarily take place within the consciousness of each individual participant, for whom "the narrative frame may," as Schechner noted above, "dissolve as the ritual action continues" (p. 309). As we discovered in relation to the Yekuana baskets, the integration of the sensuous and the rational takes place within the expressive forms themselves.

The Embodiment and Perpetuation of Cultural Values

Gottner-Abendroth's and Lomax's descriptions of dance and music forms that embody the values of their cultures, cited in the previous chapter, are excellent examples of values being expressed in and through the forms themselves. In complementary societies, where a high value is placed on inclusivity, vocal music generally gives equal weight to all parts. Song forms rarely highlight solo performers or emphasize only one voice. Similarly, in cultures that are relatively sexually permissive and where female erotic expression is valued, dance forms are more flowing and curved and involve more movements of the hips and pelvis.

The ethnographer Renato Rosaldo (1993) offers another example of the integration of the sensuous and the rational within ritual forms themselves. He describes how the
Ilongot people of the Philippines organize the pacing of their rituals so as to engender and support a particular "culturally valued quality of human relationships" (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 256). Visiting among near and distant friends and relatives is a frequent occurrence among the Ilongot. The visits are unscheduled and open-ended, and generally begin with a period of silence, followed by a meal served by the host to the guest, followed by an inquiry into the well-being of the guest's family, although the exact routine varies according to the closeness of visitor and host and other contingencies. Rosaldo (1993) proposes that the open-endedness of visiting

...comprises a concrete exemplar of forms of social life marked by mutually adjusted action and an openness to uncertain futures. Visits are improvised, made up as people go along; and social grace, a culturally valued quality of human intelligence, consists of one's responsiveness to whims, desires, and contingencies, whether these emanate from one's own heart or from those of one's partners in action (p. 257).

Rosaldo suggests that among the Ilongot, where, as in many other non-industrial, tribal and peasant contexts, "clock-time is not the paramount reality," it is an "aesthetic sensibility" that "shapes the tempo of everyday life." In other words, the rational dimension--the cultural value placed on improvisation--is integrated into the indeterminacy structured into the ritual form of visiting, available then to be sensuously apprehended by the Ilongot people. In fact, their very sensibilities about time and improvisation are both reflected and perpetuated through their participation in such visits.

So far, we have considered several examples that describe how expressive forms integrate the sensuous and the rational by simultaneously reflecting, embodying, and perpetuating beliefs and values. The "rational" elements --i.e., the values, beliefs, narratives, etc.--are incorporated into the bodies and the beings of those who participate. The capacity of ritual performance to construct (in addition to reflect, embody and perpetuate) is the focus of the next example.
Ritual Construction of Social Reality and the Reintegration of Individuals into a Shared Moral Community

The construction of social reality through ritual is the centerpiece of an analysis of Sinhalese (Sri Lankan) exorcism rituals by the anthropologist Bruce Kapferer (1986). This example is important for our inquiry because it demonstrates that through active embodied involvement in ritual forms, people can develop a quality of experiential understanding of those from whom they have become alienated. In this case, admittedly, those who are alienated were once members of the same community, so they have a common set of values and symbols to support their reconciliation. The alienation is expressed and understood as illness, not enmity. Nevertheless, in terms of the larger question of this dissertation—the usefulness of the aesthetic domain in the educational work of reconciliation—it is important to note the role of ritual in the epistemic and ethical interdependence of members of this community: the patient is reintegrated into the community of shared values as others participate in shared ritual forms, and thus paradoxically are able to understand, in an experiential way, his isolation.

During the first phase of Sinhalese ritual, spectators gather at the ritual site, but are aloof from the activities of the exorcist and the patient, as they renew acquaintances, play cards, and eat a meal. During this phase, the "patient's behavior is rendered potentially quite strange....members of the ritual gathering do not share in the immediacy of the patient's experience" (Kapferer, 1986, p. 197). During the midnight watch, however, the exorcist uses elaborate presentations of music and dance to direct the attention of the audience towards the patient. "Everyday contexts, hitherto part of the performance setting, can be suspended, and members of the ritual gathering recontextualized within fundamentally the same context as the patient" (Kapferer, 1986, p. 197). It is through their individuation and relocation, both patient and members of the audience paradoxically join in a shared experience of isolation.
The structural hierarchy of the Sinhalese cosmology [the rational element] is continually present in an exorcism. It is through the power of the Buddha and the [subordinated] deities that the demons are summoned to the rite, that their hold over the patient is progressively broken, and that their polluting and illness-causing essence is withdrawn from the patient's body.

The reality of experience constructed in music and dance reaches the senses directly through these media as aesthetic forms... [M]embers of the gathering are uniformly individuated and restricted from adopting standpoints outside the immediate experiential realm constituted in music and dance...[which] mold all subjective experience to their form.

...It is in the individuation of members of the ritual gathering in relation to the central ritual events and through the media of music and dance that the experiential state of the patient, alone and terrified in the world, is most nearly approached (Kapferer, 1986, pp. 198-199).

The transformative power of ritual, in Kapferer's view, results from how various expressive forms structure active, committed, embodied participation. The "directionality of the performance and the media of the performance...constitute the meaning of the ritual, ...enable communication of its meaning, and create the possibility for mutual involvement of participants in the one experience...." (Kapferer, 1986, p. 193). Kapferer acknowledges that the ritual may awaken different images and feelings in each of the spectators. Citing Defrenne (1973), however, he asserts that the spectator's different perspectives "converge at the same point, like intentions which aim at the same object. All these views only display or exfoliate its possibilities..." (Dufrenne, 1973, pp. 59-60, quoted in Kapferer, 1986, p. 193).

The transformative dimension of the ritual, begun as the forms of the music and dance structure a shared experience for the "patient" and other members of the gathering, is augmented through possibilities inherent in yet another form, comedic drama.

Comedy and the discovery of the comic finds its specific movement and process in the juxtaposition of opposites, in the linking of categories of experience and knowledge which in the everyday cultural world are understood to be located in different domains, and in the realization of contradiction.... The comic process itself reveals [these] inconsistencies, but the recognition by an audience of the full potential of the comic is dependent on their being conscious and committed to their everyday world as it is culturally and socially typified. Patients are enjoined by the exorcists and by other participants to laugh, and their laughter in the company of others is taken to be a sign that they have reentered the world as experienced by the normal and the healthy.
...The comedy of exorcism....frees individuals from the solitude of subjective experience, links them to others through the mediation of shared constructs and typifications, and demands that they take a variety of standpoints on the world as experienced and as it achieves its diverse meanings... (Kapferer, 1986, p. 201).

This description of an exorcism ritual reveals the social re-integration that is made possible through embodied and committed participation in structured ritual forms. Through the media of music, dance and comedic drama, the exorcist structures the context to evoke desired qualities of response and participation. The healing itself is accomplished when, through their engagement with music and dance, participants come to share an experience with the otherwise isolated, frightened and alienated patient. Then, through participation in the comedic drama, the patient is invited or cajoled to return to the shared beliefs and values of the community.

The reintegration of the patient into the community is reminiscent of the reintegration that takes place within a moral community, when, through rituals of apology and forgiveness, the repentant person and the violated person reaffirm their shared understanding of the moral order. By agreeing on their shared assessment of the violating behavior, they are able to achieve a reconciliation of their relationship through a reaffirmation of the ethical principles they share. Shared laughter at contradictions and inappropriate juxtapositions affirm shared membership in an ethical/religious/social fellowship.

The Native American feminist and writer Paula Gunn Allen (1986) eloquently summarizes the capacity of ritual to harmonize the relationship between individual and community by constructing social reality and shared cosmology. In relation to the rituals of Native American communities, she writes that

tribes seek--through song, ceremony, legend, sacred stories (myths) and tales--to embody, articulate and share [the mythic reality that gives life its meaning], to bring the isolated, private self into harmony and balance with this reality, to verbalize the sense of the majesty and reverent mystery of all things, and to actualize, in language, those truths that give to humanity its greatest significance and dignity (Allen, 1986, p. 55).
Liminality, Innovation and the Sublimation of Violence

So far, we have considered examples where rituals integrate the sensuous with the rational as they reflect, embody, perpetuate and reaffirm shared beliefs and values, and construct social realities. In the next examples, ritual forms, like the instances of material culture noted in the previous section, also provide the context for innovation and cultural transformation.

Although many people associate the repetitive nature of rituals with conservatism and reification of the status quo, Victor Turner (1974, 1977, 1986), perhaps the foremost anthropologist of ritual, argues for the opposing view. While in many circumstances, rituals do provide stability and reinforce existing social relations, because of their formal qualities rituals also create contexts for freedom and innovation: structured within a framework of traditional symbols, participants enter moments when they are released from the normative demands of cultural scripts, where they enjoy the freedom associated with play. As Clifford Geertz (1980) puts it, ritual allows the "dreamed of" and the "lived in" orders to fuse (cited in Meyerhoff, 1986, p.273). During rituals, writes Turner (1974), participants are

betwixt and between successive lodgments in juridical political systems. In this gap between ordered worlds almost anything may happen. In this interim of "liminality," the possibility exists of standing aside not only from one's own social position but from all social positions and of formulating a potentially unlimited series of alternative social arrangements... (p. 13).

The freedom to experiment with "alternative social arrangements" is supported by both the boundedness and the liminality associated with ritual forms.

The history of the carnival on the island of Trinidad offers an example of these dynamics. It is a history inscribed by the cultural, class and ethnic rivalries that evolved from the enslavement of Africans and the indentured servitude of East Indians. During the period of slavery, Blacks and mulattos were denied access to the fine "fetes" of their culturally European masters--who expressed their own ambivalences by donning costumes of "negro" workers and mulatto "seductresses" (Stewart, 1986, p. 299). At the end of
slavery, and into the early twentieth century, the carnival developed on two planes: "as a rowdy, superstitious always potentially violent carnival of the masses and as a carnival of glitter and stiff-backed decorum among the upper classes" (Stewart, 1986, p. 302).

Carnival provided an opportunity for the cultural middle class, excluded from full political and cultural enfranchisement by the white elite, to see their conflicting allegiances. Few achieved an invitation to the upper class ball, but many were among the most vocal critics of the fighting, bloodletting and public eroticism that characterized the street festivals of the African and East Indian communities (Stewart, 1986, p. 303). Prior to World War II, the ritual was sufficiently spontaneous, however, to afford the kind of liminal experience theorized by Turner (1974). At the last "jump up" or street dance, "fraternizing between the classes approached its most daring. Under the cover of darkness and lost in the throng, people struck up acquaintances they seldom would have in other circumstances" (Stewart, 1986, p. 304).

After the war, apparently influenced by the American military presence on the island and concomitant media celebration of violence, men who had engaged in ritualized combat at the time of the carnival exchanged their relatively innocuous sticks for far more dangerous weapons: knives, cutlasses, rocks and razors. Since independence, the Creole-dominated government has worked to curb the violence, by transforming the carnival into a series of government-supported competitions, geared less to the desires and sensibilities of the "locals" than to the needs of Trinidadians returning from abroad and tourists. In its current form, hundreds of prizes are awarded—to bands, for costumes, and for skills in design. In exchange for participating, competitors are required to obey and comply with instructions of the Stage Managers, and to forego presentations judged to be lewd, vulgar or obscene.

The carnival is the centerpiece of a growing and successful tourism industry. Many local Trinidadians, however, have become alienated from the routinized events. Partly in reaction to excessive control, for instance, the steel bands that used to be the centerpiece of
the post-pageant street dance, or "jump-up" have become alienated from the festival, which now has lost the capacity that it enjoyed as a more liminal event to engender relationships across the divisions of race and class.

The anthropologist John Stewart (1986) writes that:

[c]hanges in the carnival...may be recognized as occurring between the two poles of social ideal and social reality, with a tendency to reject insistence on either extreme. Where the underlying tensions that are a fundamental part of everyday social relations appear too boldly, are too fully expressed, the carnival declines from ritual to mere disorder. By contrast, where there is overemphasis on the ideal of harmonious integration, such as is the case with the current festival, one result is the loss of ritual vitality. In their interpretation of the festival, Trinidadians resist either being too fully subjects of their carnival or being too heavily subjected to it. The desire is for a voluntary experience of the tensions between ideal and real, balance and excess, permissiveness and control, and various other oppositions (p. 313).

According to Stewart, then, the generative, liminal space of ritual is itself a space "between": between the chaos and violence of complete disorder, and the rigidity and superficial harmony of imposed order. Rituals, then, may also mediate against violence by creating liminal context in which inequities can be redressed and new social relations explored.

Ritual Performance and Cultural Survival

The formal qualities of rituals not only support reflection and innovation arising from within a particular community, rituals can help groups understand, respond to and in some cases even resist intrusions from their environment. As Smadar Lavie (1990) reports in her study of the Bedouin of the Sinai, the intrusions of both Israeli and Egyptian armies and tourists made traditional cultural imperatives towards hospitality virtually impossible to enact. In choosing to articulate this and other related dilemmas in the context of traditional storytelling rituals, however, the Bedouin were able to reaffirm their identity and recreate the patterns of social interaction that were at the core of their communal life. In the context of historical change too rapid to be understood and accommodated, the shaping of stories about new and threatening circumstances in the forms of long-standing narrative traditions provided a context for mediating between the new and the old (Lavie, 1990, p. 30).
The form in which the Bedouin chose to articulate the threats to their traditions paradoxically preserved the very practices and values whose demise they feared (Lavie, 1990, p. 31). The Bedouin narrative culture described by Lavie (1990) continued its dynamic development through sustaining the forms of storytelling performance. We can imagine attempts to preserve threatened cultures by recording "authentic" renditions of stories on audio tape, or by transcribing narratives verbatim in printed text, or by exhibiting prototypical samples of traditional embroidery in a museum. Something of the values of the culture will be preserved through such attempts at documentation, but in the absence of the interactions facilitated by the performance of traditional ritual forms, it is unlikely that the culture will survive. The strongest survival value of a collective expression can be discovered in performances, i.e., in the moments of its shaping, in the acts that give meaningful form to values, not in reified instantiations of the form itself.

Plural Reflexivity

Because of the freedoms associated with liminality and boundedness, rituals can offer opportunities for collective innovation in response to new (and possibly threatening) circumstances. Rituals, then, can function both in service of conservation and transformation; it appears that they often serve to mediate tensions between the two, as reflected in the circumstances of the Bedouin reenactment of traditional storytelling rituals.

Like the aesthetic objects described in Chapter 7, rituals also "work" by virtue of their formal qualities. The nature of people's engagement with the forms, however, is quite different: it is much more multi-sensory, a more bodily participation than a detached apprehension. Nevertheless, in both cases, formal qualities are registered. In the case of rituals, the intensity of engagement--via multiple modalities, sometimes over extended periods of time, often involving temporary or permanent alterations of the body--can result in the creation or substantiation of social constructs and related transformations in individual and collective consciousness.
Theories of the aesthetic that address both individuals and collectivities refer to the evocation of desired qualities of response. For the individuals involved in rituals, the valued quality of response is one of committed participation. Successful rituals help their participants feel affirmed in their membership within the group; they generate feelings of belonging and well-being, recreating through their forms the very world views they affirm and celebrate. In other words, for the individual participants, the qualities of response could hardly be more different than the detachment and disinterestedness so prized in Western philosophical theories of the aesthetic.

But for the collectivity, we see that rituals serve a function analogous to the reflection that takes place when individual attention oscillates among self, symbol and referent. The liminal and bounded qualities of rituals provide a context in which groups can manifest the various points of view of their members, reflect on their circumstances, and experiment with various innovative configurations and social arrangements. As Victor Turner (1986) put it, writing about the somewhat broader category of "cultural performances,"

[they] are not simple reflectors or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agencies of change, representing the eye by which culture sees itself and the drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting "designs for living" (p. 24).

...[T]he plural reflexivity involved allows freeplay to a greater variability of action: actors can be so subdivided as to allocate to some the roles of agents of transformation and to others those of persons undergoing transformation (p. 25).

...Performative reflexivity is a condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public "selves."

Performative reflexivity, too, is not mere reflex, a quick automatic or habitual response to some stimulus. It is highly contrived, artificial, of culture not nature, a deliberate and voluntary work of art (p. 24).
Thus we see that rituals create opportunities at the level of the collectivity for a kind of reflexivity that parallels what individuals can experience when creating or reading a poem.

Demarcating 'The Aesthetic' as a Quality of Collective Experience

In this chapter I have analyzed how the material and performative expressive forms of collectivities integrate the sensuous and the rational and create formal structures for participation. Building on Dessanayake's insight that the development of widespread literacy represents a watershed in the ways in which human beings create meaning and in which cultures pass on accumulated knowledge and wisdom, I have focused on the folk arts and rituals of pre-literate cultures. In this concluding section, I summarize both the ways in which the aesthetic experience of pre-literate collectivities can be understood in relation to the three clusters of ideas that demarcate the aesthetic domain in Western philosophical literature, and also the ways in which analysis of 'the aesthetic' as collective experience points up limitations in the Western philosophical view.

The Integration of the Sensuous with the Rational

In the expressive forms of pre-literate collectivities, the sensuous and the rational are integrated in several different ways. As we saw in the Yekuana culture, the rational elements—i.e., the beliefs, values, cosmology, cultural narrative, etc.—are enacted in daily routines and in specially marked rituals. They are made available for apprehension through all of the senses, through stories, songs, images, food ways, body decor, architecture, etc. The sensuous and the rational are integrated within the expressive forms, and inscribed in and on the bodies of the people: both in how they decorate and adorn themselves and also in how certain perceptual capacities are promoted through, for instance, the shimmering bichromatic designs woven into the Yekuana's ubiquitous baskets.

In relation to ritual, we considered this integration from another point of view. Sensuous elements—the music, dance, rhythms, colors, smells, etc.—are understood to be
imbued with symbolic meanings. In other words, they "resonate within a framework that is cognitive."

Also, neuropsychological theory proposes that pleasurable rhythmic synchronies between the left and right hemispheres of the brain are set in motion by rituals because of their intense sensory stimulation tied to narrative meanings. The integration of the sensuous and the rational, then, must be occurring on a neuropsychological level as well. In any case, in ritual settings, values and beliefs are embodied in, enacted through, and perpetuated by expressive forms that engage the senses. Rituals simultaneously reflect, embody, perpetuate, construct, and make available for reflection the group's beliefs, values and cosmology.

In non-literate cultures, the sensuous and the rational simply are integrated: mutually referential, symbolic cultural forms make beliefs, values, cultural narratives and cosmologies available to the senses. There is no distinction between "meaning" and "doing."

In literate societies, aesthetic forms and processes seek a re-integration of the sensuous with the rational—an integration that is the prevailing circumstance of pre-literate cultures. As Dessanayake argues, literacy promotes detached, isolated experiences of meaning-making; alphabetic literacy, in particular, appears to give the reader direct access to the subject with little attention to the symbols and to processes of interpretation. Through reading and writing, individual persons can analyze information, for instance by noticing analogies and discrepancies, constructing arguments, creating hierarchically organized categories, and undertaking conceptual analysis. Meaning-making is often a cerebral, individual endeavor.

In literate societies, then, the aesthetic is the domain in which the sensuous and the rational are re-integrated—through the use of pre-conceptual schemata that preserve aspects of sensory perception and emotional response in the development of organizing patterns;
through cognitive attention to one's sensory impressions; and through meta-cognitive awareness of one's own processes of sensing and interpreting.

In non-literate tribal societies, such as the Yekuana of South America, the Bedouin of the Sinai, the Ilongot of the Philippines and the African cultures described by Gottner-Abendroth (1986), Lomax (1968) and Richards (1993), communal life is informed by a single cosmology, a consistent set of narratives and related symbolic forms. When referring to the "aesthetics" of such a group, then, we refer to the embodied, enacted beliefs and values that are reflected in and perpetuated through temporal and spatial forms. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) argues that to understand such a culture, is not, as idealism supposes, to seek in the conscious mind the universal structures of a "mythopoetic subjectivity" and the unity of a spiritual principle governing all empirically realized configurations regardless of social conditions. It is, on the contrary, to reconstruct the principle generating and unifying all practices, the system of inseparably cognitive and evaluative structures which organizes the vision of the world in accordance with the objective structures of a determinate state of the social world: this principle is nothing other than the socially informed body, with its tastes and distastes, its compulsions and repulsions, with, in a word, all its senses, that is to say, not only the traditional five senses--which never escape the structuring action of social determinisms--but also the sense of necessity and the sense of duty, the sense of direction and the sense of reality, the sense of balance and the sense of beauty, common sense and the sense of the sacred, tactical sense and the sense of responsibility, business sense and the sense of propriety, the sense of humour and the sense of absurdity, moral sense and the sense of practicality, and so on (p. 124).

Collective expressive forms, then, reflect, embody, and engender sensibilities--preferences that can be understood to be comprised of both sensuous (embodied) dimensions as well as cognitive or rational dimensions. As we have seen in the examples explicated earlier in this chapter, these sensibilities are reflected and perpetuated when culturally valued capacities and proclivities are promoted through participation in the creation, beholding and enactment of cultural forms. These forms, and the sensibilities they reflect and engender, can be said to comprise a culture's "aesthetic."

Form and the Apprehension of, and Engagement with, Formal Qualities

In Western philosophical theory, the 'aesthetic domain' is also demarcated--in addition to the integration of the sensuous and the rational--in by perceivers' attention to
formal qualities. 'Formal qualities' refers to relationships among elements in a whole, and between each element and the whole. In contrast with the non-utilitarian, detached apprehension of formal qualities that is evoked in individuals when they behold works of art, or that they bring to perceptions of, for instance, a natural scene, it is through engaged embodied participation that collective expressive forms convey the groups' sensibilities to its members. In other words, the "work" of both individual and collective aesthetic expressions is accomplished by virtue of their formal qualities. They both convey meaning and engender sensibilities by engaging people in their forms.

The key difference in the apprehension of individual and collective expressive forms can be found in the faculties that each engages and the extent to which the process is conscious. In individual aesthetic experience, expressive forms tend to be perceived through the more distant sensory faculties of sight and hearing. Perceivers tend to consciously suspend or modify attention to the content in order to appreciate and find pleasure in the formal relations. The sensibilities inherent in the form, and the qualities of attention and response their engender, then affect perceivers' understandings of and responses to the content.

In the case of collective expressive forms, very often the creators and the perceivers are the same persons; people experience the forms through active engagement in singing, dancing, moving, tasting, feeling, and smelling as well as hearing and seeing. The forms are thus enacted, inscribing themselves more directly on the bodies of the participants, who may or may not be conscious of the effects of their engagement with the expressive forms.

Both individual and collective expressions acquire their formal structure in part through the sense of boundedness. The finiteness of expressive forms--the fact that the ritual has a beginning and end, and that the canvas has borders--can support experimentation and innovation.

It appears, then, that both individual and collective expressive forms mediate tensions between innovation and conservation. Western aesthetic theory emphasizes
innovation, but the innovation nevertheless takes place within the constraints of a genre. Folk arts and rituals often play a conservative role, but, as we saw in the case of the Bedouin storytelling, the Pueblo ceramic sculpture and the Trinidadian carnival, they also can reflect and generate new relations and social experiments.

Individual and Collective Reflexivity

The third cluster of ideas that demarcates the aesthetic domain in Western philosophical conceptions of the aesthetic refers to the non-utilitarian response, and the resulting shimmering of the perceiver's heightened attention among self, symbol and referent. Some philosophers refer to an aesthetic attitude as one of disinterestedness—appreciating something for its own sake, for its beauty, not for its functional or commercial value.

We might say that collective aesthetic forms evoke desired qualities of response: they evoke passionate, committed engagement, and a sense of familiarity and well-being. It is a bit awkward, though, to speak of "evoking desired qualities of response" when the creators, performers and beholders of the form are in fact the same people. In relation to such forms, it is in the doing itself that is meaning is enacted; meaning is not constructed in some reflective response after the event itself.

However, in collective forms such as the Palestinian embroidery patterns that were improvised as women reacted to the insinuation of British weapons onto their land, or in the shifting patterns of the Trinidadian carnival, groups can engage in what Turner (1986) refers to as "plural reflexivity." "Plural reflexivity" is analogous to, at the collective level, the enhanced awareness of both self and other that individuals can achieve when their attention oscillates between a poetic image and their own feelings and responses. In other words, although individuals who participate in a ritual may be far from contemplative as they become swept up in its moods and rhythms, such events create opportunities for the stable and shifting sensibilities of collectivities to become apparent to the group as a whole.
Innovations in expressive forms both reflect and engender shifts in the sensibilities of the group.

New configurations of elements within the social structure, such as experiments in new social relationships, are made possible by the bounded and liminal qualities of ritual events. For the collectivity, these new configurations are analogous to the innovations that result from the pre-conceptual schematic patterning of the individual imagination.

Collective expressive forms can also help groups respond to external threats to their integrity—as they use traditional forms to "comment" on new circumstances, incorporate new elements into existing forms, and/or adapt the forms themselves in accordance with new social, political, economic, and cultural realities. Contact between and among diverse cultures is mediated and made apparent in part through transformations in cultural forms. Whether these transformations take the form of appropriations, reciprocal innovations, or completely new inventions seems to relate, in part, to the dynamics of power inherent political circumstances of the contact itself.

In the conception of the aesthetic domain constructed from Western philosophical sources in Chapter 7, a conceptual pattern emerged of a dialectical integration of opposites, or tendencies toward the mean, along three different dimensions: the integration of the sensuous and the rational; a dynamic equilibrium of form that avoids the extremes of random chaos and unchanging rigidity; and the oscillation of attention that allows for new understandings of both self and other. This conceptual pattern can also be discerned in the preceding analysis of 'the aesthetic' as an experience of collectivities. For instance in discussing the potential of the carnival to revitalize community life and to generate new social relations, the anthropologist James Stewart (1986) remarked that the Trinidadians appeared to resist on the one hand too bold a manifestation of underlying tensions and, on the other, overemphasis on the ideal of harmonious integration. Trinidadians desire "a voluntary experience of the tensions between ideal and real, balance and excess, permissiveness and control, and various other oppositions" (Stewart, 1986, p. 313). The
form becomes vital and generative when it avoids the extremes of violence (chaos) and idealized harmony (rigidity).

Our conceptual analysis of the expressive forms of collectivities also reveals an additional dimension along which aesthetic forms and processes tend towards the mean. While we can acknowledge that material and performative folk art forms in general serve a conservative function, we also see that in times of changing circumstances they do serve to mediate tensions between innovation and tradition. Similar to the ways in which genres create structures within which individual creativity can emerge, traditional forms serve as structures within and against which collectivities experiment and innovate.

Summary

To summarize, then, we see that the aesthetic experiences of literate individuals and of pre-literate collectivities are similar in the following ways: they both integrate the sensuous with the rational; they both engage participants in formal qualities of objects and events; the both provide opportunities for reflexivity; they both mediate tensions between innovation and tradition; they both appear to promote tendencies towards the mean, along several different dimensions.

On the other hand, the aesthetic experiences of pre-literate collectivities are different from those of literate individuals. Although they both integrate the sensuous and the rational, they do so in different ways. In the expressive forms of pre-literate groups, the sensuous and the rational are integrated in the forms themselves and also in the bodies and perceptual apparatus of the perceivers. Western aesthetic theory emphasizes the integration of the sensuous and the rational within the apprehending, perceiving and interpreting capacities of the individual perceivers and creators, and also in the metacognitive awareness of sensory perception.

As we noted above, the "work" of both individual and collective aesthetic expressions is accomplished by virtual of formal qualities, and how these both reflect and engender desired patterns of perception and response. The key differences are the degree
to which engagement with formal qualities is conscious and the senses through which they are apprehended.

Finally, while Western aesthetic theory emphasizes non-utilitarian and disinterestedness of response, collective expressive forms tend to engage people in active, committed participation, sometimes of an ecstatic nature. Paradoxically, these very different kinds of individual response can both create opportunities for reflexivity. Non-utilitarian response creates a space for the oscillation of individual attention among self, symbol and referent, while the active participation engendered through collective forms creates opportunities for plural reflexivity.

With this summary of the similarities and differences between the individualist and collectivist conceptions of the aesthetic domain, we have completed a theoretical trajectory begun in Chapter 8 with Ellen Dessanayake's theory about the transformation in patterns of artistic expression and response that accompanied widespread literacy. We have explored at some length her challenge to the conception of the aesthetic that has evolved in Western philosophical literature--considering both feminist and Africanist aesthetic theories as well as the material and performative expressive modes and related patterns of participation and response of non-literate groups. The analysis of the aesthetic domain that emerges from the experiences of collectivities points to important limitations of the conception of the aesthetic that we articulated in Chapter 7. An overarching conception of 'the aesthetic' will have to account for both the similarities and the differences we noted above.

Before articulating such an overarching view, I will first very briefly consider a second set of comparisons that will help to assess the strengths and limitations of the conception of the aesthetic that emerges from Western philosophical literature. We now understand that the Western philosophical conception will need to be expanded to cover the experiences of non-literate collectivities. What can we learn from an analysis of the aesthetic theories that emerge from non-Western literate cultures?
In the next chapter, I address this question, and then propose an overarching conception of the aesthetic domain.
CHAPTER 10

TWO EASTERN AESTHETIC THEORIES
AND AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTION OF THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN

Introduction

Ellen Dessanayake (1988, 1992) argues that the development of widespread literacy and related transformation in patterns of human attention and perception account for the rise of the aesthetic domain as it has been understood by Western philosophers: as an experience of individuals, paradigmatically associated with a non-utilitarian mode of engagement and disinterestedness on the part of the perceiver. Following her insights, I analyzed the expressive forms of non-literate collectivities and compared them and the responses they evoke with Western philosophical ideas about the aesthetic. I drew two conclusions about the relationship between the aesthetic understood as an individual phenomenon and as a quality of collective experience. First—these two kinds of transactions between expressive forms and their perceivers are closely enough related to be considered part of the same domain. Second—to embrace the aesthetic experiences of pre-literate collectivities, the clusters of ideas that emerged from Western philosophical literature on the aesthetic need to be modified, expanded, and made more abstract.

Dessanayake's challenge to Western aesthetic theory--i.e., that it based on a limited view of patterns of human expression and response that arise from literacy--is only one of many possible challenges that have been and could be made. We might ask, for instance, whether there are other cultural biases embedded within this theory--based on other features that are distinctive to Western modernity. Since this dissertation is not devoted solely to the generation of a culturally-nuanced aesthetic theory, it is impossible to consider in depth the aesthetic theories and practices of several world cultures and to contrast them with each
other. However, to acknowledge the importance of this line of inquiry, and to inform the overarching conception of the aesthetic to be proposed at the conclusion of this chapter, I will consider very briefly the aesthetic theories that emerge from Eastern philosophical literature.

The cursory view presented in this chapter lends support to Dessanayake's theory that literacy itself accounts for many of the features of the aesthetic as the concept has evolved in Western philosophical traditions. On the other hand, the aesthetic theories of different literate cultures are also distinctive. An analysis of how two particular Eastern theories differ from the Western conception expands upon the dichotomy between individualist/literate cultures and collectivist/non-literate cultures suggested in the previous three chapters. The Eastern theories, consistent with the approach of most Western philosophers, privilege a kind of non-utilitarian response; but the desired qualities of response are imbued with religious significance and are themselves signs of a shared cosmology. This suggests that the demarcation of an aesthetic domain distinct from the spiritual may itself reflect the cultural bias of secularism.

In this chapter, I present brief highlights from Japanese and Indian aesthetic theories, and then compare and contrast them with the understandings of the aesthetic domain that have emerged in the previous three chapters. Then, I propose a conception of the aesthetic domain that arches over and integrates the theories arising from Eastern and Western philosophical literatures and the patterns of expression and response prevalent in non-literate collectivities as well.

Japanese Aesthetics: Seeking Beauty in Darkness and the Hidden

Both Chinese and Japanese aesthetics incorporate understandings of The Tao, or 'The Way,' a construct that refers to appropriate relationships among all things, both natural and human-made. Within the framework of the Tao, and in East Asian aesthetics generally, the demarcation between society and nature is less distinct than in the West. Unlike in the West, where 'art' is related etymologically to 'artifice' and 'artificial,' in
Japan, writes aesthetic historian Kenneth Dewoskin (1996), "aesthetic undertaking itself is a natural and organic activity for humankind, a part of self-realization and self-refinement, practices that resonate with things in nature, [and] proper adaptations to the physical and social landscape" (p. 73).

Under the influence of Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism and Shintoism, aesthetic sensibilities in East Asia generally:

- Incline towards the understated, the evocative, the lyrical, with an interest in negative capability and quiet surface. The ideal in painting is the hidden and obscure, in music the inaudible, in acting the motionless, in poetry the unstated. Painting is best in monochrome, music best in song for one or two, poetry best in the fleeting sigh of the brief lyric. The aesthete refines the human capability to live artfully, to create art and to perceive the true and beautiful in art and nature—something always there, but rarely perceived (Dewoskin, 1996, p. 69).

- Also unlike the originality and individuality emphasized within Western aesthetic theory and practice, Japanese traditions emphasize perfection of skills...and submission to the inner order of the world.... The artists and their efforts are a more crucial locus of the aesthetic than the outcome -- that is, the performance or objects themselves. Hence the focus of much writing on aesthetics is on innate endowments, inner self-cultivation, reclusive lifestyles and the interactions between the artist and his media and between the artist and the outside world" (Dewoskin, 1996, p. 69).

An example of this can be found in the writing of Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1444), a playwright and actor, also considered a brilliant theorist. It is the actor's artfulness—qualities of being cultivated in life as well as in one's professional role—that allow the stylized Noh play to have the desired impact on the audience:

The seed of the flower that blossoms out in all works of art lies in the artist's soul. Just as a transparent crystal produces fire and water, or a colorless cherry tree bears blossoms and fruit, a superb artist creates a moving work of art out of a landscape within his soul. It is such a person that can be called a vessel. Works of art are many and various, some singing of the mood and the breeze on the occasion of a festival, others admiring the blossoms and the birds at an outdoor excursion. The universe is a vessel containing all things--flowers and leaves, the snow and the moon, mountains and seas, trees and grass, the animate and the inanimate--according to the seasons of he year. Make those numerous things the material of your art, let your soul be the vessel of the universe, and set it in the spacious, tranquil way of the void. You will then be able to attain the ultimate of art, the Mysterious Flower (pp. 68-69, cited in Turner, 1986b, p. 120).
One of Zeami's central concepts is *yugen*, derived from Japanese words meaning "deep, dim, or difficult to see," and "the dark, profound, tranquil color of the universe; the Taoist concept of truth" (Uedo, 1967, p. 70, cited in Turner, 1986b, p. 118). *Yugen* (i.e., the 'mysterious depth of things') became for Zeami a unifying aesthetic principle, underlying all aspects of highly stylized Noh theater, in which "the most important actions were not represented but suggested. The main character is often a ghost or spirit from another world. Dance and gesture may suggest the distance of the world of the dead and the anguish of being born" (Munro, 1965, p. 46).

The performance theorist Richard Schechner (1993) describes the proper attitude of people in a Noh audience. Sharing in the experience of Noh drama definitely requires a shift in the quality of attention away from the perceptual mode of everyday life, but, according to Schechner's description, the desired qualities are somewhat different from the 'disinterestedness' or 'rapt attention' that characterizes Western conceptions of 'aesthetic response':

Japanese say that the proper way to "watch" Noh is in a state between waking and sleeping. Among the Noh audience are many whose eyes are closed, or heavy-lidded. These experts are "paying attention" by relaxing their consciousness, allowing material to stream upward from their unconscious to meet the images/sounds streaming outward from the stage. In this state of porous receptive inattention, the spectator is carried along in Noh's dreamlike rhythms. Often the images and sounds are shared by shite, chorus and musicians so that the principal character is distributed among a number of performers (Schechner, 1993, p. 315).

Schechner (1993) quotes the Japanese theorist Kunio Komparu:

The viewer participates in the creating of the play by individual free association and brings to life internally a drama based on individual experience filtered through the emotions of the protagonist. The shared dramatic experience, in other words, is not the viewer's adjustment of himself to the protagonist on stage but rather his creation of a separate personal drama by sharing the play with the performer. Indeed, he becomes that protagonist (Komparu, 1983, p. 18, quoted in Schechner, 1993, p. 315).

The qualities of mystery and hiddenness that inscribe Noh drama inform another concept central to Japanese aesthetics, *mitate*. *Mitate* pertains to the display of objects, in everyday contexts, in ceremony and as art. It refers to techniques "used to associate
objects of ordinary life with mythological or classical images familiar to all literate people."

Masao Yamaguchi (1991), a contemporary sociologist from the University of Tokyo, explains that:

Japanese use *mitate* to extend the image of an object. By so doing they transcend the constraints of time. *Yama* for example is a popular word in the Japanese vocabulary of the imagination. The word *yama* originally denoted mountain, but became associated with and assimilated to the place where deities reside. In this way *yama* took on the sense of a mediating space between humans and gods. A physical representation of *yama* can be either a small mound of sand or a cart with a stage on it that is carried by participants in a festival procession (p. 58).

In traditional Japanese homes and communities, objects, events and places mediate between humans and the gods, bringing a quality of reverence and mystery to daily life. In all traditional Japanese homes, for instance, a display space called the *tokonoma* is maintained with decorated objects, wall hangings (changed with the seasons) and *ikebana* or flower arrangements. "The art of flower arrangement," writes Yamaguchi (1991), originally "was meant to astonish gods with its ingenuity. It is the adding of something different—an act of eccentricity." It is through the mediation of exhibition that "sacred reality is manifested" (Yamaguchi, 1991, p. 65).

The qualities of hiddenness and mystery, originally emerging from the linking of objects and events on the physical plane with invisible spiritual underpinnings, results in artistic expressions that are evocative and subtle, suggestive rather than explicit. One quality particularly valued in Japanese art is *aware*, or "sensitivity to the beautiful sadness of things" (Munro, 1965, p. 45), or "melancholy elegance" (Dewoskin, 1996, p. 72). Artists focus on the moment of the falling cherry blossom or the unwept tear, the sadness of an autumn evening. A contemporary Japanese aesthetic theorist, Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, (1886-1965) in his book *In Praise of Shadows*, describes a 'propensity to seek beauty in darkness' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 30).
Rasa and the Experience of Self Itself as Pure Bliss

Satish Kumar is a native of India, a student of Ghandhian non-violence, and the founder and director of Schumacher College, a center for the study of ecology located in England. From an Indian perspective, he said in an interview,

"When you have a sense of art—which means a sense of aesthetics—it means a sense of the sacred...because aesthetics and the sacred are two sides of the same coin with us, or even interchangeable....When you set out to do a painting of the landscape...you have a feeling of reverence for nature, a reverence for the environment and for the landscape, and that is the spiritual, sacred point of view. In Indian thinking, we would say the earth is sacred and the trees are sacred—a tree is not just useful because it will make a nice beam for our house, or nice planks for our furniture, but it is a divine manifestation. It is the home of God, and therefore the tree is sacred...The artist's role is to create, among people, and to somehow be the bridge, or the instigator, for developing a sense of reverence and beauty. Beauty and sacredness go together. Because if something is natural, then it is beautiful (Kumar, quoted in Gablik, 1995, p. 139).

Indian theories of art refer to "pure aesthetic experience" or "aesthetic delight" with the word rasa. According to early Hindu writers, the capacity to experience beauty, or "to taste rasa," is a reward for merit in past lives. The theory of rasa was articulated in relation to drama by Bharata (c. 500) and then developed in relation to poetry and other theatrical arts as well by Abhinavagupta (c. 1000). A key element in Indian aesthetics, the term rasa has translations at many levels. The contemporary Indian art theorist and curator, B. N. Goswamy (1991), writes that:

"at the physical level the word rasa means sap or juice, extract, fluid. It signifies, in its secondary sense, the nonmaterial essence of a thing, the best or finest part of it—like perfume, which comes from matter but is not easy to describe or comprehend. In its subtlest sense, however, rasa denotes taste, flavor, relish; but also a state of heightened delight that can be experienced only by the spirit (ananda)...In the singular, the word is used in the absolute sense, "with reference to the interior act of tasting flavour unparticularised." In the plural, the word is used relatively with reference to the various, usually eight or nine emotional conditions that may constitute the burden of a given work and that the listener or viewer can experience. These conditions, or sentiments, are the erotic, the comic, the pathetic, the furious, the heroic, the terrible, the odious, the marvelous, and the quiescent.

The notion is that rasa, or aesthetic delight, is a unity, but comes within the reach of the viewer through the medium of one of these sentiments. At the same time, rasa being essentially an experience, it does not inhere in the art object; it belongs exclusively to the viewer of listener, who alone can experience it....[E]ach rasa has its counterpart in what is called a bhava, a dominant feeling or mood. Thus, the erotic sentiment has love as its
corresponding bhava; the comic sentiment has mirth or playfulness as its bhava, and so on. Bhava belongs to the work, and can be consciously aimed at by its maker or performer (p. 71).

We see, therefore, that, like Western aesthetics, which addresses relationships among the artist, the object or performance, and effects on the sensibilities of the viewer or listener, the concepts of *rasa* and *bhava* are used to address the relationship among these three elements of an artistic/aesthetic experience. Unlike the Western notion, however, the experience of *rasa* clearly has inherent mystical and spiritual dimensions, in which beauty is explained "in terms of the enjoyment of perception or a state of sublime composure or blissful serenity which was a reflection, intimation, image, or glimpse of the enduring bliss of the spirit" (Raghavan, in Munro, 1965, p. 39). This aesthetic/spiritual experience emerges from a quality of detachment from the everyday (not unlike the non-utilitarian response of disinterestedness): "*Rasa* is realized when an emotion is awakened in the mind in such a manner that it has none of its usual conative tendencies and is experienced in an impersonal, contemplative mood" (Chaudhury, in Munro, 1965, p. 37). As in Aristotle's poetics, the sensibilities engendered through the experience of works of art is understood to affect people's ethical capacities and choices.

In this cursory review, Indian aesthetics appear to combine the religious/spiritual dimension of African aesthetics with the value on individual transformation and disinterestedness of response associated with Western aesthetic theories. In fact, it is precisely the disinterestedness of response and detachment from the everyday world that Hinduism elevates to a spiritual plane. In a passage that could have been written in anticipation of the "shimmering" of attention associated with Gaston Bachelard's (1994) poetic transsubjectivity, the Hindu aesthetic theorist Abhinavagupta wrote nearly ten centuries ago that

the aesthetic experience at the highest level is the experience of Self itself as pure bliss. At this level the duality of subject and object disappears through intense introversion and the basic mental state sinks back into the subconscious because it is utterly disregarded... The universalized 'this' shines against the universalized 'I'..." (quoted in Munro, 1965, p. 32).
It is telling that the Western aesthetic theorist and expert on "oriental aesthetics" Thomas Munro (1965) appears to apologize for Abhinavagupta by commenting: "In passages like this, one is reminded that Abhinavagupta wrote in the eleventh century and in terms which would have been congenial to Western mystics of that period" (p.32). In fact, throughout his study of 'oriental aesthetics,' Munro consistently looks for ways to circumvent, or minimize, the spiritual dimensions of the aesthetic theories and practices of India, China and Japan, assuming that they are "unacceptable" to the Western aesthetic theorist.

The theory of rasa, then, describes expressive forms that engage not only the sensuous and the rational, but the spiritual as well. Art also engages the emotions of the viewer or listener, but transforms them according to the particular "flavor" of the particular rasa. "These qualities are mixed as in a dish at the table, which differs from each ingredient when taken separately" (Munro, 1965, p. 35). Like the theory and practice of African cultures and other pre-literate collectivities, and in contrast with Western aesthetic theory, the Indian theory of rasa refers to the refinement of all the senses, including touch, taste and smell.

Citing Ananda Coomaraswamy, Satish Kumar emphasizes the Indian view that the capacity to create art is a birthright of all people, not, as is common in both Western and Japanese theory and practice, the rightful domain of a select few geniuses. "The artist is not a special kind of person, but every person is a special kind of artist...[T]hat represents truly the traditional Indian way of thinking" (Coomeraswamy, paraphrased by Kumar, quoted in Gablik, 1995, p.136). Kumar acknowledges that modern art in India is influenced by the West, and, in particular, two hundred years of education under the British system. He lends his personal support, however, to what he calls "traditional Indian art," that never came from the "ego-centered individual," but rather from the community. He argues that "the great body of works of art in museums and galleries" has resulted in an "ugly world."
That vast ugliness, the desert of ugliness all around us, with then a little bit of oasis consisting of these few, special works of art -- it's not right....Out of the ten thousand students going into art college, ten might become the masters. What a waste of energy and money and time! In India, we want all ten thousand -- every single one of them -- to become artists, and therefore, no single master (Kumar, quoted in Gablik, 1995, p. 145).

Although formal theories of Indian aesthetics emphasize a spiritualized detachment from everyday life (especially for members of elite castes), there are aspects of Indian folklore and philosophy which maintain deep appreciation for the connections between the aesthetic and the spiritual within daily life and the "living process" of human creativity.

Linking Coomaraswamy's insights with those of his own mother, Kumar says:

She was a very great craftswoman. She used to make beautiful embroidery work, beautiful mirror work on shawls, skirts, blouses -- anything she made. And when she'd give it to my sister, sometimes my sister would say, "Mother, this shawl is too beautiful. I can't wear it. I must put it on the wall." And my mother's answer would be, "Don't put it on the wall -- it's for you. I made it for you to wear. The day you start to put beautiful things on the wall, you start to put ugly things on your body. And that is not right" (Kumar, quoted in Gablik, 1995, p. 138).

Theoretical Insights from Japanese and Indian Aesthetics

Eastern Aesthetic Theories and Literacy

The brief inquiries into Japanese and Indian aesthetic theories offer several insights that will be useful in constructing a theory of the aesthetic domain that corresponds to a distinctive kind of pleasurable interplay between expressive forms and human perception and sensibilities, as that interplay manifests itself in all cultures. First, these theories support Ellen Dessanayake's claim that, in contrast with the collective expressive forms typical of non-literate cultures, aesthetic theories that arise in literate cultures refer to the experiences of individuals. The aesthetic theories arising from both the literate elite of both India and Japan clearly refer to transactions among individual artists or ensembles of individuals, objects and events, and viewers.
Disinterestedness

Also, in both of these Eastern cultures, aesthetic perception is understood to include a transformation in attitude, similar although not identical with the non-utilitarian and disinterested response theorized by Western philosophers. Those who watch noh plays enter a state of "porous receptive inattention" so that they can allow "material to stream upward from their unconscious." Indian aesthetics also refer to a kind of disinterestedness; in this case a mystical state of blissful serenity.

Reciprocity between the Perceiver and the Forms of the Expression

In each case, we can discern a kind of reciprocity between the sensibilities of the perceivers and the sensibilities embedded into the spatial and temporal forms of the expression itself. There is a match between the plays "dreamlike rhythms" and what is understood to be the "proper," half-waking, half-sleeping state in which to approach the theater. A similar kind of reciprocity can be seen in the pairing of the Indian concepts of bhava (a mood that "belongs to the work") and rasa (a kind of delight that inheres in the experience of the listener).

Inter Subjectivity

At the same time that these Eastern aesthetic theories focus on the experiences of individuals, from the perspective of cultural outsiders, it is clear that the "individual perceivers" are, in fact, members of their cultures. In fact, their sensibilities have been informed precisely by their engagement with, their dwelling within, the expressive forms of their cultures. Although in the preceding chapters it has been helpful, for the purposes of analysis, to distinguish between the aesthetic experiences of individuals and collectivities, the Japanese and Indian aesthetic theories serve as reminders of inter subjectivity--the interembeddedness of individuals and collectivities--noted in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, in the section on 'reconciliation.' Here we see that in addition to ethical and epistemological relationship between individuals and their groups, and the political allegiances and regional dialects Elaine Scarry (1985) understands to be inscribed into the
bodies of citizens, aesthetic sensibilities and perceptual proclivities are also inscribed into
the bodies of all those who are shaped by, and become bearers of, cultures. As Pierre
Bourdieu noted, these bodily sensibilities become so deeply insinuated into one's
understanding of the world, so much a part of the fiber one's being, that they become
ineffable, and difficult to bring to conscious awareness for reflection.

The Relationship between the Aesthetic and the Sacred

Implicit in both Indian and Japanese aesthetic theories is an overlap between the
aesthetic and the religious/sacred domains. In India all life and all that is natural is assumed
to be sacred. In Japan, all of creation, including both the animate and the inanimate, is
assumed to reflect the way of The Tao. It is logical, therefore, that related patterns of
expression and response would be understood to have spiritual and sacred dimension as
well.

Of course many works of art and aesthetic experiences in Western cultures
incorporate religious ideas, sentiments and sensibilities. This has been the case especially
in earlier centuries, when religious institutions maintained political and cultural hegemony.
These brief inquiries into Japanese and Indian aesthetic theories raise a question at the
deeper categorical level: they seem to imply not just that the aesthetic domain can be
brought to bear on the religious and the spiritual, but that there is no meaningful distinction
between the aesthetic domain and the spiritual domain. This contrast points to another
possible limitation to universal application of Western philosophical aesthetic theory, which
has arisen from a society that is not only literate but also, to varying degrees, pluralistic and
secular. The assumption in Western philosophy--in some cases made explicitly and in
some cases implicitly--of a clear distinction between an aesthetic domain and a
religious/sacred domain may need to be revised in order to generate a conception of the
aesthetic that reflects that the reciprocal relationships between expressive form and
perceivers' sensibilities as these experienced in many of the world's cultures.
These very brief forays into the aesthetic theories of two entire peoples can never do justice to the richness, complexity and subtlety of these philosophical and artistic traditions. The preceding discussion merely marks a trajectory for future inquiry.

Nevertheless, this brief analysis has expanded upon the dichotomy between individual and collective aesthetic experience which will be useful to the development of an overarching aesthetic theory. It is with that task, then, that this chapter concludes.

An Integrated Conception of the Aesthetic Domain

In the present and previous chapters on the aesthetic domain, we have considered several distinct conceptions of the aesthetic. One arose from 18th and 19th century Western philosophical traditions. It describes a domain of human endeavor—including forms of expression, reception, pleasure and response—in terms of the experience of individuals. The second conception, implicit in the work of feminist and Africanist scholars, as well is in the discourses of Anthropology, Folklore and Performance Studies, refers to the expressive forms and related sensibilities of collectivities. Finally, we briefly considered aesthetic theories arising from two Eastern philosophical traditions, Japanese and Indian, noting the necessarily intersubjective nature of aesthetic perception and response.

Here we propose an overarching conception of 'the aesthetic' that generalizes from and takes account of the differences in the various concepts of this complex and multifaceted aspect of human experience.

The word 'aesthetic' is used in two different ways. As a categorial term, it demarcates a domain of human experience. As a normative term, it refers to preferences, judgments and standards about experiences within that domain. The word functions, then, similarly to the word 'moral'. For instance, when 'moral' is used in the categorial sense, i.e. when we say a dilemma is a 'moral' one, we mean—to put it simply—that it is a question that pertains to judgments of right and wrong. When used in the normative sense, i.e., when we say an action was the 'moral' thing to do, the word refers to a substantive
judgment or sense that the action is right, or justifiable according to a set of ethical principles to which we subscribe. Similarly, in its categorial sense, when we say that a question is 'aesthetic' we mean that it is a question about matters of taste and beauty, or, more technically, about the degree to which spatial or temporal forms are pleasing those who engage with them. In its normative sense, when we say, for instance, that a scene is particularly aesthetic, we are making a judgment that scene is beautiful, that the arrangement of spatial and temporal forms in fact does please, and that others will or ought to find it beautiful as well.

We see already that, whether understood in the categorial or normative sense, embedded within the notion of 'the aesthetic' is a transaction between forms and the responses of those who engage with them--as creators, or spectators, or participants. In other words, we can describe an 'aesthetic object,' but not without reference to the kind of perception or participation it either requires or evokes. We can also speak of 'aesthetic apprehension,' but it only makes sense in terms of the formal relationships that are either incorporated within its object or that become apparent in response to the special qualities of the perceptive attention. The phenomenologist Mikel Dufrenne makes a distinction, using this line of argument, between a work of art, which is constant, and the 'aesthetic object,' which is variously created in each instance of perception. "The aesthetic object," he writes, "is completed only in the consciousness of the spectator" (Dufrenne, 1973, p. 204).

Incorporating insights from our analyses of the various aesthetic theories, then, I propose the following conception:

The aesthetic domain refers to (1) pleasurable kinds of human apprehension and (2) the forms and processes that reflect, embody and engender them. The aesthetic dimension of an experience refers to, and aesthetic pleasure results from, the reciprocity between the form(s) being perceived and the perceptual capacities and sensibilities of the perceiver(s).
Reciprocity of perceiver and perceived results from (1) intense engagement with a bounded form, (2) the integration of the sensory and rational, and (3) the mediation of tensions--between, for instance, randomness and order, tradition and innovation, and the impulses of individuals and the imperatives of the group.

Aesthetic experiences can generate, for both individuals and collectivities, qualities of attention and response (such as disinterestedness, committed participation, metacognitive alertness, receptiveness, and blissful serenity) that afford unique opportunities for learning, reflexivity, creativity, innovation and experimentation.

One of the key words in the first part of the definition is 'reciprocity.' It can perhaps best be understood by considering it as a median point between two other kinds of transactions between perceivers and objects of perception. 'Reciprocity' is mid-way between analysis, in which the perceiver "controls" the object by compartmentalizing it into preconceived categories, and propaganda, in which the expressive form has been designed to manipulate, seduce or coerce. In the case of aesthetic apprehension, whether in the case of ecstatic participation in rituals or non-utilitarian contemplation of a poem, the forms of the expression are synchronized with or attuned to the perceptual apparatus of those who apprehend them.34

The 'reciprocity' between an aesthetic subject and aesthetic object can be characterized as a relationship of respect, in which neither term overpowers the other. The perceiver is (or the perceivers are) invited by the pleasures inherent in apprehending the configuration of formal elements in itself--to attend, to feel, to interpret, and to reflect. And, conversely, in attending to these formal elements and their reverberations and resonances within them, perceivers (or participants) allow an 'aesthetic object' or 'aesthetic event' to emerge from a work of art or from, for instance, a ritual form.
The attunement or synchronicity between aesthetic subject and aesthetic object that can be characterized as 'reciprocity' does not, however, imply a perfect match, in which the form to be perceived matches all expectations. To the contrary, as perceivers of and participants in formal expressions, human beings seem to find, to greater or lesser degrees, pleasure in innovations, in embracing the unexpected, in stretching to accommodate what at first seemed jarring. Human perceptual capacities and proclivities, as well as the forms that reflect, embody and engender them, vary to some degree in different historical and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, in general, both the familiarity of the expected form, and the measured challenge to integrate something new are sources of aesthetic pleasure.

The 'meaning' of an aesthetic expression can be found partly or, in some cases, completely, in the sensibilities engendered in the processes of expression and perception itself. If the expression includes a narrative or discursive dimension, the significance of that content depends in part upon the qualities of the forms through which it is presented.

Because of their integration of the sensuous with the rational, and the nature of the engagement with bounded and formal qualities they promote, aesthetic experiences can bring to awareness information that previously had not been available to consciousness.

This conception of the aesthetic domain is one that embraces the aesthetic experiences of both individuals and of collectivities, and acknowledges the dynamics of inter subjectivity. It allows for distinct modes of aesthetic expression and response which will themselves have distinguishing features, including, for instance, the extent to which the integration of the rational and sensuous dimensions takes place in the consciousness of individuals or is encoded within the expressive forms, the range of responses forms are designed to evoke, and the nature of the reflexivity involved.

Does this Conception of the Aesthetic "Beg the Question" of the Dissertation?

In choosing to conceptualize 'the aesthetic' as I do, am I prejudicing this inquiry by defining 'the aesthetic domain' arbitrarily in a way that predisposes it for the work of reconciliation? Am I, in effect, begging the question by building our conclusions into the
premises of the argument? I do not think so, for two reasons. First, the condition or characteristic of universality itself, while possibly a necessary condition for a human capacity to be useful for the work of reconciliation, is certainly not sufficient. The capacity to inflict harm is a universal human capacity; its ubiquity hardly makes it a candidate for such work. And related to this point, it is important to clarify that simply by proposing a conception of the aesthetic that does not exclude any cultures, we are not intending to imply that all such forms and processes are necessarily reciprocally intelligible.

Secondly, the conception I propose is not arbitrary: it builds on established understandings of the word, as articulated by analytic, pragmatist and phenomenological philosophers, theorists arising from the disciplines of sociobiology, folklore and performance studies, and scholars of artistic expression of many different cultures. I have not accepted limited definitions proposed by formalist theorists, whose ideas are understood by many to be unnecessarily narrow and to apply only to the experience of a privileged elite.

Some notions central to Western aesthetic theory, most notably the concept of disinterestedness of response, have been associated by some with ethnocentrism and domination. The definition proposed here embraces the concept of disinterestedness, because it is a kind of aesthetic response, common in literate cultures. However, including it within this definition of 'the aesthetic,' rather than making it in itself definitive of 'the aesthetic,' some of the harshest criticisms of the concept--i.e., that it is inherently ethnocentric and domative--are allayed. Other concerns about disinterestedness--i.e., that it is impossible or undesirable to achieve--will be addressed in the next chapter.

The creation and appreciation of objects and events deemed to be beautiful is a universal human capacity. In every culture, spatial and temporal forms are elaborated beyond the minimum required for utilitarian function alone. Therefore, the need for a conception of 'the aesthetic' that can potentially include all of the distinct cultural
manifestations of universal human proclivities for embodied expression, apprehension and interpretation arises from our inquiry into the aesthetic domain itself.

To summarize this chapter, then, we have briefly considered aesthetic theories that have emerged from two Eastern, literate cultures. This analysis pointed us towards the necessarily intersubjective nature of aesthetic experience, expanding upon the dichotomy that had emerged between individualist and collectivist conceptions.

With that insight, I proposed an integrated theory of the aesthetic domain--one that is still useful in distinguishing the aesthetic from other domains of experience, but nevertheless is broad enough to account for the experiences of individuals and groups of very different cultural and historical contexts. Finally, I argued that the proposed definition, although it intends towards universality, does not "beg the question" of this study. It is a definition that emerges from an interdisciplinary study of the aesthetic domain itself.

In the next chapter, the final chapter of this section on the aesthetic domain, I briefly consider several ethical risks and possibilities associated with aesthetic experience according to the conception I have proposed.
CHAPTER 11

THE INTER-RELATED ETHICAL AND EPISTEMIC POSSIBILITIES AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN

Overview

In this chapter, I begin an assessment of the ethical possibilities and risks inherent to the aesthetic domain according to the conception just proposed. First, I summarize the work of several moral philosophers who argue that the qualities of attention made possible by the non-utilitarian response (typical of aesthetic experience in literate societies) enlarge our capacities to (1) respect and understand others (especially in how they are different from us; (2) meet the needs of self-consciousness and increase self-awareness; and (3) "feel into" the experience of others in an empathic way. These philosophers argue both that specific aesthetic encounters can lead to these kinds of awareness and that on-going engagement with the aesthetic domain can enhance in a general way morally significant perceptive capacities.

Following an analysis of these three ethical and epistemc possibilities, I respond to a set of concerns, raised primarily by feminist scholars, about the dangers of 'disinterested response.' They are critical of disinterestedness not only as definitive of the aesthetic domain. They claim that disinterested response may be impossible and in any case is morally suspect.

Having considered several Western ethical assessments of the aesthetic, I then propose possibilities associated with the integrative conception of the aesthetic domain articulated in the previous chapter. I consider how the qualities of respect, self-awareness and empathy can be brought to understandings of the expressions of diverse cultures--by
appreciating both their folk arts and the work of individual artists who are intersubjectively linked with the sensibilities of their groups.

I also propose a set of ethical possibilities associated with ritual. First I make reference to theories about ritual's role in the sublimation of violence and the mediation of conflict. Then I return to the Elaine Scarry's theories, first addressed in Chapter 6. She argues that large-scale human creations (such as new configurations of nation-states) must not only be imagined; they must be substantiated, or made believable to all parties of a conflict. Currently this substantiation usually takes places as the "compelling certainty" of the pain of wounded bodies is appropriated to the as-yet uncertain construct. I propose here that the visceral and embodied nature of ritual offers a non-violent alternative through which human communities can substantiate their large-scale creations.

This necessarily partial and preliminary discussion of ethical possibilities of an inclusive conception of the aesthetic domain ends with a brief assessment of the surfacing of "information" from pre- or non-conscious sources—a feature of both individual and collective aesthetic experience.

The chapter ends with a brief acknowledgment of the related ethical and epistemological risks of the aesthetic domain, and a rationale for considering them only briefly.

Aesthetic Engagement and Respect for Others

Two contemporary moral philosophers, Iris Murdoch (1985) and Martha Nussbaum (1986, 1995), argue that moral sensibilities and capacities are linked to the non-utilitarian response associated with aesthetic experience in literate societies. Non-utilitarian or disinterested response allows us to apprehend something "for its own sake," independent of our own interests or will. Murdoch argues that aesthetic perception involves suppressing the distorting aspects of self and will. Therefore, it allows us to apprehend the world more clearly that we do in more usual perceptual modes. "The chief enemy of excellence in morality (and also in art)," she writes,
is personal fantasy: the tissues of self-aggrandizing and consoling wishes and
dreams which prevents one from seeing what is there outside one...The
appreciation of beauty in art or nature is not only (for all its difficulties) the
easiest available spiritual exercise; it is also a completely adequate entry into
(and not just analogy of) the good life, since it is the checking of selfishness
in the interest of seeing the real... The greatest art is 'impersonal' because it shows us the world, our world and not another one, with a clarity which
startles and delights simply because we are not used to looking at the real
world at all...Great art teaches us how real things can be looked at and loved
without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy

In insisting that aesthetic perception is more than "an analogy" of morality,
Murdoch is linking the aesthetic and moral domains more closely than did Kant. In a
sense, Murdoch elaborates moral implications of Kant's aesthetic theory that he
acknowledged in only a peripheral way. Clarity of perception, in Murdoch's view, is an
act with moral significance, because it makes possible respect for the other.

In thus treating realism, whether of artist or of agent, as a moral achievement,
there is of course a further assumption to be made in the field of morals: that
ture vision occasions right conduct. This could be uttered simply as an
enlightening tautology: but I think it can in fact be supported by appeals to
experience. The more the separateness and differentness of other people is
realized, and the fact seen that another man [sic] has needs and wishes as
demanding as one's own, the harder it becomes to treat a person as a thing
(Murdoch, 1985, p. 66).

In Kantian terms, Murdoch is arguing that the greater our capacity to see persons separate
from the imposition of the constructs of our pre-existing concepts, the greater the likelihood
that we will act towards them with respect (i.e., not only as means towards our ends, but
as beings with their own purposes, as ends-in-themselves). Murdoch also extends Kant's
suggestion that there is a relationship between the disinterestedness of aesthetic attention
and capacity to 'love.'

The great artists sees his objects (and this is true whether they are sad,
absurd, repulsive or even evil) in a light of justice and mercy. The direction
of attention is, contrary to nature, outward, away from self which reduces all
to a false unity, towards the great surprising variety of the world, and the
ability so to direct attention is love (Murdoch, 1985, p. 66).

What is it about the aesthetic domain that nourishes our capacity to love? The
capacity of art to lift us above our egos--above the "proliferation of blinding self-centered
aims and images" of which, according to Murdoch, "willing" is most often a part--this
capacity is derived from our attention to formal qualities. Murdoch (1985) writes that,
although much art can serve self-indulgent fantasies, great art, like nature, is able to
nourish this capacity to love, by virtue of "the perfection of its form." Such "perfection of
form ...invites unpossessive contemplation and resists absorption into the selfish dream life
of the consciousness" (p.85-86).

Martha Nussbaum (1990) arrives at similar conclusions in an essay entitled
'Literature and the Moral Imagination.' Novels can elicit within us moral attention, or "the
loving scrutiny of appearances" with "intensely focused perception." The reading of
novels supports us to develop moral capacities beyond those we use to examine our own
lives, she argues, because our understanding of the characters' emotions and the moral
dilemmas they encounter is not obscured by the jealousies and personal interests that often
obstruct our perception of ourselves. As we read, we are shown what it would be like to
take up, in our own lives, a stance that allows us to experience "love without
possessiveness, attention without bias, involvement without panic" (Nussbaum, 1990,
p. 162). Even the child who delights in stories and nursery rhymes "is getting the idea that
not everything in human life has a use. It is learning a mode of engagement with the world
that does not focus exclusively on the idea of use, but is capable, too, of cherishing things
for their own sake" (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 42).

Does literature allow us, as Murdoch suggests, to see the world more clearly than
attending to life itself? Nussbaum argues that we do come to see more clearly. In her
view, though, what we see more clearly is not some "world-in-itself" but a world already
shaped by human concepts and interpreted through human culture. With artists as "guides"
we see more clearly:

The objectivity in question is "internal" and human. It does not even attempt
to approach the world as it might be in itself, uninterpreted, unhumanized. Its
raw material is the history of human social experience, which is already an
interpretation and a measure. But it is objectivity all the same. And that is
what makes the person who does the artist's task well so important for others.
In the war against moral obtuseness, the artist is our fellow fighter, frequently our guide. We can develop, here, the analogy with our sensory powers that the term perception already suggests. In seeing and hearing we are I believe, seeing not the world as it is in itself, apart from human being and human conceptual schemes, but a world already interpreted and humanized by our faculties and concepts. And yet, who could deny that there are some among us whose visual or auditory acuity is greater than that of others; some who have developed their faculties more finely, who can make discriminations of color and shape (or pitch and timbre) that are unavailable to the rest of us? Who miss less, therefore, of what is to be heard or seen in a landscape, a symphony, a painting? Jamesian moral perception is, I think, like this: a fine development of our human capabilities to see and feel and judge; an ability to miss less, to be responsible to more (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 164).

In the conceptions of both Murdoch and Nussbaum, then, the quality of perception associated with aesthetic experience is understood as having both epistemological and ethical implications. They do not claim that the beautiful, the good and the true are identical; but they do maintain that aesthetic perception can lead both to knowledge about the (human) world and to sensibilities that, in Murdoch's view, have moral significance in themselves, and in Nussbaum's, have moral significance because they increase the likelihood of moral action.

Another philosopher, Roger Hepburn (1984), finds ethical value in wonder, an inquisitive mode of apprehension made possible by the unusually concentrated, rapt experience associated with the non-exploitative and non-utilitarian aspects of disinterestedness. An attitude of wonder can embrace appreciative, contemplative, inquisitive, interrogative and sometimes restless dimensions. Wonder has a "life-enhancing character," Hepburn writes, because it is "appreciative and open, opposed to the self-protective and consolatory" (1984, p.144). Wonder is "notably and essentially other-acknowledging," and it is in this quality that we find its ethical value. Like Murdoch, quoted above, Hepburn emphasizes the links between an appreciation of otherness that derives from the openness of aesthetic response (in this case, wonder) and a Kantian notion of respect:
Some philosophers have thought that moral solidarity with others was best promoted by a metaphysic which denied the ultimate separation of individual selves....I should want to argue on the contrary that the task and distinctive point of view of morality are obscure until the otherness of one's neighbor is realized, and realized with it is the possibility of action purely and simply on another's behalf....

There is...a close affinity between the attitude of wonder itself--non-exploitative, non-utilitarian--and attitudes that seek to affirm and respect other-being.... The nearer the object of wonder comes to having the life, sentience, and rational powers proper to moral person-hood, the more the element of respect in wonder takes on the Kantian quality. The more intense a person's wonder at the human brain...the less bearable becomes the thought, for instance, of wantonly putting a bullet through it or crushing it with a rifle-butt (Hepburn, 1984, p. 145).

Paul Crowther (1993a) analyzes the element of respect in aesthetic transactions in terms of the non-coercive dimension of a beholder's engagement with a work of art. Embodied within a work of art is an artist's sensibilities. It gives us access to a sensuous awareness of an aspect of the world, but generally without the artist's physical presence, which otherwise could pressure us "into sharing the vision exactly on his or her terms."

Other modes of discourse--such as written political analysis and philosophical argumentation--which can also allow us to engage with a set of ideas free from the pressures of face-to-face contact, have the disadvantage of being abstract and, according to Crowther, potentially "alienating." It is through "the experience of art," he claims, that "we recognize ourselves in and through the Other, with a degree of freedom that is foreign to all other modes of discourse" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 141).

The freedom inherent in the apprehension of works of art is especially important in understanding the nature of the aesthetic transaction when a work of art has political content or significance. Crowther notes that Walter Benjamin (1977) feared that the "aesthetic contemplation of a work prevents it from becoming a vehicle for 'compelling' political decision" (Crowther, 1993b, p. 91). It is precisely the freedom inherent in our engagement with works of art, however, that distinguish such works from propaganda, and make them suitable for processes that aspire to the standards of 'education,' which
must, as we recall, respect the integrity of the student. Crowther (1993b) makes the following distinction:

The problem with propaganda is that it is something to be seen through--either in the sense of recognizing it as 'mere propaganda', or in the sense of being forced to go beyond the work by taking up the political stance which it thrusts towards us. To experience political meaning as a necessary feature in the original aesthetic unity of an artwork, in contrast, is to encounter that meaning at an equalizing distance. We are not simply being preached at by a superior being who know what is good for us. Rather, we see the political content as something which contributes to the distinctive vision of this particular artist or creative ensemble....We are, in other words invited to share the artist's political values. They are not rammed down our throats. Aesthetic experience can allow us, therefore, a freedom to make political decisions which propaganda cannot, and decisions made freely, of course, are always the most compelling....

[It is this very dimension of respect for the recipient which enables the work to be all the more readily and deeply assimilated within his or her experience...(emphasis added; pp. 91-92).

Works of art engage their viewers by invitation rather than coercion. The artists' struggles--be they political, or cultural, or existential--are incorporated within the work, available for our apprehension and interpretation, but not forced upon as, as in propaganda, or argued, as in political or philosophical discourse. Upon beholding a work of art, we may engage in criticism, or in political or philosophical reflection, informed by the awareness that results from the aesthetic encounter. In these instances, however, as Crowther (1993b) summarizes, "[i]t falls upon the consumer to generate political meaning from clues--intended or unintentional--which the artist provides. This, I would suggest, is the only way in which... the aesthetic, political, and indeed, moral integrity of both parties" can be presented (p. 92).

In this section, then, we have considered how the non-utilitarian, disinterested response associated with aesthetic experience in the theories of literate societies is related to respect. Disinterestedness of response is also associated by some philosophers with related increases (1) in our understanding and awareness of ourselves and (2) in the ways in which we are similar to others. They argue that aesthetic response increases our capacity to empathize with others. We turn our attention to these claims in the next two sections.
Aesthetic Engagement and the Needs of Self-Consciousness

In addition to his theories about respect, Paul Crowther offers another view of related ethical and epistemic possibilities inherent in the aesthetic domain. In his ecological theory of art, he argues that the disinterested and heightened qualities of attention associated with aesthetic perception expand our intellectual capacities. Drawing on theories of Merleau-Ponty (1995), Kant (1966[1790]) and Hegel (1975[1835-8]), Crowther claims that aesthetic modes of perception meet the conditions for and needs of self-consciousness.

We can briefly summarize Crowther's argument as follows. At a very basic level, to be conscious of one's self requires the capacities of attention, comprehension and projection: the capacity to be receptive to sensory stimuli, to organize these stimuli by discriminating sameness and differences among them, and to remember and imagine. In addition to capacities for attention, comprehension and projection, consciousness of self as a human being requires us to employ these capacities to further our awareness of ourselves in relationship with perceiving subjects (i.e., as the objects of their attention), to recognize and be recognized by others, and to enjoy the freedom associated with "inaugurating action on the basis of [our] own choices and decisions" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 151). In aesthetic perception, these capacities are brought into relationship with each other, in ways that we experience as enlivening and pleasurable (totally apart from any practical needs that might be met). It is the pleasure that we take in aesthetic perception that keeps us alert and engaged beyond those moments in which we are performing tasks needed for survival. Our capacities for attention and comprehension develop through use, facilitating "the pursuit of knowledge and experience for its own sake, thus massively expanding the general intellectual resources available to a culture in its struggle for survival" (Crowther, 1993a, p. 161).

Aesthetic experiences enhance our capacities for attention, comprehension and projection, stimulating to an unusual degree "the reciprocal interaction of the necessary factors in self-consciousness." They also reflect back to us, in the form of "concrete and
sensible objects of experience....in symbolic form at the level of perception itself"

(Crowther, 1993a, p. 154) the relationship among the necessary factors of self-consciousness. As we create and appreciate the artifacts of unalienated labor, for instance

self-consciousness is able to articulate and comprehend itself in a way that draws on both the senses and cognitive powers functioning as a unified field. It comprehends itself, in other words, at the level which is most fundamental to us -- that of our reciprocal interaction with the world as embodied subjects (Crowther, 1993a p. 154).

Although we may recognize this only on an intuitive level, a human-made artifact is an embodied connection to both past and future, and an "objective realization of our capacity to act on our own volition and exercise choice" (Crowther, 1993a, p.161).

Although he does not articulate these explicitly, I believe there are moral implications in Crowther's analysis of the importance of aesthetic experience in addressing the needs self-consciousness and in enhancing our capacities for self-consciousness. There is pleasure in enlivening and enhancing our capacities to attend and to comprehend, to remember and to imagine--i.e., to be present to the world, to make meaning of our experiences and perceptions, and to remember the past and imagine a different future. In this, his argument is related to Nussbaum's and Murdoch's: we are more alert and we see more clearly. He then takes a different turn, however. He doesn't focus on the disinterestedness evoked by our perception of the beautiful and how it can aid us in seeing the reality of other people. Rather, he argues that in the space created by our disinterestedness, we experience ourselves in relation to the natural world and other people, and experience our freedom and our interconnectedness reflected back to us, in the embodied forms of nature, artifice and art. In this way, we can come to feel more at home in the world, less isolated in our grappling with the moral complexities of our human-ness, and for these reasons, more able to make choices about when and how to act.

Paradoxically, according to Crowther, it is in the aesthetically-evoked solitary wondering about the human condition that art create possibilities for empathy with others:
An artwork is experience become concrete, and intersubjectively accessible. It is a microcosm of the artist's own being. [T]he experience of an artwork can bring a unique reflective awareness of the nature of the human condition itself. This moving revelation and celebration of the enigma of embodied consciousness is what I shall call empathic experience. ...--Works of art make us stop for a moment to see and wonder at what we have created, at what surrounds us, and what we, in essence are. This fundamental awareness is a simple but potentially shattering experience that is the proper root of the... empathic... (Crowther, 1993a, p. 46).

'Empathy' is a concept that has received considerable attention from aesthetic theorists. The next section presents a sampling of their perspectives.

Aesthetic Engagement and Empathy with Others

'Empathy' is a translation of the German 'Einfühlung,' or 'feeling into,' first coined by Theodor Lipps (Langfield, 1953, p. 317). Technically, it refers to a kind of motor response in perception, in which we feel in our own muscles the sense of the object or action being perceived. Empathic response is the opposite of a defensive or reactive response. To give an example, if upon seeing the outstretched arm (of a person or of a statue) we feel in the muscles of our own arm the tensions associated with being outstretched, then the response is empathic. If, on the other hand, we react to the outstretched arm by blocking it, our response could be called defensive or reactive.

Writing in 1920, Sidney Langfield argued that during aesthetic contemplation such experiences are not felt as sensations within the body. In fact, they do not come to consciousness as sensations of our own movements at all, but influence the perception in such a way that the lines and figures themselves seem to have the force which is actually in us. As soon as we are conscious of our own sensations, we are no longer contemplating the beauty of the object (p. 317).

In the Western philosophical tradition, the capacity of aesthetic engagement to evoke empathic awareness of the suffering of others is an idea of long standing, articulated first by Aristotle in his Poetics. We referred briefly to Aristotle's theory in Chapter One.

In "Tragedy and Self-Sufficiency," Martha Nussbaum, (1992) discusses the relationship among empathic feelings of pity and fear, on the one hand, and ethical
responsiveness on the other, specifically in terms of coming to understanding the suffering of the other, of one's enemy:

...In pity, the human characters draw close to the one who suffers, acknowledging that their own possibilities are similar, and that both together live in a world of terrible reversals, in which the difference between pitier and pitied is a matter far more of luck than of deliberate action. This is where fear fits in: for often the thought of general human vulnerability is accompanied by fear—which, as the expectation of bad things to come, may be directed at the person pitied, if his or her sufferings are thought to be still in the future, but which is often self-regarding as well or instead, as the pitier trembles for his or her own possibilities.

And it is in this that the poets see, I believe, the social benefits of pity.... Through his pity, Achilles arrives at a new understanding of the shared vulnerabilities of human beings, and becomes able to think of his enemy as a human being like himself...

[In Philoctetes,] the language of the play closely connects the painful experience of pity with a new dimension of ethical responsiveness: for Neoptolemus uses the language of physical suffering to describe his own response, and even calls out with the interjection, papai, that the poor man had used in the throes of his torment—as the pain of pity causes, in turn, the pain of moral distress that leads, eventually, to his generous and noble choice (Nussbaum, 1992, pp. 267-268).

In the same essay, in a later section in which she explicates Aristotle's notion katharsis (a "clearing out" or "cleaning out" of the emotional impediments to moral action) Nussbaum refers explicitly to the educative importance of tragedy, noting its particular relevance in the context of war:

...Neoptolemus is good, but capable, as nonomniscient good people are, of making mistakes. Without realizing it, he has diverged from his good character. The sight of Philoctetes' pain removes an impediment (ignorance in this case, rather than forgetfulness or denial), making him clearer about what another's suffering means, about what his good character requires in this situation, about his own possibilities as a human being. The audience, in the midst of wartime, is recalled to awareness of the meaning of bodily pain for another, for themselves. Even good people do need to be reminded—especially in time of war, when military passions run high and awareness of the enemy's similar humanity is easily lost from view in the desire to inflict a punishment. ...Forgetfulness, ignorance, self-preoccupation, military passion—all these things are obstacles (fully compatible with general goodness of character) that are "cleared up" by the sharp experience of pity and fear...


Through their fear and pity, indeed in those responses, spectators attain a deeper understanding of the world in which they must live, the obstacles their goodness faces, the needs each has for the help of others (Nussbaum, 1992, pp. 282, 287).
In theories of the aesthetic based in the Aristotelian tradition, works of art are understood to help us see more clearly in part because they allow (and sometimes prod) us to do emotional work. In the space created by disinterestedness, in this case in the emotional space created by our awareness that we are viewing a representation of events and not "real life," we empathize with the suffering of the character enacted in the drama, feel pity for him or her, and fear for our own vulnerability. The formal qualities of the play, which Aristotle describes in detail in his *Poetics*, evoke emotions as well as moral and cognitive judgments, in an intense and concentrated way. According to Richard Janko (1992), the emotions experienced during tragedy have salutary effects in two ways. First, dramatic mimesis leads us to the correct emotional response to the characters' plight via our moral and cognitive judgments about them, since their personalities and actions are vividly represented as universal patterns of action. Our enhanced perceptions can improve our capacity for moral judgment, practical wisdom and virtue. [...]Feeling such appropriate emotional reactions can habituate us to achieve and maintain the proper standard in our moral choices... (p. 352).

But more than our cognitive capacities for moral judgments benefit from the experience of theater. Some theorists emphasize the ways in which both comedy and tragedy can clarify our emotional responses, "leading them toward the mean." For instance, Richard Janko (1992) writes that:

[The] catharsis of the pleasant emotions in comedy offers similar benefits: we learn to laugh at the right objects and to the proper degree. Moreover Aristotle would add, with his usual optimism, that we learn not to laugh at actions which cause excessive pain to others, whereas the buffoon does not mind whether his jokes injure their object. For the mature citizen, both tragedy and comedy are a civilizing force. The pity and fear aroused by watching *Oedipus the King* might lead a timorous man to realize that his own fears are exaggerated, and that his own misfortunes are not so terrible; yet the same play might arouse in a powerful and confident person, prone to feel and behave arrogantly toward others, the thought that even the mightiest ruler may one day need the sympathy and help of those weaker than himself. Similarly, laughing at a comedy might make a real-life buffoon realize how foolish he seems at the dinner-table, but might make a prude relax from his prissiness. All these reactions conduce to the mean. (p. 352).

According to some philosophers, then, engagement with aesthetic forms and processes create opportunities for viewers, as individuals, to understand more about ourselves and others as we "feel into" the experiences of others. These 'others' include the
In either case, our insight into these others enhances our capacities as moral agents in the world. Engagement with the aesthetic enhances our perceptual capacities and refines emotions, allowing us to understand both ourselves and others more clearly. This clarity of perception—especially perceptions about our own vulnerability and our interdependence with others—can lead to moral action.

Responding to Feminist Critiques of 'Disinterestedness'

It is striking, and at first surprising, especially in light of the positive moral consequences many moral philosophers attach to it, that contemporary critics of aesthetic theory have targeted 'disinterestedness' as an especially dangerous and offensive concept. The feminist aesthetic theorist Hilde Hein (1993) writes that the "disinterestedness thesis" entails "somatophobic and mysogynist" biases, and that feminists "have a special mission to expose" it (p. 12). According to several contributors to the recent anthology *Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective*, the notion of 'disinterestedness' is suspect because it "obliterates distinctions among perceivers" (Kornmeyer, 1993, p. viii).

Part of the feminist critique of 'disinterestedness,' then, is that it represents an ethnocentric bias because it rules out the expressive forms and patterns of response of many of the world's cultures. It completely excludes the utilitarian and embodied expressive forms typical of tribal cultures, such as those described in Chapters 8 and 9. This criticism is important: much harm has been done to the non-Western people because of the arrogance of colonizers; their dismissal of indigenous cultural forms has been bound up in patterns of domination and oppression and have contributed to enormous cultural degradation and human suffering.

The conception of the aesthetic domain proposed in the previous chapter addresses this particular concern. I propose there that what distinguishes an experience as aesthetic is the reciprocity between the subject and the object, not any particular pattern of response.
By making this reciprocity definitive of the aesthetic, we give equal weight to the expressive forms and patterns of response of every culture.

In addition to concerns about ethnocentrism, however, feminists raise other reservations about the ethical implications of a disinterested stance in and of itself. 'Disinterestedness,' they argue, removes from aesthetic attention concern for social and moral values as well as truthfulness (Keller, 1993; Kornmeyer 1993) and, most problematical, is linked to the segregation of the aesthetic from everyday, or lived, life (Donovan, 1993; Hein, 1993; Lauter, 1993; Walker, 1974). Josephine Donovan (1993) argues that the entire Western conception of art is "dominative," because it views art as "material that has been extracted from the real world" (p. 53) to be governed by apolitical aesthetic laws that are imposed upon it as the artist endows it with form. Drawing on Woolf (1985), Adorno (1980, 1984), and Walker (1974, 1975), Donovan calls for an aesthetic embedded in the everyday, that is infused with personal and local history. As we elaborated in Chapter 8, Estelle Lauter (1993) argues for a feminist theory in which "aesthetic value arises in relationship to moral and cognitive values," and the status of art "depends on its effectiveness in making life sensible to an audience for which it is produced or by which it is received" (p. 31).

In contrast with Nussbaum and Murdoch, who link the aesthetic with morality precisely by virtue of the 'disinterestedness' of aesthetic response, Korsmeyer (1993), Hein (1993), and other feminists (who wish for a conception of the aesthetic in which moral values play a strong part) eschew 'disinterestedness' as 'dominative.' How are we to make sense of the disparity in assessments of the ethical significance of this concept?

The feminist criticism of disinterestedness is based, in part, on the meaning of the concept that arose in the formalist philosophy of art. Formalism promotes a strict segregation between art and life and privileges a elitist contexts for aesthetic experience. It is true that advocates of the formalist, art-for-art's-sake, philosophy did find support for their view in a particular interpretation of disinterestedness; nevertheless, as it is clear from
Nussbaum's and Murdoch's work, interpretations of disinterestedness are not limited to the formalist view. They describe one of the many paradoxes of aesthetic experience as it has evolved in literate cultures: it is, in fact, precisely by virtue of their autotelic nature, i.e., their being appreciated as ends in themselves, that works of art and scenes of beauty have been understood to serve ends beyond themselves, namely the moral development of their human beholders.

Although the notion of 'disinterestedness' has been used in support of aesthetic theories that are elitist, and although it is linked to Kant, whose theory is tainted by misogyny, I do not think that the concept itself is without merit, both descriptively, as a defining dimension of some kinds of aesthetic experience, and also normatively, as a description of a quality of attention with positive moral value. Critics of Kantian-derived Western aesthetics may be correct in doubting that human beings are able totally to separate our perceptions from our political and personal interests. The very constructs through which we make meaning of our sensory impressions are saturated with ideology and cultural beliefs and values. Yet the fact that our capacities to perceive in a disinterested fashion may be limited does not lead to the conclusion that we are unable to extend them to a useful degree.

To the extent that engagement with works of art can engender within perceivers critical self-awareness, respect for differences and feelings of empathy, (as suggested earlier in this chapter), aesthetic experience may facilitate knowledge of person's of other cultures better than other kinds of exchange. Encounters mediated through aesthetic forms and processes help us learn more than information about the circumstances of another's life. We can apprehend their sensibilities, made intersubjectively accessible to us through the medium of the work of art.

Nevertheless, there is merit in the feminist argument that there are many circumstances in which adopting a disinterested stance could be dangerous to the perceiver, especially when she is in a less powerful position. It might be argued, for instance, that the
very energy consumed to perceive openly a narrative or a drama that expresses an oppressor's point of view can interfere with an oppressed group's capacity for effective action on its own behalf. However, it is hard to imagine a political struggle in which the capacity to understand deeply and perceive clearly would be a liability. Furthermore, there is epistemological and ethical value in expanding our capacity to perceive in a disinterested way, so that we are free to choose to do so when we wish. In overtly politicized contexts, this ability may be important for those on both sides of a power divide who wish to relate respectfully across differences. Given the complexities of power relations that inscribe virtually every political struggle—for instance women who form coalitions to confront sexist bias must still confront inequities among themselves based on class, race, and sexual orientation, etc. --I think it is difficult to defend the notion that expanding our capacity to see something for its own sake, separate from our interests, is necessarily and inherently misogynist. Understanding the felt experience of a more powerful adversary can help those representing disenfranchised groups to negotiate more effectively.

One of the most important concerns raised by the feminist critique of 'disinterestedness' refers to characterizations of the attitude and response evoked by beautiful objects and events—i.e., objects and events that we could perceive in terms of their formal qualities—that are nevertheless a part of every day life. Does 'disinterestedness' apply with equal appropriateness to the attitude evoked in us by paintings in a museum and plays in a theater, on the one hand, and by quilts on our beds, and the lighting of Sabbath candles or preparation of the feast marking the end of Ramadan, on the other? Understanding the implications of 'disinterestedness' in relation to expressions of "vernacular aesthetics" is important, because, whether due to the constraints of stereotyped gender roles or by choice, it is through the creation and appreciation of ephemeral forms such as gardens and meals, that women have often found aesthetic pleasure and expressed themselves artistically.
Let us consider closely the question of whether including 'disinterestedness' in our conception of the aesthetic domain eliminates or minimizes the significance of formalized expression within the domestic sphere. Formalist theories of art have used the criterion of 'disinterestedness' to privilege aesthetic experiences that are segregated from everyday life, asserting that the viewing of artwork in a museum, for instance, is optimal for aesthetic response. Is the segregation of the aesthetic from everyday life necessarily implied by the notion of 'disinterestedness,' as some feminists claim (Hein, 1993, p.12; Kneller, 1993, p. 181; Korsmeyer, 1993, p. viii; Lauter, 1993, p. 28; Lorraine, 1993, p. 44)? We can approach this question by considering different responses to an object such as a beautiful quilt—perhaps the quilt described in Alice Walker's often-quoted story, "Everyday Use." In keeping with the formalist paradigm, we might wish to remove the quilt from its everyday use, hang it on a wall, or perhaps even find a venue for it in a museum of fabric art or folk art. (In the story, this was the intention of the older daughter who returned to her rural family home after a her "education" in an urban university.) But suppose, like the mother in Walker's story, we decide that the quilt was made for everyday use, and keep it at home, in use as a quilt. We can imagine a range of responses to the quilt. On some days, we might barely notice it as we move through the busy routines of life. Our engagement with it might be more bodily and less conscious, similar in some ways to the engagement of the Yekuana people with their painted baskets. But on other days, there might be moments where we focus our attention on the quilt separate from its usefulness, noticing the colors and shapes, the consistency of the stitches, the repetition of patterns in different scale. As we focus our attention on the formal features of the quilt, we might notice the way its rough and smooth textures seem to echo the qualities of our emotions. Or we might remember the grandmother who made it, and wonder about her intentions. We might pause to reflect on the rhythms of our daily life, and the pressures that make it difficult to notice the beauty of the quilt, and reaffirm our appreciation of the quilt's grace.
An object or event can be part of every day life and still occasion attitudes of disinterestedness. Meals are a part of every day life; when we eat foods we incorporate material into our bodies for the sake of our nourishment and pleasure. It is possible, however, to pause to appreciate the colors, textures and placement of foods; to step back for a moment from the utilitarian purpose of the food, allowing an appreciation of beauty, a quality of reverence, to inform daily life. We sometimes wonder at the excellence of a utensil's form in relation to its purpose, and at the human capacity to create such exemplary objects. We might experience what some aesthetic theorists refer to as 'alethia,' or the "wonderous apprehension of thinghood," when the forms of objects capture our attention, engaging our senses as well as our rational faculties (Crowther, 1993a, p. 44). Sometimes objects of everyday use are embellished with colors and textures beyond the requirements of their use. In these instances, according to Morawski, when an object's structure is "rendered conspicuous, it acquires an autotelic function" (Morawski, 1974, p. 106). In a book-length study of ornamentation, the Islamic art historian Oleg Grabar (1992) argues that our experience of everyday objects can be modified through the emotions or stances evoked in us by the repeated patterns of ornamental designs. The forms used to embellish objects--including shapes of letters, architectural structures, geometrical designs and elements of nature--serve as "intermediaries." They evoke non-utilitarian responses, such as feelings associated with of forcefulness, order, boundedness and vitality, that become attached to the utilitarian function of the object itself (Grabar, 1992, p. 230).

From all these examples, it becomes clear that whereas formalists may have linked the attitude of disinterestedness with the segregation of the aesthetic from the every day, this separation is not inherent in the concept. In itself, then, 'disinterestedness' is does not require segregation of the object of attention from everyday life. As long as it is not understood to be definitive of all aesthetic experience, I do not think that it is an inherently dominative concept, either.
In defending the ethical possibilities inherent in a response of disinterestedness, I do not intend to argue that it is a better or more moral mode of aesthetic response that other kinds of aesthetic reaction. Each mode of aesthetic response contains both possibilities and risks. 'Disinterestedness of response' describes one kind of aesthetic engagement that has particular value for the individual moral agent who must not only participate in, but also be able to criticize, the symbol systems of her own community. This idea is developed in the next chapter, where we consider the most important contributions of the aesthetic domain to the work of reconciliation.

Intersubjective and Collective Aesthetic Experience and the Sensibilities of The Other

To this point, we have considered the ethical possibilities associated with the aesthetic as it has been demarcated in Western philosophical literature. These theories refer to moral possibilities inherent in engagement with artistic forms such as the novel and tragic drama, because of the kinds of attention and perception such forms invite. The conception of the aesthetic domain I proposed in Chapter 10 is not limited to disinterestedness and non-utilitarian responses— but it does include them. For this reason, I have responded to criticism of disinterestedness, not just as definitive of the aesthetic, but as inherently dominative. I have argued that disinterestedness does not necessarily rule out an aesthetic dimension to everyday life, and that it can be a useful capacity, even for those who may be in subordinate positions.

Several feminist critics of Western aesthetic theory cited above argue, in part, that (even if desirable) it may not be possible for individual persons to shed their subjectivities to understand how other persons— especially those who belong to different social groups— experience the world. It is in addressing this difficulty that I believe the aesthetic domain— understood as the experience of collectivities and of individuals in intersubjective relationships with their own groups— finds a portion of its epistemological and ethical promise.
Crowther and other Western aesthetic theorists claim that as individual artists work in a medium not just their ideas but their embodied sensibilities are incorporated into the work, thereby becoming intersubjectively accessible to the public. As it has become clear, however, from our brief consideration of the aesthetic theories from Japan and India, artists also carry within them, to greater and lesser degrees, the sensibilities of their cultures. In many cases, then, when attending to the expressions of a group of artists of different eras or cultures or genders, I may be able to discern not only the individuals' idiosyncratic sensibilities, but also the sensibilities of their groups. In the case of art forms that include a narrative element, we may be able to discern the sense of shared morality that binds a group together. Many different forms—including both spatial and temporal arts—might give us a feelingful awareness of the sensibilities of a collectivity, including, as Bourdieu (1993) suggested, their shared sense of humor, sense of the absurd, sense of the sacred, sense of responsibility, etc.

If we engage with these works of art with the qualities of reciprocity that characterize an aesthetic transaction (as opposed to analyze them) then we can enter into relation with a manifestation of another culture with all of the qualities that are, by definition, part of the aesthetic domain—the respect associated with the reciprocity of the subject and the object, the feelingful awareness associated with the integration of the sensuous and the rational, the enlivening of the perceptual and cognitive capacities associated with aesthetic experience in general.

We can become aware of the sensibilities (and in some cases the history and culture) of a collectivity not only by engaging with the expressive forms of individual artists intersubjectively bound to a particular group, but also by attending to the folk art produced by a collectivity. In the case of performed folk expression—folk songs and dances, for instance—our awareness can be experienced bodily, as we feel in our muscles the tensions of musical cadences and the rhythmic intricacies of a pattern of steps.
None of these kinds of aesthetic engagement will afford us 'perfect' knowledge of the other, as if we ourselves could experience the world exactly as they do. Still, understanding by way of aesthetic engagement—reading the corpus of its literature, or learning to perform its music—has the potential to lead to understanding qualitatively richer than understanding by way of philosophical or political texts alone. Aesthetic forms and processes give us access not just to information about a group, but to the sensibilities of a group. We can begin to imagine how it feels to be a part of the other group, how the world appears and is experienced.

Collectivities, too, not just individual perceivers, may be able to understand something of other collectivities by engaging with their expressive forms. This is the view of Susanne Langer (1953), an aesthetic theorist who placed little emphasis on the communicative importance of works of art. Nevertheless, she believed that the sensibilities embodied in works of art can promote understanding between and among collectivities. "Works of art," she writes, can:

"make a report" of one age or nation to the people of another. No historical record could tell us in a thousand pages as much about the Egyptian mind as one visit to a representative exhibit of Egyptian art. What would the European know of Chinese culture, with its vast reach into the past, if Chinese feeling had not been articulated in sculpture and painting? What would we know of Israel without its great literary work—quite apart from its factual record? Or of our own past, without mediaeval art? In this sense, art is a communication, but it is not personal, nor anxious to be understood (Langer, 1953, p. 410).

Ritual Forms as an Alternative to Violence

Ritual forms can be used to construct and substantiate social realities, a phenomenon imbued with enormous ethical risk and possibility. In the hands of despotic leaders and bigots, ritual enactments—such as the cross-burnings of the Klan or mass rallies held in support of Hitler—can play on fears so compellingly and can be so consuming that they appear to override individual moral reasoning. On the other hand, rituals can give imagined human constructions—such as a peace treaty signed in the midst of war—an aura of reality until such time as the imagined forms are realized in the artifacts of political, economic, and cultural production.
According to both Eric Gans and Barbara Ehrenreich, human beings are the only species for whom the greatest threat to survival is intraspecies violence (Gans, 1993, p.2; Ehrenreich, 1997). A large body of theory addresses the relationship of ritual to managing this dangerous species trait.

Victor Turner (1974), for instance, argues that rituals can play a critical role in the redressive phases of social dramas, "disharmonic" or "crisis" situations that ultimately lead to transformation and human cultural growth. He writes that:

Social dramas...[typically...have four main phases of public action... These are 1. Breach of regular, norm-governed social relations... 2. Crisis during which there is a tendency for the breach to widen... Each public crisis has what I now call liminal characteristics, since it is a threshold between more or less stable phases of the social process, but it is not a sacred limen, hedged around by taboos and thrust away from the centers of public life. On the contrary, it takes up its menacing stance in the forum itself and, as it were, dares the representatives of order to grapple with it... 3. Redressive action [ranging] from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery, and, to resolve certain kinds of crisis or legitimate other modes of resolution, to the performance of public ritual... Redress, too, has its liminal features, its being 'betwixt and between,' and, as such, furnishes a distanced replication and critique of the events leading up to and composing the 'crisis.' This replication may be in the rational idiom of a judicial process, or in the metaphorical and symbolic idiom of a ritual process... 4. The final phase... consists either of the reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between contesting parties (Turner, 1974, pp. 34-41).

Richard Schechner, extending the work of Victor Turner, and integrating insights from Rene Girard, claims in fact that ritual finds its raison d'être in the sublimation of violent impulses. Citing rituals as diverse as American sporting events and tribal initiation and exorcism rites, he proposes that violence, sexuality, theater and ritual converge.

Displaying if not celebrating violence of a sexual kind is a chief intercultural characteristic of theater and ritual. Such performances suggest that all violence is sexual and experienced as dangerous, crying for some means of control... [Rene] Girard believes (and I agree) that ritual sublimates violence: "The function of ritual is to 'purify' violence; that is to 'trick' violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals" (Schechner, 1993, p. 303).

The relationship of theater to ritual is complex and multifaceted, and cannot be explored adequately in this context. Richard Schechner (1977) suggests, however, that "it is at the level of performance that aesthetic and social drama converge. The function of
aesthetic drama is to do for the consciousness of the audience what social drama does for its participants: to provide a place for, and a means of, transformation" (p. 124).

Historically and cross-culturally, rituals have played a role in helping communities both resolve conflicts non-violently and reflect on violent impulses and the likely consequences of retaliatory exchanges. Perhaps they serve to interrupt the addictive nature of violence, noted by Sissella Bok and Simone Weil, in Chapter 6. Elaine Scarry's theories suggest that rituals could play an even more important role in reducing violence in the future.

We recall that Scarry argues that the human body is used in political conflict not just instrumentally, to staff outposts, injure enemies, and claim land. The body--in particular the injured body--functions also as a sign. The felt attributes of pain--its certainty, its compelling vibrancy, its incontestable reality, Scarry (1985) writes, can "be lifted into the visible world" and attached to beliefs or constructs that lack substantiation (p. 13). In war, in which two or more competing fictions seek to legitimate themselves and delegitimate others, what makes the outcome abiding, according to Scarry, is this quality of human injury. The incontestable realness of the pain of the wounded bodies is appropriated to the victor.

Large scale patterns of human social organization cannot remain fixed. As in any organic or dynamic process, the framing pattern must shift or the organism will die. As a human community, we have recognized only a few non-violent processes through which the boundaries of empires and nation-states can be either transformed or substantiated.

However, as we could see at a small scale in the exorcism rituals of Sri Lanka, described by Bruce Kapferer (1986), it is through the formal features of music, dance and their dramatic elements, that rituals can construct social realities for their participants. In the liminal spaces of collective rituals--sometimes recreated, elaborated and intentionally lengthened in the workshop space of theater rehearsal--new social arrangements can
emerge, as groups can see and reflect on the current configuration and experiment with others.

Former adversaries can construct new rituals, through which they can come to understand each other and reflect their understanding back to each other. We recall from the previous section of the dissertation, for instance, Bjorn Krondorfer's (1995) reconciliation work with young American Jews and non-Jewish Germans, whose sessions together culminated with a visit to Auschwitz. There, through rehearsal, performance and ritual, they were able to imagine, enact and substantiate their reconciliation.

I believe that it is in these small-scale examples that we can discern, in nascent form, the most significant ethical possibilities of the collective aesthetic domain. Rituals are comprised of compelling, embodied interaction. They offer possibilities for the multi-modal sensory stimulation and the intensity that human collectivities apparently need to create and substantiate new fictions, new creations, new human-constructed overarching frameworks. We need to discover how to construct them to move enough people as viscerally, and to transform us as profoundly, as does the feel, the sight and the memory of the wounded body.

Aesthetic Engagement and the Non-Conscious

Aesthetic forms of expression—both those of individuals and collectivities—can, by virtue of their integration of the sensuous with the rational, reveal information and sensibilities that were previously held outside of or beneath conscious awareness. Aesthetic engagement can allow that which was non-conscious to become available for conscious reflection—we become aware of ideas, perceptions, feelings, intuitions, etc., that previously were not articulated, and in some cases were ineffable (unable to be articulated in language). This is particularly important in the case of trauma victims who may be able to express—and therefore heal—memories that have been suppressed to conscious memory and/or linguistic recall.
It is by bringing underlying and unspoken social dynamics into conscious awareness that rituals, for instance, can promote the kind of collective reflexivity and innovation that Victor Turner emphasized, as we noted in the previous chapter. In individual artistic creation, the tangible expression of the imagination's pre-conceptual schemata in perceivable forms also can make non-conscious apprehensions available to awareness. This aspect of aesthetic creativity gives art its innovative character: rather than imposing pre-formed concepts and constructs that are already available to the conscious mind, the individual and collective imagination patterns the world of sensation through new schematic configurations.

According to Gregory Bateson (1972), an anthropologist who specialized in cybernetic theory, the expression and apprehension of non-conscious material—referred to variously as information, or knowledge, or wisdom—has important related epistemic and ethical dimensions. He argues that human beings develop in part by transforming that which they first learn consciously into habitual or non-conscious "knowledge." In fact, those actions and values that we know best are those we learn "by heart."

The ability to act out of habit, to function from levels of our being deeper than consciousness, is, according to Bateson, adaptive. An individual organism could not manage to be conscious simultaneously of all that is needed for survival. Conscious awareness, then, represents only a narrow slice of all the information an organism must utilize.

Among the "knowledge" held in the non-conscious realms of human beings is the information required for the survival of the group. Evolution and processes select for the capacity to internalize these patterns.

Bateson theorizes that the knowledge necessary for species survival may, in fact, be relatively inaccessible to conscious awareness through the channels of rational discourse. "Mere purposive rationality," writes Bateson (1972),
unaided by such phenomena as art, religion, dream and the like, is necessarily pathogenic and destructive of life.... Its virulence springs specifically from the circumstance that life depends on interlocking circuits of contingency, while consciousness can see only such short arcs of such circuits as human purpose may direct (p. 146).

Bateson defines "wisdom" in cybernetic terms, as knowledge required for the survival of the system as a whole. In contrast to conscious purposefulness and individual intention, Bateson argues that decisions about questions pertaining to peace and war should be made through processes that access the "wisdom" of the unconscious: processes such as art, rituals and analysis of dreams. "Love can survive," he writes, "only if wisdom has an effective voice" (Bateson, 1972, p. 147).

Risks Associated with the Aesthetic Domain

Philosophers of many eras and cultures have theorized not only about the related ethical and epistemological promise of the aesthetic domain, they have also had much to say about its risks. In banishing poets from his Republic, Plato warned that the pleasures of art would seduce citizens away from rational reflection. In the contemporary context, as we have seen, many post-modernist and feminist thinkers argue that entire notion of an aesthetic domain is inherently 'dominative' (Donovan, 1993, p. 53)

The conception of the aesthetic domain proposed in the previous chapter, accounting as it does for historically and culturally distinct aesthetic sensibilities, addresses many important concerns about the ethnocentric bias of 'the aesthetic' as it has been theorized within Western philosophical traditions and enacted by the elite art world. It incorporates the Western philosophical aesthetic conception as one of many, without assuming that it is either universally applicable or paradigmatic.

The aesthetic theory proposed here does not, however, demarcate a domain that is free from political and ethical dangers. Aesthetic pleasures can, and have been, used to indoctrinate and to manipulate, just as Plato feared. They can also distract attention from injustice and other problems requiring political remedies. In fact, elite art institutions are often organized to protect and advance the interests of the privileged. Aesthetic forms and
processes—both individual and collective—have been used in the service of evil regimes, and to soothe the conscience of perpetrators of crimes. Ritual forms can have the effect of perpetuating ethnocentric loyalties, often accompanied by the irrational hatred of outsiders.

Aesthetic representations of war and other forms of suffering present a particular moral dilemma. On the one hand, the very pleasures associated with a particular form—the novel, the play, the poem—can support us to attend to difficult but necessary content. On the other hand, as is argued persuasively by Lawrence Langer (1995), critic of literary and other artistic representations of the Holocaust, artistic conventions can themselves "sweeten" the legacy of atrocities, obfuscating the very history such works appear to memorialize. Attending to such a version of an unspeakably horrible era of human history can delude us into feeling as if we have engaged in the moral work of bearing witness while actually buffering us from grappling with the moral problems inherent in the atrocity it purports to represent. (Langer, 1995) This is but one example of how the forms of expressions can themselves, by the force of convention, distort what is understood and represented according to tradition and their own imperatives.

The interface and interplay between and among the aesthetic forms of different cultures present another set of risks. One danger—the appropriation of cultural expressions into the forms and meanings of a dominant culture—was illustrated in Chapter 8, in the Guggenheim Museum's display of traditional Akan paperweights. (It is no coincidence that museums arose simultaneously with modern nation states, both to consolidate and amplify national culture and to flaunt the bounty from colonial conquests. Political and economic inequities create contexts for unwanted appropriation and inadequate sensitivity—dynamics that have become apparent in recent efforts of Native American tribes to reclaim from mainstream museums cultural artifacts and ancestral remains.)

The risks briefly mentioned here merely suggest the moral dangers inherent in the aesthetic domain in general, and, in particular, in cross-cultural engagement with expressive forms. It is a topic that warrants more attention. Nevertheless, throughout
most of this chapter I have chosen to focus on theories about the ethical and epistemological possibilities inherent in the aesthetic domain. My rationale for doing so arises from the purpose of the dissertation as a whole. I do not seek to demonstrate that aesthetic forms and processes inevitably result in sensibilities or understandings that are useful to the work of reconciliation. My purposes rather is to argue that inherent in aesthetic forms and processes are ethical and epistemological possibilities that can be crafted to further the work of reconciliation. Part of "the crafting" of the form and the related processes include minimizing the ethical risks.

In the next section of the dissertation, I discuss the uses of aesthetic forms and processes in the work of reconciliation. I include examples of ethical dilemmas and how they can be addressed.

In this chapter, we have culminated our analysis of the aesthetic domain by considering some of the ethical possibilities and risks inherent in its forms and processes. First, we considered three related ethical and epistemic possibilities related to the Western philosophical notion of disinterestedness: respect for others, self-awareness, and empathy. Then we responded to concerns raised by feminist theorists that disinterestedness in itself is inherently domineering.

The next sections of the chapter considered the ethical possibilities inherent in aesthetic forms and processes as these are understood to be qualities of collective and intersubjective experience. We argued that the respect, self-awareness and empathic understanding of others associated with disinterestedness can also be used to mediate individual's understanding of other cultures.

Then, we considered the important possibility that ritual may afford human communities non-violent means of substantiating new overarching social frameworks. We may discover ways to make embodied participation in rituals as compelling and vivid as the wounding of human bodies in contexts of injuring known as war—still the prevailing means through which we decide and substantiate changes in overarching political frameworks.
In the last several sections of this chapter, the discussion of risk and possibilities inherent in the aesthetic domain has shifted close to the question that frames the dissertation as a whole: What are the distinctive contributions that aesthetic forms and processes can make to the educational work of reconciliation? In the chapters that follow, I integrate the analysis of the related epistemological and ethical challenges of reconciliation with the epistemological and ethical possibilities inherent in the aesthetic domain. There, I will demonstrate not only why aesthetic forms and processes are particularly useful for such work, but offer examples of how they have been and might in the future be used.
CHAPTER 12
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AESTHETIC DOMAIN
TO THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Integrating 'Reconciliation' with 'The Aesthetic:' An Overview of Section Three

Aesthetic forms and processes— including the aesthetic transactions of both persons and collectivities—are uniquely well-suited to accomplish the educational tasks, and to meet the educational challenges, inherent in the work of reconciliation. Before I began the present inquiry, I believed this to be the case, based on my experiences as a community oral historian, folklorist and cultural worker. I had witnessed artistic renderings of oral narrative reach diverse audiences beneath the categories and stereotypes embedded in the discourses of their respective communities. I had also experienced a loosening of stereotypic rigidities in my own perceptions of "others"—when, for instance, I read novels by African-American women or fingered the embroidered fabrics belonging to Palestinian friends and colleagues.

Now, having analyzed the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation, and having constructed a conception of the aesthetic that includes both individual and collective experience, I am in a better position to articulate why aesthetic forms and processes can be such important tools in the work of peace-making. This section of the dissertation is devoted to that task.

In arguing that the aesthetic domain is uniquely well-suited to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation, I do not intend to imply that other forms of exchange—such as political debate, philosophical argumentation, or even business partnerships and athletic competitions—are ineffective or unnecessary. In some cases, the arts are useful precisely because they create contexts for and engender exactly these sorts of
conversations and debate when they otherwise might not have occurred. Some aspects of reconciliation—the negotiation of boundaries, for instance, or the articulation of policy agreements—require the precision of legal discourse. Philosophical inquiry—into conceptions of justice, for example, or the implications of invoking individual or collective notions of equal rights—may help adversaries choose among possible resolutions to their dispute.

Reconciliation is extremely difficult to accomplish; it is the highest ethical standard to which those involved in the resolution of conflicts can aspire. It makes sense to seek resources for such a difficult task in all of the non-coercive communicative and interpretive capacities available to human beings. Hopefully, understanding the relationships between, on the one hand, the educational tasks and challenges inherent in reconciliation, and, on the other, the educative potential of the aesthetic domain will allow educators, artists and practitioners of conflict resolution (and related scholars, activists and policy makers) to make better use of cultural and artistic resources in the practical and theoretical work associated with peacemaking.

In the present chapter, I explicate the conceptual connections between those features that are definitive of the aesthetic domain with the educational requirements of reconciliation. Then, in the following two chapters, drawing on my own experiences as a community oral historian/folklorist and as a co-existence facilitator, I will give examples of how, in practice, the resources of the aesthetic can be brought to bear on peacemaking efforts. In Chapter 13, several brief examples illustrate how aesthetic forms and processes can be used (1) to restore the capacities needed for the work of reconciliation; and (2) to help adversaries imagine and substantiate a future relationship characterized by trust and respect. In Chapter 14, I conclude the dissertation with an extended example of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict, illustrating how narrative, poetic and folk art forms can be interwoven to cultivate attitudes of reverence and respect as adversaries learn about their own and each others' history and culture.
To begin making the conceptual links between reconciliation and the aesthetic domain, I will review the educational tasks and challenges inherent in reconciliation, as we came to understand them in Chapters 2 through 6.

The Educational Tasks and Challenges Inherent in Reconciliation

In Chapter 2, 'reconciliation' was defined in terms of the creation of a moral relationship between individuals and groups who had become morally alienated from each other:

Reconciliation refers to the re-creation and/or creation of the moral framework of a relationship through which individuals and groups overcome alienation by engaging in transformative processes that in themselves embody the norms of respect and fairness intended for their new relationship.

Through the on-going processes of reconciliation, the parties to conflict become increasingly trusting and trustworthy as they understand each other's suffering, acknowledge injustices, and strive to address both unresolved and emerging conflicts in ways that meet their underlying needs.

With this definition as a guide, we came (in Chapter 3) to see that reconciliation actually refers to a particular sub-set of all conflict resolution processes: those that meet a number of ethical criteria. These criteria include:

- disputants' understanding of their own and each other's suffering, as experienced and interpreted by those who suffer;
- adversaries acknowledging, and when possible and appropriate redressing, past injustices; and
- enhancing disputants' capacities to trust and be trustworthy, however gradual that process might be.

These three criteria, then, can be translated into three of the most important educational tasks that are necessary to achieve reconciliation: the understanding of suffering, the acknowledgment of injustices, and the achievement of reciprocal trust and
trustworthiness. Furthermore, these tasks must be accomplished through processes that also meet two additional criteria. The processes of reconciliation must:

- embody the norms of mutual respect and fairness intended to characterize the adversaries' future relationship; and
- recognize participants' integrity as moral agents, and, when necessary, restore the moral capacities required for the work of reconciliation.

These two criteria can be understood as meta-level educational tasks inherent in the work of reconciliation. The processes through which disputants' come to understand themselves and each other—including understanding suffering, acknowledging injustices, and becoming more trusting and trustworthy—must in themselves be educative. Specifically, they must give participants practice in relating respectfully, fairly, and in ways that acknowledge and enhance each other's agency and integrity.

These already daunting tasks are made more difficult by virtue of the related ethical and epistemological relationships of disputants (1) with the groups with which they identify; and (2) with their "enemies." We referred to these relationships in terms of "intersubjectivity" and "transsubjectivity" in Chapters 4 and 5. As adversaries begin to engage each other with respect—i.e., as they begin to listen to how others understand their own circumstances, to grasp the narrative frames others use to make sense of their lives—they inevitably confront the limitations of the system of symbols, the conceptual frameworks, through which their own communities have constructed meanings. In some cases, these symbols and frameworks previously were accepted tacitly, assumed to be true without question or awareness. In other cases they have been celebrated, even experienced as sacred. The need to bring one's own symbols and conceptual frameworks into question can often create resistance to hearing, or believing, or giving due weight to, an adversary's story. It can prevent us from believing they have suffered, or from feeling their suffering. We might, for instance, accuse our enemy of telling stories just to win sympathy or to

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accomplish political ends. (That these accusations plausibly might be true—and in some cases are true—only complicates the situation further.)

Furthermore, as adversaries become aware—in a feelingful way—of each other's suffering, and as they strive to acknowledge past hurts and injustices, they must confront the complicity of their own people in contributing to the other's suffering and to the unjust situation. This often brings people up against another kind of resistance: the emotional resistances associated with guilt and shame, and with the fear that accompanies awareness of one's own wrong-doing. These feelings are often an important source of resistance in members of the group with more political and military power. But even a less powerful adversary almost always will have inflicted pain on its enemy. Complicity in the very suffering that requires one's own feelingful presence represents an enormous emotional challenge—a challenge that has educational implications as well. In order for disputants to understand clearly each other's circumstances, facilitators often must create some kind of emotional distance and/or enough safety for people to work through their shame, guilt and fear.

According to psychosocial theories of enmity, there is an additional reason for the fact that acknowledging the humanity of an enemy often can result in resistances to learning. In the processes of dehumanization and demonization of an enemy, the negative traits attributed to the other are precisely those that are the least desirable traits of one's own group. As we begin to see a former enemy more completely, therefore—as a person or group with both positive and negative traits—we are required to acknowledge a more complete picture of ourselves and our own people as well. This more complete view of one's self can shatter sacred beliefs and myths that have constructed one's world view. People often resist awareness when its consequences are so painful.

The emotional and intellectual resistances associated with questioning the symbols of one's own group, acknowledging one's own complicity in another's suffering, and recognizing the morally questionable dimensions of one's own people's actions: these are
among the distinct challenges, then, confronting educators and facilitators as they support former adversaries to accomplish the educational tasks inherent in the work of reconciliation.

Much of the work of reconciliation takes the form of inquiry. We seek to understand our former adversaries, the dynamics of the conflict, the points of possible agreement. The qualities of presence we bring to this inquiry—whether we are open or skeptical, warm or cool, engaged or detached, animated or sluggish, judgmental or compassionate—in themselves can affect our adversaries' capacities to be expressive, to act ethically, and ultimately, therefore, the outcome of the process. For instance, if we are able to attend in a feelingful way to the suffering of our former enemy, we may relieve one of the most aversive aspects of that suffering: the isolation it can create. If we are able to apologize in a feelingful way for the harm inflicted by our own people, we may facilitate our former enemy's ability to forgive. The challenge here is that just at those moments when we are trying to be receptive, trying to understand, we are also confronting emotional and intellectual resistances. Within the constraints of our habitual discourses, we have every reason to be skeptical about the ideas and images we are being asked to engage with warmth, openness, vitality and compassion.

Resolving conflicts in contexts of violence—including both the structural violence of oppressive systems and the physical destruction of life and property—creates another difficult challenge for educators and mediators. As we considered in Chapter 6, the very circumstance that gives rise to the need for reconciliation, i.e., violence, can impair the faculties needed by adversaries to resolve conflicts peacefully. Among the capacities that, to varying degrees, might be impaired, are abilities to listen, to express some experiences in language, to imagine, to trust, to feel, and to think. In many cases, for reconciliation to be possible, such capacities will need to be restored or regenerated, on both personal and collective levels.
Elaine Scarry argues that war destroys not only the objects created by human communities, it deconstructs the process of creating itself. In many cases, to engage in the work of reconciliation, to believe in the possibility of creating a new social order, former enemies need help to restore their belief in the potential benevolence and vitality of human creativity. They need not just to learn to trust, but to regain faith in the possibility of trusting.

Although it does not take place in a linear process, reconciliation can be conceptualized logically in three stages: (1) the restoration or enhancement of needed capacities; (2) learning—about one's enemy and one's self and one's own group as well as about this history of the conflict, as it has been experienced on all sides; and (3) imagining and creating the moral framework for a new relationship, based on respect and trust. We have just considered briefly the first two stages. In relation to the third stage, we recall the theory of Elaine Scarry (1985), who argues that all human creativity consists of two phases: making up and making real. In her theory, the "making real" of large scale social constructions, such as nation states, has historically been substantiated through the wounding of the human body.

A final challenge for reconciliation, then, is how to substantiate—to make real and believable—the large scale creations such as those that result from and embody reconciliation. For obvious reasons, the wounding of human bodies as a mode of substantiation is inappropriate. Human communities must find other ways of legitimating their invented overarching moral frameworks until they can be made real through political documents and organizations, and embodied in and enacted through new patterns of cultural, political and economic reciprocity.

The Aesthetic Domain and the Educational Work of Reconciliation

As conceptualized in Chapter 10, the central and defining quality of aesthetic transactions is the reciprocity between the perceiver and the perceived. This reciprocity refers to an alignment between the formal organization of the elements of the object or event
being perceived and the perceptual capacities and sensibilities of the perceiver. It is made possible, in part, by three additional defining features of the aesthetic domain. They are: (1) the intensity of engagement with a bounded form; (2) the integration of the sensory with the rational; and (3) the mediation of tensions—for instance between tradition and innovation, the individual and the collective, and randomness and rigidity.

These three defining characteristics of the aesthetic domain are not different from the reciprocity between the perceiver and the perceived; rather they comprise part of the substance of that reciprocity. In other words, perception becomes pleasurable when we attend to a bounded form with intensity and focus; when the rational and the sensuous are integrated in one or more of a variety of ways; and when the form avoids extremes along several dimensions. There are wide ranges along these continua—of randomness and rigidity, innovation and tradition, individual impulse and collective imperative—within which human beings will experience perceptual pleasure; and tolerance for the extremes varies in the organization of perceptual apparatus associated with different historical and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, in all cases, the requirements that aesthetic forms and processes be attuned to human perceptual capacities and sensibilities in itself exerts a pressure towards the mean along several dimensions.

Each of the defining qualities of aesthetic transactions contribute to the domain’s distinctive usefulness in accomplishing the educational tasks and meeting the educational challenges of reconciliation. We will consider first the educative value inherent in the reciprocity of subject with object.

Reciprocity of Subject and Object

The reciprocity of aesthetic transactions implies an extension of oneself towards the other party. Embedded within aesthetic experience is the quality of other-acknowledgement. As a perceiver, for instance, when I bring an aesthetic sensibility to a story being told by a friend, I enter into a state of receptivity, an appreciation of the many levels on which the words, sentences, images and metaphors convey meaning, an active
listening for the patterns of meaning within the elements of the story itself and between the
narrative and what I know of my friend's life. As a storyteller, if I shape my narrative with
an aesthetic sensibility, I would look for opportunities to create pleasing configurations of
sound, images that are vivid, symbols that are resonant. But--pleasing, vivid and resonant
to whom? To the audience, whose sensibilities I know, or imagine, or guess.

The other-acknowledgment inherent in aesthetic transactions might be intended or
experienced as a kind of respect or care; in a sense it is a precursor to, or an ingredient of,
both. In an aesthetic transaction, the subject does not try to analyze the object of perception
according to pre-existing concepts or categories; nor are the formal qualities of the object
designed to manipulate or coerce. The formal elements are designed to give pleasure--and
in this way, their beauty issues an invitation, as it were. In the case of folk arts or rituals,
the forms are consistent with the sensibilities of the community, and while individuals may
for moments be drawn in, the collectivity itself is afforded opportunities for reflexivity,
precisely because collective sensibilities are acknowledged (even as they may be
challenged).

An aesthetic object, by definition, then, is a collaboration between perceiver and
perceived, in which the subject respects the integrity of the object and the object is designed
with awareness of the subject.

To imbue an object or event with the capacity to "respect" its perceiver may at first
seem to be mere anthropomorphizing. As Elaine Scarry (1985) notes, however, we expect
human-made objects of all kinds to reflect within their structure and design awareness of
human proportions and vulnerabilities. As evidence she cites the safety devices on irons
and furnaces, or child-proof caps on medicine bottles, as well as an abundance of personal
injury case law in which inventors of products are held liable for the harm caused by the
"stupidity" of their inventions. In Scarry's view, the awareness of human proportions and
vulnerabilities embedded in artifacts can be understood to comprise a kind of objectified
compassion, the beneficial effects of which amplify the effort expended on their creation.
A work of art also has embedded within it the sensibilities and intentions of its maker. The meaning of an artwork's "respect" for its audience can be understood, perhaps, by contrasting a work of art with an instance of propaganda. Both art and propaganda work by way of illusion. But, as Crowther (1993b) points out, they differ in the extent to which they make the devices of the illusion available for scrutiny. Propaganda tends to hide its devices, to draw us into the illusory world as if it were real. Art, on the other hand, simultaneously draws us into the illusion and also directs our attention to the symbol itself, as well as to the processes of our interpretation. (This tacking back and forth of attention between symbol and illusion, artistic device and interpretation, as well as our meta-level awareness of this oscillation, accounts for Bachelard's [1994] notion of transsubjective "shimmering.") In an aesthetic transaction, then, while the object is designed to draw perceivers into a world of illusion, it makes the devices of illusion-making and illusion-perceiving themselves available for reflection and even scrutiny.

In contrast with propaganda, works of art meet standards that parallel two of R. S. Peters' criteria for 'education': namely, that learners can gain "knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective" and that the processes of transmission respect the "wittingness" of the learner (Peters, 1966, p. 45). In his view, we recall from Chapter 3, processes that meet the criteria of education must support learners to understand the nature of evidence that leads to their beliefs, and the processes through which those beliefs can be criticized and revised. Furthermore, learners must at least in a minimal way act as "voluntary agents" (Peters, 1966, p. 42).

Similarly, at least on some accounts, works of art (as opposed to propaganda) allow those who perceive them to understand the nature of the symbols and symbolizing that evoke their response and interpretation. In this way, works of art respect the "wittingness" of their audiences and allow them to assess the "evidence" that leads them to certain perceptions.
With these distinctions in mind, then, it seems fair to conclude that the collaboration between perceiver and perceived that characterizes aesthetic transactions is one of reciprocal respect.

Whether or not the other-acknowledging reciprocity that defines aesthetic transactions is understood as respect, several western moral philosophers, as we saw in Chapter 11, link the non-utilitarian and disinterested nature of aesthetic response with respect for the other. With slight variations, Murdoch (1985), Nussbaum (1990, 1995), Hepburn (1984) and Crowther (1993a, 1993b) all argue that aesthetic responses engender sensibilities that allow us to perceive more clearly—especially to perceive an other independent of our own interests or will. Murdoch and Hepburn link the clarity of perception to Kantian notions of respect for others as beings with their own purposes, as ends-in-themselves. The 'wonder' associated with aesthetic response is understood to have an affinity with affirmation and respect for "other-being" (Hepburn, 1984, p.145).

In relation to the educational work of reconciliation, the other-acknowledging quality of aesthetic reciprocity is important for several reasons. In the context of recent enmity, where adversaries have been intent on destroying each other, or diminishing each other's capacities for agency and disregarding each other's needs and sensibilities, messages that are other-acknowledging in their form (even to the point of giving pleasure) in themselves interrupt the disregard and violation definitive of enmity. And because aesthetic forms are accessible to the senses, they communicate this regard for the other in ways that might overcome the defensive mechanisms embedded within communities' everyday discourses and in the skepticism that often accompanies rational analysis.

At least some minimal form of respect for the other—respect for the other's right to exist, to live free of fear, to enjoy basic forms of individual and collective self-determination—is the basis for virtually all forms of non-violent conflict resolution. For those conflict resolution processes that aspire to the ethical standards associated with reconciliation, the respect that is sought as an 'end' of the process must also be embedded
in the means through which the conflict is resolved and the new moral community is
established. Furthermore, the respect that is required for reconciliation (as opposed to
more distant kinds of coexistence) is of a quite profound nature. We respect not only our
former adversaries' rights to exist, but also their rights to agency, their capacity for growth
and transformation, even when these must be preceded by healing and restoration. The
inherently other-acknowledging quality of aesthetic forms and processes—the collaboration
between perceiver and perceived that we might characterize as reciprocal respect—can be
mobilized to address this meta-level educational task of reconciliation. In the work of
reconciliation, members of each of the adversarial groups are both perceivers and
perceived, subject and object. If learning is skillfully mediated through aesthetic forms and
processes, we might simultaneously experience being respected and being invited to
respect. As we are learning about each other's suffering, as we are acknowledging
injustices, as we learn to trust and be trustworthy we can do so through processes that are
respectful and engender the non-utilitarian and other-acknowledging sensibilities upon
which respect is based. Interestingly, this capacity to respect the other is linked with
awareness of ourselves and the processes through which we interpret symbols and
construct meaning.

The Pleasure of Aesthetic Experience

The reciprocity between perceiver and perceived, just assessed in terms of its
relationship with 'respect,' is defined also as a source of pleasure. That aesthetic
experience is, in itself, pleasurable has important implications for reconciliation.

As noted above, among the greatest educational challenges inherent in reconciliation
are the emotional resistances to learning caused by the circumstances of the conflict itself.
People may be weary of focusing on a war, with its many losses and all its suffering.
They may, as Scarry suggests, have lost faith in the possible benevolence of human
creativity or the possibility of human trust.
The vitality of aesthetic creativity, the pleasure to be experienced in aesthetic expression and perception can help to overcome these initial resistances. Engaging with the arts can enliven perceptual, interpretive and imaginative capacities. It can remind those who have been depleted by violence of a zestful way of engaging with problems. Energy can be mobilized in expression itself, even when what is expressed is filled with sorrow.

The Integration of the Sensuous with the Rational

As we discovered in the previous section, aesthetic forms and processes can integrate the sensuous with the rational in a variety of different ways. In the aesthetic experiences of persons, theorized in literate societies, the integration of the sensuous with the rational takes place both in the creator and the perceiver, as they use imaginative pre-conceptual schemata that have the pattern-generating capacities associated with rational thought but that remain close to the sensuous apprehension of forms. It is here that the creativity and innovation associated with the aesthetic finds its roots. Because 'aesthetic ideas' can be free of the concepts that are familiar in existing discourses, new configurations of meaning can arise—configurations that might allow us to move beyond stereotypic responses embedded within linguistic codes.

By way of illustration I offer a small example from my experience as a coexistence facilitator working with Israeli and Arab teenagers at the Seeds of Peace International Camp. A 14-year-old Palestinian boy, when asked to create a visual image representing his hopes for the future drew an unlabelled map of Israel-Palestine, accompanied by a flag that incorporated elements from both the Israeli and Palestinian national flags. The cities in the land were marked, not by the usual black dots, but by colorful hearts, indicating, he said, both people's love for the land. His creative rendering is not, of course, a political solution, but it might open hearts and minds to options not yet namable in the discourses of national self-determination, security, or even mutual respect.
Before something can be made real, as Elaine Scarry argues, it must first be made up. Images that arise from the preconceptual imagination can serve as a source of new ideas, even in the context of apparently intractable conflicts.

A second way in which the sensuous is integrated with the rational relates to the focusing of conscious attention on the impressions of our senses. Sensory impressions and the feelings they evoke can be brought into awareness, an awareness infused with qualities of feeling. Such feelingful awareness will have many uses in the work of reconciliation, but it is particularly important, we recall, as a quality of presence to bring to our inquiry into the suffering of another. Feelingful awareness of another's suffering can promote the depth of contact that removes a degree of the aversiveness of such suffering—that part of suffering that amplifies itself because of isolation. Feelingful awareness of another's suffering might create opportunities for grieving, and therefore for healing and transformation. Feelingful awareness of a former enemy's suffering (especially when it is achieved in spite of resistances to understanding caused by our own complicity in their losses) opens the possibility for meaningful, heartfelt apology.

The third way in which the sensuous and the rational are integrated within Western aesthetic theories is in the metacognitive awareness of our own processes of sensing and interpreting. In other words not only is my conscious attention focused on the impressions and apprehensions of senses, but I become aware of myself as a sensing, feeling, meaning-making being. The capacity to become aware of (and on occasion, therefore, to become critical of) the symbol system of one's own community is the key to addressing the educational challenge to reconciliation inherent in the intersubjective ethical and epistemological bonds that link a person to her culture.

How might this feature of aesthetic experience be brought to bear on the educational work of reconciliation? Here again, an example will prove useful. In A Passion for Life, Stories and Folk Arts of Palestinian Women, the folk arts and crafts of two peoples engaged in long-standing reciprocal demonization were exhibited side by side in a small,
yet professional, community arts gallery. Each artifact was accompanied by the life story of its maker. Embedded within the artifacts were many symbols through which each group made sense of its own history, and legitimated its claim to contested land. For instance, Palestinian embroidery included sayings from the Koran along with schematic representations of the flora and fauna of Palestine. Jewish works included Biblical references to the land of Israel and images of Jews praying in Jerusalem. Metacognitive awareness of these competing symbol systems was invited in three ways: (1) by the mere juxtaposition of two divergent sets of symbols, each offering a distinct interpretation of the same history and geography; (2) the contemplative and reverential sensibilities cultivated by the gallery context itself, which invited receptivity and reflection; and (3) the printed text of relevant portions of women's life stories, used as a kind of extended label, highlighting the meaning of each artifact in for its maker.

It was, of course, somewhat paradoxical to exhibit folk art (dresses and amulets, cookie presses and family photography, which, like the Akan paperweights discussed in the previous section were clearly meant to be touched and used) in a traditional gallery setting. The exhibition designers commented on their own inconsistency by suggesting in the center of the gallery a living room—a soft and quiet place where viewers were welcomed to sit on pillows, finger fabrics, read and write and to contemplate an imaginary domicile embellished by the folk arts of two enemies.

Collective aesthetic expressions integrate the sensory with the rational in somewhat different ways—the integration takes place more in the spatial and temporal forms and on the bodies of participants than in the conscious awareness of a separate perceiver. These collective expressions are useful to the educational work of reconciliation in at least two important ways. First, members of different cultures, including former adversaries, can come to appreciate each other's skills and sensibilities by engaging with their collective forms. They might attend each other's meals and religious rituals, or take special effort to appreciate the rhythms and sensibilities embodied in a lace tablecloth or in a woven basket
or rug. Even more valuable, in educational terms, might be attempts to join in the singing and dancing; to learn to cook the foods and embroider the dress. In these instances, adversaries can begin to understand each other's cultures in a visceral, embodied way. They can honor a kind of collective expression that does not have the defensive, and often subtly belligerent, overtones evoked by overtly nationalist symbols. The folk arts and the art of one era or culture can "report" (Langer, 1953) to another, by virtue of the sensibilities and values that are embodied in collective and intersubjective expressive forms.

The integration of the sensuous and the rational in collective aesthetic experience has another important role to play in the work of reconciliation. We alluded to this briefly in the previous chapter, when we noted Elaine Scarry's theory about the importance of the wounded body in substantiating large scale human fictions. Rituals, in particular, and perhaps other embodied performances, can be marshaled for just this substantiating purpose. As we saw in the examples examined in Chapter 9, rituals can engage people in multiple modalities over extended periods of time. They are capable not only of reflecting, but also constructing social realities, so that participants can experience an imagined future in their senses and their bodies as if it were real now, in the present. When Krendorfer's (1995) non-Jewish German and Jewish American students created rituals at Auschwitz they used music, poetry, movement, stillness and silence to transcend the limiting "victim"/"victimizer" discourses of their respective communities. As noted in Chapter 2, their rituals acknowledged the distinct ways their shared historical legacy had informed them; as they found ways to be present to their similar and divergent feelings, their reconciliation was simultaneously constructed, enacted and substantiated.

Gregory Bateson (1972) suggests that there is "wisdom" in the enactment of subconsciously held ritual forms—knowledge that is necessary for the survival of the group, as distinct from the purposive intention that most often fills the screen of individual consciousness. Much of the wisdom of collective rituals may pertain to the survival of the tribe, and be at best irrelevant, at worst dangerous, for the survival of the species. But
there are examples of transgroup and transnational rituals, such as the shared peace pipe of Native American cultures, the potlatches and competitive games in many tribal regions, the passing of the torch at ancient and modern Olympic Games, that might be utilized in the service of reconciliation (Goldschmidt, 1994, pp. 109-131).

Finally, rituals do not need to be sensational to be effective. Conflict resolution practitioners may find it sufficient to engage adversaries in a shared meal, a toast, or a repeated song, to draw on the substantiating power of ritual.

Intensity of Engagement with Bounded Forms

A third characteristic of the aesthetic domain as defined in Chapter 10 is the intensity of perceptual and/or participatory engagement with bounded forms. This characteristic refers both to the "frames" that surround composed expressions as well as the selective attention of a perceiver's gaze.

This quality of the aesthetic can make two important contributions to the educational work of reconciliation. The first derives from the boundedness of aesthetic form itself. Because an aesthetic event—an exhibit or a play, for instance—intentionally is framed and set off from the surrounding conflict-ridden context, the form itself can be composed to enact or display features of the hoped-for future that are not yet possible given the political status quo. In particular, an aesthetic event can be constructed to embody norms of equity and fairness that might be impossible to manifest in the society at large. In an exhibit, for instance, each party's "story" and "culture" can be given equal weight, or the underdog's story can even be enhanced in some kind of symbolic compensation. (For instance, in A Passion for Life, we exhibited the stories and artifacts of an equal number of Palestinian and Jewish women, and were careful to mount exhibits of relatively comparable emotional and visual impact. To acknowledge the discrepancy of power between the two groups, however, we listed "Palestinian" before "Jewish" in the project's title, contrary to what would have been the neutral alphabetical sequence.)
Similarly, efforts can be made to compensate for unequal access due to economic or linguistic barriers by translating outreach material, targeting specific audiences, selecting accessible venues, and/or arranging transportation. By virtue of the boundedness of aesthetic forms, they can anticipate in their conception, content, creation, production and presentation norms of fairness that the society as a whole has yet to manifest.

In addition, the boundedness of the forms invite intensity of perceptual engagement and response. We might be able to focus on a particular story or play that deals with the consequences of war long after we have become numbed by daily news reports. The fact that the elements of works of art are composed to capture our attention and to please our perceptual sensibilities—even when they invite us to acknowledge suffering—may make it possible for us to attend, with awareness that is more focused as well as more feelingful, than if I were reading a factual report or listening to political debate. There are risks associated with this sort of pleasure, as we noted in Chapter 11. However if they are acknowledged and addressed, the educative potential here is substantial, because of the difficulties inherent in bringing adversaries to focus on each other's history and culture, and in some cases, to bring war-weary enemies to deal with the conflict at all.

Tendencies towards the Mean

The pleasure afforded by aesthetic perception results in part from the mediating role they can play in relation to chaos and order, individual impulses and the imperatives of collective life, and innovation and tradition. It appears that ritual may find its *raison d'etre* in the direct sublimation of violent impulses.

In this regard, we can simply note that there appears to be some kind of resemblance between on the one hand, aesthetic forms and processes and, on the other, reconciliation. Reconciliation itself is artlike, in that it is a "form" that gives order to "elements" that once were in chaotic and destructive relationships with each other. The "form" is a new moral relationship; the "elements" it orders include individuals, collective action and consciousness, cultural narratives, political entities, etc. Reconciliation work
creates an overarching frame so these disparate or conflicting elements can be perceived in relation to each other. It then seeks to organize these elements into some kind of balance (that is, into a relationship in which it is possible to perceive the unity within their diversity) and harmony (diversity in unity).

In most works of art, the illusions of tension and resolution are created by the rhythmic array of spatial and temporal elements. Reconciliation, too, unlike mere tolerance, recognizes the vitality inherent in conflict, and structures processes and institutions and cultural norms to support their peaceful and generative resolution. As with works of art and all living forms, the forms that result from the processes of reconciliation are dynamic, animated by patterns of tension and resolution.

As we have noted, aesthetic forms and processes conduce towards the mean, along several different dimensions. Reconciliation, too, is a kind of mean point in human relations, between the intrusions of violent contact and the detachment associated with mere tolerance. Reconciliation allows for people and groups in conflict to transform each other, not through destructive acts of violence and oppression, but in ways that are respectful of integrity and nourish the capacity for agency among all parties. We might say that reconciliation is itself an aesthetic form, or, at least that it represents an artful way for divergent communities to coexist and to grow through the resolution of their conflicts.

These qualitative affinities between the aesthetic domain and the processes of reconciliation do not comprise a precise argument for the distinct contributions of the aesthetic domain to the work of reconciliation. Nevertheless, it seems logical that reconciliation, as a form of conflict resolution that seeks to produce a conflict-embracing unity, can be achieved at least in part by engaging adversaries in modes of expression and response that are, themselves, conflict-embracing unities. Such forms and processes may cultivate within us the sensibilities and capacities—to maneuver within ambiguities and to accept the inevitability of paradox—necessary to live peacefully with those who have once been our enemies.
Summary

In this chapter, I outlined some of the potential contributions of the aesthetic domain to the work of reconciliation, organized according to the qualities that are definitive of the aesthetic. We saw that the very qualities that make a transaction aesthetic—the pleasurable reciprocity of subject and object that derives from the integration of the sensuous with the rational, intense engagement with bounded forms and the mediating nature of aesthetic forms and processes—correspond to the educational tasks and challenges inherent in the work of reconciliation. Aesthetic forms and processes are, by nature, other-regarding and creative; they tend to mediate tensions, enhance self-awareness, and engender empathic responses. These characteristics of the aesthetic domain and typical effects of aesthetic transactions make the aesthetic uniquely well-suited to facilitate educational processes which must engender respect for others and the feelingful awareness of suffering. It also can make distinctive contributions to addressing the resistances to learning and to overcoming or circumventing the damage to moral capacities that almost accompany violence and oppression.

In the next two chapters, I present several examples that illustrate how aesthetic mediations of conflict have worked and might work in practice. There we will consider the conciliatory and educative potential of the aesthetic domain not just by virtue of its inherent qualities, but because its forms and processes can be crafted with sensitivity both to the requirements of reconciliation and to the dynamics of particular conflicts.
CHAPTER 13

AESTHETIC MEDIATIONS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT:
RESTORING CAPACITIES AND SUBSTANTIATING IMAGES OF A NEW FUTURE

In the previous chapter, I outlined at a conceptual level some of the links between the defining qualities of the aesthetic domain and the educational work of reconciliation. In this chapter and the next, I show how aesthetic forms and processes can be crafted to meet the educational challenges that present themselves at different stages of the reconciliation process. I do not intend to demonstrate, empirically, that the particular interventions I describe were transformative. Although I do believe that the activities were, to varying degrees, educationally effective, they were constrained by extremely limited resources, and their effectiveness was assessed only anecdotally, if at all. This dissertation's claim is a conceptual one, and the examples are offered as illustrations rather than as evidence.

At the most general level, the educational tasks of reconciliation can be divided into three stages: (1) restoration and/or enhancement of the necessary capacities; (2) learning—about oneself and one's former enemy, as well as various viewpoints on the history of the conflict; and (3) imagining and substantiating a new configuration for the future, based on a new moral relationship and an intention to resolve conflicts in ways that meet the underlying needs of all parties. These "stages" are not at all linear—as adversaries deepen their understanding of the conflict new resistances are often encountered that then require a corresponding deepening of capacities. Also it may be that a single activity can address more than one task. Nevertheless, these three broad stages are helpful for purposes of analysis.

In this chapter, I will present illustrations primarily from my own work as a co-existence facilitator along with some examples of the work of colleagues. These
illustrations are presented in terms of 'reconciliation' and 'the aesthetic' as these have been conceptualized in previous chapters.

My own work as a co-existence facilitator often incorporates elements of a community-based oral history model developed in collaborations among artists, scholars and community people affiliated with The Oral History Center (OHC) in the Boston area. The OHC model is based on the idea that every person has a story to tell and that stories can be important vehicles for education.35

Stories can be important resources for facilitating communication across differences for several reasons. First, people in every culture tell stories, and narrative is one of the easiest forms to translate from one language to another. Also, stories generally chronicle both actions and consciousness, and for this reason give windows onto ethical dilemmas and the moral dimension of human choices (Bruner, 1990, p. 51). Stories are used to pass on values from one generation to another, and also to construct meaning and to explicate "the mitigating circumstances surrounding conflict-threatening breaches in the ordinariness of life." (Bruner, 1990, p. 95) In a sense, even personal narratives are expressions of collective forms: people tell stories within the forms and using sets of symbols made available to them from their culture (Linde, 1993, p. 11). Nevertheless, individuals do compose their own life stories, improvising on cultural patterns and, in some cases, finding unexpected meanings. (Bateson, M., 1990, p.16)

The OHC model places an equal emphasis on the importance of attentive, focused listening in eliciting the stories that people need and want to tell. In many ways, the quality of listening is like aesthetic attention—in that in this kind of oral history work, interviewers are asked as much as possible to suspend their own points of view, their own frameworks, and to listen for the patterns that emerge from the teller's rendition. Interviewers seek to discover the teller's map of her own story.

In addition to the language of story and the importance of listening, the OHC model emphasizes the use of a variety of artistic media, in order to present stories back to
Communities from which they are gathered in formats that are engaging and accessible, and that dignify the narrators and honor the history and culture their stories reflect and sustain. Stories gathered in oral history interviews have been synthesized, for instance, in quilts, slide shows, murals, plays, exhibitions of photographs and stories, books, ballads.

The OHC model was developed to document, validate and analyze stories of groups that rarely have been highlighted in traditional history sources, including women, people of color, immigrant groups, working people, children, and religious minorities. Projects are designed both to encourage awareness of one's own history and culture and to strengthen understanding across differences in age, class, race, gender and sexual orientation.

Among the settings in which I have used this model are two that involved people from groups engaged in overt, violent conflict. In both cases, the conflict addressed was in the Middle East. The first project was A Passion for Life: Stories and Folk Arts of Palestinian and Jewish Women. In it I worked with a Palestinian fabric artist to create an exhibition of the life stories and folk arts of eight women, both Jewish and Palestinian, then living in the Boston area. The exhibition, which opened in 1989, was accompanied by a series of public events, including a workshop on stereotypes, a theoretical inquiry into folk arts in communities in crisis, an evening of storysharing, and a music and dance festival.36

The second setting involved workshops with teenagers currently living in Israel, Palestine, Egypt, and Jordan, and smaller numbers from other Arab countries as well, who attended Seeds of Peace International Camp, located in Maine, in the summers of 1996 and 1997. In 1996 I worked with nine groups for just one session each; in 1997 I worked with twelve groups for three sessions each.

While these two settings made use of the same basic community oral history model, they were adapted in different ways, especially in terms of the relative emphasis placed on product and process, and the directness of contact between members of the adversary groups. At Seeds of Peace, the teenagers interacted directly, through joint participation in
oral history activities and visual art projects, interspersed with a great deal of conversation, and, on many occasions, heated arguments. In *A Passion for Life*, participants' contact with each other was mostly indirect; they learned about Palestinian and Jewish history and culture (as did members of the general public) primarily by viewing an exhibition of edited life stories, juxtaposed with objects of related folk art. Only a few Palestinian and Jewish people, those who participated in the project's Directions Committee, interacted directly for any length of time.

Most of the examples in this chapter and the next are drawn from either *A Passion for Life* or from Seeds of Peace International Camp. I do, however, also illustrate points using examples from two community oral history projects that were efforts at reconciliation among people divided by the structural violence of oppression (as opposed to the direct violence that defines the Middle East conflict). I will describe these projects in the body of the chapter, as material from them is introduced.

Circumventing or Restoring Impaired Capacities

In this section, I will illustrate how aesthetic forms and processes can be used to restore and/or enhance the communicative capacities needed for reconciliation. In particular, I will illustrate how aesthetic engagement can be used to support adversaries to circumvent or overcome (1) intolerance; (2) the inability to listen; (3) the inability to speak; and (4) consuming rage.

Overcoming Intolerance

*A Passion for Life* was planned in the mid-1980s, but did not actually get underway until 1988 and 1989, the years during which the Palestinian *intifada* was at its most active and the Israeli government's response at its most brutal. Although the project took place among Jewish and Palestinian people living in the United States, it was nevertheless difficult to find people willing to participate, especially in face-to-face meetings. In fact, my Palestinian co-director found herself so distraught over the televised images of Palestinian children being injured by Israeli soldiers that she was unable to listen to Jewish
women's stories and, therefore, to conduct joint interviews, as we had planned. One of the Jewish women, an American citizen who had immigrated from Europe at the end of World War II, was willing to have her story in the exhibit but unwilling to meet directly with Palestinian women. She held her position in support of the Israeli government, which at that time decreed that it was illegal for Israeli citizens to meet with Palestinian people.

We might say, then, that the ability of these women simply to tolerate each other's presence—indicative also of the capacities of members of their communities—was impaired by their responses to the violence, by the history of enmity and by their unquestioning allegiance to the rules of relevant governments. In this case, the inability of Palestinian and Jewish women to meet each other face-to-face was temporarily circumvented by having their "conversation," their learning about each other's cultures, mediated through a variety of art forms. At a small gathering, both Palestinian and Jewish women listened to each other's folk music; at another they observed demonstrations of Eastern European Jewish papercutting and Palestinian embroidery. Finally, they attended an exhibition of each other's stories and folk arts. Those women who remained unable to converse directly, beyond in some cases polite greetings, were able to learn something of each other's perspectives, sensibilities, history and culture by attending these events and viewing the exhibition. They were able to move through a range of emotional responses, unconstrained by expected interactions with either their adversaries or members of their own communities.

It might be argued that adversaries can access indirectly each others' points of view by reading history, or commentary by each other's philosophers and political scientists. This is true, and some people do make use of these resources. Life stories and folk arts are different however, in that they embody not just ideas, but the sensibilities of both individuals and collectivities. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the stories and folk arts of people on both sides of the conflict, A Passion for Life was crafted to support people who could witness their own history and culture celebrated and validated at the same time they
were being asked to extend themselves towards their perceived enemy. Some people—Palestinians in particular, whose stories and culture receive so little exposure in the American context--focused most of their attention on the stories of the women from their own community. But several who made repeated visits throughout the two months of the exhibit could be seen glancing at and beginning to confront the Jewish women's stories and folk art as well.

The stories of each of the women whose work was exhibited in A Passion for Life were selected and sequenced to counteract the most common stereotypes and to highlight cultural commonalities, of which there are many. Although each woman's section of the exhibit included stories related to the conflict that would be challenging for members of the adversary group, we began each sequence with stories about daily life and children's games, stories about rituals surrounding healing and childbirth, and stories that revealed a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at oneself.

Here are two stories from A Passion for Life. Both emerge from the domain that is distinctly women's, in each culture. The first is told by an older Jewish American woman who had grown up in a Lithuanian shtetl. The second is from a Palestinian American woman whose family had fled from Israel/Palestine in 1948 and who grew up in Jordan and Syria. Both stories include reference to the "evil eye" and remedies against it. The "evil eye" is a belief construct shared by Jewish and Arab/Muslim cultures.

Embedded with each story is a bit of history that is important for Jewish and Palestinian people to understand about each other. The first story makes subtle references to tensions between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors in Europe. At the same time, it shows European Jews as resourceful and valuable members of their communities, not the child-murderers many Palestinian women believed them to be, based on the "history" they had been taught in Arab schools. The Palestinian woman's story includes an understated reference to the losses incurred by her family when they fled from Israel/Palestine in 1948. Her mother's embroidered gameboards had been left behind, and it took her many years to
begin to embroider again, to come back to normal. The very understatement of this comment may have allowed some Jewish exhibition viewers to begin to imagine the pervasiveness of the losses experienced when Palestinian people were uprooted.

The Same Prossik

My grandmother used to take care of the medical part of her town. There were no doctors. There wasn't even a veterinarian. I remember my grandmother used to buy by the pound all kinds of things, medicine and with a shtaysl -- you know what a shtaysl is? a mortar--and I always used to help her. She used to have three, four, five mortars: bigger ones and smaller ones. And I as a little girl, I used to come in, she used to give me the pestle and say, "Reib. Klapp." I used to help her. And when she used to finish, she used to put it into square little pieces of paper, to make proskes.

We used to make jokes about it. We used to say that somebody comes and tells Bobbe that they can't have a baby. They want to have a baby, and they can't have it. She used to give them a prossik. And the same day, somebody else came, and said she had too many children, she would like to stop having children. She used to give her a prossik too. The same prossik! That was a joke, but maybe it was true. Who knows?

Farmers used to come to her and buy the medicine for their cattle. That was the only way they could treat their cattle from disease, from infections. And it helped. Without Grandmother, I don't know what they would have done. But in some cases, where nothing helped, you know what they used to do? They used to come to the rabbi to oyfshprekhin ayin ha-ra--you know what that means? They believed that if nothing helped, they could come to the rabbi and he would chase away the evil eye. I don't know even if the rabbi believed in it or not, but the farmers used to come to him.

And when they came to him, they were ashamed from one another; the next-door neighbor shouldn't find out. So they used to bring a chicken for--they didn't have any money to pay, so they used to bring a chicken for the rabbi, for his services. So they used to hide the chicken somewheres, so that nobody knows they're going to the rabbi. They used to run around backalleys, back yards. And everybody did it, but they were afraid of one another, because they were ashamed.

A Catholic farmer going to a rabbi, to get help for his cattle! Does that make sense? But they had no alternative. There was nothing else to do, so they used to come to him.
My Father Wouldn't Even Know

This is a traditional Palestinian women's game called Bargheese. I made it especially for A PASSION FOR LIFE, but I made it in the traditional way. The name Bargheese comes from an Arabic word referring to one of the stars in the sky. And every game should have something written on it. This one says: "Flowers are beautiful! How beautiful are the flowers!" Sometimes people write "A stick in the eye of the devil" to protect you from the evil eye.

And the most interesting thing is that the game uses the names of parts of the house. The center square, where you have to get to to win the game, we call it "The Kitchen." So when you move a marker into the kitchen, we say "it's cooked." And in order to get into the kitchen, you have to have exactly the right combination of shells, so when we are stuck in that place, we say, "it's like being stuck in the bathroom." So we use everything from the home to make the game more interesting; it shows a woman's life.

The game uses six shells, which are thrown; different combinations indicate different moves. You can knock the other players off the board. So it's not just luck; you have to be smart enough to make the right choices.

Before '48, every Palestinian woman used to make several of these games before her marriage. They would make several so that on the days when women gathered at each other's houses there would be enough games to go around. And they would put their names on the back, because sometimes they needed to borrow from each other. In '48, my mother left several fancy Bargheese games in Safed. She left so many embroidered things there—that's why it took many years for my mother to come back to normal and start to embroider again. That's when she made a new set of Bargheese.

I've been playing this game since I was eight years old—when I was a child, I thought it was the only game in the world. I played it with my sisters and my step-sister and my mother. Many times when I came home from school they would be playing; and many times they would forget the food cooking on the stove. The food would get burned, and they wouldn't notice until they smelled it, and then they would rush around....So my father used to try to hide the game from my mother, because he knew about this problem. They used to look everywhere: under the bed or under the mattress. They would play with it and then put it back so my father wouldn't know they had found it.

Circumventing and Overcoming Difficulties in Listening

In a recent interview, I asked Elise Boulding, a revered elder of the peace studies and conflict resolution professional communities, what capacities she would hope to find in a novice conflict resolution practitioner, one who might be just graduating from a masters'
program. "If I had to sum up peacemaking in just one word," she said, "it would be 'listening.'"

Even in what appear to be the most intractable of conflict situations, one kind of intervention is almost always possible: listening to the stories, the suffering, the complaints, even the defensive rhetoric of the adversaries on both sides. People who have been involved in longstanding violent enmity, often need to be listened to extensively. They need to have their suffering acknowledged, they need to tell the stories of the traumas they have witnessed and experienced. To heal their wounds they need to vent their rage, grieve their losses and relive their terror. To construct the meaning of their experiences, they have to revisit what was incomprehensible at the time it occurred and also to integrate new realities.

Listening can be transformative also for those in positions of relative power for whom reconciliation requires a re-examination of their own stereotypes. For instance, in The Listening Project, a Buddhist-inspired anti-racism project in rural North Carolina, an activist described the following experience:

Active listening allows a greater truth to emerge. I remember listening to one woman who was being surveyed about the relationship between racism and poverty. She started off by calling Blacks inferior. I didn't judge her or react to her. I asked her to comment on the fact that many Blacks are highly respected doctors, lawyers and professors. This led her to talk about the importance of education, and we soon began talking about the effects of slavery and unequal opportunity. Eventually she disagreed with her own statement of Black inferiority and ended by acknowledging a need in the United States to make equal opportunity for education a national priority. This transformation was possible only because my listening made her feel safe to risk examining her ideas on race, perhaps for the first time in her life (Walters, 1993, p. 24).

It is the rare circumstance in which one's former adversary is able to afford this kind of listening. It would be unreasonable to expect most African-American people to subject themselves to this kind of rhetoric (although there are many members of oppressed groups who are able to listen with generosity of spirit and belief in the possibility of change). But in most cases, the enemy herself is filled with her own need to tell, to heal, and to construct meaning. Furthermore, the stories one adversary needs to tell are those
which are likely to raise the resistances of the other—who, after all, may have been
complicit in the first’s suffering, and who will likely take offense at the very constructs
used in the telling.

For instance, most of the Palestinian teenagers who participate in Seeds of Peace
witnessed many horrors during the *intifada*. Some had been wounded or imprisoned
themselves; many witnessed the death of friends and family members. Their need to tell
about these experiences is enormous. Israeli teenagers, on the other hand, who have been
socialized to revere the image of the just and moderate Israeli soldier, whose older brothers
and sisters are now soldiers, and who will, themselves be soldiers in just a few years, can
barely stand to hear the Palestinian’s stories. They look for every possible reason to
discredit their narratives, challenging inconsistencies in small details or trying to discover
what unnamed Palestinian aggressions could reasonably have justified the Israeli violence.
Many Israeli young people were sure that the Palestinians were highlighting rare incidents
of violence for the politically-motivated purposes of gaining sympathy and deliberately
inflicting discomfort upon the Israelis.

The Palestinian teens also have difficulty listening to Israeli stories. However much
they might sympathize with Israeli’s fears about traveling on buses, or what they endured
during the Gulf War, they feel—often with justification—that their own suffering has been
much more profound and pervasive. Israeli’s do need to tell these stories, as well as stories
about personal connections to the Holocaust. But it is difficult for the Palestinian young
people to give their Israeli counterparts the quality of attention they need to feel validated
and heard.

The emotional difficulties on both sides are further exacerbated by discrepancies in
language. When a Palestinian refers to “Palestine” the Israelis feel threatened that they are
referring to the whole piece of land in question, leaving no room for an Israel. They argue
“There is no Palestine; say Palestinian Authority!” The Israeli insistence that there is not,
as yet, a Palestinian state undermines a portion of the pride Palestinian teens can claim.
I believe that in situations like these, there exists what we might call a "systemic deficit" in listening capacity. It is here that facilitators, mediators, and artist/mediators can play a crucial role. Mediators have traditionally found listening to be among their most important activities—listening to one side and interpreting motivations and meanings and experiences of suffering in terms understandable to the other side. Artist/mediators can deepen and expand on this role in two important ways. First, they can listen with a quality of attention they have cultivated as artists—with the alert calmness, engaged detachment and feelingful awareness that are needed to elicit the stories with a quality of integrity that has the potential to be healing and transformative. As Dori Laub (Felman & Laub, 1992) noted, the calm animation of a certain kind of listening can infuse energy into the silences of trauma victims, in ways the support them from sinking into the abyss of their own despair. Listening is one important way in which capacities that have been eclipsed by violence can begin to be restored.

It has been my experience that the stories that emerge into the respectful, animated, and attentive (i.e., aesthetic) receptivity often exhibit unusual integration of feelings and thoughts as well as wholeness of form. Listening to another's story takes on aspects of aesthetic perception when we listen for the meanings that emerge from a complete rendition (as opposed to interrupting, questioning or challenging a particular statement). Listening also has aesthetic dimension when we attend to the patterns that unite even seemingly disparate elements. The listener responds to the emotions of the story as it is being told, reciprocating them by way of body language and tone of voice. The listener brings an eagerness to hear, a belief in the importance of the story to be told, a reverence for the teller and the telling. It often happens then that the teller reciprocates the qualities that pervade the presence of the listener.

An artist/mediator who gathers such stories can then shape them for presentation to various publics, including the adversaries of those telling the stories. This is the second important way in which the work of an artist/mediator can deepen and extend the carrying...
or interpreting of messages between adversaries that is common to most mediation. The stories can be sequenced, edited, crafted, and presented to those who may otherwise be resistant to hearing the story, with awareness of the sensibilities both of those who have told them and those who need to hear them. The artist/mediator has a range of resources—including a variety of aesthetic forms—that can be used to transmit the qualities of reverence and respect for the storyteller that animated the original conversation. What is being mediated, in these cases, is not just information, but qualities of listening, attention and response as well.

In the Seeds of Peace context, where I was co-leading process-oriented co-existence sessions, I structured this kind of mediation in the following way. After a series of warm-up activities, participants were asked to create visual images. The images were usually about how the conflict in the Middle East had affected them personally. At various stages of the camp experience, campers also had other choices: to draw images of their family and community, of a time when they or someone they knew "took a stand" for a heartfelt belief, or what they anticipated would happen when they returned home. Their pictures were drawn on foam-core cut to resemble hexagonal tiles, which were later arrayed as a mosaic.

After the images were completed, my co-facilitator and I chose two to four participants to interview as the group observed. We used the visual images on their "tiles" as starting points. In part, we were modeling interviewing skills, which, in most sessions, the participants later could practice with each other. At the same time, we were also allowing the whole group to hear several important stories, told into the receptivity of our listening. It often was the case that the teenagers told stories in this context that they had not yet shared with each other—particularly stories about losses within their own families. In some cases, several hours were required to process the feelings, reactions and questions raised in response to just two model interviews.
These interviews did not automatically and immediately transform skepticism into respectful curiosity. Nevertheless, they did allow the campers to hear stories that they would not have otherwise heard, and/or to hear stories with a depth of feeling that they might not have heard. Over time, I believe, telling and listening to such stories contributed to the campers' understanding of each other and their ability to become more trusting and trustworthy.

Among my colleagues at Seeds of Peace, several use aesthetic forms and processes to address the ubiquitous communicative problems raised by the young people's inability, especially at the beginning of their camp experience, to listen to each other. Left to their own devices, the campers would spend hours simultaneously yelling at each other, shifting from topic to topic, hurt to hurt, myth to myth. Sometimes we would allow this angry yelling to continue for a half hour or so, so the young people themselves could reflect on its value and whether it in fact helped them to feel understood or to understand.

One team of facilitators from the Creative Arts Team (CAT) at New York University used the techniques of educational drama to create enough distance for the campers to reflect on their own feelings and experience. The facilitators acted out a scene between two campers arriving at Seeds of Peace from New York City, one African-American (Tisha) and one white (Jolie). At first their two characters are delighted to find someone from home (especially amidst all these "terrorists" from the Middle East, about whom they complain and express their fears), but all too quickly they discover they are from neighborhoods—Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bensonhurst—where Tisha's brother had been killed, and Jolie's mother had been mugged. The scene they act out is crafted brilliantly to parallel the feelings that the Israeli and Palestinian young people encounter as they meet each other at camp—to serve, according to Linda Carole Pierce of CAT, as both a distancing device and simultaneously as a mirror. Tisha and Jolie become immersed in a violently angry fight, and then turn to the real Seeds of Peace campers who take on roles of counselors and bunkmates in order to mediate their conflict.
The Arab and Israeli teenagers are extremely skillful in helping Tisha and Jolie find a way of communicating with each other. These skills do not immediately transfer to their arguments about the Middle East—but their experience in the drama does become a touchstone for them. When they (frequently) reach the point where they are unable to listen, they sometimes recall the scene with Tisha and Jolie and remind each other to take a breath, to listen, not to continuously change the subject.

In relation to *A Passion for Life*, I have in the past several years experimented with poetic form as a way of inviting the adversaries to listen to each other’s stories with the qualities of reverence and respect that animated the initial interviews. As a form, the poetic renderings of the narrative have important educative potential. For instance, historical material can be streamlined, so people are able to absorb and compare several different aspects of the conflict within a relatively short period of time. Also, the poetic forms invite the shimmering of attention between self and other, hopefully engaging those who hear in attending both to the poetic image as well as to its reverberations and resonances within themselves.

Here are examples of poetic renderings of small sections of two narratives collected during *A Passion for Life*. Each one represents a part of the history it is particularly difficult for those on the other side of the conflict to acknowledge. One is a story about Auschwitz; the Holocaust is a part of Jewish history that many Palestinians have great difficulty in acknowledging, in part because it has been offered inappropriately as an excuse for their own suffering and because its legacy has been politically abused by leaders on both sides. The second is a story about Israeli brutality in the imprisonment of Palestinians during the intifada. These stories are extremely difficult for many Jewish people to hear, including many Jewish Americans whose images of Palestinians have been shaped by the media’s representation of “terrorists” and whose capacity to criticize the Israeli government is impaired by a sense of unquestioning loyalty.
These poems have embedded within them the power of life stories on which they are based--personal narratives that allow us to consider major historical events at the level of human experience, suffering and resilience. The poetic form attempts to capture the intensity of the personal encounter, paradoxically less available through reading transcripts of oral narrative verbatim.

*To Tell the Story* (excerpts)

When I returned to the barracks
A hunched little figure filled my spot on the floor
Arye, my brother! A miracle!
"I'm not Arye, I'm Eva, your sister"
Her voice and her eyes were ghosts

Eva didn't want to eat
she'd lost everything by then
So I stood in line
filling her coffee can with food:
"Take this sip for Father, this sip for Mother
Just another sip."
Every day
day by day
I was strong
for her

They marched us three miles
for delousing.
After the shower, we grabbed for dresses
my sister didn't get one
Three miles she marched
naked
back to Birkenau
As we walked by electrified wire gates
two inmates were looking for us
one with a ball in his hand
and all at once
he threw it
It was a pink cotton dress
crust of bread
in the pocket

What mortal person would stand there?
If the SS saw them they would have been shot.
It was another Elijah
Human Eljahs
claiming their lives
by risking their lives
pink dress tossed
in the grey, grey, grey desolation
of the camp.
Taking a chance
I volunteered to work in their factory
Naked, we marched in a circle
SS watching to see who was strong
I pinched redness into Eva's cheek
on her head I tied the scarf from Elijah

Somehow I held her arm
And somehow we walked around
And somehow we were chosen

Each morning
in the corners of the factory
a German worker
hid onion or potato
breadcrust or apple
for Eva
the gaunt slave girl
who swept shattered glass from the floor

At Christmas
with threads pulled from blanket
black wool cut from coat
needle begged from guard
the shattered glass girl
stitched him a bookcover
corners embellished with yellow flowers

- based on interviews with 'Sara'
To Cry Palestinian Tears (excerpts)

Even if you are in heaven
you will dream of Palestine

Nablus rests on two mountains
the downtown between
the sun rises
the sun sets
houses of white stone glow golden and red

I cry when I remember

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At seventeen
my brother lay flowers
on the gravestones of martyrs
seized from our nest
he was flung into jail

Cold pre-dawn darkness
pawed at my soul
each minute choked back an hour of rage

Soldiers searching our parcels, our bodies
until we no longer felt we were real

Through the fence between me and my brother
My finger sought his on the other side
I brought him rainbows of threads and strings
escape routes he could embroider

Once, when three of my brothers all were in chains
the young soldier who came for the fourth
pushed papers in my father's face:
'Sign that we haven't taken anything from your home.'
My father refused.

What can I say?
You want me to sign that you didn't take a couch?
You took the best thing in my home
the best thing in my life
You took everything that I want
Everything that I love.

For years my father refused to see them
refused the shame of the prison guard's search.
Sitting on the couch
he wept like a woman.
His sons all in prison
and he sits alone.
You could see the prison from our house
and I cried every minute
After eleven years they let him go free
but his youth and his joy
had long since been lost

I'd love to return his embroidered purse
the bird filled with song and the red, red rose
But I can't
get them in
to the country
now. It's forbidden.

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When my father died
he left me many things
but not being Palestinian
I cannot inherit them.
I cannot sell
I cannot buy
I cannot do anything
as Palestinian
except cry Palestinian tears.

--based on interviews with Jehad

So far, in this chapter I have presented examples of how aesthetic forms and processes can be used to overcome or circumvent impairment to two communicative capacities critical to the work of reconciliation: the capacity to simply tolerate interaction with another, and the capacity to listen. In the next two sections, I will offer examples in which two additional kinds of capacities are addressed: the capacity to speak and the capacity to overcome consuming rage.

Overcoming the Inability to Speak

People who have been directly involved in violent conflict are often unable to speak about their experiences. We examined this phenomenon in considerable detail in Chapter 6, when we considered Elaine Scarry's theories about the political implications of the inexpressibility of pain, and Dori Laub's conclusion that the silence of trauma survivors is both sanctuary and bondage.
The aesthetic domain offers enormous resources for those who are unable to speak about their experiences. Feelings and actual accounts of events can be expressed first through visual art, dance, movement, puppetry, drama, etc. Rehearsal sessions and improvisatory workshops can be structured to create safe spaces in which feelings that might otherwise be deemed inappropriate can be expressed, and experiences that have been repressed, can be brought to awareness, and integrated into one's self-concept. There is a whole literature based on the experiences of and therapeutic interventions (including art therapy) for victims of sexual abuse, trauma, and post-traumatic stress syndrome.

In the context of this dissertation, it is possible only to mention briefly two practical ways in which the Oral History Center's model has been adapted in working with people who have been unable or reluctant to speak about their experiences. The first instance is drawn not from the Middle East conflict, but from work with Haitian children living in Cambridge. Many of these children had witnessed political atrocities enacted by Jean Claude Duvalier's militia, the Ton Ton Makout. Others had been transplanted by airplane from rural Haitian communities where they had never seen a toilet or a clock into the middle of a major urban metropolis. Many of these children were also separated from parents and other family members.

In addition to these traumas, the Haitian children in the grade 5-8 bilingual program at the Graham and Parks Alternative School in Cambridge were at the bottom of the social hierarchy in their school. They did not speak English well, if at all. They were teased about body odor and about being carriers of AIDS. Their already low self-esteem took a bruising every day, and their teacher, Pat Berkeley, felt frustrated in her attempts to have them share their experiences or discuss their lives in Haiti.

Pat decided to engage the class in an oral history project. The Haitian children chose careers they were interested in learning about, and interviewed Haitian adults successfully employed in those occupations. The adults told stories not only about their jobs, but also about traumas they had experienced in Haiti and also about how difficult it
had been to adjust to the cold Cambridge winters and the peculiarities of American culture. With help from a Harvard intern, they transcribed the tapes of these interviews and created a slide-tape show called "We Are Proud of Who We Are" where they took the roles of the successful adult they had interviewed.

Once the Haitian children saw that the stories of the adults of their community were validated in the school setting, pictures and stories from their own experiences began to pour out of them. They drew pictures of harrowing experiences with the TonTon Makout and with voodoo practitioners. They wrote about their longing for the island, its bounty and its beauty.

Pat created a gallery of the children’s artwork in the school corridor, across from the principal's office, where they would be noticed by other teachers and children as well. These images created a context for other teachers, at first, to ask the Haitian children about their experiences and their stories. Ultimately, through a series of several projects, the Haitian children led the whole school in creating notecards to sell to raise money for an eye clinic in Haiti. They had come a long way from being unable to name their own experience.

At Seeds of Peace, too, some of the teenagers were reluctant to speak, especially about particularly painful stories. As I noted above, in these workshops the oral history model was adapted so that stories and experiences were first expressed in visual form. It was in this context that several of the campers were first able to express important experiences. I don't think that in any of these instances the stories had been suppressed beneath language. They might have emerged with attentive listening, whether there were opportunities to draw first or not. However, the opportunity to express themselves in a visual mode offered each of the campers the chance to focus solely on their own story for fifteen minutes or so, without having to fight for airtime or worry about how others would respond. It is not totally a coincidence, I think, that it was in this format that during the fourth and last week of camp, Hiba from Gaza was able to tell her co-existence group for
the first time that nine years ago her older brother had been accused of fighting during the *intifada*, and that he had left the country rather than risk arrest by the soldiers who came searching for him on a daily basis. She has not seen him since that time. It was also in this format that Dana from Egypt told her co-existence group that her grandfather had been killed in a war with Israel and that her uncle had been held in an Israeli prison for two years. Torture had left him blind and somewhat deranged. Dana’s family had hidden these stories from her until they knew she was coming to Seeds of Peace, when they made a point of informing her of the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on her own family.

These small examples are noted here simply to mark the enormous potential of aesthetic forms and processes to create opportunities for expression, even when experience is not accessible to language or when discursive language alone is insufficiently nuanced to capture the import of an experience that needs to be expressed and shared.

**Overcoming Consuming Rage**

It is often the case that people who have been involved in violent conflict are scarred by their suffering, unable to feel at all, or unable to empathize to any meaningful extent with the suffering of their former adversaries. Several of the Palestinian teenagers I worked with at Seeds of Peace appeared to fall in this category. Many had witnessed the deaths of several young friends and relatives; many had suffered humiliation at the hands of Israeli soldiers; many had lost years of schooling because of curfews; many were still unable to visit relatives in nearby towns and cities. “We have had no childhood,” they said, frequently.

The Israeli young people faced another challenge. They are the children of occupiers, yet they themselves nevertheless live in fear. Unquestionably, though, the general tenor of their lives is one of normalcy, with access to amenities unimaginable to some of their Palestinian peers. But the Israeli youngsters must contend with shame, with resisting first the suspicion and then the conviction that the policies of their government
have inflicted enormous pain on the families of these young Palestinians, the very people who are becoming their friends.

In the mid-point of the camp, Abd-El-Salaam told his coexistence group the story of his experiences during the intifada. At the age of 9 he was caught throwing stones by Israeli soldiers and imprisoned overnight. He saw a fifteen year old friend and a twenty-three year old uncle killed. Abd-El-Salaam was filled with rage. When the Israelis in the group questioned him—"Well, what did you expect if you were throwing stones?"—he lashed out. "You Israelis are a people with no history and no culture," he spat out, apparently referring to the fact that Israel has been a state for only fifty years. "I don't care if you are scared to ride in your busses. We deserve to be on this land and we will fight for it. I am proud to fight for it."

Abd-Al-Salam was one of the young people who made me wonder whether coexistence sessions were appropriate for all the kids. I wanted to spend hours with him alone, listening and listening and listening to his stories, allowing him to rage and to weep and to move through his experiences at his own pace. Of what use is it to the Israeli kids to hear this rage, I wondered—-a wonder that was sharpened as one Israeli girl got up in tears and walked out of the co-existence session well before it was over.

At the end of our three sessions with each of the twelve co-existence groups, my co-facilitator and I asked each participant to spend a few minutes writing a letter to the group or to any member of the group, expressing anything that they had not had the time to say during the sessions, or that remained unspoken for whatever reason. Most of the campers finished these letters in five or ten minutes. Abd-Al-Salam was writing in a very focused way, however, and requested to continue to work on his letter after the session ended. He brought it to me during a meeting a couple of hours later. Here is what he wrote:
To all Israelis in my group:

1 - You are very angry about what I said yesterday and about the way which I spoke but this is my way which I learned from your soldiers and your government because your people taught me to be always angry and because my heart was broken a lot of time and until now my heart is broken so when I said that your country without culture or without history because your government try to burn my culture and my history.

2 - You are very angry when someone say that is from Palestine and you understand that he is from Jaffa or Hifa [Haifa—i.e. from inside the 1967 boundaries of Israel]. I think you do that because you know that this land (which occupied in 1948 and 1967) is Palestine from the beginning of life.

3 - About suffuring you said you are scared in bombing and you can't find the safe [safety] in buses but you must know that hamas activities started [four years ago] and I agree with you that you can't find safe in buses but I can't find in my home in my school and in my hospital. The only place I find safe in cemetery and you must know that hamas is a very small part in Palestinian people but your government who make troubles in my side was elected by 52% from your people. And you must ask about the reason which control hamas to make like these things.

4 - About what you said to me you must forget the past my answer that I must remind you about my past because I'm afraid that what your government did with my uncle and my friend maybe your government will make it to me or to my father. I need to live in peace with my family with my friend and maybe with my sons and my daughters and my wife and the main important thing that I will to say is that I'm not talk about my past to make your heart broken but you must lesson [listen] to my past to understand my life and my story because we must make peace.

Abd-Al-Salam wrote this letter during the third of his three sessions with me; from that point he moved on to other facilitators. I actually never had an opportunity to talk with him again in depth. But the facilitators who led his group at the end of the camp reported that in the final session Abd-Al-Salam was strongly appreciated by all the members of his group, Israelis and Arabs alike, who all felt that they had learned from what he had shared. For his part, he indicated that he counted as among his dearest friends one of the Israeli boys in his group.

Whatever progress Abd-Al-Salam made, and however lasting it turns out to be, it is attributable to the seriousness with which he approached the work, his willingness to be vulnerable, and the support he received from all of the coexistence facilitators and the entire camp program. I would not be surprised, however, to learn that these sessions in which he
told his story and wrote this letter—in which his anger was acknowledged and honored, and
in which he focused all his attention on expressing it, giving it shape in the forms of story
and letter—played a part in healing his wounds and in helping him overcome his
understandable, all-consuming rage.

Imagining and Substantiating a New Future

In the previous section, we considered several ways in which aesthetic forms and
processes can be structured to help restore capacities that are needed for the work of
reconciliation, but, whether due to the effects of the violence or for some other reason,
have been impaired or are insufficiently developed. Many of those same examples also
illustrate how adversaries' learning about themselves and each other can be mediated
through aesthetic forms and processes—a phase of the work of reconciliation to which we
return in the next chapter. In the present section, I will illustrate several different ways in
which the aesthetic can be used to help adversaries imagine and substantiate a new future.

Imagining a New Moral Framework for Future Relationships

In 1992, I worked for a week in a "cultural camp" for African-American, Viet
Namese and white young people sponsored by a neighborhood house in Biloxi,
Mississippi. I was part of a team of cultural workers from The Center for Cultural and
Community Development (CCCD), including, among others, the African-American
musician Jane Sapp and the Chinese-American muralist, Wen-ti Tsen. In the words of
CCCD's mission statement, our work was guided by the belief that

the historical and cultural roots of grassroots communities provide a powerful
base from which communities can determine and shape their struggles, their
development, their institutions and their visions.... We believe that a strong
sense of cultural integrity is necessary in order for people to overcome
feelings of powerlessness and to understand that there are resources and
possibilities created by their own lives, histories and struggles.... CCCD
connects communities with the power of their own creativity to mobilize their
efforts and their vision into powerful forces for social transformation (Center

Throughout the week, I spent each afternoon working with the oldest participants,
a group of teenagers, all of whom were African-American. Their work illustrates the
potential in aesthetic forms and processes—in this case, storytelling and drama—to help people imagine transforming relationships inscribed by patterns of domination and oppression to relationships of reciprocal respect.

Although in many cases, aesthetic mediations of conflict involve people from opposing groups interacting directly with each other, this example illustrates the usefulness of working in homogeneous groups. In cases where people have been oppressed, or where they are fearful of retribution or retaliation, working in uni-national or single-community settings may be a necessary prelude or accompaniment to activities with the mixed group.

On the final day of the cultural camp, the Biloxi teenagers shared stories with each other about moments when they had experienced discrimination. They used these stories as the basis for a dramatic presentation that they performed for their parents, for the younger children, and for members of the church that hosted us. During the morning, the twelve teenagers shared thirty-three stories about experiences with racism—primarily about times when they were mistrusted or humiliated by white teachers at school, and also about incidents in stores owned or operated by either white or Viet Namese adults, who either kept them under surveillance or made them wait while white customers were being served out of turn. Their stories made it clear that racism is pervasive in their lives. Their stories also revealed the extent to which they feel unsupported by adults in dealing with this problem: their parents are equally likely to be victims of racist incidents in commercial settings and equally likely to feel trapped by their own rage and their feelings of powerlessness. In relation to problems at school, their parents generally would take the teacher's side of a dispute, admonishing them to refrain from being 'disobedient.'

The dramatic representation of their stories was set in a public school classroom. Each of the twelve performers wore a sign indicating the race of the person they represented. Kim, who portrayed a white teacher, set the scene by instructing the class to take out papers and pencils for term exams.
The teens portrayed five incidents in which the teacher discriminated against the African-American and Viet Namense students in the classroom, all of which were based on the stories they articulated earlier in the day. In the first incident, the teacher invites the students to move around the classroom to do anything they need to do prior to the test. After allowing a white girl to get up and discard some trash, the teacher admonishes Dandrea, a black student, for being up out of her seat. She demands that Dandrea retrieve her paper from the trash. “I ain’t no trashdigger,” Dandrea refuses. “Now you go and sit down,” instructs the teacher. In an aside to the audience, Dandrea holds her own: “I’m sitting down because I want to.”

In the next incident, the teacher simultaneously allows white kids to talk with impunity, but disciplines the African-American children. Referring to the white students, she justifies her actions: “Well, they are pulling A’s in this class.” Then she accuses Darius of cheating. She tears his paper and sends him to the office—all enacted while two white students are visibly and audibly comparing answers with each other, to no consequence. Darius’ body jolts with frustration that is all too real.

The teacher offers help to a white student while denying it to a Viet Namense student; and then allows a white girl extra time to complete her exam, making excuses for her when the other students complain.

In the final moments of their presentation, the students portray a scene that was not anticipated in any of their stories. Through an invention of their imagination, they collectively confront the teacher, pointing out the unfairness of her prejudicial attitudes and racist behavior. And then, with a generosity of spirit I found quite moving, they imagine the white teacher as someone capable of reconciliation. She apologizes to Dandrea in front of the class, and offers Darius the opportunity to take the exam again. She ends the play promising that “in the future I’ll treat everyone equally.”

As the teenagers leave the stage, Darius says under his breath, “We should take this play to the school board.”
Before the cultural camp, the African-American teenagers in Biloxi understood the dynamics of racism that pervaded their lives. They were also impressive storytellers, exploiting the vibrant colors and syncopated rhythms of African-American vernacular to full advantage. What they were missing was support to take each others' stories seriously, the opportunity to hear their stories as part of a larger whole, a structure that calls for a resolution, and an adult audience capable of and willing to take them seriously. Had their performance been part of an on-going program, or even a month-long program, and if the adults did not interfere, perhaps Darius would have led his friends in performing for the school board.

In any case, these teenagers from Biloxi now have in the repertoire of imaginable responses the possibility of supporting each other to confront racist behavior, even when they experience it at the hands of an authority figure. They and their audience also have an image of a white person capable of apologizing, of committing herself to changing her racist ways. Hopefully, these constructs of their imaginations will serve them well in the future.

Substantiating the New Future Being Imagined

In addition to imagining a new future, people involved in the work of reconciliation need some way of substantiating what they have imagined. At Seeds of Peace, during the early days of camp, many children and adults complained, "This isn't the real world. When these kids go home, they will face a different reality."

Throughout the month of the camp, there were many opportunities for the campers to experience their emerging respectful relationships as reliable, as real, on a visceral level. Israelis and Arabs slept in the same bunks (no small trauma for the first few nights), ate at the same tables, went on canoe trips and climbed mountains together. At news of the bombings in Jerusalem they grieved together and comforted each other. A symbol of the harmonious future they were anticipated emerged in a camp "anthem," composed for the camp by a musician who incorporated words written by one of the campers.
The Seeds of Peace anthem is unusual for a camp song. Its harmonies are complex and subtle; the four lines of its chorus can be sung in a canon. There were moments during coexistence sessions, when Palestinian and Israeli campers were engaged in angry shouting matches—over the future of Jerusalem, or whether the actions of a soldier could ever be considered terrorism for instance—the strains of the Seeds of Peace anthem overheard as it was rehearsed in the distance seemed almost laughable.

But as we repeated the song day after day, as people became familiar with its words and its melodies, the music itself could sometimes create for a few moments the experience of harmony that its words anticipated. I came to understand that the peaceful harmony of the Seeds of Peace anthem wasn’t "fake"; it allowed us to momentarily experience a hoped-for future we were still in the process of creating.

During the last few days of the camp, all of the campers are divided into two teams for "Color Games"—a variation for obvious reasons on the typical American camp’s "Color Wars." In 1997, the colors were green and blue. For three days, the teams competed: in every sport imaginable, in art contests, in memorization of poems, in singing national anthems, in a talent show. The entire event has a tribal ritualistic feel: teams are chosen around the campfire; bodies and hair are streaked with green and blue paint; by the end of the first day everyone is hoarse from chanting and shouting in support of their teammates. Color Games ends with an awards ceremony, where coaches and leaders give their own T-shirts to campers who have demonstrated desired qualities of persistence, generosity, sportsmanship and risk-taking.

It is an event about which I was very skeptical at first. Wouldn’t it have been terrific, I thought, to have a more arts-focused camp, and to have a culminating celebration with concerts, plays, exhibits, and publications? Wouldn’t it be better to pour our energy into something creative that wasn’t of such a competitive nature? While I still believe that the arts programming could be strengthened in various ways, and while I still have some reservations about their competitive underpinnings, I have come to see some virtues in the
Color Games. The most important aspect of the event is that campers forge extremely strong bonds across national lines. They depend on each other in an intense and visceral way. They stretch themselves, trying out new sports, for instance, or performing even when they are shy. Its very ritualized and visceral nature gives it the power, I think, to impress upon the campers the "realness" of the relationships they are creating with each other.

This year, Noa, one of the Israeli campers, allowed the entire camp to make use of Color Games for more reflective purposes as well. Noa, at thirteen, is a gifted musician and composer. For her contribution to the talent show, she composed a song, a meta-level commentary on Color Games:

When I look into your eyes
I feel like part of the Green team
And then I ask myself
What does it really mean?
Because a few days ago you were a Seed of Peace like me
But now things have changed, can't you see?

We belong to different sides
I am green and you are blue.
And during color games
I behave as if I didn't know you.
Because a few days ago you were a Seed of Peace like me
But now things have changed, can't you see?

Now the game is coming to an end
And the whole thing is through
I want you back as my friend
Even though you are blue
Because a few days ago you were a Seed of Peace like me
And how things have changed, can't you see?

The lyrics of Noa's song were discussed during many of the post-Color Games final coexistence sessions, where campers reflected on the similarities between the intensity of their allegiance to their teams and their feelings about their nations and their people. If we can feel so strongly about a group that had been contrived in a matter of hours, no wonder people's feelings about their religions, nations and cultures can be so powerful that they are willing to die for them. On the other hand, if that which we felt so strongly about, so willing to take risks for, to lose our voices for, to go without sleep for, had been a
group coalescing around a color with no particular meaning--perhaps we can step back from our unquestioning allegiance to the symbols of our nations as well.

Noa's meta-level, reflective commentary on the most ritualized and collective of aesthetic experiences of Seeds of Peace points towards a generative interplay between the two versions of aesthetic experience explored in the previous section of the dissertation. Reconciliation engages us both as members of our groups and as persons with individual moral capacities and responsibilities. Aesthetic mediations of conflicts can engage people in celebrating their own and learning about each others' collective aesthetic expressions, and at the same time, invite the kinds of reflective awareness of self, symbol and referent that is invited in aesthetic transactions understood as experiences of individuals.

In *A Passion for Life*, for instance, by exhibiting folk art in a gallery context, we invited an interplay between collective and individual collective experience. The next chapter presents an extended example of a related aesthetic mediation, designed to invoke collective understandings of shared symbols and simultaneously to nourish reflection, empathy and individual moral agency among those who create and witness it.
CHAPTER 14

LEARNING ABOUT OUR ENEMIES AND OURSELVES:
AN EXAMPLE OF AN AESTHETIC MEDIATION

In the preceding chapter, I presented examples of the crafting of aesthetic forms and processes to restore capacities needed for the work of reconciliation—capacities that had been impaired by violence. Other examples illustrated former adversaries using aesthetic forms and processes to imagine, create and substantiate their future relationship. In this chapter, I end the dissertation with an extended example of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict. It illustrates how the learning required for reconciliation—learning about one's own people as well as one's former enemies—also can be mediated through engagement with the aesthetic domain.

Like several of the examples in the previous chapter, the 'aesthetic mediation' presented here is drawn from *A Passion for Life: Stories and Folk Arts of Palestinian and Jewish Women.* It remains, as of this writing, a work in progress. I include it here to illustrate how aesthetic forms and processes can invite adversaries to engage with their own and each other's history and culture with qualities of receptivity, respect, empathy, creativity, vitality, reverence and humor.

The stories told by the Palestinian and Jewish women in *A Passion for Life* are presented here as a script interweaving poetic renderings of the narratives of six women, edited and refined through several layers of aesthetic engagement. First, the women shaped their experiences into stories in response to the focused attention of an interviewer. Then, the transcripts of their oral history interviews were selected and edited for an exhibition that juxtaposed written text with objects of folk art, such as embroidered dresses, woven baskets, family photographs, amulets, cooking utensils and religious...
objects. Stories were selected for their coherence as stories, and also for their educative value. By educative value I refer to the potential of both the content and form of the stories to counteract stereotypes, to honor the collective suffering as experienced in individuals' lives, to celebrate cultural traditions, to acknowledge injustices, and to open windows onto the impact of major historical events on the lives of women and their families.

Years after the Passion for Life exhibition, I used the text as the basis for rendering each woman's story into a lengthy narrative poem, in some cases returning to the women to gather additional stories, or listening again to the taped interviews to remember certain language or inflection. The poetic renderings, in themselves, are intended to capture some of the intensity of the face-to-face interview, an intensity that can be lost in lengthy edited transcripts of oral narratives. In some instances the "poems" are actually ethnopoetic renderings of the women's own words—in which poetic devices such as line breaks are used to capture the rhythm and meaning of the verbal expression. In most cases, however, my intention was to give a coherent shape to each woman's story, using repetitions for instance to highlight paradox or to intensify the meanings of a phrase. These poetic renderings include images that emerged in my own imagination in response to the story as it was told by the women. I have since solicited and incorporate response from the narrators, so the narrative poems represent a true collaboration.

In the version presented in the following pages, the poetic renderings of six women's stories have been mediated yet again, this time juxtaposed with each other and woven into a new whole, a script that is intended to be performed by six voices. In performance, each of the six characters is identified by an icon, an image of a folk art object projected onto a screen at various points during the presentation. The icon serves to help the listener distinguish among the six characters, and also to emphasize certain segments of the story. Other folk art images illustrate other segments of the narratives. Musical interludes serve to cluster sets of stories together, and to provide for moments of integration and reflection.
The interweaving of the poetic renderings of the women's stories invites the listener to notice juxtapositions, similarities and differences among their experiences as well as the reverberations of the historical events in Europe, for instance, on the lives of women in Palestine, Israel, Yemen and America. Audience members will likely feel some resonance with their own history and culture, as well as experience resonances between the Palestinian and Jewish women's stories and folk expression. Hopefully the poetic form invites the shimmering of attention that allows for simultaneously deepening awareness of self and other. The performance mode allows for reinterpretation and revision through rehearsal processes, and, importantly, can invite audience response. This work resonates differently for listeners who are or are not connected to either of the groups whose history is represented here.

Versions of this script have been presented twice: once to participants in a joint Howard University-University of New Hampshire course on cultural diversity and communication, and once for a group of coexistence facilitators, including men and women both from the Middle East and from the United States, working at Seeds of Peace. I consider this piece a work in progress because, based on the response primarily of Middle Eastern members of the audience, I have come to believe that it requires several additional vignettes of more recent Palestinian experience. As it stands, the piece could work well for American and American Jewish audiences, many of whose members need basic introduction to Palestinian history and culture, and who will be challenged to receive images of Palestinian people outside the media images of "terrorists" and "refugees." Middle Eastern audiences, however, will find it lacking in the ways just mentioned.

I imagine proceeding with this work along several different trajectories. In one, I would work with Palestinian and Israeli advisors on slight revisions and additions to the script, and create a professional multimedia production, that would include performances of the words (perhaps with gesture and movement), carefully edited sequencing of the visual images, perhaps on several different screens on an otherwise darkened stage, and music,
performed not just as interlude, but supporting and amplifying the emotional resonances of
the spoken words as well.

I also imagine revising this script through workshop and rehearsal processes with a
group of professional or amateur actresses. Performers from the Middle East, or deeply
familiar with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, could themselves decide upon necessary
additions, deletions or revisions. Negotiating these changes would provide an opportunity
for them to learn about each others' perceptions of the conflict, their feelings, their visions
for the future.

This script or a performance of it could be used in facilitating coexistence or
dialogue sessions with adversaries in conflicts in other parts of the world. It could be used
to invite the sharing of similar stories or as a model for a kind of presentation they might
create based on their own stories and folk art.

Finally, I would like to create a book of these poetic renderings of the women's
stories, each accompanied by visual images and annotated with explanations of the
historical and cultural references embedded within the stories. While the performance
creates the possibility of a shared experience and possibilities for dialogue among members
of its audience, a book would allow the stories to be savored and studied, over time.

In the written version of the script that follows, I have presented the Palestinian
women's stories in plain type and the Jewish women's stories in italicized type, in order to
help readers unfamiliar with the names and the cultural references within the stories. In
performance, less intrusive and dichotomized markers will be sought through variations in
costumes and images of folk art (or actual objects). The women's names are pseudonyms.

As I noted in the introductory chapter, I end the dissertation with this extended
example of an aesthetic mediation of a conflict, rather than with a more traditional chapter
on implications. I do believe there are important implications of this study--for theorists,
practitioners, activists and policy-makers in the fields of Education, the Arts, and Conflict
Resolution/Peacebuilding. These implications, mentioned in the Introduction, will be
spelled out in detail in publications directed towards scholars and practitioners in each of the three fields.

I hope that by engaging with the following modest enactment of an aesthetic mediation, readers of this already lengthy analytic work will appreciate its implications—if not with the precise clarity of conceptual analysis, then with the feelingful awareness and imaginative reciprocity that aesthetic engagement invites.
A Passion for Life:
Poems in Six Voices

A presentation based on life stories told in 1989 by Jewish and Palestinian women living in the Boston area.
The following script is designed to be read by six actresses. The characters, in order of appearance, are:

Sibyl: Palestinian-born Quaker woman who grew up in Ramallah on the West Bank and moved to the United States during World War II when she was 12 years old. Her icon is an embroidered bird on a tree, detail from a red and white Ramallah wedding dress.

Tamar, Israeli-born Yemenite Jewish woman who came to the United States after attending college in Israel. Tamar's parents migrated to Israel from Yemen in 1948. Her icon is a round woven basket in muted colors.

Jehad, Palestinian-born Muslim woman who grew up in Nablus on the West Bank of the Jordan River. Jehad lived for eleven years under Israeli occupation before coming to this country with her Palestinian husband. Her icon is an old brass coffee-pot typical of those used by Bedouins.

Ruth, Jewish woman born in Lithuania during the time of pogroms, when the Zionist movement offered the poverty-stricken young Jews of Lithuania the dream of a homeland in Palestine. Her icon is a brass candle-stick.

Hiba, Palestinian Muslim woman whose family fled from Safed when Israel was created in 1948. Hiba lived in Syria and Jordan and then came to the United States in the early 1980's. She is a traditional embroiderer. Her icon is a black and yellow embroidered dress.

Sara, Hungarian-born Jewish woman who survived Auschwitz and then came to the United States with her husband, who was one of the British soldiers who liberated Bergen-Belsen. Her icon is an old family photograph, depicting her parents with six children.

The presentation is divided into four movements, divided by musical interludes.

I. Our whole lives were built from these stories
II. I was always amazed at what she could cook
III. Childhood was stolen from the faces of the children....
IV. A prayer for peace

The poems are to be accompanied by projected images of folk art.

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Musical Prelude

I. Our whole lives were built from these stories....

Sibyl:
I love my grapefruit and orange trees. Every summer I prune them and take them outside. If aphids appear I get a sponge and bathe each leaf in water and salt. The trees love being out in the sun: they become sturdy and tall and vibrant. My citrus trees remind me of the family biyara in Gaza. Yehieh, the caretaker, had many many children and we’d play together all day. Twice a year we children watched as water streamed through channels and ditches branching out to each of the trees. We loved to run in the sand and then splash our hot feet in the swirling, gushing waters.

One time my brother discovered hiding in the groves a wizened old man eating tomatoes and onions. He mesmerized us with stories about smuggling hashish from Sinai to Gaza. He was harmless, but hungry, so we’d sneak him bread from the house. We never told my father. And there were foxes! We’d hear foxes and coyotes when we slept outside on hot, still nights. "They're near! They're close!" my brother would tease and I’d go scrambling into the house. We thought the coyotes wanted us; what they wanted were grapes from the vineyard next door.

My grapefruit trees make it alive: coyotes and foxes and the wrinkled smiles of the smuggler of hashish; water swirling over the feet of Yehieh’s children, my friends.
Tamar:
Rosh Ha-ayin, in Israel, where I grew up
is like a miniature Yemen.
You've heard of Little Italy?
Rosh Ha-ayin is Small Yemen.

Every few houses is a rabbi's house
with one room used for praying.
On Friday afternoon, when Shabbat arrives
nothing in town is moving.
Even the Muslims from the nearby village
selling vegetables from horse-drawn buggies
leave Rosh Ha-ayin by noon.
My mom woke up at four in the morning
to prepare all kinds of breads:
kubane, jihnoon and zalabia
cooked outdoors on the round taboon.

In the evenings, men would sit smoking their water-pipe
chewing on leaves of the gat.
They became very funny and told stories forever.
Women weaving baskets and embroidering clothes
sat beside them and listened.

Dad told stories for hours in Arabic.
For us, at that time, they were real.
We'd perch on his lap, his shoulder, or head
and hear about life in Yemen.

Sibyl:
My father was an historian and geographer
and the principal of the Ramallah Friends' School.
My mother arrived from South Dakota in 1927
to teach for just a year,
but then fell in love with my father.

Raya, our nanny, sang lullabies
in the Arabic scale and all off-key.
My mother would go into hysterics
at my renditions of how Raya might sing.

At four every day
tea would be served
with breads to dip in lebene and oil.

At bed-time Father would wear his camel-hair coat
and tell us about d'ubbe, the hyena
and the tic, tic, tic of its tail.
If you rode on a mule in the middle of the night
from one village to another
you'd have to be careful of the d'ubbe
who would circle around, stunning the mule.
who'd follow the d'ubbe back to its den
and then you'd get eaten up!
...unless, there was a miracle
like in one story the traveller fell down;
the jolt to his head broke the d'ubbe's spell.

I believed everything.
It seemed so real because father
set the scene on the outskirts
of Ramallah near the radio station.
So when we'd take walks on Radio Road
in the lengthening shadows of the softening dusk
I'd see myself riding a donkey
and hear the tic of hyena's tail.

My friends at school would laugh at me:
"Sibyl, that's ridiculous!"
I'd say, "Don't you believe it? It's true!"
These stories were so vivid in my mind
I believe them still, to this day.

Tamar:
My favorite story was how my Dad met my Mom.
When my Dad was only eleven, his father passed away.
As the oldest son, Dad had to care for the household,
breed the cows and feed them
and sell them to wealthy Jews and Muslims
who lived at a distance of four days' walk
in the city of Sana'a.

Right before Passover,
he met the fine family of a jeweler.
His one daughter was hiding, veiled except for her eyes.
"Those eyes told me so much!" my Dad would say.
So he went to her father and asked for her hand.
It was the luckiest trip he ever had made:
he came home with so much money.
His Mom gave him a third of the dowry
and kept the rest for her family.

Then my Mom would come into the room
and add in her part of the story:
On the wedding night she was dancing
circling the groom three times.
She had never even seen his face!
She was veiled, looking down;
all she could see were his feet --
which were huge.
"Who am I marrying?" she trembled with fear.
"Is this a man, or a monster?"
Their first night together
they were both really scared.
He was fifteen; she was eleven
he'd seen only her eyes; she'd seen only his feet.
And they didn't know what to do.

"How was it?" the men of the village whispered
a week later to my Dad.
"How was what?"
So an uncle took him aside and explained the ways of marriage.
A few weeks later, when they asked him again
still nothing had happened.
Mom had pushed him out of the bed
and tried to beat him up.
So her mother had a talk with her.
It took them months to realize
what marriage is all about.

Jehad:
Even if you are in heaven
you will dream of Palestine
Nablus rests on two mountains
the downtown between
the sun rises
the sun sets
houses of white stone glow golden and red

I cry when I remember

This old, patched, sturdy brass pot
crafted by Bedouins
in camel-hair tents
to serve coffee to guests

the rim of the pot
bears designs of our fences
and partitions screening women and men at prayer

I remember steam rising
soft curlicues of aroma
circling guests
who wept and laughed
and waited
as my grandfather's century-old hands
tilted the pot
poured thick dark liquid
in their small delicate cups

Now this old, patched sturdy brass pot
decorates the hallway
of my house
Ruth:

Dabeik:
The whole town
the whole life
was built from these stories.

If I think of something, I will tell.

Of course in Yiddish I would tell it better.
Dabeik was born in Yiddish
and died in Yiddish.
It was a Yiddish town until its last breath.

Dabeik was a small town with small people:
a cobbler, a glazer, a carpenter, and bakers.
Peddlars travelled to villages,
bought surplus onions and eggs
to sell in town.

We lived in a house with one and a half rooms
my parents and the nine of us kids.
One room, ten by fourteen,
was the kitchen, the dining room, the living room
and the bedroom for the children.
We also kept there food for the cow
for when she came in from the fields.

The other room was narrow and small:
a bedroom for my parents
and whichever children were still in cribs:
two I always remember.

This little home served eleven people
and also five or six chickens --
who spent nights in the poptsis
a little tunnel under the oven.
In the summer, they'd run around
and share the house.

Hiba:

My true identity is inscribed in my dress:
I believe in it more than in scholars or books.
Embroidery is my work
inherited from ancestors
to be passed on to my daughters
so they will know who they are.

Books are easily twisted and biased
but dresses sewn by common people
will always tell the truth.
Sara:
I see Mother
back in Debrecen, in Hungary,
lighting Sabbath candles

She took me with her everywhere
to the kosher butcher
to the rabbi
to the ritual bath
we were together
in a room with two tubs

She showed me
how my life would be.

And I remember Passover
Father wearing the kittel, the pure white shirt
Mother embroidered
for him
for their wedding

Patiently he explained the Passover story
like the rabbis of old.
Opening the door
we welcomed strangers
Wine and song
        longing for Eliahu HaNavi
        messenger of messiah

"Whenever you need him
Elijah will come," said my father
the Passover King.

In the fall, on the floor of the sukkah,
we rolled walnuts
        aimed for the largest in hopes of winning all
When Father joined our game
we were in heaven

And so went the year
Mother cooking and baking
and lighting holiday candles
In shul I sat with the women upstairs
        My brothers played near my father
down below
        I would watch those special special moments
when Father wrapped them in his tallis
and they davened together
On Tisha B'Av
   the very sad day
   when twice the temple was destroyed
I would sit on a little stool
and in Yiddish, so she could really understand
Mother read about starvation and dying children
and cried bitter bitter tears.
Was she weeping only for those old time Jews
or did she have an inkling already
of what would happen to us?
II. I was always amazed at what she could cook....

_Tamar_:  
My Mom stood four feet, nine inches tall
every inch pulsing with life.
She never knew how to read or write;
in Yemen she'd never worn shoes.
In Israel my Mom cleaned house
for the rich Ashkenazi ladies.

Every day when she came home from work
my Mom sent us out to do chores.
She'd gather the homework we'd left on the table
and bring it to the neighbor next door
and ask if our papers were perfect.
After our chores she'd be ready
to tell us which problems to fix,
and where we needed more work.

When I was twelve
I needed my Mom to sign a form
so I could go on a two-day class outing.
"Sit down," she said, "I need to tell you
I don't know how to write."
"It can't be!" I argued; then my mother explained
she'd hidden her ignorance
not out of pride
but to be sure we'd work really hard.

The Ashkenazi ladies set up groups
to teach the Yemenite women to read.
"They treat us like we're stupid," my Mom complained
and then refused to go.

Mom was only 44 when she died;
then we realized her strength.
My Dad had seemed as tough as a brick;
when we were in trouble we feared him.
But after Mom died he lost his wind
like a balloon pricked with a needle.

Proud of Yemen, her accent, her kids,
she had held the whole house in her hands.
Hiba:
See this design? We call it 'The Birds.'
The gold circle is the nest, and it stands for a home.
First the birds are facing each other, happy and friendly,
and the next day they are back to back.
Just among women it has a special name:
'The Mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law.'

I will tell you a story about this design,
about why I love it so much:

My mother's father owned an olive oil business
with presses in three or four villages.
He went from one to another to check on his workers,
how they are working and what they must do.
One time he went to a village and stayed with a friend
whose wife was also a friend of my grandmother's.
The woman's son had just gotten married
and my grandmother wondered were they happy or not.
Not wanting to involve the men in such matters
but knowing that her friend could neither read nor write
she embroidered a pillowcover with the design of 'The Birds'
and sent it along as a gift.
My grandmother's friend understood right away:
"Are you happy or are you fighting?"
Since her son had just moved to his new wife's house
she was not happy at all.
So she embroidered the part with the birds back to back
with a line dividing the nest in two.

Men never listened to women's concerns
so they stitched each other their messages.
This is how the women 'wrote'
Even when they couldn't write.

Jehad:
In winter around a little hearth
we'd listen to mother tell stories

To teach my brothers to be good to their wives
she remembered a cousin:
a week after his wedding he joined boyhood chums
for evening talk about bachelor things
very late, he walked home through dark quiet streets
His wife waited at the roadside
in her long, embroidered wedding dress.
'You are late,' she called out, and fell in behind him
in silence
the young groom looked around
his wife was not nearby.
Looking back further he saw her
grow taller and taller
and taller and taller:
a ghoul, hurling rocks and berating his name.
Heart pounding, he raced to his home
opened the door, to his wife inside
and from that night on
he never left her alone

Ruth:
Tsayt likhtsebenschen!
Tsayt likhtsebenschen!
The rabbi with his long, long beard
long black robe and well-shined shoes
would walk through the streets, to every Jews’ house
announcing the time to light candles.

Tsayt likhtsebenschen!
Tsayt likhtsebenschen!
The women would rush to finish their cooking;
The rabbi was their clock.

My grandmother sent me to the homes of the poor
with gefilte fish, chicken and challah.
Her life’s greatest pleasure
was knowing all Dabeik Jews
would at least have a good shabbes dinner.

Sibyl:
Knowing my mother was American
and knowing we lived in a fancy house (with fancy plumbing and all)
my aunts took it upon themselves to show us the life of Palestine.

Auntie Nimeh’s house had only one room.
In the morning she folded her thin mattress
and stacked it against the wall.

She had no running water
and carried everything on her head.
In the garden was a well
or maybe a cistern.
I remember many urns,
heavy urns, about four feet tall.
There was a special corner with a wonderful fragrance
of raisins and spices and all kinds of dried fruits.
I was always amazed at what she could cook on her tiny Primus stoves. She baked cakes and boiled huge stews and soups on this one small burner. In the summer she cooked outside in a shed but in the rainy season she made meals and treats all in her tiny room. She baked her own bread sometimes on the oven in town.

Her yard was filled with lots of trees: walnuts and almonds, apricots and grapevines, and the garden was ringed with mint.

Ruth:
You know what is a shtaysl? A mortar. Grandmother had three, four, five. I'd walk in her door, she hand me a pestle: Reib, Klapp....Klapp. I helped her make proskes, bundles of medicine folded in squares of paper.

A woman came crying: "I want to get pregnant!" and Bobbe gave her a prossik. "I've got too many kids!" the next woman complained; she got an identical prossik. It was a joke, but who knows? Maybe it was true.

Grandmother gave farmers medicine to treat their cattle's infections. If this didn't help they'd go to the rabbi to oyfshprekhin ayin ha-ra -- to call off the evil eye. They had no money so they'd bring him chickens hidden under their jackets. Running through backyards and alleys they'd hide their shame from their neighbors.

Catholic farmers running to a rabbi hoping to heal their cattle. Does it make any sense? But they didn't have a choice. There was nowhere else they could go.
Musical Interlude

III. Childhood had been stolen from the faces of the children.

Ruth:
The First World War took a whole year to get to Dabeik.

The cossacks came to our house
and saw the commode where we kept Nikolayevski
and all our other treasures.
"Open it up!" they demanded, but the key was stuck.
"Oh, no, don't touch it!" Mother warned
"it's Pesadikh, kosher for Passover!"

They got scared and put back the key.

Everybody was running
and the cossacks were running after us.
I was six years old, in my mother's jacket
with very long sleeves:
 it was so much fun!

We ran from Dabeik as far as we could.
In Utian we stayed in a field of potatoes
that we dug and ate for breakfast.
There were a lot of families sleeping under the sky.
Little Hannah cried for a whole night
"Ikh vill mayn vigele! I want my crib!"
We sang lullabies all night
but still she cried and cried.

Months later, when we finally went home,
they'd broken all of our furniture.

There were no books, no nothing
no place where to spend time.
I'd sit on the porch
and wait.

The Christians had a library
but a Jew could not belong.
The librarian was a friend
a nice fellow who came to our store.
From time to time he'd bring me a book.

My sister and I wore hand-me-downs.
And when we went to school in Utian
which was already a city, with all kinds of kids,
they would dance a circle around us
their songs insulting our dresses.
If there was money we'd buy our food;
mostly, Mother would send us bundles.

But when the snow was heavy
we would starve.
For dinner we'd have a little piece of bread
dipped in sugar.

At lunch we'd sit in our room
ashamed
sugar on open notebooks
We shut them fast if anyone came.
For this, we thought we were brilliant.

Summertime we'd be home for three months
in heaven with enough to eat.

Finally Father and Mother said we couldn't go to school
the younger ones needed a chance.

Hiba:
In 1920 the British came
Their missiles descended on dresses
scattering flowers and upending trees.
Women felt the danger of the weapons
but it was unsafe to speak of their fears.
Fingers, though, refused to be silent
and raged at the foreign army:
a mother's scream in every stitch.

My grandmother made a dress with this pattern
but left it behind when we fled.

When I was a child I thought bargheese
was the only game in the world.
I played with my sisters, step-sister and mother
tossing shells and moving markers
on the embroidered, velvet gameboard.
It's not just luck; you make choices
try to knock others out of the game.
The center square (where you must be to win) we call the kitchen
When your marker lands there
we say: "It's cooked!"
If the toss of the shells won't get you to the kitchen
then you get stuck in 'the bathroom.'
These words from our homes make the game fun;
they show us the life of a woman.
Playing *bargheese* in the late afternoon—
many times dinner would burn on the stove.
When father tried to hide the game
We'd look under beds and in between mattresses,
play with it and sneak it back
before he even knew!

Women would stitch several of these games
so when they gathered for coffee they'd have enough sets.
In '48 my mother left *bargheese* games in Safad
along with embroidered dresses and capes.

It took many years for her to come back to normal:
to start to embroider *bargheese* games again.

**Sibyl:**
I have a picture of myself at five
in full Ramallah costume,
and one of my sister, my brother and me
dressed up as Arabs for our South Dakota cousins.

When I was ten I studied piano in Jerusalem
travelling alone each week by bus.
I always made sure I had exactly the fare--three piasters--
so I wouldn't have to speak to any unknown people
in their strange Hebrew language.

I didn't know many Jews at that time;
there were only a few nearby.
Tikvah, an orphan, was a friend at school
but I never met her relatives.
My father was friends with Dr. Magnus
a famous Jewish man who respected Arab people.

But even then I knew there was turmoil;
a sniper's bullet once shattered the glass
in my mother's library window.

**Ruth:**
*Mother used to stand for hours
over her big brass mednitza*
*cooking cherries, strawberries, currants and raspberries
skimming from the top what was white like snow
to make Dabeik's best preserves.*

*Women came for cooking advice;
one from across the street
would borrow mother's mednitzen.*

*Years later we learned that woman's son
helped Nazis find Jews in hiding.
When I left he was just a little boy.*
In the twenties, business was bad.  
The gentile farmers supported Lithuanian coops  
and tried to avoid our stores.  
There was nothing for young people to do  
and nothing enlivened our dreams  
except the groups of khalutzim, pioneers,  
planning to go to Palestine  
to farm on Jewish soil.  
Sara and Shmuel went there  
and I hoped to go to Israel, too,  
until America became my home.  

Sara:  
Three days and three nights  
we had been locked in the car.  
The train halted  
Dogs barked  
Guards screamed  
"Stand in line!"  

I gave my sardine to a man  
in funny striped clothes  

The place was so empty, so desolate  
a sad, low building with a single, high chimney  
What could it be?  

The SS watched  
as we marched  
showered  
were shaved.  
I was lucky:  
I found a soft wool dress  
grey, with three quarters sleeves  
full skirt and two pockets.  

But my mother's picture  
all that I had from home  
disappeared  

In my soft wool dress  
head just shaved  
I waited.  
A man appeared  
handed me ugly, grey, watery food.  
Not yet knowing the hunger to come  
I refused.  
He insisted: "Here you eat everything."  
So I ate it.  
He pulled a kerchief from his pocket:  
"This is for your head."

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"What kind of place is this?" I asked.
"Is everyone here? Are Mother and Father here?"
"It's a place where you work
and after the war, you go home.
Everyone is here. Soon you will see your parents."

He vanished

I think of him so many times
Elijah the Prophet
giving me faith
to live
in that moment
to go on
in that place
where I was

I hope he survived

If I hadn't wanted so desperately to live
I would have wanted, desperately, to die

Thank God there was no mirror.

The food was so little
We were hungry all the time
We couldn't think of anything else
not family
not anything

In the smallest trickle of water
we tried to keep ourselves clean
but the camp was dust
everything was grey
the people were grey
the ground was grey
the soldiers were grey
the camp was grey
there was no blade of grass
there was nothing

Somehow I remembered the story
of a valley of dry bones
God promised they would come to life
and return to Israel
So I knew God would take us home
We just had to remember
who we really are

Instead of smelling incinerated flesh
I smelled the acacia tree near my bedroom window
and fresh bread from the bakery back home
Washing in the ravine
I looked up into the barrel of the German's big gun
"Schweiner," he was saying, "Pig Jews."
"Not me, not us. You're the one.
I'd rather be in my place than yours."

My parents would die of heartache
if they lost their child
I had to survive
to go home
to tell

But I would have wanted, desperately, to die
If I hadn't wanted so desperately to live.

When I returned to the barracks
A hunched little figure filled my spot on the floor
Arye, my brother! A miracle!
"I'm not Arye, I'm Eva, your sister"
Her voice and her eyes were ghosts

Eva didn't want to eat
she'd lost everything by then
So I stood in line
filling her coffee can with food:
"Take this sip for Father, this sip for Mother
Just another sip."
Every day
day by day
I was strong
for her

They marched us three miles
for delousing.
After the shower, we grabbed for dresses
my sister didn't get one
Three miles she marched
naked
back to Birkenau
As we walked by electrified wire gates
two inmates were looking for us
one with a ball in his hand
and all at once
he threw it
It was a pink cotton dress
crust of bread
in the pocket

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What mortal person would stand there?
If the SS saw them they would have been shot.
It was another Elijah
Human Elijahs
claiming their lives
by risking their lives
pink dress tossed
in the grey, grey, grey desolation
of the camp.

Taking a chance
I volunteered to work in their factory
Naked, we marched in a circle
SS watching to see who was strong
I pinched redness into Eva's cheek
on her head I tied the scarf from Elijah
Somehow I held her arm
And somehow we walked around
And somehow we were chosen

Each morning
in the corners of the factory
a German worker
hid onion or potato
breadcrust or apple
for Eva
the gaunt slave girl
who swept shattered glass from the floor

At Christmas
with threads pulled from blanket
black wool cut from coat
needle begged from guard
the shattered glass girl
stitched him a bookcover
corners embellished with yellow flowers

Liberation was something to deal with itself
Losing our family, our country, our people
Terrible years of terrible nightmares
and wondering how, possibly, to start a new life:
Another story for another time.

I conjured up moments
wondering how my father and mother had died.
I see my father
holding close
my two young brothers
imaginary tallis surrounding their small shoulders
the mourner's Kaddi
silent on his lips.

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My mother, defiant
railed against God:
“What did you do to us? What happened to my children?”

It didn’t matter how long you were in Auschwitz:
a half a day, an hour, a moment:
It was an eternity
the end of the world
We survived, but I don’t know why:
maybe just to tell the story.

Musical Interlude

Hiba:
My mother told me about the war in ’48
and how it happened that we fled from our home.

People were very scared.
Loudspeakers announced they should leave for three days
and then the war would be over.

We walked from Safed to the border with Lebanon
when we reached a village it was already dark.
We found a mattress in a family’s home
and paid them gold in exchange.
We were five people, one mattress, one blanket
with nine other families in the same room

It was dark.
The kids were tired and hungry and dirty;
they’d brought no changes of clothes.
A cousin went back during one night
just to get clean clothes for the kids.
We waited and waited
but he never came back.
We felt so bad because his children
were just about our age.

My mother remembered one woman
who was so scared
she picked up her pillow
instead of her baby.
At the border she tried to look at her child
and found, instead, the pillow.
Later, a man who had heard its crying
picked up the child on his way out of town
and brought him to the mother.
She had almost lost her mind.
Holding her child
right there in her arms
she still found it hard
to believe he'd survived.

Tamar:
Life was good for Jews in Yemen
according to my parents.
Their Muslim neighbors came with live chickens--
gifts for our wedding feasts.
And our families would go to them
with flour or bread, meat or cakes.

If a Jewish man went with a Muslim girl
then there would be big trouble.
The punishment wasn't just going to jail:
there'd be a public stoning.

When numbers of Jews left their villages
to begin their journey to Israel--
it was then the Muslims attacked.
Maybe they knew of the war in Palestine
and how their brothers were suffering.

So why did my parents decide to leave?
There really was no question.
They were gathered in the rabbi's house
in the little room for prayer.
My Dad said, "A man arrived,
dressed very weird, in pants, not a dress.
He told us 'Any minute, the Messiah is coming!'"

My parents believed with all their hearts:
"If this is what God wants, this is what we will do."

This is the kind of story that hurts:
At the time of their three-month journey
my sister Bracha was only three months old.
They were so long on the road, they ran out of water and food,
it was desert, no rain.
They were taking a path remote from the villages
to avoid raids from Muslim marauders.
With no water at all, my mother's breasts became dry
and she couldn't feed my sister.
Bracha gasped for breath;
they thought that she might die.

My parents and all their companions
stopped—and called out to God:
"We can go no further. We pray You send us rain."
That night it poured so hard donkeys were swept away.
Even some of the people died.
But there was water enough to feed little Bracha.
When they finally arrived in Aden
the travellers were met by a creaky old plane.
Officials hurried them.
"There's danger.
Bury your belongings, your jewelry, your Torahs--
The plane can hold only people."
My Mom said they were pushed like cows;
She barely was able to breathe.

So the Jews of Yemen left with nothing:
no clothes, no jewelry, not even the handcrafted breastplates
that had adorned their beloved Torahs.
All they had was their vision of Zion;
their faith in the Messiah's return.

What the Yemenites found in Israel
resembled paradise not at all:
 twenty people in a tent,
 standing in line for food,
 month after month in lice-infested camps.

Officials cut the earlocks of many men
and assigned them shorter, Hebrew-sounding names.

Malaria struck my sister Bracha,
from water she drank on the trip.
She was in and out of the hospital for three years.
My Mom was scared we would lose her.

There are stories now:
Parents were told their sick kids had died,
and by Jewish law, they'd been buried that day.
Years later Yemenite children appeared
in families all over the world:
they'd been given away or sold
by those who felt their families were too large:
these 'backward' people should have fewer kids.

I've also heard that the Torahs and jewelry
buried in Aden by those trusting souls
had been unearthed by Israelis
and stolen just for profit.

I've tried to understand our story,
why my parents were displaced.
Was the Yemenite ruler truly to be feared?
Would Jews have been harassed had they stayed?
Or did the European-born Jews import their darker-skinned cousins
to fight their wars and work for low pay?
Hiba:
It wasn't until '63 that Israel and Jordan agreed
to arrange a place for families to meet.

So many years had passed
at first her mother didn't know who Hanan was.

"Oh, mommy, oh my mother," my step-sister cried,
and stretched out her arm through the wire mesh fence
that marked her side of the border

From behind a second fence ten meters away
Her mother, too, reached out her hand

They cried and cried
their wails higher and louder
until soldiers pushed them on
tearing them
from the gate
on the bridge
where their fingers
never
touched

Tamar:
At school they taught us the war is coming, the war is coming.
We had to dig a trench in the backyard
It had to be above our heads.
I remember digging all day
thinking if I don't do it fast enough
They will see my head, they will see my hair,
they will get me.
And we learned to dig in a zig zag shape
to block the Ketushya rocket that comes in straight.

I remember as a twelve year old running into the trenches
with my grandfather and my two brothers.
My grandfather ran with his cane, and flipped in the trench.
He was too big for us to move.
I was scared they would see his leg and get us all.
I remember hearing the whhhisssshhh of the ketushya
The sound piercing through me.
My three-year-old brother wondered why I was smothering him,
covering him with my body.

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Mom returned but refused to sleep in the trenches:
too many scorpions, too many snakes.
Inside the house she put two beds together
and covered the windows with black:
no lights, no sound.
Four of us kids held on to Mom:
one held a leg, one her arm, one her hair.
It was too dark to see so we just had to feel her.
We couldn't wait for the light of day.

A knock on the door.
Should we open it? Should we not? Who could it be?
Mom peeked through the shutters and saw an Israeli car:
It was a policeman just checking that we were OK.
Another night came a knock, but no car.
The more frantic the banging the more scared we became.
Finally we heard our neighbor's voice wailing "Let me in!"
She was locked out of her house.

Another night a neighbor came screaming.
The assistant mayor on guard in the watchtower
was found dead, hanged by a sniper.

Ketushyas over the trenches with no parents around,
hearing neighbors wail:
seeing the guard who'd been hung
One week of living like that
and your whole life is shaped by fear.

Avi, my brother's friend,
was religious, respectful, hardworking:
One night when they were both thirteen
At seven they returned from a movie.
At ten his Mom came running to our house;
Avi still had not arrived home from the bus.

They called the police
and the whole village started searching.
At 4 in the morning they found him, butchered,
arms slashed and his head crushed in with a stone.
He was found in a cave on one of those hills
Where I used to take our goats.

They found knives and pieces of blood-soaked cloth
in the Muslim village where our friend Abdallah lived
in the home of a man who had been a business partner
with the father of young Avi.

How can we trust them?
How can we trust?
The echo still rings to this day.
Hiba:

After many years
my mother's aunt Mariam
managed to travel to Safed.
When she returned
she knelt on the floor, faced towards Mecca
and prayed.
In front of her were two small bags
and a vessel made of clay.

There was no furniture in the room,
just a carpet on the floor,
and my mother and sisters
and many women friends
ready to hear her stories.

When Mariam finished her prayers
the women rushed to hug her
and smell her
so they could breathe in Safed's essence.

She told us she'd been on a pilgrimage
to Mecca, and then, to the Dome of the Rock.
Somehow she got a permit to Safed
and went there in a taxi.
As soon as she could see the town
she began to cry--and then, fainted.
"Passengers poured water on me
and asked me what was wrong."

Mariam was born in Safed
and lived there til she was forty.
"There were many new buildings," she said to her friends,
"but I breathed the same air I remembered from before."
She went directly to her house
built of stones that last forever.
"I felt as though I had returned to the past."

She knocked, and a lady opened the door,
and she fainted again, right there on the steps.

When she came to
the Jewish people that lived in her house
were wiping her face with water,
wondering who she was.
"I told them my family built this house:
I'd lived there until '48.
'I just need to look inside,' I said,
'to bring back all of my memories.'
"In the living room I saw the old, fancy frame
but they'd thrown out the portrait
I used to love.
In the place of our family was a picture of them,
this Jewish family that lived in our house.

In my son's room was the bed
where he had slept for so many years.
I touched it's heavy wooden sides."

Mariam wept as she spoke these words
and the listening women all cried too,
because she was telling their story.

"My grandfather had planted
almond and orange and olive trees:
I found them there
in the backyard garden."

And opening one of the two small bags
Mariam gave an almond to each woman.

With our fingers alone we could open the almonds' tender skins.

Then she turned to the second bag
filled with earth from Safed's cemetery.
"It's nothing now, they've turned it into a park."
One woman began to cry
remembering the graves of her father and son.
Mariam tried to soothe her friend:
"Maybe their spirit is here in this earth."

In the vessel there was cold, fresh water
Mariam had brought from the spring
where families used to go for picnics.
Each woman placed on her neck
some drops of this precious perfume.

My step-sister Hanan had never heard from her mother
who had stayed behind when we left.
With tears streaming down her cheeks
she begged Mariam to tell her the truth:
"Is my mother still alive?"

"If this isn't the truth, may Allah take my son from me.
Your mother lives in Romeh, where I wasn't allowed to go.
But I met someone who had visited her just last week.
She is in good health
but asks about her daughter
and hopes to see you
before she dies."
With tender almonds close to their hearts
and fresh spring water perfuming their necks
at last the women left Mariam's house
each with a vial of Safed's earth.

Jehad:
At seventeen
for laying flowers
on the gravestones of our martyrs
my brother was seized from our nest
and flung into jail

Cold pre-dawn darkness
pawed at my soul
each minute choked back an hour of rage

Soldiers searched our parcels, our bodies
until we no longer felt we were real

Through the fence between me and my brother
My finger sought his on the other side
I brought him rainbows of threads and strings
escape routes he could embroider

Once, when three of my brothers all were in chains
the young soldier who came for the fourth
pushed papers in my father's face:
'Sign that we haven't taken anything from your home.'
My father refused.
   What can I say?
   You want me to sign that you didn't take a couch?
   You took the best thing in my home
   the best thing in my life
   You took everything that I want
   Everything that I love.

For years my father refused to see them
refused the shame of the prison guard's search.
Sitting on the couch
he wept like a woman.
His sons all in prison
and he sits alone.

I'd love to return his embroidered purse
the bird filled with song and the red, red rose
But I can't
get them in
to the country
now. It's forbidden.
After 24 hours in flight to Amman
I reached the Allenby Bridge,
my six-month old in my arms.

There is no food
no drinks
no chairs
no nothing
just soldiers who search you.
You take off your clothes, pass by a machine
its rays penetrate what might be hidden inside
your body
somewhere.
they search your clothes
they x-ray your shirt and your shoes
tax you on rings in your ears
or a chain 'round your neck
Even the baby food they threw away.
Whatever you take
it will all be a loss
it will all be humiliation.

Let me tell you a story
I still feel bad about
After I married I left Palestine
but cherishing my people
I didn't become an American.
I'd get a permit
leave the West Bank
and then come back to renew it.

But my third child born very ill
was in the hospital for the year
my permit expired

No papers from specialists
could buy me more time
'You must go back to Nablus,' the agent insisted.
Did they expect me to leave my baby here, sick?

So, my permit expired.
I'm a Palestinian no longer.
It took more than four years to go back
but only as an alien.

I did not let them see my tears,
but handing the guards my outdated ID
was the worst moment of my life
I lost everything
I wasn't Palestinian any more
I wasn't yet American
so who could I be
before God and the world?
When my father died
he left me many things
but not being Palestinian
I cannot inherit them.
I cannot sell
I cannot buy
I cannot do anything
as Palestinian
except cry Palestinian tears.

**Hiba:**
Childhood had been stolen from the faces of the children
They tried to be as clean as they could
but there wasn't enough water just for drinking.
They came to school chewing on bones
with holes in their uniforms
and lice in their hair.
I taught in the camps for twelve years.

The U.N. food lasted just a few days
not a whole month as we'd been told.
They brought us powdered milk for the kids;
we mixed it in a barrel on the playground
and heated it over a Primus stove.
As hungry as they were the kids couldn't stand the smell;
they poured the liquid from their cups into the ground.

When I asked them to make a picture of spring
they drew flowers
under a plane dropping bombs.
When I asked them to show their mother
they drew a woman in the sun
hanging laundry
under a plane
dropping bombs.

**Sibyl**
Among my treasures is a dress and shawl
with dense, deep red embroidered designs
feathers and pomegranites
and wheat and peacocks, symbols of fertility.
It was a gift to my mother in 1928
from the women of Ramallah.

Every woman there made her own dress;
she cherished it for life.
After '48, when children were hungry
many sold their dresses;
they'll never replace those treasures--
there are no more threads this shade of maroon.
This dress is not decoration. It's the steadfastness of a people expressed and nurtured in blood-red threads on linen the color of stone.
Musical Interlude

IV. A prayer for peace

Ruth:
Do I miss Dabeik?
Ooof: When I think of Dabeik I can’t sleep
that’s how bad I miss it.

I should tell you why?
We used to go swimming there
in a round place
in a little blotte, a little running river.
Piafkes—those things that bite and pull out the blood?—
we used to have them there.
We’d go traipsing through the farmers’ lawns
and they’d chase us
and we’d run.

And if young boys would see that we’re swimming
our clothes lying on the grass
they’d take our dresses and run away
or hang them up high on a tree.

So why not miss it?
We miss it all the time.
What else is there to miss?

Jehad:
My mother loved to hear stories
and she loved to visit her friends.
Strangers knocked on our door
asked for something to eat
something to wear.
We would open our closets
and give them our clothes.
It’s our habit there.

I’ve lived for eleven years here in America
where so much is so great
I love this country.

But here you live like strangers—
You live a stranger and you die a stranger.
And if you’ve ever lived a different life
it hurts

Even if you are in heaven
You will dream
about Palestine.
Hiba:
If my mother or grandmother would see my dress
they would say it is nothing;
the design is too simple, too sparse.
They could sit a whole day and embroider
but my life is different from theirs:
studying and teaching
and now with my children;
I take three or four years to finish a dress.

But when I wear this dress
with pine trees and feathers and kernels of wheat
in colors of Northern Palestine
I feel closer to my family
in my homeland
at home

Sara:
I loved my brothers so dearly.
I couldn't think of them for many years
not wanting to feel the loss.

If only Israel had been a state already
in those years before the war
maybe my brothers would still be alive.

Since I survived, I live as a Jew:
That's what they wanted to kill.
You choose life.
You must choose life.
There is no other way.

Tamar:
Who am I?
About being Yemenite there was never a doubt;
I love every minute.
But Jewish and Israeli:
in college I began to ask questions.

What does it mean to be Jewish?
Put me beside a Jew from Europe
and we look so different.
We call holidays by the same name
but our celebrations are different
and so are our prayers.

Once in Minnesota I was so lonely
I went to the Jewish Center looking for friends.
I offered to teach, anything to help.
"You don't even look like us," one of them said.
It hurt more that she could imagine.
I love Israel.
There's a spirit, a caring:
Until today, it is home.
I love being part of a Jewish nation
where the whole country celebrates at the same time.
And when I sing songs with other Israelis
I'm electrified; I open more deeply to life.

But for Palestinians, what is fair?
I don't know how to find an answer
and what can I do
by myself
as one?

Hiba:
My tapestry shows a woman behind barbed wire
wearing a dress embroidered like mine
Around her neck is the flag of my people
and from her outstretched arm she releases a message
carried in the beak of a dove:

Women love peace to raise their children.
I as a Palestinian know
there are two kinds of peace:

Peace that is built on the bodies of those murdered
to silence their calls for their just rights;

and peace which comes from understanding a people's suffering,
sitting down with them to resolve their problems,
so that justice and equality, not death and suffering, can be the code of the land.

I smuggled my dreams in my hidden wishes
and crossed the ocean with hopes for peace;
for my Palestinian sisters who lost their children in wars
and who have been widowed at an early age.

I ask you for true peace for my people.

Sibyl:
When the pain in my body becomes too much to bear
I escape to a secret biyara
an inner, sacred, orange grove temple
where children are playing
and my spirit is at peace.

As I listened to news of the war in the Gulf
I wrote make-believe letters to the men in charge:
Dear George,
Dear Saddam,
Come visit my biyara; you can relax and be safe.
No uniforms here: wear your parka or your jacket.
We'll drink Arabic coffee and talk of your childhoods:
What was it like to be little boys?

Here in my sacred orange grove temple
You will see you have much in common.

Now I know that I'll never go back
my time is too short; the cancer too strong.
But I remember the stories about d'ubbe, the hyena
and the adventures of the smuggler with the wrinkled, tanned face.
I hear Raya singing lullabyes off-key
and taste my auntie's fresh warm breads.
Yehieh's children squeal in delight
as water swirls over their feet.

The sturdiness of my grapefruit trees
and the steadfastness stitched in my mother's dress
sustain my will to live.
My breath will sing a silent prayer
for healing and for peace.

_____________________________________________________________________

Music
_____________________________________________________________________

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FOOTNOTES

1 Readers interested in uses of 'poetics' to refer to the literary or aesthetic dimensions of phenomena not typically characterized as aesthetic can refer to the following sources for examples: Alcalay (poetics of disaster, of resistance, of indeterminacy); Bogdan (poetics of need, of ordinary existence, of pluralism, of refusal, of gender, of engagement); Lavie (poetics of military occupation); Mair (poetics of experience.)

2 Joan Bondurant (pp. 9-11) offers subtle distinctions among force, violence, injury and coercion: Force is "the exercise of physical or intangible power or influence to effect change. Violence is the willful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to the person or group against whom it is applied. Injury is understood to include psychological as well as physical harm. Non-violence when used in connection with satyagraha means the exercise of power or influence to effect change without injury to the opponent. Coercion has been defined as the use of either physical or intangible force to compel action contrary to the will or reasoned judgment of the individual or group subject to such force."

3 Michael Hardimon (p. 85) writes that the process may be variously described as "... overcoming conflict, division, enmity, alienation, or estrangement; the result, as the restoration of harmony, unity, peace, friendship, or love. The concept of reconciliation contains within it something like a story: two parties begin as friends, become estranged, and become friends again. The basic pattern is thus one of unity, division, and reunification."

4 De Waal's research balances Konrad Lorenz's highly publicized findings on aggression in primates, findings that have been used to argue that human proclivities towards violence are evolutionarily determined and therefore inevitable.

5 'Tolerance' could as easily refer to a situation in which someone is reconciled to an unpleasant circumstance as to an openness that allows for interaction and exchange. But for people in conflict to become reconciled with each other implies that (1) they have already engaged in some kind of conflict, and, (2) the rift has been healed and/or people have created relationships of sincere goodwill in spite of differences.

6 The notion of "warranted trust" is developed by Trudy Govier. See Govier, 1992.

7 Gulliver's primary purpose is to clarify that the distinction between negotiation and arbitration is one of the locus of control: in negotiations, whether mediated or not, the parties themselves decide how to resolve the conflict; in arbitration, a third party determines the outcome.

8 This idea of transformation is captured by Hardimon (p. 85), in his explication of the German word for reconciliation Versohnung, which he says implies a state of transformation even more strongly than does its English equivalent. Hardimon's "higher state" is similar to the "synthesis" sought in Gandhi's satyagraha, or experiments in truth. When two parties become genuinely versohnt, they do not resume their old relationship unchanged. They become versohnt by changing their behavior and attitudes in fundamental ways. Parties who have attained Versohnung do not have to decide to get along together;
their getting along together is, instead, the natural result of their being in a new, transformed state. The unity of their new relationship may be described as 'higher' in the sense of being more flexible, complex, and stable than the unity that preceded it.

9Louise Diamond's emphasis on the root issues and needs being expressed in the conflict situation, rather than the positions that parties in conflict might at first bring to the table, is a central idea among contemporary conflict resolution practitioners. Burton, for instance, argues that in most conflict situations, the most important needs being expressed through violent conflict are needs for identity, security of identity group, recognition, political participation, and distributive justice. They are not negotiable, not repressible. They are needs "for which persons and communities will make endless sacrifices." When the underlying reasons for conflict are identified, Burton believes, remedies can be found that take them into account and resolve relationship problems.

10From the Christian perspective, "we shall be to one another what we were before, save for one important difference. I know now that you are a person who can forgive, and that you prefer to have suffered rather than to resent, and that to keep me as a friend, or to avoid becoming my enemy, is more important to you than to maintain your own rights. And you know that I am a person who is not too proud to acknowledge his fault, and that your goodwill is worth more to me than the maintenance of my own cause. ....Forgiveness does not only forestall or remove enmity: it strengthens love" (Burnaby, p. 87, cited in Brummer, p. 442).

11Personal correspondence from Karen Sirker, conflict resolution practitioner.

12In the intensive, interpersonal sort of reconciliation facilitated by Bjorn Krontorfer, it is one's own emotions that must be made vulnerable. He writes, "[For Jews and Germans] to transform their strained relations, they must learn to trust each other and allow their long-stored anger, guilt, grief, and pain to emerge. Reconciliation demands a willingness to become vulnerable and honest in the presence of another. Honesty and trust are central to reconciliatory efforts."

13In the folklore/oral history project A Passion for Life, for instance, Palestinian and Jewish participants often hurt each other because they were ignorant of the meaning of particular words or historical references. For Palestinians, for instance, 1948 is the year of the disaster. When Jews referred to it only in terms of the return to their homeland, Palestinians rightly felt betrayed, wounded. On the other hand, when Palestinians were unable to hear stories about the Holocaust, Jewish participants felt that a sacred memory had been violated. In neither case did the participants wish to hurt the other or to disregard important symbols. They were ignorant of the full meaning for the other of particular words and images, and their ignorance caused them to unwittingly betray each other's trust. This example illustrates that building trust in contexts of mistrust often requires more than a change of heart. (See Cohen, 1994.)

14See Cordella for discussion of restorative justice in mutualist community.

15For an example of "moralizing" and western imposition of values, see Rodrigue, on Jewish French "education" of Sephardic Jewish children in Middle Eastern countries.

16The frustrations of the "cold peace" between Israel and Egypt underscore the limitations of changes in governmental policy that are not matched by corresponding shifts in consciousness.
See Cohen, 1994, for an analysis of the different meanings associated with these terms.

Although pain is assessed differently in different cultural contexts, even in contexts in which the culturally appropriate response to pain would be stoic tolerance, "when pain is perceived suddenly and unexpectedly, and when its impact is not anticipated, chances are that the individual's behavior will be characterized by uninhibited manifestations of alarm and anxiety, with all their behavioral concomitants" (Zborowski, p. 29).

One study, for instance, found that soldiers in field hospitals reported less pain than patients recovering from surgery, although the actual damage to their tissues and organs was more severe. For the soldiers, pain was experienced as a reassurance of life; the threat of annihilation was reduced. Their wounds represented a respite in the relatively safe hospital and a reprieve from battle, with its ongoing terror of death. For the patients recovering from surgery, the converse was true; their pain was generally experienced as an indication of their illness, and a source of anxiety (Bakan, p. 87). Pain interpreted as reassurance of life may also help to account for the confusing phenomenon of masochism. Persons who fear annihilation may seek the intensity of pain's sentience as a way of averting the even greater discomfort of their anxiety.

I do not mean to suggest that the ameliorization of suffering is only a matter of understanding or consciousness. Clearly, in most instances, action is required. But some degree of suffering can often be relieved through expression, understanding and reinterpretation. And action—changes in policies or actual interventions, for instance—undertaken in the absence of understanding often have unintended harmful effects.


At Auschwitz, some of the young German students appear stoic and indifferent. Kronorfer writes: "As I began to reflect on the students' responses, I realized that the vicious cycle of fear, anger, and ensuing guilt disguised another, much stronger feeling: shame. 'Guilt is a reaction to a deed, shame a reaction to a mode of being,' the psychoanalyst Peer Hultberg writes (1987:85), "Third-generation Germans are not guilty of the deeds of their forebears but can still be ashamed of being German, especially at Auschwitz. Their intellectual detachment, the fear of being judged, the anger that defends against guilt feelings can actually be read as a giant maneuver against shame."

A classic study by JoAnn M. Eland and Jane E. L. Anderson, published in 1977, showed that over 1/2 the children between the ages of four and eight who had major surgery, including amputations, received no medications for postoperative pain. They attribute this, in part, to how easily, in the hospital setting, medical personnel dismissed childrens' limited vocabulary (cited in Morris, 1991, p. 146).

Given that one of the purposes of torture is the obliteration of language, it is striking to note the extent to which the destruction of language is a feature of a form of violence that might be construed as "less extreme" than torture, oppression. Oppression could reasonably be placed at the opposite end of a spectrum from physical torture, in that it is a form of collective, structural, long-standing violence, whereas the violence of torture is individual, bodily and immediate. Colonizing powers often forbid or constrain indigenous...
people from speaking their own language, as when Native Americans were punished for speaking native languages in mandatory boarding schools run by the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Similarly, during the period of slavery, Africans who spoke the same languages were often separated from each other, and also forbidden to use drums that would have allowed them to communicate from one plantation to another.

Laub theorizes that the Holocaust was an event that defied witness, because it was impossible to stay outside of the "trapping roles" that conferred the status of either victim or victimizer. Furthermore, it perpetrated a world in which, as Laub writes, "the very imagination of the Other was no longer possible. There was no longer an other to which one could say 'Thou' in the hope of being heard, of being recognized as a subject, of being answered." In the absence of the recognition that accompanies address and response, victims became unable to bear witness even to themselves. The result is annihilation: "history is abolished" and "identity ceases to exist" (p. 82).

The Amnesty International 1997 Annual Report cites well-documented cases of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including rape, in 124 countries.

Elaine Scarry writes that "the moral and aesthetic value of a given creation does not just depend on the content of the fiction but on the nature of the substantiation used in its confirmation in the transitional period when it is between the states of having been already made-up and not yet made-real; and far, far back in the most atavistic form of substantiation that entails the use of the injured human body, it will become strikingly clear that the most fundamental relation between body and belief turns on the question of whether a person uses his own body in confirmation of a symbolic displacement of that body, or instead uses the body of someone outside the benefits of the invented construct in the confirmation process" (Scarry, 1985, p. 150).


Johnson argues that metaphors that evolve from bodily experiences inform the patterns of even our most abstract thinking, including the propositional structures of rational argumentation itself. So, unlike Kant, whose entire theory of human rationality is based on an understanding of objectivity that separates the thinking mind from the feeling body, Johnson claims that, in fact, "the body is in the mind" (Johnson, 1987, p. xvi.).

The fourth dimension of Kant's understanding of the imagination refers to imagination's creative function, i.e. to the human capacity for originality of expression—capacities often associated with 'imagination' in everyday discourse. In "reflective judgment" the mind does more than organize sensory data by way of a fixed stock of schemata and concepts. It "plays over" various representations (percepts, images, concepts) in search of possible ways that they might be organized (Johnson, 1987, p. 158). Such "free play of the imagination" is central to our apprehension of beauty, when we attend to the formal features of an object to discern patterns of harmony or grace. The notion "free play" refers to the idea that such reflections are not guided by any concept—not of the object itself, because we are attending only to its formal features; and not of beauty, because strictly speaking, there is no concept of beauty. Johnson expalics one of the most difficult passages in Kant's aesthetic theory to explain how, in Kant's view, we can arrive at judgments of beauty that might be universally shared:
Kant describes this non-rule-governed conformity of imaginative activity to structures of understanding as a special kind of "purposiveness" (Zweckmässigkeit) that the object has for my cognitive faculties. More precisely, there is a "purposiveness without any definite purpose," since there is no definite concept (of a purpose the object serves) guiding the reflection, and yet it is somehow fitting (purposive) for mental activity that makes sense to me. Objects judged to be purposive or fitting in this way are called "beautiful," and we say that they put our imagination in a playful harmony with our intellect or understanding (i.e., our conceptual faculty). Thus we judge objects to be beautiful by a free (non-rule-governed) preconceptual imaginative activity that has a rational character and can lay claim to the agreement of other judges, since it focuses only on the formal features of the object, which imagination allows us all to experience in the same way (Johnson, 1977, 160).

The free play of imagination is engaged not just in the appreciation of beauty, but in the creation of works of art as well. Johnson summarizes Kant's notion of genius as "the capacity to initiate a free harmonious play of imagination that issues in a new ordering of representations that make sense to us without the use of concepts." It is a faculty for "producing an aesthetical idea, defined [by Kant] as 'that representation of the imagination which occasions much thought, without however any definite thought, i.e., any concept, being capable of being adequate to it; it consequently cannot be completely compassed and made intelligible by language'" (cited in Johnson, p. 162). Aesthetical ideas "create new meaning, new significance, by going beyond the confines of our established conceptual system" (Johnson), enlarging the concept in "an unbounded fashion" (Kant).

31Bachelard notes that the French philosopher Charles Nodier, wrote in 1828 that "the different names for the soul, among nearly all peoples, are just so many breath variations, and onomatopoetic expressions of breathing" (Bachelard, 1994, p. xx).

32For example, see Cooper, 1996.

33Kapferer defines performance as a "unity between text and enactment, neither reducible to the other." In this regard, his definition parallels Dufrenne's theory about the nature of works of art: they are irreducible to performances, yet "graspable only through or in them" (Kapferer, 1986, p. 192).

34For a related understanding of aesthetic reciprocity, see Dufrenne, p. xxxi.

35The Oral History Center model has been described in detail in several publications. Thompson (1994) emphasizes the importance of narrative in a project addressing urban violence in the United States. Cohen (1997) describes an effort to adapt the model to educate teachers about issues of oppression.

36For a description of the project, see Cohen, 1994.

37To read several of the narratives upon which these poems are based, see Cohen, 1994.
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