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A HUMANITIES-BASED CLASSROOM: ONE TEACHER'S MOTIVATIONS FOR INTEGRATING THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

by

Jay Lewis Cravath

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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has been approved

April 2002

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the self-described "humanities-based" teaching practices of a third grade classroom teacher at an inner-city school district in a major metropolitan city in the southwestern United States and her motivations for using her chosen pedagogical approach.

The study incorporated two methodological designs: portraiture of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Barone's critical storytelling. As called for in portraiture, a "Prelude" chapter discussed the history/perch of the portraitist. The "Interpretation" chapter represents a re-storying of the events of the life of the teacher under study and how her multiple experiences, personally and professionally, converged to form a pedagogical framework in an arts and literacy rich environment.

This research was conducted to determine the impetus behind and the procedures and activities related to the teacher's extensive use of the arts and humanities in her classroom as well as how she perceived its educational benefit to her students. The research revealed that a childhood and adolescence spent intimately involved in the arts motivated and guided this teacher toward educational practices that encouraged multiple arts literacies in her students.

Dedicated to my family

Lynne, Jeff and Chloe,

Margaret and John Cravath,

Walter and Mary Lou Woodcock

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my wife Lynne, I am grateful for her support and encouragement during this journey. I am thankful to Tom McGowan, my chair, for his excellent scholarship and advisement through this process and for his suggestions regarding this manuscript. Many thanks to my Committee members: Lin Wright, Dan Shilling, Robert Pena, Octaviana Trujillo, and Marsha Harrison for their advice and support. To Tom Barone goes my appreciation for opening my eyes to narrative research and the possibilities of critical storytelling as a powerful tool for educational change. Finally, I am thankful to the main participant of this study for her willingness to share her life, talents and insights, and for her remarkable dedication to the craft of teaching.

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PRELUDE

Introduction

In *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (1997) Lawrence-Lightfoot quotes Oscar Wilde's rationale for not showing one of his paintings in that it reveals too much of his soul. In explaining the portraiture methodology, Lawrence-Lightfoot continues: "Voice is the research instrument, echoing the *self* (or the soul as Oscar Wilde would put it) of the portraitist—her eyes, her ears, her insights, her style, her aesthetic" (p. 85). A detailed explanation of portraiture and how it was used in this work is found in the "Methodology" chapter. Offered below, however, is an introduction to the portraitist of this research as called for by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997). It is intended to empower the reader to recognize markers and trail signs of the researcher as the narrative was negotiated and to share in an epiphanous moment that began my aesthetic and intellectual search for the roots and reasons for integrative learning and the liberal arts.

Barone's (1997) call for storied narrative to give richness and nuance, shadow and "ambiguity," was incorporated in the text as often as appropriate, given the nature of the research focus—enabling me to provide a coherence and relate my portrait of a teacher to a series of research questions. Portraiture's tools were incorporated to "frame the aesthetic space" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 34). The "Methodology" chapter further clarifies the role of critical storytelling in this work. The stories shift voices among the actors to heed Erickson's (1986) call to follow the research where it leads.

Personal Memory and Epiphany

The following section is an autobiographical sketch of my first memory and the subsequent 24 years spent in my hometown, Whitefish, Montana. It was there, after receiving my undergraduate degree, that I was introduced to the humanities through a nationally televised PBS program entitled *The Ascent of Man*, written and hosted by Jacob Bronowski (1973). The content of that program, I am convinced, embedded in me the importance of using the arts and humanities in education and initiated the journey that has led to this dissertation.

First Memory

Rushing speckled light and shadow, car window bath.

Driving to Yellowstone. First memory: Standing small among tall—watching Old Faithful with family and strangers all around. Blue and white—sky and steam. Later a row of cabins through that same light—dappled forest disappearing into silken dark. Someone carries me. Outside light transforms into cabin brown glow as we enter. Scent of musty tablecloth plastic—the smell and light of forest home.

A Forest Home

At the age of five my family moved to Whitefish, Montana. It was at the urging of Grandmother Alice to shake my parents loose from the family business. Not healthy Alice felt—her son-in-law tied to the mammary gland of her husband's heavy equipment operation. So the older generation underwrote their kids a resort on a small lake in northwest Montana. We drove into this picture postcard on a sunlit June day. Opening before me was a lush green playground without fences spreading before me into high

lines of trees—down the last open hill before the turn. And sleeping on a lake of mottled blues was Kamp Karefree, a collection of rustic cabins on 14 acres of pine, cottonwood and birch glens. The lake was formed some 80 millenia before by a carnivorous river of ice, a gaping earth wound its legacy—filled up with water over time and welcomed trees to water's edge. A frame of green in summer, they circled the lake not knowing their gold and yellow fate.

Settling into our cabin camp, we were the only inhabitants, the guests not to arrive for another month. Actually, we had company: the squirrels who complained with their machine gun chick-chick tongue-lashing to tree trespassers, robins who yanked huge worms from the central lawn as though playing with rubber bands, and the myriad buzzing and crawling insects that turn five-year-old boys into cruel entomologists. Blowing up anthills with firecrackers was one sinister experiment. I cried, though, when the older neighbor boy swung a leopard frog in a bucket round and round until it died from centrifugal force. My dad always told me to eat everything we killed so I insisted we fry the legs. They were rolled in flour and cooked in butter. The adventurers squeamishly pulled bits of meat from delicate bones—specks of flesh clinging to white sculpted toothpicks.

This was my domain for the next 20 years, and the land and I grew into each other's skin, blood and soil, grit and bone—a cord fashioned—connecting me to the land. Our arrival coincided with the snowing of the cotton from huge trees along our beach. Pitch clung to the releasing husks falling everywhere—to the water, leaving a yellow fringe along the shore and docks—and on the beach, tracing a sticky passage over the smooth gravel. The air was sweet with this sap. As the cottonwoods groaned overhead in

the afternoon breezes, they released more of their white crop. I must have lingered on that beach often after we first arrived, awed by the undulating expanse of blue and green. The quiet and the sound were conducive to contemplation and observation. I was already researching in a sense—studying the big world surrounding my small life as a wide-eyed naturalist.

My older brother was the fisherman. He actively sought those silvery treasures beneath. I was content to exercise my senses in the discovery of the lake's external mysteries: its immensity, the smells and sound that arose from the restless waters. I'd run along its pebble beaches in search of stones for skipping or saving. From time to time I found broken remnants of arrowheads while floating in an innertube just off the shore. Gazing through my little face mask at the clustered stones, glowing softly on the bottom—rippled light from the waves above passing over like clouds across a plain.

And so I passed my first summer in Whitefish, wrapped in an idyll of sweet days and long evenings, playing in the languid northern sun. It was hard to put children to bed at 10 p.m. when the orb still glowed golden low over the lake. My mother solved that problem through mandatory naps, one hour a day, whether you slept or not—all the way to the age of nine. Those summer evenings were for baseball, pom pom pullaway, kick-the-can. Beach fires were twice a week–firepit with a mandala of campers—where, some years later, I provided entertainment as an off-key guitar-brandishing troubadour. During these young years at the camp, though, I took my place in the marshmallow line and joked with my summer friends, whose parents had come up from Billings, Great Falls—or some place I hadn't heard of—to share the strange magic of life on the lake.

A bus took my two brothers and me to school after the summer season was over and always brought us home to witness a new subtle change in the seasons—the earth growing more fecund as though routinely fertilized while the frost waved its ice wand. Trees colored their cloaks and shed them in pieces, the wind cold and sliding through rustling branches. Autumn at Whitefish may have been the most beautiful time of year, for on calm sunny days, one could scan over the gold-crowned birches with their gleaming white stake trunks and see them all reflected in a gigantic mirror of blue and silver, so that if you stood on your head and compared the two scenes, you might not discern the reflection from the source.

Winter came—long fingers hard to the land. From Canada the promise of six months of bone chill and ice tinsel—from the west, air carried the evaporated waters of the Pacific to deposit in unrelenting white blankets, leaving the forest muffled—a remarkable acoustic dampening project that seemed to suffocate any sound that dared whisper. Walking in this still land made you feel as though secrets were kept. Breaking the silence with child shouts startled the senses. Then the serene hush again.

Spring began with the gray mush of melting snow underfoot. The air cold but fragrant—with stirring life in the mild forest places—in trundle beds of last year's leaves and humus. Those little crevices next to ancient fallen cedars where my pretty classmate/neighbor Susan picked wild lilies by the bus stop and put them in her hair. She danced on the road through the slush of thaw like a gypsy girl. Her house was before mine, so I would wave goodbye to this sylphan creature through her gate and down the cement steps to her blue home with white trim—the lake splashing below their deck. Susan had exuberant unconscious beauty, a goofy sense of humor, her own cotton candy

machine, and a warm soul. Her dad owned the local bowling alley. Their house was just down the beach from our cabins. We had grown up as neighbors and friends but when sixth grade came and she started to blossom, I felt a peculiar new urgency and our relationship forever changed. No longer could I speak to her as a friend. She was now the formidable prey. Passion cut out my tongue like one of Ali Baba's thieves. She captured me and the rights as muse to most of my future love songs. Susan may have requited my love if given a chance, she shared recently. Alas, she moved away at the onset of junior high before we could exercise our libidos together. Spring and Susan are still synonymous.

These romantic stirrings formed the first fuel for the music I had been playing on my guitar and quelled that thirst. Music gave voice to these adolescent longings. My belief that the arts are essential in our lives came first through these expressive responses, for I found that by playing or writing a song, a kind of resolution or insight took place. Also, being in nature—living with its many shapes and colors, the sounds of birds and fury of the wind across the lake, the dark green of the silent forest nurtured an appreciation of visual beauty. A patchwork of experiences during my early years in this natural place became the seeds for a life-long interest in aesthetics.

The notion that I had a facility for writing descriptive prose came when my eighth grade English teacher asked me to stay after class. She had just handed back graded research papers to the class on the history of education and mine had "Please see me" at the top. No grade—just those three words. After the other students filed out I stood at Miss Olson's desk.

"Jay," she asked, her voice tense, "Did you write this?"

My brain did a cell block lockout. I thought I had paraphrased not copied the early history of American education from the *World Book*. My mind raced back to the plodding article. But that was at the *end* of the paper! It was the opening two paragraphs she was concerned about—narrative *I* had written. It was based on discussions about Socrates two years earlier during a history lesson. My sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Paulis, had taught us a unit on ancient Greece including Socrates and his famous cocktail to eternity. She always spoke vividly when she talked about history. Remembering her stories, I began the paper in question with something like "Imagine it 500 B.C. You are clothed in white robes walking through a garden. Fountains and statues surround you and in their midst a man stands speaking boldly"—and so on. It was like Mrs. Paulis might begin one of her lectures. That was the part Miss Olson thought I had copied! I explained to her that I had made that up from stuff I already knew. She smiled warmly down at me and complimented my writing. She handed me back my paper. I remember walking out of the class dazed by the fact that Miss Olson suspected plagiarism when it had come out of my imagination, fueled by a series of romantic images etched a couple years before by a gifted storyteller/teacher. The Golden Age of Greece—Pericles' Greece. We studied it in depth, did large historical murals. We acted out scenes and learned about old Socrates' miserable but noble demise. Our classroom activity had captured my imagination and stuck in my mind, returning whenever I conceptualized good teaching.

Was the facility for writing genetic? If so, I remain convinced that the right set of circumstances nurtured me toward the disposition. My Grandmother Alice had been a writer—she kept lengthy journals, though I'm not sure if she ever published any of them. However, from when I was very young, my mother had encouraged me to read and I took

to it readily. She modeled like a trooper, spending idle time wedged into gothic novels. She would bring home books from the library. *The Wind in the Willows* stands out because the cover was so bizarre: two amphibians dressed to the teeth—spats even—ready for a wild ride in the horseless carriage. The dialogue helped make me an Anglophile. It seemed so rich and full of humor. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* series cemented that play of words to create through their various misadventures the humor of incongruity—a folk version of an Ianesco play.

Living out of town, we didn't have many neighbors and because my brothers and I had to take summer naps, I had daily summer reading time. By the age of nine, I had met Mark Twain, various books on paleontology, having dinosaur madness, and crawled into the *Dr. Dolittle* series by Hugh Lofting. To this day I can place myself in the giant sea snail that Dolittle convinced to bring him from Africa to England. This snail created its own oxygen that the good Doctor breathed and the shell offered cramped but tolerable accommodations under its shell. Mom was flexible with my napping quarters and on sunny days I would choose to lie in the deep quack grass and service berry bushes next to the short telephone pole-style clothes lines. I read as lady bugs and katydids negotiated their jungle, ignoring the intruder who sometimes put his book down and observed them through his junior detective plastic magnifying glass. It was this reading, I believe, that taught me the structure of fictional writing: an intuitional education in ways to frame narrative. Teachers like Mrs. Paulis gave us structured opportunities to exercise the imagination with more well chosen fiction. This approach to learning, I believe, led to a facility most other students missed the opportunity to develop.

The guitar lessons I received around this time would later play a large role in the interests I pursued after high school. I had learned to strum, but discovered fingerpicking through trial-and-error. I remember working out my first song, *Scarborough Fair*, on our porch one evening while a group of girls who were guests at the camp listened. When I finished, they screamed like Beatles fans and acted frenzied. Mostly, they were acting out the ritual roles of the Fab Four audience. However, that was a significant personal axiom: guitar is chick-magnet. When it came time to study a subject in college, therefore, my decisions were based primarily on this insight, precluding me from much chance for success in the material world. I would get an impractical degree in music—not even with an education focus. Rather, art for its own sake. No matter, for the remarkable journey booked for my life was chosen with art as the guide, a no finer mentor I say.

My father introduced me to ideas through another lens. He was interested in general knowledge—at times even close to obsession. I would hear others remark to him during conversations that he knew a lot about different things. Dad seemed to be able to converse on most subjects with ease (excluding the arts where he seems to have missed the boat growing up). As a junior high teacher of social studies and science, though, his curiosity about the physical world gave me an appreciation for ideas in their breadth. He was a natural educator, lecturing unsolicited as we drove on trips across Montana, explaining the geology of the region—the faint shoreline along the hills far above that had been Lake Missoula, or the story of how giant rivers of ice had once ripped solid rock from metamorphic mountains to form the rocky crags of Glacier Park. Dad instilled a curiosity of ideas in the physical world while Mom covered aesthetic territory.

College Life and Marriage

So when I went off to college, I did indeed study music, but pursued other subjects as well. A course on comparative religion, taught by the brilliant Thomas Dicken, introduced me to Paul Tillich, that wonderful theologian reviled by some who were made uncomfortable by the Christian existentialist who dared to fuse the sacred with the intellectual and suggest that the inverse of Kierkegaard's leap of faith—ontological doubt—is a necessary component to healthy honest reflection—even that heaven may be heavenly imagination. And this at a small church-affiliated liberal arts institution.

Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana, offered other excellent mentors as well and allowed me to write a program of independent study that combined music and psychology majors into a series of papers and projects advocating the arts as therapy in our lives. And though my liberal arts education may not have been of Ivy League stature, I felt as though I had grown much during my four-year sojourn and graduated with curiosity intact.

Soon I was back in academia to study music composition. Life with the folks back in Whitefish had become stifling. A trek to Missoula, home to the University of Montana, continued a feast of arts discovery and reflection. This excerpt from my journal during that year demonstrates, I believe, developing interest in the poetic use of language:

> Suddenly something else that makes sense
> You needn't look narrowly
> View widely longly
> Not just sad moments in cool smoothness

Take looks across horizon clusters of moments
Stream of vision, flowing and lovely
In the shades of the perfect dancer
The way moves with pain

Without wings, singing under breath
Streaming over dying oak
Fallen sometime ago
Left without pause

Allow her a fern in Louisiana dusk
Cool like that, yes, and dimensions of haze
Color of her skin as she comes swiftly and
Rounding the waters in flight

Everything that lives is holy
Life delights in life

Jay's version of the *Songs of Innocence* (Blake, 1987). Not inspired by angels in trees a la Blake—yet playing with words through a prism of idealism. My naïve romanticism is starkly evident. Yet it shows, I think, a mind disposed to ideas and ripe for any epiphany that might stalk out of the shadows. It was the kind of naïve poetic inquiry that Sylvia Tierra (pseudonym), the main actor in this dissertation, spoke of in an interview when describing her adolescent encounters with verse and Romantic (the cultural period) ideas.

After a whirlwind courtship in Missoula where I met my future wife, and an idyllic autumn wedding on the beach of Kamp Karefree, my parents packed their car and headed on a sabbatical to Mexico, leaving Lynne and me in charge of the cabins. This opportunity handed me back my boyhood playground to steward the place as another Indian summer opened before us. We played house in a setting of sweet country. Lynne, who had recently graduated with a fine arts degree, and I settled into married life at the folks' house on the lake. She painted while I wrote music, did maintenance around the place and continued to pen long, often incoherent entries in my journal. The muses were

with us as the cloak of winter slowly enveloped those last, sweet days of the second equinox. The lyric I wrote to describe our courtship is of the fairy tale genre:

When I was young I was dreamin'
Someday that I'd have a wife
A home and a little family
The American life

So I found me a girl with stars in her eyes
We sang right in tune from the start
Two lovers sharing their fantasy
Two children still in the heart

(chorus)
When that heart grows too weary
And all senses are drowned
Close your eyes and listen
That's when the music will sound
For the ages have told us
That the rain will wash down
And the sweet smell of summer
Will float all around

Life was good. Sunday nights we became PBS-aholics watching those ten-part Masterpiece Theatre "sagas." One series that held us in bondage was on the hunger strike among the suffrage workers in England during the height of that movement. Prison wardens decided to begin force feeding—not a pretty sight or sound to witness women staked like rabbits to the bed and tubes shoved down the esophagus. The actors played their parts chillingly well. Feeding sequences were staged from personal accounts written after the victims were finally released. A fine training film for misogynist parolees. The excellent stories and acting from these PBS series reawakened my interest in history, dulled by bad teachers, and engendered an interest in social issues—one of the predominant themes of the network during that period.

One Sunday night the slot before Masterpiece was taken up by a new serial. It turned out to be an hour essay, filmed on location, hosted by a short balding man with coke-bottle glasses. He stood in front of the camera and dazzled me. With elegance and passion, Jacob Bronowski wove stories of science, discovery, and an intellectual and aesthetic mark on humans. Like Joseph Campbell, who introduced us to the muses of myths then climbed into his own life painting, Bronowski died as his program was becoming a hit of public television. *The Ascent of Man* combined Bronowski and the philosopher's immense understanding of human history and achievement. With his storytelling acumen he was spellbinding. I had been taught that subject areas were discrete and separated by a kind of academic barbed wire. Mr. Wilcomb had convinced me in high school that history had to be boring—that it was some grownup droning endlessly for 45 minutes in slow motion—about a victor's narrow story of "America and the World." Two classes taken from him—all in a steady hum. I hadn't heard anyone integrate ideas since Mrs. Paulis linked them through time—concepts I was taught in high school to keep in separate bins. Bronowski compellingly demonstrated week after week that our relentless curiosity as a species was manifested in a network of shared and worfed ideas. The inventors of our modern realm riffed and traded solos with each other. He began with Australopithecus—the tree dweller: that gentle being that foraged with its hands, stood upright and seemed to reflect upon the world. This man, Bronowski, with the piercing, curious eyes explained our ancestral stirrings—the nights on the savannahs, waiting out the hyenas who paced drooling underneath the trees. When the teeth really started to change, Bronowski said—that was the beginning of man. Two million years ago we began making tools. Around a million back, we began refining them. The story

was told with such grace, rhythm and passion that I was transfixed. The ability to tell this story with such eloquence and conviction to others appealed to me because I identified so much with the compelling manner in which Bronowski spun his magic. This man was not only consummate storyteller and writer—I realized he was a great teacher. I had dismissed education as a career because my father, a teacher, had seemed to constantly complain about his profession while I was growing up. Though I recognized my avocation for the craft—persuading people to accept my ideas and lecturing about familiar subjects—it had been suppressed.

And so—for ten Sundays in the autumn of 1976 Bronowski changed my life. He showed this musician Pythagoras finding a mathematical relationship to music, the harmonic ring of the diatonic scale when a single string is touched precisely at certain nodes: in the middle of the string: 2:1, an octave; a third of the way: 3:1, a perfect fifth; a fourth of the way: a perfect fourth. And so on—until I could begin to hear those ancient harps of the Mediterranean sing, in Aeolian, and Dorian, and Phrygian modes.

Since the drawing of the human form was banned in Islam, Bronowski (1973) explained one evening, the "artist and mathematician became one." The wealth of patterns, Bronowski instructed, includes geometric shapes (a la M.C. Escher): tessitations. This wealth is no accident, he argued. These patterns are the very shape of life. Arabian artists were fond of designs that repeated as mirrors of each other so that any one shape could be folded over onto another. This is why crystals can only have certain shapes because, like these patterns of the Islamic mosques, the crystal locks together in the same way so that it will be able to extend itself in either direction. As though these mathematicians had used electron microscopes. Bronowski demonstrated

how we find "certain kinds of symmetries not only in man-made patterns, but in the regularities which nature herself imposes on her fundamental atomic structures" (Bronowski, 1973, p. 174).

In a very intellectually accessible way, Bronowski's series compelled its viewers into mathematical and scientific realms that had been the exclusive domain of the academician and theorist. Given populist treatment in literature (the essays of Lewis Thomas, for example), Bronowski's was the first series to synthesize these ideas for a mass audience (viewership of 9 million for some of the episodes, very sizeable for a program of its nature in the 1970s) and weave scientific events and the history and ideas that impacted them into a connected and persuasive story.

I remain convinced that this television series was the greatest single epiphany that set me on a quest, culminating for the moment in this dissertation research. I set out to answer the question of why I was so compelled by Bronowski's pedagogy and his intersectioning and integrating of ideas. Reflecting back, the various circumstances and events of my life wrought an artist's temperament and a humanist's curiosity that set me inexorably to the intellectual setting in which this Prelude was written. The childhood idyll of forest, lake and sky; the quiet guidance of my mother toward books, music and ideas; my father's curiosity toward and stories of the natural world; the small liberal arts college that brought me into the tight circle of an intellectual and spiritual world; and the various friends, artists and countless serendipitous events in my life that prepared me to see the value of my own education and, through its context, that of others. Through 12 years of teaching elementary general music and college humanities where I experimented with the integration of disciplines using cooperative learning centers, my frustration with

the teaching of subjects as discrete islands in classrooms all around me, finally resulted in the pursuit of a Ph.D. It was hoped that I would find answers to the perpetuation of the linear curriculum I saw all around me and perhaps grow a strong and reasoned voice of dissent and alternative. The chain of events and epiphanies that make up my life have brought me to this dissertation.

With a dedication to Jacob Bronowski and all who have taught me to possibilitize—to create, express and explain, to re-story and make poetic, I offer the following portrait of a woman who dared do that in a classroom everyday, whatever the potential costs in an age of standardized testing and mandated curriculum.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree

T. S. Eliot

Rationale and Questions for Study

Sylvia Tierra: Entrance of the Main Actor

Though portraiture will be fully defined in the "Methodology" chapter, it is important here to briefly consider Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis' (1997) discussion of context as an essential tool in the use of portraiture. Without an established context, the reader cannot hope to interpret the portrait that the researcher offers. So, this introduction of the main actor, Sylvia Tierra, provides a beginning point for the process through which the reader situates the inquiry's historical (Sylvia's predilections toward certain kinds of pedagogical styles), personal (how those dispositions and preferences have been constructed) and internal (the actor's views of her work as a teacher, as a humanist, as an artist) contexts.

Sylvia Tierra was born in Sri Lanka, an island nation off the coast of India, in 1962. It was formerly known as Ceylon after the phrase "Land of the Singhalese," who,

along with the Tamil, comprise the two major ethnic groups residing there. Sylvia's parents are Winston and Miram Tierra (pseudonyms). Sylvia had one sibling—a sister named Constance (pseudonym) who is two years her junior. They grew up outside of Kandy, the capital of the republic in a five bedroom house on a hill amid the tea plantations of a well known British company. Winston, whose university degree was in engineering, managed infrastructure development for Barton Limited (pseudonym), a construction and maintenance company that served the needs of the colonial plantations on the island. Winston was well-paid and, while Sylvia was in Sri Lanka, the family had a chauffeur, cook and servants. The Tierra girls commuted to school in a limousine with their father.

In the early 1970s, tensions among factions within and without the government exacerbated. Sylvia was 13 years old at the time. The Tierras had applied for visas to the United States two years before to spend time with Miram's sister-in-law, Priya (pseudonym), who had a Montessori school in Austin, Texas. Miram and Priya had both trained in Montessori pedagogy and the former had entertained the idea of moving to America and opening a school of her own. When Winston learned their visas had come through, he and Miram decided to move without waiting any longer. The unstable conditions developing in Sri Lanka were not the primary reason, but certainly played into the decision. The choice to move was in spite of Winston's generous income and a new house they had just completed and made ready for move-in.

When the Tierras packed, they left with a few trunks of clothing and a small amount of currency—Winston was unable to recover funds from his investments in the country. They arrived in Austin and stayed with Priya and her husband until they could

secure a small two-bedroom apartment. Miram began working at her sister's Montessori school while laying the groundwork to establish her own, while her husband looked for work. Because his engineering degree was not recognized as legitimate by U.S. firms, Winston's job opportunities were diminished. He became a photocopier salesman until ultimately establishing his own contracting business.

Sylvia and her sister attended a public high school and, after graduation, Sylvia began undergraduate studies. In her second year, she met Rasheen Mahanama (pseudonym), a graduate student in the college of law. Rasheen had received numerous academic awards including a fellowship to study at Oxford for a year. He and Sylvia dated and, after they graduated from college, he with a law degree and she in liberal arts (history major and art history minor) they married and moved to a large city in the American Southwest.

Rasheen began practicing law with a prestigious firm and Sylvia set up housekeeping. She did work part time for four years as a preschool teacher until registering for a post-baccalaureate program at a large urban university in elementary education. After a year's academic work, Sylvia gained her teaching certificate and acquired a position at Kokopelli Elementary School (pseudonym) where she began teaching full time. A year later, she began work toward a master's degree in elementary education while continuing to teach third grade.

After six years of marriage to Rasheen, Sylvia and he divorced. She remained in the house they had shared and he relocated to another part of the city. Sylvia continued her university studies and was recently awarded a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction.

She is now living in a large metropolitan city in the southeastern part of the United States doing post-doctoral work at a major, large, research university.

I first met Sylvia at a state social studies conference. Her easy, friendly laugh resonated in the hotel corridor that edged its way into a hall of exhibits teaming with hawkers of the usual curricula cornucopia: books, learning tools, and maps. Sylvia's smile was warm and broad—intelligent eyes danced with grace and good cheer. She spoke with an accent that sounded East Indian—it rolled off her tongue in rich British chunks of sound, as though her words were sculpted. I was President of our state's Council for the Social Studies at the time, and Sylvia was doing a session for our conference. During our introduction, I queried her about the title of her presentation, which included the word *humanities.* She described herself as a "humanities-based teacher." She then listed a series of classroom practices to justify that moniker. This piqued my interest in her work and ideas and thus began a friendship that has led to the door of this study.

Appointing Sylvia to a vacated position on the Board of the State Council for the Social Studies, we were able to become better acquainted. She was a third grade classroom teacher at the time in a district in the urban core of a large city in the Southwest. We were each working on the Ph.D. and over the next year continued to connect professionally through projects related to the Council for the Social Studies and personally on campus—sharing war stories of our trials in academia.

Gradually, as I learned more about Sylvia's approach to teaching, I recognized her as someone who might exemplify my developing notions of what elementary education could be: project-based, rich in arts and humanities and in the tradition of the Progressive

movement of John Dewey (Semel & Sadovnik, 1999). Originally, I had hoped to find such a teacher and research her students to explore their motivational responses and learning outcomes. Instead, I resolved to study the teacher herself—to discover what motivated her to spend so much more time in preparation than she would using more standard models of teaching—what formal and informal educational experiences had this person synthesized to form a personal, humanities-based pedagogy?

Sylvia Tierra's pedagogical approach was indeed arts and humanities based. Her subjects were tied together through class-wide themes with extensive projects that involved multiple art forms and alternative assessments, both negotiated and portfolio. According to this teacher, using the humanities in combination with arts approaches assisted her students by:

- offering multiple perspectives—those of seeing the world through the eyes of an artist and writer as well as scientist and mathematician;
- helping them to value and enjoy aesthetic experiences;
- encouraging them to think about environment in richer ways;
- enabling them to discover their own artistic talents and communicative abilities (Eisner's frames of representation, 1998);
- pushing the students to ask questions driven by curiosity and to create an ongoing intellectual climate where big ideas are revisited and subsequent connections made.

Sylvia taught in third and fourth grade self-contained classrooms from 1996 to 1999, at Kokopelli Elementary School (pseudonym), an inner city school in the Southwest. Its student population during her tenure was approximately 550. The socio-economics included a mixed population, ranging from lower to upper middle class. Soon

after she received a post-baccalaureate degree in elementary education, she began her work in the classroom. At the time this research was conducted, she was no longer full-time in the classroom but had a part time art specialist position as she pursued her Ph.D. Besides many conversations with Sylvia, data collection included extensive document review and multiple interviews with a number of actors identified below.

Her former principal during her years as a classroom teacher confirmed that Sylvia integrated arts and humanities through all her subject matter "to a great degree" and in original ways (C. Cronski, personal communication, May 3, 2001). As examined in depth in the "Interpretation" chapter, Sylvia received a rich liberal arts education through elementary and middle school. She became conversant in all of the arts to varying degrees, participating in a traveling dance troupe, performing Shakespeare and continuing with intense involvement in theatre from the fifth grade, playing the piano and painting (the latter began with her mother's guidance, at the age of three). Her arts literacy enabled Sylvia to comfortably instruct through the various art forms. For an elementary classroom teacher to have even moderate competency in dance, music, drama and visual art is unusual. Therefore, specialists are generally required to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the arts (Stake, Bresler, & Mabry, 1991).

In interviews with colleagues, parents of her students and friends, Sylvia was consistently described as a tireless worker, innovative and thorough. She was the most-requested teacher by parents for incoming fourth graders during her three years at that grade level. Her students' test scores were consistently high. According to her principal, Sylvia spent many extra hours on the job, designing, planning her curriculum and interacting with parents. That was an area of her job description she took very seriously

and, her principal again: "She won a lot of parents' hearts and sold them on her classroom practices" (C. Cronski, personal communication, August 28, 2001)."

Sylvia's approach was in the tradition of Progressive education. Among her inspirations was John Dewey—and when I compared the daily curriculum of the former to the latter's University of Chicago Laboratory School (Tanner, 1997), they have a remarkable number of shared attributes. Both ultimately chose to integrate subject matter through interdisciplinary approaches. My "Review of Literature," therefore, includes a summary of Progressive practices and particular features of that movement that were manifested in Sylvia's classroom. Due to Sylvia's comprehensive use of the arts and humanities, the literature review also traces the roots, the historical chronology of the subjects, elaborates their definitions, and examines the extent to which the arts and humanities are included in preservice training.

It is not the intent of this research to study the practice of or argue a position on the place of the arts and humanities in school curriculum or the relative merits of Progressive education. My goal was to understand, as deeply as this research would allow, the motivations behind Sylvia's willingness to dedicate herself so completely to the task of shaping a curriculum that her students thrived in and the personal and professional training she acquired that in some ways generated and also responded to those motivations.

Historically, research in arts education has focused on student outcomes rather than teacher motivations (Davis, 1993; Fineberg, 1991; Jay, 1991; Kardash & Wright, 1987; Moore & Caldwell, 1993; Torff, 1994). Surveys involving arts education curricula examined for this research have not sought to discover conceptions or motivations of the

teachers. Perhaps responding to this lack of attention to teacher attributes, McKean (1997), in a cross-case study of six classroom teachers identified as using the arts significantly in their classrooms, found that the teachers "value the arts most as vehicles for self-expression" (p. 159). The main thrust of her research was to find the conceptions of and motivations for teaching the arts in the classroom. Though I am interested in Sylvia's motivations for teaching the arts, examination of her beliefs regarding incorporation of the humanities in the classroom are included as well. Sylvia's personal conversance in the arts and humanities is also a departure from the teachers selected for the McKean study.

Sylvia Tierra richly integrated the arts and humanities during her tenure at Kokopelli Elementary using principles of Montessori, progressive practices of child-centered approaches learned during preservice training and her interpretations of a liberal arts education. Reflecting Sylvia's sources of instructional inspiration, the purpose of this research has been to discover/uncover the answers to three primary questions:

- What experiences, events and epiphanies in her formal and informal education culminated in the educational practices that Sylvia exercised on a daily basis in her classroom?
- How did Sylvia's personal literacy in the arts and humanities enable her to design a curriculum unique to her school and, through diligence, successfully implement it over time?
- Why was Sylvia motivated to use this approach in the face of time constraints and a school district that continued a legacy of subject-centered curricula (believing they yield higher scores on standardized tests).

To assist in an informed view of Sylvia's work in her classroom, a range of actors were interviewed. Those participants included her parents, childhood friends, educational

mentors, colleagues from her schooling and work, ex-husband, and Sylvia's students after she became an elementary teacher. In all, you will be introduced to 26 actors during various stages of her story in my "Interpretation" chapter. Extensive interviews with the main character, Sylvia herself, illuminated my understanding of her quest for developing personal arts literacy and how that conversance enabled her to teach her students those skills. Reading and rereading interview transcripts offered insights into understanding her development of interdisciplinary approaches. As an alternative data source, some of Sylvia's former students, parents and colleagues were interviewed to establish that her teaching was actually humanities/arts-infused. Document review of student class projects and videos, Sylvia's lesson plans and various papers she wrote, including her master's thesis on creative thinking, provided rich insight into her curricular approaches.

Through the rich description provided by multiple sources, I constructed a portrait—an effort to synthesize the rigor of portraiture's ethnographic lense (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). Using the suggestions of Barone (1997), the data from the interviews are re-storied to offer aesthetic richness and the heteroglossia of lived events (Greene, 1990).

Definition of Terms

An alphabetical list of definitions of the terms that appear in the "Review of Literature" and "Methodology" chapters follows to assist with clarification of the discussion presented in those chapters. These definitions helped guide this study by assisting the researcher in comparing and interpreting the interactions of the actors who influenced a selected teacher's classroom through a common frame:

Aesthetics: According to Smith (1987), aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that includes questions about the nature, meaning and value of the arts and the character of both natural and human-made environments.

Arts: As defined in the National Standards on Arts Education, the arts are designated as dance, music, theatre and the visual arts (Music Educators National Conference [MENC], 1994).

Dispositions: Affinity toward ways of responding mentally or actively when presented with a given situation. They are belief-actions based on how we have constructed and been constructed by our universe through metaphor (McLaren, 1992).

Humanities: The term *humanities* includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life (National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 1965).

Liberal Education: A liberal education is "an education that is 'liberal' in that it liberates the mind from the bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 8). "The cultivation of humanity" (Seneca, in Nussbaum, 1997).

Perceptions: "How phenomena 'the things themselves' present themselves in the lived experience of the individual, especially as they present themselves in lived time" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996, p. 407); as individuals move "toward" the world, that is, as they create and refine meaning they build personal consciousness (Greene, 1973).

World view: The conception of oneself in reference to one's surroundings and reciprocal actions, power relationships and communication within that frame (Whitson, 1993).

The foregoing definitions are meant as guideposts as the reader negotiates the terrain of this study because they occur frequently in the text. Because they carry the weight of added meaning, it is anticipated that these definitions will assist in contextual elucidation of the arguments and discussion presented in this study.

Snapshots of the Other Primary Actors

Sylvia's descriptions of her parents quoted from interview transcripts are offered here to introduce these important actors in her life and to help provide context regarding

their relationship. As her primary caregivers and mentors in developing literacy in the arts and humanities, an essential component of Sylvia's success in the classroom and in life, I believe it is important for the reader to "meet" them in the "Introduction." The following are excerpts from Sylvia regarding her parents.

Sylvia on her Mom. (Note: italics denote excerpts from interviews.) *I think she had a real romantic spirit. That's why her art and music and she wanted flowers and everything had to be beautiful. She was just—she still is* [laughs]. *And that had a huge impact on my life. She was not somebody who wanted to sit—when she was in Sri Lanka, my father had a really good job and she never had to work. But I remember she was just not happy just sitting home and doing nothing. She just had to be in on the action. She was always going out looking for things to do and she would just have the whole town—she would be having charitable organizations, organizing yard sales. She loved throwing parties. She still does. She throws more parties than I do. She just loved entertaining—she loved life. She loved experiencing new things. And I think that kind of went against what was expected—because you're supposed to be a different way, you know, you're supposed to be content with sitting home and* [being conventional].

She was a very passionate kind of person. She still is. And I think that was a huge influence in my life because a lot of things that I did she also did through me. So sometimes I had to distance myself because [laughing] *I had to say, "Wait a minute. What is it that I like as opposed to my mother?" In some ways we are very much alike. In some ways I had to struggle to establish my own independence as well.*

Sylvia on her Dad. *My father was somebody—I think the biggest influence was music but more than anything else, the biggest influence of my father is a faith, the*

strength to believe in what you want, taking risks—my father is a tremendous risk-taker. Just a real positive attitude that no matter what the odds are, you just don't give up. You just keep plugging along. An anecdote that stays in my mind that was really powerful—he influenced me by the life example he lived. Here he had a big job as an executive of an engineering firm.

When he came here he didn't get a job. It was really hard. He had to struggle—all of a sudden from this privileged life he had to come down to the very bottom—at that time in the country [Sri Lanka] *you couldn't take your money out. So when we came here he took a job as a copy machine salesman. For somebody having to take a job, especially after being in his position, would have been really tough. But he would wake up every morning and at 6 o'clock, and he bought an old station wagon—this was not even selling it in the store. He had to cart the copy machine in the station wagon and sell it door-to-door. Before, he had a chauffeur who drove his car. And he won best salesman of the month. And to me—I guess that was powerful because I learned from him that no matter what the circumstances of what you do you do the best you can.*

The Portraitist's View of the Pedagogy of Sylvia Tierra

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) acknowledges that portraiture must reveal the perch of the portraitist though "he or she tries not to let personal inclinations shape the inquiry" (p. 14). Though I have introduced my study and suggested reasons for its pursuit, I feel it important to trace some personal educational experiences that led to my interest in Sylvia's work.

You have read of Mrs. Paulis—the project-based teacher who gave me a first awakening wonder of history—later to be sabotaged by the drone of a railroader's son in the guise of a history teacher who altered my idealistic perceptions to transform history into a dead subject. The "Prelude" offered a sketch of my positive experiences in education as a child leading to the major epiphany of first introduction to interdisciplinary learning through the Bronowski television series. To understand my position as the portraitist in this study, it is important to know a more complete story of my educational background. My support from home and a facility for language helped me negotiate primary and secondary school. However, my view of education as a career was negatively influenced by my father's unhappiness with the profession's low wages. As stated in the "Prelude," music was pursued academically and with a dual major in psychology, I graduated from college with a degree that could certify me to no specific vocation. After singing in one too many smoky lounges, though, the alternative to playing music professionally seemed inevitable: a certification to teach classroom music.

During my subsequent 16 years teaching elementary general music education, I watched self-contained classroom teachers at their work and have concluded that it is one of the most difficult occupations imaginable. Hours of preparation and planning, physical dressing and maintenance of quarters and the multiple job description as mentor and muse, parent and warden, friend and advocate, require a remarkable set of dispositions and talents. Good teachers must have a stolid work ethic, strong interpersonal skills, an aesthetic sense, organizational acumen, the patience and transcendence of Job, a deep understanding of the psychology of children and an empathic and forgiving heart. Whereas I could get by planning a general lesson that could be delivered to any class that

entered my room on a given day, classroom teachers spent early mornings, late evenings, weekends—each teacher holding religiously to her schedule of extra hours—to keep ahead of the work load. The more dedicated the teacher, the greater the chunks of preparation.

Child-centered classrooms (Tanner & Tanner, 1990) required Herculean schedules. Yet, those believers were rewarded with active, engaged communities, buzzing with business and fun—cogs of activity in sequence like a well run watch. I had already discovered a powerful pedagogy through Jacob Bronowski and his modeling of interdisciplinary education. Cooperative learning was introduced during my year of certification training. The teachers at the schools I worked in were doing theme cycles (Altwerger & Flores, 1994), negotiated with the students in a cheerful oligarchy, instituted in a kind of maternal democracy. The students from those classes had extra enthusiasm for school. They tended to be happier and more active in my music classes. The cooperative classroom centers were often clever learning labs organized so the kids stayed on task and participated fully. That gave the maestra time to facilitate.

Though I began observing through the uninitiated eyes of a specialist—passing by on my way to the office or media center—over time the recognition of these classrooms as unique and powerful sites of learning took hold. Whole language classrooms, as they were referred to by some of my colleagues (Willinsky, 1990) had certain qualities that differentiated them from what I called the "desks in a row"—the kind I grew up in. Children were more actively engaged, discussing, with greater hands-on activities and more writing than in the linear rooms. The teacher spent less front-of-the-room time; did

more facilitating and seemed, as my daughter described the teachers in a whole language school after moving from a low SES site where a linear model prevailed—"more calm."

While witnessing child-centered educational practices at my school, I too began using them in my music classes. Though not negotiated as is called for among advocates of theme cycles, my centers increasingly incorporated interdisciplinary approaches as my personal knowledge base on implementation grew (Fogarty, 1991; Jacobs, 1991; McCormick & Ricks, 1994). Theme-based centers included a range of topics: the blues, Appalachian music, American Indians and others, developed into packets that divided students into cooperative groups to rotate through centers that included listening, playing of instruments, writing, reading, singing and movement. These were so successful and the students so motivated that I used the approach with my college humanities classes who also responded positively, albeit a little more reticently to singing, dancing, choral reading, and drama while learning basic humanities.

My admiration for the child-centered teaching practices of colleagues in the schools I taught convinced me that building the curriculum around the needs and interests of the student rather than retrofitting a prescribed curriculum made for more successful learning (Dewey, 1934). Therefore, my research perspective throughout this study was based on this belief. However, I considered it essential as the portraitist that I guard against rigidity as the portrait emerged. Being aware of my proclivity toward the child-centered curriculum helped me remain open to disconfirming as well as confirming data.

Overview of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation was to discover/uncover the underlying perceptions and motivations that caused a teacher to design and implement a highly integrated arts and humanities curriculum in her fourth grade classroom. An expected outcome from this research was for me to consider the possible ramifications for use of those ideas in teacher training.

The dissertation consists of a prelude, four chapters and a postlude. The "Prelude" provides an opening sketch of myself, the portraitist/narrator, a brief summary of my childhood and education and a revisitation of an epiphanous introduction to integrated learning.

Chapter 1 introduces the research questions and the principal actors in the portrait. Definitions of the arts and humanities, a brief summary of portraiture and a meeting with the main actor are included as well.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the study—those knowledge bases Sylvia claims as contributing significantly to her educational practices. Exploring the academic and philosophical roots of Progressive and arts/humanities pedagogy, their relationship to preservice teacher training in general and, in particular, to Sylvia's preparation to teach elementary school.

Chapter 3 examines the methodology of portraiture detailing how it is used to create an ethnographic portrait. An explanation of and rationale for the incorporation of Barone's critical inquiry (2000) and re-storying of narrative (1997) is also included. My procedures for data collection and analysis are described in detail.

Chapter 4 presents my interpretation/portrait of Sylvia and her work as a classroom teacher, in lieu of a chapter that reports findings as typically occurs in traditional dissertation formats. For me, the term *interpretation* suggests greater openness to multiple points-of-view rather than suggesting something was "found" that is external to the researcher—a paradigmatic presumption. First to be considered here is context, voice and relationship: the developing set of experiences and knowledge-building of actors. On the advice of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997), relationships among the actors were examined to "navigate intimacy, declare boundaries and represent rapport" (p. viii).

Sylvia Tierra's final portrait is a fusion of empirical choices and aesthetic sensibilities as called for by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997). It is the centerpiece of the "Interpretation" chapter. The narrative frame incorporates the inquiry technique of a "collaborative educational (auto)biography" as suggested by Barone (1997, p. 222). My descriptive essay deploys "a particular literary conceit to add an element of playfulness and mystery to the material" (p. 223). It is an authorial reconstruction: a blend of "empirical details of my visits . . . with fragments from my own imagination" (p. 223). Barone (1997) describes the heuristic function of literature as social research and the value it invests in ambiguity in the name of asking important questions. My portrait of Sylvia has demanded that I, as portraitist, seek sense-making with these suggestions—for nuance, density, ambiguity and the aesthetic power of literature. The narrative style is biographical—that is, the writing reads as a life story with a reshaping of data from interviews, observation and document review into a piece informed and illuminated by elements of literature.

Whereas standard dissertations end with a discussion or conclusion, my final section, the "Postlude," includes written and musical narrative, summarizing and giving closure to my "Interpretation" and suggesting ramifications for further study. Forms for presentation of such a final section (Eisner, 1998) include poetry, song, autoethnography/journal (as described by Pinar, 1988) and instrumental music as discussed below. This section has elements of an academic soiree, with postmodern voices mingling among liberal arts aesthetics and multiple literacies (in a written and musical narrative).

Included in the "Postlude" is "A Suite of the Experience." Two recent collaborations with qualitative researchers (Barone, 2000; Finley, in press) where I was asked to write interpretive narrative in the form of music offered me the opportunity to explore translative theories and the intersection of writing and music. In a paper entitled *Music As Narrative: Seeking Translation*, I explored representational notions of music (Cravath, 2000). The suite is composed for guitar and violin and seeks to interpret the terrain of Sylvia's being/portrait that other forms of narrative cannot express. A score of the music and recorded CD are included.

Summary

The intended curriculum of a given elementary school, presented to teachers as a set of objectives, scope and sequence and expected outcomes, manifests itself in a myriad of variations in a given classroom dependent on the teacher's personal education, perceptions of how the material should be taught, individual knowledge and facility with particular subject matter and one's philosophical approach to a hierarchy of learning

objectives. Renewed calls for greater curricular integration, inclusion of the arts and humanities and child-centered, Progressivist teaching approaches, warrant a closer examination of classroom teachers who already use these approaches successfully. Careful consideration of Sylvia Tierra's educational practices, as well as her training and motivation for utilizing them, yields insight into the influences of parenting, general and higher education, teacher training and educational staff development on a teacher's instructional decision making.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

To discover how Sylvia Tierra came to reside with a particular set of personal dispositions that ultimately shaped her practices, it was necessary to identify, name and describe the various pedagogical players in her education. Sylvia described her teaching as humanities-based and insisted that the arts were not only a large part of the projects her students undertook, but were consistently integrated across her entire curriculum. She indicated that her ability to incorporate the arts and humanities was directly tied to childhood experiences and the pursuit of personal literacy in the arts. Her passionate belief in humanities and arts education was engendered first at home, then through her mother's Montessori schools, culminating in a B.A. in a liberal arts degree with a history major and an art history minor. This "Review of Literature" offers an overview of the arts and humanities, particularly their link through aesthetics, to give context for Sylvia's awakening knowledge of their effects on her academic inquiry and resulting motivations for using them so extensively in the classroom.

Sylvia was afforded significant and extensive opportunities to develop arts and humanities literacy, beginning with those provided by her parents and extended family and her various private tutors in the areas of music, dance, visual art and theater—to the private academies she attended in Sri Lanka where she was performing Shakespeare and playing organ for school chapel—through junior high, where she toured extensively with a dance troupe. Sylvia's educational experiences in the schools of her native country

were strong in the liberal arts, for her parents were able to send her to private schools where a British-based curriculum rich in traditional liberal education was institutionalized. Sylvia pursued the liberal arts and continued to develop her arts conversancy zealously through high school and into college, attaining a B.A. in liberal arts, continuing to paint and play music assiduously.

Since these experiences contributed so much to Sylvia's preparation to become an arts-and-humanities-based teacher, this review begins by exploring the literature related to the arts and humanities as currently taught at levels pre-K-16, and particularly in preservice teacher education programs, as well as the current application of these disciplines in America's classrooms. Because Sylvia lived and worked extensively in the context of a Montessori educational environment, where her mother and aunt ran schools using that pedagogy (with a strong arts integration model built in), teacher beliefs about curricular inclusion of the arts and humanities and contemporary approaches to facilitating integration are also considered.

Perhaps Sylvia's most impassioned rationale for teaching came in an email as a response to this query from me:

> Why did you do it? Why did you spend all that extra time, planning in the summer, developing projects that required many extra hours—the extra time spent contacting and winning over parents, researching and reflecting on approach?

Her response to her life in the classroom was direct, and alluded (perhaps unconsciously) to calls from a group of scholars (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1979; Ivie, 1999;

Jackson, 1995; Rubin, 1985; Whitehead, 1929/1960) who regard teaching as an art form rather than merely a set of pedagogical skills that must be scientifically based:

> Most of all, I love teaching and children. Teaching and everything that went into this experience was like creating a painting or composing music. As a teacher, I am an artist. An artist always creates and lives in a state of flow [see Csikszentmihalyi, (1991)]. Teaching for me is a way of life. I create and live in an atmosphere or environment that continuously inspires me. Ultimately, it brings joy and meaning to my life.

The final section of this review addresses scholarly literature that regards the teacher as artist, for Sylvia ultimately saw herself in that way.

The Arts and Humanities

> [After being relocated and forced to cease using their traditional arts], the Iks literally went crazy and lost their ability to communicate and socialize. Their children are now sent out to forage as soon as they can walk. The elderly are sent away to fend for themselves, often becoming prey of the children who grab food from their mouths. In essence, the Iks have lost their humanity and have become solitary, mean-spirited, self-centered, and withdrawn—gloating over and celebrating one another's misfortunes. They no longer dance or make art. They do defecate on their neighbors' doorsteps.
>
> Lewis Thomas

Defining the Arts

Lewis Thomas (as cited in Godfrey, 1992) related a story of the Iks of Uganda. Once hunter-gatherers, they were relocated from their forest home to a mediocre farming district. Robbing them of their traditional context for the arts effectively dismantled their

culture. Whitehead (1929/1960) observed that art had its beginnings in the ceremonies of preliterate cultures, carefully structured to fulfill obligations to the "power behind the sun" (Waters, 1984). Plays, dance, drama, music, pictures in the sand and in caves were all enacted in civic arenas—the citizens, in active as well as observational roles, were woven into the ritual, learning the subtleties of the myths and their metaphors for the group.

Nelson Goodman (1991) suggested that "the literature of aesthetics is littered with desperate attempts to answer the question—What is art?" (p. 114). Rather, he suggests, the question should be—"When is art," positing that symbolization is often present when art occurs. Further, he discussed aesthetic "symptoms" for judging when an aesthetic event is taking or has taken place, including exemplification: where symbols serve as a set of properties that the event "literally or metaphorically possesses" and where the metaphor becomes a "multiple and complex reference, where a symbol performs several integrated and interacting referential functions" direct at times, or mediated (p. 116). The "when" part of art for Goodman occurs according to its role in representing external ideas. A stone in a driveway could not be called art but in a gallery, if functioning for other reference(s), it most certainly could.

The "cosmic forms" theory suggests that the humanities embody universal patterns of being. Jung described certain poetry as linking the reader to significant forces he refers to as "primordial images" or archetypes (as referenced in Bodkin, 1965, p. 1). Maxine Greene (1991) defines art another way. She begins: "There is considerable doubt . . . whether 'art' can ever be finally or conclusively defined" (p. 149). She continues by suggesting that art is a response to evocation—that is, art exists to induce particular sorts

of behavioral responses (Greene, 1991). Still others say it must be discovered singly in an artist's work. Greene accedes to the suggestions of Morriss Weitz, a philosopher of criticism, who believes that no one definition will suffice—rather that: "To understand the role of aesthetic theory is not to conceive it as definition, logically doomed to failure, but to read it as summaries of seriously made recommendations to attend in certain ways to certain features of art" (Weitz, 1959, p. 155). Herbert Marcuse, Greene continues, has said that art "breaks open a dimension inaccessible to other experience" (1991, p. 51). As applied to the classroom, Greene believes that with a modicum of cognitive familiarity with symbol systems related to aesthetics, students and teachers "may feed into the reflectiveness that deepens and extends experiences with art forms" (1991, p. 151).

During a discussion of arts-based educational research, Elliot Eisner (1998) addressed some remarks to establishing a sense of what constitutes art:

> First, we can mean by art things like painting, sculpture, music, or dance, regardless of how they are executed. In this general conception art is a category that encompasses certain traditional kinds of work, regardless of its quality. Second, we can mean by art those features that we prize. In this conception, art is more than a description; it is a normative ideal that only certain works approximate. Third, we can mean by art the process of bringing something into existence. In this view, art is related to creation. (p. 150)

As one who has been involved in the arts since adolescence, first learning the guitar then writing music for it, participating in high school theater, immersing myself in the other arts in college—I have found that art and the search for its meaning provides a journey for insight into the soul and psyche. Like Eisner (1998), I believe that "cognition, by which I mean thinking and knowing, is not limited to linguistically mediated thought" (p. 61). Some of my greatest epiphanies regarding human experience came during my experiences in making music—times where words were never spoken. The arts can free

one from the tangle of language as concrete communication. Human words are often used as means to dominate, to belittle and wound. They are treated dismissively as a means to an end rather than the end in itself. With art, the spoken and written word can be avoided altogether and the communication translated to dance, music, paint or mime. Or, words can be strung into poetry and the speaker or reader allowed to savor the transcendent nature of language crafted to charge emotion or cause deep reflection.

Sylvia Tierra was aware of the power of art in her own life from a very young age. She vividly recalls painting on a large canvas in her back yard at the age of three—jars of color at her fingertips as her mother instructed and praised her efforts. She recalls lying on the floor listening to her mother play Chopin, the fresh cut flowers arranged aesthetically throughout the rooms by the pianist. She remembers the rush of practicing the pipe organ for school chapel, her small fingers creating such power through the resounding chords. Sylvia was given unique opportunities with the arts and, through her developing conversancy, she recognized their ability to nourish her, give her insights aesthetically and fulfill a deep need for self-expression that she believed we all possess. So ultimately, Sylvia recognized that her collective aesthetic experience was an essential prerequisite for engendering learning in her students. She asked at one point:

> Connecting experiences with my teaching became very important. How can I teach a child to write if I don't write? How can I teach a child the passion of painting or using colors if I don't paint?

Defining the Humanities

> It is what may now be called the humanist tradition, if the human being is understood to be someone always in search of himself or herself, choosing himself or herself in the situations of a problematic life. There are works of art; there are certain works in history, philosophy, and psychology. They are works

> deliberately created to move people to critical awareness, to a sense of moral agency, and to a conscious engagement with the world. As I see it, they ought—under the rubric of the "arts and humanities"—to be central to any curriculum that is constructed today. (Greene, 1977, p. 120)

Jacob Bronowski's television series gave me a sudden and profound fascination with interdisciplinary learning. His was a rich and persuasive story of how ideas, fired by the imagination, spread, commingled and spawned other epiphanies and innovations. Bronowski's passion and knowledge for his subjects and their deep interconnections—and his reasoned and compelling narrative drew me into the world of humanities. At the time I didn't recognize his work as interdisciplinary because I was not familiar with the term or that certain educational strategies were in place to implement such a curriculum.

Humanities programs are often designed as interdisciplinary to demonstrate the importance of context in studying cultures in relation to each other (Fiero, 1995). Walker (1995) defines integrative education as a process that "immerses students in an enriched environment that reflects the complexities of life" and provides "a greater ability to make and remember connections and to solve problems" (p. 1). Herbert Spencer, writing over 120 years ago, advocated integrated instruction because it demonstrated the interconnectedness of ideas (Vars, 1991). Lapp and Flood (1994) believed that a well conceived and delivered interdisciplinary curriculum creates situations where students recognize relationships among concepts and ideas.

The humanities, by the nature of their disciplines, seek connections and encourage critical reflection (Nussbaum, 1997). In the following paragraphs, I will consider further the roots of humanistic inquiry, beginning with Greek philosophy, including key definitions. I then explore their historical development, particularly how

they have moved as forms of study, from process, or tools for reflection and erudition, to product—a set of outcomes such as might be required on a standardized test.

For Socrates, the central goal of education, the "examined life," was critical for a democratic mind (Nussbaum, 1997). The Stoics, following this Greek ideal, called for a curriculum that challenged the individual to think his or her own thoughts, expressing not the voice of convention nor wearing "stage masks which an actor's voice speaks" but to seek his or her own perspectives because "this life is not worthy of the humanity in them, the capacities for thought and moral choice that they all possess" (p. 29). Referencing the Roman tradition of seat placement at a banquet table according to status, Nussbaum noted that one who has critically examined such conventions, the Stoics believed, would be less angry toward the inevitable class divisions of society and would, therefore, be better citizens: more reasoned in thought and tempered in emotion. Seneca's letter to Lucilius' on liberal education (*studia liberalia)*, Nussbaum continued, is a response to the former's query on the importance of traditional subjects to perpetuate "time-honored values and practices" formulated for the upper classes (as cited in Nussbaum, 1997, p. 30). Seneca responds that *liberalis*, rather than connoting its traditional meaning "suited for the freeborn gentleman," suggests that liberal study "makes its pupils free, able to take charge of their own thought and to conduct a critical examination of their society's norms and traditions" (p. 30). Development of critical consciousness is a departure from the Greeks, who, though they did not always practice the premise, would have embraced it nonetheless.

The term *humanities* or *humane letters* also comes from the Romans, who used it to reference Greek literature, rhetoric, philosophy and history. It is expressive of a

preceding culture they saw as superior to their own. These subjects became the core of a curriculum by which "a man might become educated, learned, cultivated, and wise" (Levi, 1991, p. 226).

Robert Horn (1980) suggested, "literature and cultures; history; English; and philosophy" (p. 3) constitute humanities education. In a report by the Commission on the Humanities sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, Horn (the author) began an elaboration of the humanities with an illustration and an analogy:

> Nailed to the ship's mast in *Moby Dick* is a gold doubloon stamped with signs and symbols "in luxuriant profusion." The coin is Captain Ahab's promised reward to the crewman who sights the white whale, but in its emblems each man reads his own meaning. As Ahab says, "This round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self."
>
> Like the bright doubloon, the Humanities mirror our own image and our image of the world. Through the Humanities, we reflect on a fundamental question: What does it mean to be human? The Humanities offer clues, but never a complete answer. They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of a world in which irrationality, despair, loneliness, and death are as conspicuous as birth, friendship, hope and reason. We learn how individuals or societies define the moral life and try to attain it, attempt to reconcile freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship, and express themselves artistically. The humanities do not necessarily mean humaneness, nor do they always inspire the individual with what Cicero called "Incentive to noble action." But, by awakening a sense of what it might be like to be someone else, or to live in another time or culture, they tell us about ourselves, stretch our imagination and enrich our experience. They increase our distinctively human potential. (p. 3)

The notion of humanities as the study of "the classics" is of Renaissance lineage. Those works of the Roman age were added to the Greek and, according to Levi (1991), the scholars of the day, in searching the monasteries, libraries and private collections where the archives were kept, shifted focus from ideas as process to ideas as product. These were the beginnings of linear education:

> For it caused *tradition* to be seen finally less as habits of procedure, of ways of doing, feeling, thinking, and valuing, than as the transmission of literary *artifacts*. Literary culture became a matter of bibliography and the things of the spirit assumed a mysterious substantiality. The consequences of this Renaissance accident persist today: in Hutchins and Adler's concept of "the great books" and in T. S. Eliot's doctrine of the changing *body* of tradition in which this body is composed of "works of art" and of "existing monuments." (Levi, 1991, p. 226)

This shift is the reason, Levi believes, for our post-Renaissance view of the humanities "not as arts, skills, or cultivated methods of educational procedure, but as subject matters" (p. 227). And though the notion of humanities has broadened to accept new canon from India, Africa and Asia, there is still the penchant to treat them as bodies of content and not representations of a way of thinking, of habits of mind.

The other way to view the humanities, Levi (1991) continues, is what has caused us to divide Arts and Sciences in many of our modern universities, confronting undergraduates with a discipline-bound creation like the College of Liberal Arts. It makes it much easier to teach discrete subjects if you put them in separate colleges to isolate and narrow the curriculum. The schools of Chartres, Orleans and Paris taught grammar, rhetoric and dialectic so that men could become liberal or "liberated" from the role of laborer—by learning skills in reading, speaking, understanding and rational argument—"not knowledge to be added to an intellectual storehouse, but habits to be learned so as to constitute elements of character and perhaps even qualities of personality. This transformed the center of learning from the substantive to the procedural!" (Levi, 1991, p. 228).

By reviving the Medieval notion of knowledge as process rather than substance, it is clear that the humanities and liberal arts are the same, and that they are three: "*the arts of communication* (the languages and literatures), *the arts of continuity* (history), and

the arts of criticism (philosophy)." It affords one the view of the humanities less as subject matters and more as "civilizing skills" (Levi, 1991, p. 228).

Levi (1991) expressed hope that the aim of his "strategy" was clear:

> It is to simply assert that for any literary work to be taught as a humanity is to bring to bear upon it the arts of communication, of continuity, and of criticism—that is to say, to attempt its *simultaneous illumination* as an example of *linguistic expressiveness*, of *temporal situation*, and of *rational reflection.* (emphasis in original, p. 230)

In *Liberal Education and the American Dream*, Guyotte (1980) defines humanities and liberal education as "a reasonably rigorous academic approach to the study of discrete fields of learning, coupled with a commitment to encourage in students civic virtues of initiative, community-mindedness, and love of justice" (p. 4). He traces the change of emphasis within the liberal arts from education for leadership in the 1920s, to the increasingly "general studies" of the 30s as the middle class entered the university system, and to specific topical foci after World War Two, degenerating the university into what some critics argue has become a kind of four-year trade school. Guyotte termed the change a "move from leadership to followership" (p. 9). Other critics argue that a valorized and most prevalent version of the liberal arts is the Dead White Male curriculum: as exemplified by Adler's Paidea Principal (1982).

Humanities, the Arts and Imagination

Scholars believe the humanities give us dispositions toward experience—ideas as well as things to be interested in (Barone, 2000; Egan, 1999; Eisner, 1979; Nussbaum, 1997). In examining what many humanists and arts advocates say about the importance of a meaningful liberal arts education, the word *imagination* appears prominently in the

literature. The business of being human is the work of the liberal arts. It is Greene's wide awakeness: "To love our children may well be to introduce them to the symbolic forms, the historical studies and novels and painting and anthropological accounts that emerge from the past and exist in the present, waiting to be realized, to be known" (Greene, 1977, p. 33).

Literature on the humanities supports their role in awakening imagination and giving direction and meaning to the insights they teach. Nussbaum (1997) calls for imagination to realize her cores of a liberal arts education: "critical self-examination, the ideal of the world citizen, and the development of the narrative imagination" (p. 13). "Imagination is the apotheosis of reason," claims Eisner (as cited in Egan, 1999), "not a diversion from the real business of thinking" (p. ix). Egan (1999) believes that the important disposition of the Romantics, imagination, assists in generating and actualizing ideas. Teaching literacies of artistic practice and observation extends a ticket for a life of personal expression through the arts. Sylvia felt an altruistic responsibility to share the contribution the arts had made in the enhancement of her own life with her students so that they might enjoy that same richness of imagination. As for myself, the impetus for this dissertation is driven by that same deep-seated belief that the arts can offer for others that sustenance.

Essential in postmodern thought, imagination "does not conceive the human subject as either predetermined or finally defined. It thinks of persons in process, in pursuit of themselves and, it is to be hoped, of possibilities for themselves" (Greene, 1995, p. 41). Greene sees teachers recognizing the fixed categories that children have been assigned to through achievement testing and possibly finding themselves

"responding imaginatively and, at length, ethically to these children. To respond to those once called at risk, once carelessly marginalized, as living beings capable of choosing for themselves" is a principled response worthy of the humanities. And "as imagination is set free, windows open in the actual, and all sorts of new alternatives for living become clear" (p. 42). It is imagination, Greene believes, that gives life to the possibilities that follow.

Imagining is central to our culture's development, claims Eisner (1998). From the great mythical stories to the skyscrapers of Manhattan, they were first visions, then reality. Given the importance of imagination in our history and development, one would think it a basic of education. Alas, it typically is not. "We are far more concerned with the correct replication of what already exists than with cultivation of the powers of innovation or the celebration of thinking" (Eisner, 1998, p. 26).

Oakeshott (1990) sees liberal learning as essentially an education in imagination. He believes that rather than beliefs and ideas an education should be comprised of:

> a variety of distinct languages of understanding, and its inducements are invitations to become acquainted with these languages, to learn to discriminate between them, and to recognize them not merely as diverse modes of understanding the world but as the most substantial expressions we have of human understanding. (p. 38)

According to Smith (1993), a study of the humanities and arts needs a sheltered place to occur, yet it should be rigorous and integrated. An important prerequisite to student learning is a knowledgeable teacher. In the many interviews, phone conversations and email letters I exchanged with Sylvia Tierra, she described her classroom as an environment of security, exploration and experimentation—all of which provided the cultivation and enrichment of imagination. She was conversant in the arts and believed

working with them allowed for great personal growth in regard to imaginative and original thinking. She would be comfortable with Smith's sense of the necessary prerequisites and potential benefits of an education infused with the humanities and arts.

Aesthetic Inquiry—The Bridge From Arts to Humanities Education

Simpson (1991) offers two definitions of aesthetics—the narrow view: "the contemplation of form," as in an object of art—its figurative rather than "literary" properties— and the broader view: a holistic approach including "representation, expression, narrative, social comment, psychological insight, and technique" without "prejudice or fixed ideas" (p. 172). He suggests a classification system for aesthetic education, examining it in terms of individual perceptions of its usefulness in any curriculum. Simpson advises that the term aesthetic education suggests, for many, a specific focus on the arts. Others envisage its possibilities across the curriculum. Simpson "crudely" categorizes these potentials:

1. The "comprehensive" view sees an aesthetic thread, not only arts, across every element of human life and "fundamental" to all education.
2. The "unitary" view considers the aesthetic as it informs the arts inclusively.
3. The "kaleidoscopic" view sees the aesthetic as one of a group of criteria applied to or created within the arts.
4. The "peripheral" view welcomes the aesthetic marginally in the discourse of arts education (pp. 172-173).

Herbert Read, Simpson continues, epitomizes the application of the comprehensive view. Read rejected subject-centered approaches for an organic curriculum based on four major headings or "types": drama, design, dance and craft, headings that conventional disciplines would fall under. Moral and democratic inquiry is

integrated throughout (Simpson, 1991, p. 173). Read, like Dewey and other Progressives, saw the child as the site of learning and advocated activities to widen her/his worldview while enhancing aesthetic judgment and appreciation. This unitary version sees the arts as the intersections to an aesthetic education.

Arts appreciation facilitates encounters with visual art, literature, dance, drama and music. The aesthetics are essentially locked in this curricular domain. Kaleidoscopic advocates see the application of aesthetics as one lens for encountering the arts. The group most closely aligned with this view designed a discipline-based art education program through the Getty institute, which will be discussed formally in the following section.

The term aesthetics first appeared in Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* published in 1750 (as cited in Meeson, 1985). Kant (1952) incorporated the word to describe the exercise of judgment. *The Critique of Judgement* explicated what Kant referred to as "the middle term between understanding and reason" (p. 461), or the middle term between the laws and study of nature and the concept of the rational. Best (1991) saw artistic appreciation as "a fully rational activity in that the judgments involved are supportable by reasons" (p. 182). He allied with Kant in believing that aesthetic judgment can be learned through systematic inquiry relating to works of art. Bambrough (1979) lambasted the empiricists for suggesting that value judgments are ultimately subjective in examining art. Though it is ultimately an individual matter, the author believed situational criteria can be applied to discover the value of a work of art.

It is the task of the humanities, according to the charter of the National Endowment for the Humanities, to interpret the arts. The mandate of the National

Endowment for the Arts is to support individuals and organizations in the production, dissemination and preservation of the arts (National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 1965). Therein lies the bridge—recognized in these modern government bodies but following a long tradition from the first attempts of Herodotus to explain the underlying aesthetics of Homer's work, through Erasmus' explication of Michelangelo's spiritual/artistic sensibilities to Barone's (2000) call for what he terms *aesthetic projects*—lengthy examinations of issues and problems using approaches that unfold like stories—explorations driven by "engagement that springs not from an extrinsic source such as desire for praise or a fear of not doing well on a test, but from within the activity itself" (p. 129).

Arts and Humanities in School

> For these reasons education in music is most sovereign because
>
> > rhythm and harmony most of all penetrate into the inner region of the soul, and bringing grace, grasp hold of it most strongly, and if someone is reared correctly, make him graceful, but if not, the opposite; and further, because he who is reared as he ought to be in this realm will have the sharpest sense for things left out and things which are not beautiful products of craft or nature, and then, having the right dislikes, he will praise beautiful things, and delighting in them and taking them into his soul, he will be nourished by them and become beautiful-and-good; and he will blame and hate ugly things in the right way when he is still young. (Plato as cited in Blankenship, 1996, p. 74)

Psychological rationales for the inclusion of art in the school curriculum have tended to emphasize art as a means of developing or training a skill, whether it be manual dexterity, problem solving activities or facilitation of other cognitive skills—what Meeson (1985) refers to as "the factual and propositional subjects" (p. 56). While these

sorts of defenses for the place of art in a school curriculum proliferate, there are few accounts of art's role and meaning in the context of our culture:

> The values which art projects, embodied in its processes and the attitudes of mind which it fosters are rarely overtly discussed in art education literature so what is claimed as the purpose of art in schools is often the outcome of a calculation about what will appeal as rational, sensible or broadly useful to the public at large. (p. 56)

Educationists have argued for integrating arts and humanities into the curriculum because they address ways of knowing that other subject matters cannot (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 1998; Gardner, 1991). Sir Herbert Read (1958) argued that education must assist students to become their potential. Therefore, schools that promote increased self-efficacy have a greater chance of accomplishing that goal. Read posited that integrating the humanities into coursework widens human experience by giving one multiple perspectives for acting on the world and empowering one with strategies for interpretation and response. Eisner (1998), for example, considered that the arts provide alternatives to discursive writing as ways of communicating. "Forms of representation" are various arts modalities that allow one to make implicit ideas manifest," he claims (Eisner, 1998, p. 26). Dewey's work on aesthetics in *Art as Experience*, speaks about good judgment as "development in thought of a deeply realized perception" (Dewey, 1938, p. 300). Aesthetics, Dewey believed, develops one's discernment for the subtleties of experience: "The imagination, by means of art, makes a concession to sense in employing its materials, but nevertheless uses sense to suggest underlying ideal truth. Art is thus a way of having the substantial cake of reason while also enjoying the sensuous pleasure of eating it" (Dewey, 1934, p. 258). Dewey relocated art from the museum to

the locus of everyday life. It is for him, as Wickersham (2001) posited, "an intensification of ordinary experience" (p. 6).

From this pragmatic view of art, Efland (1993) believed that knowledge of the object or event and the history connected to its making or action, informs and influences the meanings constructed by the participant. Greene (1990) saw the humanities as a means for understanding human relationships and wider reality by perceiving "things in patterns, meshes, networks, which are always open, always in the making" (p. 371). The web of relationships we encounter in life are archetyped in great literature and transform interest in the world into "something pulsating, alive, and forever open to more and more perspectives, to more and more dialogues" (Greene, 1990, p. 377). Life is not a multiple choice test. It is shifting and unsettled, often unpredictable. The humanities open one's sense of acuity for confronting and improvising successfully with experience. Considering what constituted a proper education, Sylvia Tierra once wrote in a paper that creativity education helps an individual to survive in this world because "becoming truly educated is having the ability to adapt and learn new things. An individual must become flexible and possess the skills to continue" the pursuit of life-long learning.

Aesthetics imbedded in the study of the humanities can sensitize learners to the nuances of human interaction and motivation. In developing understandings of relational interactions among educators, Popper (1990) considered that certain literary works can illuminate situational discourse. For him, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* offers insight into administrative power plays, suggesting that understanding can be gained by drawing parallels between actions in ancient history and the behaviors of those who prefer leadership by monarchy rather than democracy. Berman (1967) posited that

the humanities provide opportunities for exploring ethical, social, intellectual and aesthetic values, thus providing "the essence of experience" (p. 14).

The Cause for Arts in Education

Over the last 20 years in the United States, the arts have been recognized as partners in the school curriculum. Nationally, they were included among academic subjects in Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1992 (McKean, 1997). At the state level, in Arizona for example, the State Board of Education has mandated a comprehensive and rigorous K-12 curriculum in the arts (Arizona Department of Education, 1997). One requirement specifies that to graduate, a high school senior must demonstrate a given level of competency in one of the arts areas—dance, visual art, music or drama.

Advocates of the arts in education have called for reconceptualizing the subject area as distinct ways of knowing. Two of the foremost theorists in this field of inquiry are Eliot Eisner and Howard Gardner. Eisner (1998) has argued persuasively for "forms of representation," a literacy of the arts, to be included significantly in the classroom (p. 26). We are born with brains, not minds, he asserts. The task of socialization and education is one of conversion. The curriculum is a "mind-altering device" (p. 21), teachers directing and mediating learning experiences. In the traditional classroom, abstract and language-based skills are valorized. Eisner insists that the senses are intelligences as well and should receive significant inclusion into subject matter:

> Our world is first a qualitative world. We are able to experience color, texture, smell, and sounds—qualities that permeate our world.

> Becoming conscious of that world or some aspect of it depends on a skilled and intact sensory system. We often do not think of the senses as being skilled: they just are there. However, the qualities of the world are not simply given to human experience, they must be won. (p. 23)

Eisner (1998) believes our children need to develop multiple forms of literacy. He considers four functions that forms of representation (visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile—manifested in speech, movement and gesture, sound, pictures, word and number) can serve educationally. Because "there is nothing so slippery as a thought," externalizing an idea stabilizes it in a child's mind (Eisner, 1998, p. 27). It allows students to hold on to it and refine it. Refining, the second function, is essentially editing—making clearer and sharper, more compelling. Eisner is concerned that we do not practice this kind of clarification nearly enough in the conventional school curriculum. The third function is communicating what has been made external. It is the chance for your imagination to "make public" an inner part of you. Sylvia Tierra embraced Eisner's argument, encouraging her students to celebrate the sharing of their writing. Sylvia made it a class norm to share comfortably—for feedback in revising a text and just for the joy of the recognition. She tells of one boy who filled his entire draft book, all 50 pages, with a story about his adventures with James Bond. He was allowed to read his story in a serialized version and relished the attention of the other students. The fourth function of practicing the arts in schools is that it provides opportunity for discovery. Sylvia used the Biblical quote, "He who is the greatest among you shall be your servant," in the context of studying Martin Luther King, Jr., and offered her students the opportunity to discover the meaning of the verse and create a montage or story based upon their insights.

As Eisner (1998) sees it, alternative forms of literacy, like the arts, have a syntax that is "structure seeking or figural" (p. 28). The term *syntax* comes from the Latin syntaxis—to arrange. Creating a poem or painting requires discovering coherence. Most of our curriculum, he continues, is "rule-abiding" (p. 28). There are correct orders for numbers and one right answer. Involvement in the arts is more of a dialogue than monologue because the artist interacts with his/her material to find a solution that has not been scripted, yet it still seeks coherence. It is lamentable, Eisner concludes, that this area of thinking that "has the most potential to offer, is the most neglected" (p. 28).

The arts have been devalued, Eisner (1992) argues, ever since Socrates asked Glaucon to imagine a single horizontal line. The upper half is the intelligible world, the lower half the visible world. The intelligible world represents rational thought, the lower world—perception. This hierarchy, Eisner believes, established the perceptual world as a lower level cognitive activity. "But is it true that the perception of qualities is a low-level cognitive activity? When those qualities are complex and subtle, as they are in the arts, perception of their relationships and nuances can be daunting" (p. 592).

Gardner (1983), through his theory of multiple intelligences, posited that humans possess a range of distinct ways of comprehending reality. Those who possess substantial intelligence in the arts fields have had their talents undervalued. He advocates finding the states through which children best learn. Engagement for the learner should be intrinsic, coming from within to act outwardly on the world. Gardner calls this a "profile of natural competencies" and believes that acknowledging multiple literacies and ways of knowing enhance and embolden the child (Gardner in Goleman, 1997, p. 94).

Such advocacy for the arts as ways of communicating and knowing does not convince many school leaders to expand their arts curriculum. Currently, students in elementary schools average two hours of arts education a week (McKean, 1997). It has placed the classroom teacher in an awkward position. Few are equipped to adequately teach the arts as core disciplines. Funding for the arts in schools has diminished steadily per capita over the last 20 years in America (Leonard, 1991). Fewer music and visual art teachers are finding jobs. That has not kept research on the arts in elementary education from focusing on the effects of the arts on student learning rather than on teacher performance (Davis, 1993; Jay, 1991; Kardash & Wright, 1987; Moore & Caldwell, 1993). It has also revealed interesting relationships between the arts and academic success. For example, Stewig and Young (1978) found that children engaged in dramatic play were able to make more explicit meanings from the story. Two studies investigated the effect of drama and drawing as preparation for writing (Caldwell & Moore, 1991; Moore & Caldwell, 1990). Both showed increased writing scores for those students who had participated in either drama or drawing activities. Studies by Raucher (1994, 1995) reported a significant correlation between music training and spatial-temporal ability enhancement in preschoolers and among college students who simply listened to a Mozart sonata.

Faculty at the University of Connecticut were commissioned to examine data on the multiple effects of arts learning compiled from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 25,000 secondary school students. The NELS did case studies of exemplary theater and opera programs; the research team conducted a series of observations of teachers and students, measuring students in high-poverty schools

engaged in integrated arts programs to examine their changes in academic and personal efficacy. The final report, written by Catteral, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999), was dubbed *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* and concluded that:

> The arts serve to broaden access to meaning by offering ways of thinking and ways of representation consistent with the spectrum of intelligences scattered unevenly across our population—for example, resonating with the multiple and differing intelligences identified by Howard Gardner at Harvard. The arts have also shown links to student motivation and engagement in school, attitudes that contribute to academic achievement. (p. 4)

Only a few studies on elementary school teachers' conceptions and beliefs regarding the teaching of the arts have been conducted (McKean, 1997). Among them are studies conducted by Stake, Bresler, and Maybry (1991) in multiple art forms; Garcia (1995) in drama; and Bresler (1993) in the visual arts.

Most relevant to my research, the work of Stake, Bresler and Maybry (1991) examined seven elementary schools' arts education programs that presented an arts curriculum to students in some way—including the use of specialists, classroom teachers and outside organizations to present an arts-based content. The authors concluded that students' encounters with the arts were occasional and piecemeal at best. McKean (1997), commenting on the case studies just referenced, noted that they did not address issues of teachers' "individual conceptions" toward the teaching of arts and called for further study into those issues (p. 8).

One of the champions of arts learning at an early age is Egan (1999). He posits that the human mind develops differently than other animals. Some of our intellectual capacities come to fruition earlier. Our imagination, as well, does not parallel our biological development. Egan argues that "we begin as poets" (p. 86). Citing Winner

(1988), Egan contends that our "ability to recognize and generate appropriate metaphors reaches its peak by age five, and declines thereafter" (p. 87). Whereas our logico-mathematical abilities slowly build, our imaginations are ripe and roaring in childhood. Language acquisition is at its height as well. In preliterate societies, stories served to develop a store of language, Egan continues. They were used to teach constructs of the culture, including its norms and values. "Stories, basically, are little tools for orienting our emotions" (Egan, 1999, p. 88). The stories that most engage children are rich with metaphor. Though children may not know what "oppression, resentment and revolt are," in the context of the story of Robin Hood, they come to understand these complex ideas (p. 89). Children are powerfully affective thinkers. The arts are the playgrounds for affective learning. Sylvia and I have discussed at length how children are able to make sophisticated judgments about human behavior through story.

While collecting data for this study, I spoke to one of Sylvia's parent volunteers, who also assisted with publication of school stories from the various classrooms that were collected and later housed in the media center. She noted that by Christmas, Sylvia's classroom computers had used more memory for stories than the rest of the classrooms in the entire school combined. Sylvia recognized the importance of stories as a means for developing rich thinking, problem solving and developing abstract thinking, which Egan (1999) contends begins with "binary opposites" embedded in stories—good/evil, hot/cold and security/fear (p. 91). Children understand those conceptual extremes through direct experience and develop a comprehension of the shades between those opposites through abstractly considering points on the continuum, believes Egan.

With a national audience in mind, Arts PROPEL is the first response by Harvard's think tank, Project Zero, to develop a standard curriculum from Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Working in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Public School District (Winner, 1991), the curriculists chose music, visual arts and imaginative writing as domains for practice. Developed over a five-year period with support from the Arts and Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Educational Testing Service, the think tank and its partners undertook to "observe and in turn influence how students learn in the arts at the middle and high school levels" (p. 7). Gardner (1991) and his colleagues believe that art production should be central to the study of arts in the schools:

> The heart of any arts-educational process must be the capacity to handle, to use, to transform different artistic symbol systems—*to think with and in* [emphasis in the original] the materials of an artistic medium. Such processes can occur only if artistic creation remains the cornerstone of all pedagogical efforts. (p. 281)

Discipline-Based Art Education

The content- or discipline-centered reform of the 1960s in America's schools inspired a movement in the visual art education community that became known as Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). Assuming that scholars in academia are the most appropriate curriculum specialists, a prevalent educational trend at the time, DBAE offered teachers and administrators concomitant roles as implementers/practitioners in the partnership (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1991). DBAE proponents were concerned that the "creative self-expression approach" focuses on art activities with the process and aesthetic fulfillment as the end result (p. 239). At variance with Gardner and Project Zero, the Getty Trust who funded DBAE, instead envisioned a deeper, more "well-

rounded education [focusing on] art as a subject for study" (p. 239). From that axiom, they proposed four areas or ways to interact with visual art: aesthetically, critically, historically and through production (the last being the only process shared with the creative self-expression approach).

DBAE assumes each child's innate creative ability and the importance of growing that talent while presenting art in a wider context: its understanding and appreciation. "This involves a knowledge of the theories and contexts of art and abilities to respond to as well as create art" (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1991, p. 240). DBAE is taught as "an essential component of general education and as a foundation for specialized art study" (p. 240). In other words, advocates of DBAE view the study of art globally, as a means for connecting it to other areas such as aesthetic criticism and the study of history. They see this substantive approach, where art becomes more than making good paintings, as an important paradigm shift in art education, and in many ways it is. A systematic district-wide curricular approach to implementing art education, DBAE is structured as a core subject area with "sequentially organized and articulated content at all grade levels" (p. 241). Systematic district-wide art instruction and evaluation legitimate its place in the curriculum on a par with math or reading. Critics of the approach consider it excessively rigid, with the art of Western European Dead White Male artists as the focus of study (Taxel, 1991). Yet DBAE , funded heavily by the Getty Trust, has been an attempt to make the study of art more than, what Sylvia Tierra called "making pretty pictures of flowers and rainbows." Sylvia and I concur that the arts are important for both self-expression through production and as bridges to understanding

culture. Though not following the curriculum in a strict sense, we have both incorporated many aspects of DBAE into our teaching.

High Stakes Testing as a Deterrent to the the Arts

Sylvia's school district exercised academic accountability in ways that are becoming increasingly familiar in our schools. Educationists have suggested that a narrowing of the elementary school curriculum in the face of increased standardized testing has been taking place in America over the last 15 years (Jones, Jones, Hardin, Chapman, Yarbrough, & Davis, 1999; Madaus, 1988; Neill, 1998; Smith, 1991; Shapiro, 1998). Advocates of liberal education (Barone, 2000; Egan, 1999; Eisner, 1998; Greene, 1995; Nussbaum, 1997) and have decried this national trend toward high-stakes testing as undermining the teaching of diverse ideas as offered by the humanities and arts. Nonetheless, teacher-proof curricula that focus on "skills and drills" have proliferated of late. For example, pressure is being placed on elementary teachers in the Chandler (Arizona) Unified School District to abandon thematic units and follow tightly scripted lesson plans calling for answers that require only lower order thinking skills (P. Kunze, personal communication, September 10, 2000). Site school, district and state pressure remains great for teachers to narrow curricular goals and teach to the test. Externally imposed standards with assessment limited to multiple choice testing has serious ramifications for students and teachers (Jones, et al., 1999). As discrete skills are emphasized:

> Material that involves higher order thinking and problem-solving falls by the wayside. Standardized tests typically emphasize discrete facts and skills because they are easy to measure and avoid questions that require students to analyze and synthesize information at higher levels. (p. 200)

Since a significant amount of time is spent teaching to the test, science and arts instruction has diminished. Smith (1991) has suggested that teachers who follow a curriculum in response to high stakes testing lose their ability to be creative planners and thinkers. This trend will result in a corpus of educators who are essentially "unskilled workers" and students who lack higher order thinking skills (Smith, 1991, p. 11). Sylvia, with her strengths in integrative learning and critical thinking, did not lose sight of district and state objectives. As her principal, Pauline Gentry (pseudonym) reflected:

> Sylvia was creative but she also knew her children and provided what needs to happen in that environment. She knew what she was doing and what she wanted the children to do but also the instruction necessary. You can't replicate it without the wide understanding. But her kids scored well on standardized tests. She was able to weave outcomes successfully into her lessons.

Humanities in Primary and Secondary Education

Theorists who address an integrated humanities curriculum at the elementary level are few. Even the largest study of the humanities in America to be undertaken in the last 20 years, the Report of the Commission on the Humanities (1980)—a document of over 200 pages—gives only cursory focus to "the upper elementary and middle school levels" (p. 42). My initial enthusiasm and (I must admit) shock when Sylvia, a third grade teacher, described her teaching as humanities-based, seems justified by the lack of research in this area. Eisner (1969), one scholar who did conduct research on the humanities at the elementary level early in his career, found an interesting ambiguity related to educational and parental perceptions of the humanities. He explored issues related to integrating the humanities into the elementary school curriculum. When assessing teachers' and parents' attitudes toward the value of five subject areas—science,

the arts, social studies, music, and foreign language—he found that they prioritized them, not surprisingly, as listed. When questions related to the good life, enjoyment of children and avocational value, art and music were consistently ranked first or second. So while Eisner found that educators and caregivers recognize the significance of these subjects, they remain ambivalent about their place in the hierarchy of required content areas. When the humanities are taught, values issues arise. The content of liberal arts when, studied authentically, can conflict with parental values, posited Eisner. They offer the child alternative world views that challenge paradigmatic thinking.

The Report of the Commission on the Humanities (1980) outlined the subject's role in American life, formulated a rationale for its greater inclusion in school curricula and made recommendations toward that end. In this report, 35 scholars were asked to view the place the humanities had in contemporary life and make recommendations regarding those findings. Discovering a deficit in the curriculum, they listed three major levels of learning to be integrated: "training in expository, critical, and aesthetic skills with a firm factual base in cultural traditions" (p. 40). Curiosity elicits questions about human existence from children, they argued; learning to read combined with humanities lessons "can show children some of the pleasures of discovery and expression—that there is joy in learning" (p. 41). It is the best way to nurture curiosity and motivate learning. Almost echoing these findings, Sylvia stated that she often used humanities approaches to draw her students into subject matter.

The Commission on the Humanities (1980) asserted that when the curricular shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" typically occurs around the fifth grade, the

humanities are "indispensable for developing critical, conceptual, and imaginative skills" (p. 42). Sylvia, I believe, would endorse this conclusion.

Egan (1999) argued that studying the Romantic age, usually designated as beginning with Rousseau and concluding with the British poets of the late 19th century (Fiero, 1995), is an excellent approach to teaching the humanities at the elementary level because its tenets engage young children, emphasizing:

> Delight in the exotic, emphasis on individualism, revolt against conventional forms, stress on the importance of imagination, intense inquiry about the self, resistance to order and reason" and "glorification of transcendent human qualities." (Egan, 1999, pp. 42-43)

In his essay, *Teaching the Romantic Mind*, Egan (1999) asked the reader to consider a group of adolescents or a favorite transgressive pop group who might resonate with Romantic characteristics. One of the earmarks of all these qualities is imagination. Recalling Wordsworth, Egan noted how the poet insisted that reason and imagination were not dichotomized but tied together. Greene (1991) agreed that the humanities require reason and imagination to be fully understood. In the folklore of teaching, continued Egan, to teach children about reality, you must begin with what they know. To make sense of a neighborhood in terms of location, it is helpful to imagine it in the mind's eye. The humanities give permission for children to bridge imaginative thinking to the real world and assist them in doing so by affectively engaging them in the "strange, wonderful, or extreme" to demonstrate the boundaries of material they are dealing with. The children are able to compare the real with the unreal (or ethereal) and make cognitive demarcations for where one ends and the other begins. Thus engaged, they can be led to make sense of the phenomena. Using the imagination to be transported

from reality and then return to interpret the experience is, according to Nussbaum (1997), one of the essential attributes of the humanities: to invite the learner on a journey that both engages her/him imaginatively and intellectually to seek answers to pressing questions.

Regarding the place of the humanities in secondary education, the Commission on the Humanities (1980) considered the Vermont Writing Program a model, for it richly addressed "the teaching of writing through literature, oral history, autobiography, and other humanistic subjects" (p. 44). Courses in the humanities should probe connections between the humanities and the other fields of knowledge. For example, humanistic questions are inherent in—and should foster an awareness of—the moral dimensions of science and technology. Teachers and students should consider the human purposes of scientific discovery and technological invention—"especially important in regard to the new forms of communication transforming culture and our methods for understanding it—the electronic media and computers" (p. 46).

Eisner (as cited in Egan, 1999) sees the humanities and the arts as tools for learning to know as a living dynamic. He calls for a curriculum that views knowledge as:

> a process. It is not a noun, it is a verb. It is not something that one discovers and ships to the four corners of the earth. Knowledge is something that leads a life of change in the context of the human mind. What we know we can forget, what we have learned we can change, what we come to understand we can share, but only insofar as the individuals to whom we speak or act or display what we have come to understand are able to participate and use in a meaningful ways what we give them. (p. xii)

Increasingly, teachers have been using the humanities to address and deconstruct media (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997). In Texas, for example, twelfth graders learn to analyze and compare messages imbedded in popular media and present their findings in a short

documentary (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1996). An important recent humanities project for assisting high school students with media literacy was the Re-Visioning Project (Hobbs, 1998). Over 50 teachers from a number of high schools throughout the country met at a week-long institute at Clark University to develop a "pedagogy of inquiry"—a curriculum:

> . . . to embed the basic ideas of media literacy into all the subject areas—especially in the humanities. By doing this, educators can ensure that all young people gain the skills to understand the media culture around them while simultaneously building skills in writing, reading, reasoning, and world knowledge. (p. 56)

A sample lesson from the project called for students to examine the MOVE bombing story, an incident that took place in Philadelphia where the local police confronted a radical left-wing group that had been amassing weapons. When the group refused to surrender from their ghetto holdout, tear gas was fired, which caught the apartment complex on fire, burning it to the ground and killing a number of inhabitants, including children. Through various media the students analyzed how certain points of view are represented that reinforce power imbalances in our culture. One of the high schools involved in the project, located in Concord, New Hampshire, reported that over 400 eleventh graders participated in a "rigorous year-long curriculum" that included the study of "nonfiction and fiction, film, video, advertising, print and television news, as well as persuasive and business communication" (Hobbs, 1998, p. 57).

Though the number of innovative programs for infusing the arts and humanities in primary and secondary education grows, the number of arts specialists in schools continues to decline, effectively removing these educators from the curriculum standards reform debate (Leonard, 1991; McKean, 1997). To reverse this trend, Wickersham

(2001) suggests a conception of the curriculum drawn from the work of the reconceptualists (Pinar, et al., 1996). What is missing from American schools, she argues, is "a deep respect for personal experience, lived experience, the life of the imagination." It should not be a curriculum, she continues, "learning how to earn a living but for learning how to live" (Wickersham, 2001, p. 11). Referencing Eisner, Wickersham calls for models of our classrooms as artists' studios "where creativity abounds and difference is embraced" (p. 11). Barone's (2000) "strong poet" embodies the kind of student to grow out of such a curriculum (p. 119). "Standardized schools with standardized visions of success tend to produce standardized human beings," he suggests (p. 123). Referencing Dewey, who believed education should mirror lived life, Barone (2000) envisions a curriculum where students construct identities unique, complex and original—yet not in isolation—rather, as "a social being and a moral agent, a responsible citizen of a shared community" (p. 125). Barone's strong poet:

> is someone who refuses to accept as useful the descriptions of her life written by others. Instead, the strong poet constantly redescibes her past interactions with the world around her, constantly reinvents her *self*, so that she may act in the future with ever greater integrity and coherence. The strong poet plots her life story toward her own emergent ends and purposes. (p. 125)

The strong poet sees and acts out his or her life as a work of art, as a kind of aesthetic project with others invited in. Barone's "New American School" requires educators who are fully conversant aesthetically to interact with and inspire their students toward this end.

Sylvia believed in helping her students to think critically in a number of ways that Barone advocates. She believed in the importance of teaching children how to see issues and ideas through multiple points of view. One bulletin board she, as well a

colleague, described was a scene of a scientist, an artist, and a mathematician looking at a flower; the display was intended to show children the concept of multiple lenses:

> They're still studying the same thing but you're looking at it through different eyes. So I think that is my philosophy of teaching. To get rich ideas, you need to give multiple perspectives no matter what subject area you're trying to create.

The Arts and Humanities in Teacher Education

Sylvia pursued the arts and humanities throughout her postsecondary schooling, first receiving a degree in the liberal arts and continuing to perform and pursue scholarship in the arts. Her belief in these areas as essential to learning was nurtured while she was growing up. For students who did not have her opportunities to become conversant in the arts and learn the interplay of ideas that represents humanist dispositions, the following is an examination of such opportunities that might be offered to them.

Competing Models of Instruction: Pre- and Post-Secondary

At a national education conference, Tate (1993) noted that presenters incorporated two distinct delivery styles. The instructional style in higher education, based on the paradigm of transmission of knowledge, is one of lecture. University professors, in seeing their roles as specialists in a field, present information and ideas. Question-and-answer sessions essentially become mini-lectures for the expert to elucidate her or his thesis. School educators, on the other hand, begin by dividing participants into small groups to discuss given issues related to the session. Responses are then used to dove-tail with those of the presenters in a collaborative format, often interrupted by questions and comments. Tate believed these disparate approaches

demonstrate why liberal arts people and those in the education field are often unsuccessful collaborating on curriculum in the education of school teachers. These paradigms of school and university are far apart. The higher, the more effective a learning scheme is on the educational ladder, the less emphasis on instructional method is present, argues Tate. College and university instruction tends to be lecture, what Tate refers to as the "transmission model" (p. 17). According to Tate, primary teachers on the other hand, place higher concerns on caring over intellectual pursuits. As practitioners, they are continually learning the latest approaches and keeping up to date.

So goes the stereotype, continues Tate (1993). The truth is that good educators want to "simply turn on those light bulbs inside all their students' heads" (p. 18). To do this requires a deep understanding of both the material and the students. It is the old debate of subject-centered versus student-centered education. A solution to this dichotomy? Tate offers the suggestions of John Dewey, presented in a short work entitled *The Child and the Curriculum*. In it, the philosopher recommends (in Hegelian fashion) that the curriculum is the thesis, the student the antithesis and successful education—the synthesis. Tate suggests as prejudicial that a gap exists between the child's experience and the subject matter of a curriculum. Tate quotes Dewey as asserting they are "outgrowths of forces operation in the child's life, and of discovering the steps that intervene between the child's present experience and their richer maturity" (1993, p. 23). Tate endorses Dewey's view of the curriculum—not designed and enacted by the child, as his detractors contended, but a meeting of the two negotiated into one. Dewey again:

> Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction. It is continuous reconstruction, moving from the child's present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth we call studies. (as cited in Tate, 1993, p. 23)

Arrange the student's education to include the education of the larger human tradition. Bring them together through what Dewey terms psychologizing—making ideas meaningful to the student. It is my view, and Sylvia's, that the arts and humanities offer the young student the best forum for the reconstruction, in the Deweyan sense, of their experiences. A quality teacher education program would assist students in learning how to psychologize the curriculum, to interpret and guide their future charges toward experiences that are relevant to the children's lives, using ideas embedded in the subject matter. In other words, preservice teachers should understanding how to make curriculum a living, breathing extension of the world in all its beauty and complexity.

The rigidity of discipline separation in the Ivory Tower is well documented (Pinar, et al., 1996). One response to this often implacable paradigm, was a collaboration of Lasalle University, The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Pew Charitable Trust to assist professors in blending philosophical, historical and literary perspectives to help address the "ethical conflicts that beset the economic, social, and political conditions of modernity" (Soven, 1992, p. 1). A two-year seminar explored ways that university faculty could integrate historical, political and ethical insights common in humanities disciplines with courses in other disciplines. Organized around topics related to commerce, culture, community and democracy, the professors read such philosophers as Compte, Mill, Hegel and Marx; the literature of Cather and Forster; and the work of historian Theodore Von Laue. Seminar discussions modeled integration of

disciplinary perspectives in ways that could be transferred to courses taught by the participants. Although extensive time was not devoted to practical issues of pedagogy, the participants were taught approaches to writing papers using Aristotelian dialectic, which encourages a rhetorical approach to writing papers—that is, encouraging dialectical assertions rather than binary opposites. The outcomes, according to Soven (1992), included rewriting of syllabi from a number of faculty involved and "reaffirmed faculty commitment to incorporating humanistic ideas in their courses at all levels" (p. 10).

Sylvia and I have both witnessed the power of integrating diverse subject matters. For me, thematic music centers where teams explored areas of writing, playing, exploring technical (scientific) phenomena and reading about a particular area of music, convinced me that the high level of engagement, creativity and academic connections made during these units caused unique and powerful learning. Sylvia found that same involvement by "getting art, music, talking about issues from social studies and using literature to talk about those issues." She would integrate science, as well:

> For example, I had to teach a unit on weather. Simultaneously I looked at my curriculum and I coordinated what within the social studies concepts I had to teach that would fit with my need for teaching weather and science. So then we had to study the desert—so then I combined the weather and the desert and we talked about the weather in the desert. The connections? Well, how does that affect the plants? And how does that affect the vegetation? What does the desert look like? Maybe there are a lot of kids who have never been out of their back yard. So how I bring them an experience of the desert is by bringing art work or photographs.

Seeking the Humanities in the Academy

Martha Nussbaum (1997) insisted that a good multicultural liberal arts education will prepare teachers to teach the humanities if methods classes in preservice education would address them. She asserted that we need college level educators to truly understand the humanities since even Euro-based liberal education is hard to find. Nussbaum traveled throughout the United States on a quest in search of the holiest of grails for a classical humanities scholar—pockets of what she described as proving that there are schools creating Plato's "world citizen." Harvard's Core Curriculum and Notre Dame's teacher education classes both required semester courses on "moral reasoning"—designed to get the students engaged in the act of thinking reflectively about serious moral controversies. At Harvard this and other courses are "designed to involve the student actively in constructing and analyzing arguments and in criticizing the arguments of others" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 45). The fault Nussbaum found with these courses is that, though interdisciplinary, with distinguished faculty teamed in the curriculum design and instruction, the class enrollments are very large.

Infusing philosophical reflection into literature and revisionist history courses ties Socratic self-examination to a larger humanities framework and gives it a postmodern grounding (Nussbaum, 1997). At St. Lawrence, a well-funded liberal arts school, the Cultural Encounters program has tied philosophy to courses in humanities and social and natural science. Group discussion is an extensive part of the course content with a collaborative and systematic approach to the teaching of cultural relativism and cross-cultural studies apparent throughout the courses. Three institutions—Grinell College in Iowa; Amherst College in Massachusetts; and Brown University in Rhode Island—have

systematized advisement so that the student, with his or her advisor's or mentor's assistance, approaches the curriculum through Stoic goals of self-command and Emerson's notion of self-reliance. As the student progresses through the year, advising is a continual part of the process of reflecting on the nature and content of given courses.

Explaining a course on issues of race and gender (an integration that Sylvia achieved in a mini-symposium with her students), John Meacham, a professor of psychology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, instituted a course bringing several subject areas together. If this controversial subject were going to be taught critically, he argued, "An intelligent discussion of affirmative action should be grounded at least in history, biology, law, economics, political science, psychology and sociology" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 37).

Among my interviews with parents of Sylvia's former students was a conversation with a physician who attributed her (Sylvia's) success in the classroom with her "obvious grasp of general knowledge, extensive learning and liberal arts." He felt that because Sylvia had such an extensive knowledge base, she planned for and encouraged deeper learning in her students. Nussbaum (1997) builds a strong case for the power of humanistic study at the university level to empower students to act in decisive ways, make intelligent choices and persuade others of their views. Sylvia's extensive learning, both deep and wide, commanded greater respect from the parents and convinced them of the value of her humanities-based, integrative approach to subject areas; she moved them to desire involvement with this approach; according to Sylvia's principal:

> They [the parents] liked the activities Sylvia was doing with them. They liked her positive communication skills. They liked the writing, the creativity component, they liked the environment of the classroom- warm and child-centered. The next year she had many, many requests from parents who wanted their children to be in that environment. To me that is an indicator of the perception of parents—the word was getting around to the community.

Preservice Teachers and Arts Literacy at the College Level

Sylvia pursued arts literacy zealously on her own through her college years, motivated by the strength of her gratification from the arts from her primary and secondary school years. For preservice teachers in the typical liberal arts institution who did not receive such a rich background, required credits in the arts tend not to have literacy in mind, rather they attempt appreciation. Even for addressing the history and aesthetics of an arts discipline, the institutions tend to be inconsistent in how many of the arts disciplines are addressed. At Arizona State University, for example, preservice elementary teachers are required to take a total of nine arts credits, and the electives they can choose need have no relationship to each other. For those currently in teacher preparation programs, three of the credits have been designated for an arts course related to education (Arizona State University Education Partnership Program, 2002). For a program that can extend over three years, that is not much arts content. By contrast, the average citizen of Greece at the time of Pericles was required to learn Homeric ballads on the nine string lyre and the double aulos; play side-by-side whistles, one for each hand; dance; do gymnastics; write plays in the manner of the playwrights of the day; and receive instruction in the sculpting style of Myron (Durant, 1966).

Eisner (1969) confronted the question of teacher training in the arts and humanities early in his career:

> Are teachers educated in the humanities and arts? Are teachers prepared to lead humanistic modes of inquiry in the school setting? There is of course no guaranty that a humanistic product will be treated humanistically. (p. 653)

Almost 30 years later, Eisner (1998) acknowledged that his questions remain topical, unresolved and problematic.

Growing numbers of case studies and narratives have demonstrated an increasingly strong link between personal experiences and teaching beliefs and practices (McKean, 1997). Clandinin (1986), in examining case studies of 30 classroom teachers, found that "many of the most important educational experiences occur outside the school" (p. 27). She concluded that these non-schooling experiences make the largest impact on our lives. Echoing Clandinin's finding, I found in my study of Sylvia Tierra that many of her beliefs about and subsequent practices involving the arts and humanities were dispositions established while she was still living with her family. Her mother and father had strong interests in the arts and considered them to be necessary to one's full education. Winston and Miram (her parents) both played the piano and dabbled in visual art. They were avid readers and attended Western European-based arts events such as the ballet, Broadway musicals and plays. Sylvia was given eight years of instruction in native Sri Lankan dance known as Kandian dancing. She took piano and had private tutoring in visual art. In short, the arts were appreciated and practiced in Sylvia's childhood world. She continued personal involvement in the arts after adulthood, up to and including her teaching career. Sylvia's parents believed in the importance of linking ideas and discussion and interpretation of the arts—a distinctly humanities-based approach to learning. Miram studied Montessori educational practice while still in Sri Lanka and used it naturally in her parenting. Sylvia's Sri Lankan education occurred

almost exclusively in private schools that strongly featured the liberal arts in their curricula. This background strongly influenced Sylvia's motivation to earn a B.A. in liberal arts.

However, Sylvia's rich arts and humanities education leading up to her undergraduate experience is the exception in the extreme. Many collegians have their first introduction to the arts and humanities when they enter the academy. Professors, I believe, need to find innovative ways to bring them into the fold of disciplines that have been outside their academic lives until now.

Responding to such a call for innovation, Testa (2000) used Dewey's ode to aesthetics in *The Art of Experience* (1934/1980) to design a course for education majors at Dartmouth College. Two professors, 30 seniors, evenly divided by gender, studied a humanities-based course introducing them to the arts. Interpretation richly accompanied the curriculum of arts production and critique. The essay, *When Jocks Dance*, describes a semester spent introducing education majors to a world few had trodden. When all gathered at Dartmouth's Hood Museum in a gallery exhibiting the collages of Romare Bearden, two members of the class raised their hands when asked if they had visited the museum in four years of residence.

By the end of the semester the students were won over (Testa, 2000). The final project for a particular member of the football team was to have class members and professors gather in a circle on the football field—a cold late autumn night with each holding a long staff as the host recited the poem from Shakespeare's *Henry the V*. He had memorized Shakespeare's St. Crispan's Day speech. This represents a small victory for this young man, probably all of 21 or 22 years, who experienced his first recitation of

Shakespeare by heart and was rewarded through personal gratification as well as the plaudits of the class. Arts and humanities advocates would decry this delayed epiphany as perhaps too little, too late, while calling it the norm among America's college students. Why did it take so long for this student to experience theater in this form? High stakes testing forced teachers to avoid such "fluff," Testa suggests. Educators are not given the skills to transact such experiences for children. These are the arguments of the arts advocates. They are grounded in the conviction that involvement in the arts causes certain dispositional and perceptual changes in the participants.

Sylvia was in a Shakespeare club in Sri Lanka in the fifth grade. They did at least four plays a year. What effects or dispositional changes did those experiences have on Sylvia? Did her experiences with drama create in her the desire to attend more plays, to read Shakespeare, and other classic literature? When she entered the classroom as a teacher, did she do more drama with her students than teachers who had not acted in a fifth-grade theater company? After Sylvia married her first husband, she describes voraciously reading his entire, and according to her, extensive collection of classical literature. She also maintains that her involvement as a youth did give her the background and skills to introduce her students to drama and explore stories of the ancient world.

Arts Education and the Long Term

Little research exists on the long-term consequences of the arts and their life changing impact (Barone, personal communication, May 1, 2001). One such study by Barone (2001) followed the lives of a high school art teacher's former students to see

what changes, if any, they thought his teaching wrought. Barone's subject of study, Don Forrister, was an exceptional educator according to many who came in contact with his teaching, including Barone, who was asked to visit his classroom to validate an award given Forrister by the Rockefeller Foundation. Forrister had mentored a student photographer, working with Paul (pseudonym) after school to help him develop technique. Forrister entered his work in art shows, which led to the young man winning awards. After that student graduated he became a parole officer and discovered that the acuity for light and composition he had acquired actually hindered his ability in his job. Paul would find himself distracted by visually compelling scenes that piqued his aesthetic sensibilities.

Barone (2001) found that students Forrister identified for mentoring, the "chosen," related profound changes in their interest in and ability to do art, based on the approach the art teacher used. The difference between Forrister's mentoring practices and those of Sylvia was that Sylvia searched for and nurtured the unique and individual art potential in each child. According to parents interviewed, particularly those who volunteered in her classroom, Sylvia took extreme care to identify each child's expressive gifts and make sure they were successful. My motto to music students of mine is that prodigies are born, musicians are made.

Teaching as an Art Form

According to Ivie (1999), the medical profession received a wake-up call in 1910 with the Flexner Report. Medical schools were shown to be woefully ineffective at training members of the profession. They were either upgraded, based on a series of

scientific principles, or closed. The physician's status, not high at the time, rose considerably, along with wages. The education establishment considered such a scientific approach to professional training would work for them and thus welcomed, as outlined by Bobbit (1918), the "Factory Model" of education (Callahan, 1962).

Gage (1978) argued that educators have spent a century teaching according to skills that scientific management is unable to either address or explain. In *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching*, the author explained that teaching is closer to art than science. Though the title may sound oxymoronic, Eisner (1979) agreed with Gage's thesis. Eisner stated that the "model of the natural sciences is inappropriate for most of the problems and aims of teaching" (p. 271). Ivie (1999) posited an interesting alternative: base teaching not on science but on aesthetic foundations. Serious aesthetic inquiry is a century old and has established principles for discerning artistic practices. Ivie used four aesthetic criteria proposed by Eisner (1979) to defend his call for the teacher-as-artist. The first covered teaching as an aesthetic experience. The teacher performs with grace and artistry, what Rubin (1985) suggested includes "skill, originality, flair, dexterity, ingenuity, virtuosity . . . which, together, engender exceptional performance" (p. 156). The second: "Teaching as making emergent judgments," references teacher responses that, like those of artists, unfold as decisions based on the changing dynamics of the classroom experience. Just as the creative process of painting a picture or writing a quartet evolves based on choices made during the creation of the work of art, good teachers make aesthetic choices to optimize learning experiences. Another example of the spontaneous, artistic-situational reading-in-the-moment might be the way a comedian "reads" an audience and builds his improvised

humor based on a set of variables including the demographics of the crowd, their responses to specific jokes, individual audience reaction and the way the humor plays off them. The creative teacher reads her or his audience and subtly shifts the track of the lesson to engage the students. "The tasks of teaching are far more demanding than discursive knowledge can explain," Eisner (1979, p. 272) insisted. If teachers founded most classroom performance on information from science-based information, Ivie suggested, "most of educational practice would come to a standstill" (Ivie, 1999, p. 272). Dewey (as cited in Ivie, 1999) concurred that teachers, like artists, make aesthetic, qualitative decisions in the classroom. In the same way that the artist develops technique, though, teachers must study the techniques of successful practitioners and implement them with their own unique stamp.

Ivie's (1999) third frame for viewing the teacher as artist is a sense of " teaching as imagination." The process of teaching is unpredictable. Though routines and patterns exist in the classroom experience, the teacher must have an elastic and imaginative repertoire of responses to find individual success. "The teacher's art is one of balancing knowledge (rules) with imagination (intuition)" (Ivie, 1999, p. 5).

Imagination in the arts and humanities was addressed in an earlier section of this chapter. Collingwood (1964) viewed the imagining mind as the fundamental process of creating art. A teacher with imagination presents lessons in unique and engaging ways. S/he takes each student into the subject matter and creates a motivation to become involved with it. S/he involves students in a myriad of ways so that they become inexorably connected to what they are learning. Ivie (1999) used two teachers to exemplify his hypothesis of the teacher as artist: Marva Collins (Collins & Tamarkan,

1982), an inner-city elementary school teacher in Chicago and Jaime Escalante (Mathews, 1988), who taught high school math in East Los Angeles and was the subject of the movie *Stand and Deliver.* These examples are, according to Ivie, archetypes of the fully developed individual teacher/artist. They represent educators who have developed a set of skills, a knowledge-base and, like a humorist reading an audience, a kind of shtick: that unconscious reading of the group that allows for subtle shifts of teacher response as s/he reads the class.

Ivie's fourth frame for representing teaching artfulness is to view it as a process-directed activity. It is a human activity where often the results are emergent (Ivie, 1999). The teachable moment is a regular occurrence for the artistic teacher. S/he creates the lesson/art situationally as well as through an organized lesson sequence. According to Rubin (as cited in Ivie, 1999), teachers who practice artistically are "sensitive to what is needed at a given moment, and follow their instincts more than formula" (p. 7). Ivie asserted that artful teachers understand the nuances of their students' personalities, what motivates them and how to transform their emotional energy into directed, successful learning experiences. The author concluded by suggesting that researchers "stop lamenting the fact that teaching is so unscientific and start celebrating the fact that it is truly artistic!" (p. 8).

In considering teaching as an art form, Ivie (1999) contended that we need to examine alternative means for training teachers. In the traditional American school, Barone (2000) viewed the factory model of education stamping out students from a curriculum of external standards. In Barone's "Truly New American School" students are encouraged to write their life texts through enriching, integrated learning, meaningful

projects—coming from all angles to create strong poets (p. 131). This requires of the pedagogue the kind of empathetic understanding of the artist, the poet to "know the self of a student" in order to guide that life story (p. 131). The pedagogue must have the artist's temperament, intuition, the ability to read the moment, the subtle class dynamics, his/her own changing, evolving texts and lenses—to create the ideal environment for poetry, in Barone's sense. This will require robust aesthetic training.

Sylvia Tierra, according to colleagues, parents, and students, exemplified the artistic teacher. Though she was organized in the classroom and her lesson planning sophisticated and well-sequenced, Sylvia riffed on the classroom dynamics, seizing the moment as a jazz musician might—moving through the classroom during cooperative learning projects praising and offering suggestions—demonstrating and modeling ways of researching, drawing a figure, or acting a scene in a play. Witnesses described Sylvia as completely attuned to the emotional and intellectual needs of her students, enhancing, assuaging the learning environment—treating her teaching process as bringing forth a work of art.

Summary of the Review of Literature

Advocates for inclusion of the arts and humanities have long argued that they are more than ancillary subjects in a given school curriculum. This review has examined the roots of arts and humanities inquiry, their application to education, and addressed how one might find the kinds of opportunities for involvement with them as experienced by Sylvia Tierra. Finally, as Sylvia's own rationale for her dedication to the craft of

teaching attested that it is "like creating a painting or composing music," literature on teaching as an art form was discussed.

This study has been an attempt to trace the motivations of one third-grade teacher to implement, in her own words, a "humanities-based curriculum" in a classroom where the arts flourished and, according to the accounts of parents, colleagues and the students themselves, learning became a grand adventure. To examine the process of Sylvia's pedagogical approach, two methodological tools were used. Portraiture of Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis (1997) guided me as I analyzed data gathered in interviews and document review, and the critical storytelling of Barone (2000) gave me permission to contextualize the data and to bring it to life through the nuance and grace of literary re-storying. The "Methodology" chapter explores how these frameworks allowed me to study Sylvia's classroom practices and interpret her motivations that guided them.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Fore/Word

Two stories inform this dissertation. One is about a woman born in a foreign country who moved to the United States during her early teen years and became a third-grade classroom teacher. Based on my view of her unique approach to curriculum, singular in its conception and delivery, I chose to make her personal and professional development the focus of my research. The other story featured in this chapter elaborates the research methods chosen to guide my journey of discovery. The first part of this chapter offers an introduction to the methodological choices I made and a rationale for their use. Within that explanation I weave specific examples of how I used the portraiture framework to guide my study and critical storytelling to inform the "Interpretation" chapter. The second part of the chapter explains the procedures in using these lenses to examine the life of my chosen teacher—how the data were gathered, the extent of those data, the processes for analyzing them, and a rationale for the choices that I made from the data that enabled me to write an "Interpretation" as I did.

After careful consideration, my decision regarding a choice of methodology was to use portraiture, as conceived by Lawrence-Lightfoot in her 1983 work and with Hoffman Davis in their 1997 work, as a primary research design. When it came time to write the "Interpretation" chapter, however, I found it useful to add the inquiry techniques of Barone's critical storytelling (1992a, 1992b, 1993b, 1997) to my methodological mix. Inspired by Barone's (2001) use of re-storying to promote

alternative means for writing and reading educational research, my decision was to re-story the entire "Interpretation" chapter to create a more vivid and descriptive portrait of the work of a gifted elementary teacher. The story of how I incorporated re-storying with the portraiture framework is more fully told in later sections of this chapter.

An Explanation of Portraiture

Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture methodology evolved during a research study that culminated in *The Good High School* (1983), a series of case studies that explored life in high schools chosen for their reputations as successful and innovative institutions. Lawrence-Lightfoot met with two fellow researchers assigned to the project to discuss methodological approaches appropriate for the task. She suggested they call their pieces *portraits* because "it would allow us a measure of freedom from the traditions and constraints of disciplined research methods, and because I hoped that our work would be defined by aesthetic, as well as empirical and analytic, dimensions" (1983, p. 13). In attributing the origins of her innovative approach to social science inquiry, the author acknowledges the influences of Geertz (1973), Polani (1958), and Eisner (1972, 1979).

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) wanted her work to consider more than the empirical. She welcomed the aesthetic as well. Designing her inquiry approaches as she went along, using many of the same qualitative tools as in previous research—seeking rich description, disconfirming evidence ("deviant voices"), and multiple perspectives—she found that metaphors from visual art keyed into aesthetic guideposts to give the pieces "soul" along with rigor (p. 15).

Portraiture complements the phenomenological nature of this study. In *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) present an ethnographic frame for case study analysis that incorporates metaphors and aesthetic criteria employed by visual artists for studying educational phenomena. Portraiture offers a holistic approach from conception of the study to the final draft. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) it represents a systematic process of discovery and evaluation of actors performing in their environment. "In portraiture, the researcher—the artist—interprets the subject of the portrait internally by searching for coherence in what she observes and discovers" (p. 30).

The authors argue that ethnographic analysis, as aesthetic considerations of a work of art, involve cognitive processes of interpretation, recognition, sorting and categorization (see also Eisner, 1998). In particular, interpretive description, so strongly identified with the arts, is an essential attribute of portraiture, as this excerpt from *The Good High School* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) illustrates:

> The tone of self-criticism at Milton is modeled and encouraged by Jerome Pieh, the Headmaster. With a listening and gentle approach, he invites vigorous exchange, does not deflect harsh disagreements, and seems inspired by healthy debate. It is not that he seems to like confrontation, but that he deeply believes that institutional invigoration and change will only come with the difficult work of challenge and debate. (pp. 270-271)

Portraiture and Phenomenology

The approach, as conceived by Lawrence-Lightfoot, is what Willis (1991) refers to as interpretive inquiry: "In its most basic form, phenomenological inquiry investigates the distinctly human perceptions of individual people's perceptions of other people" (pp. 173-174). Consciousness is a major theme for the phenomenologist. It speaks to the

"multiple ways in which objects, events, and other human beings are presented via the distinctly human processes of perceiving, judging, believing, remembering, and imagining" (Pinar, et al., 1996, p. 406). Rather than inexact and mystical as some have described them, phenomenological approaches seek to explore what, in the practical world, might be concealed or veiled. Phenomenological research seeks layers of meaning about what it means to be human. It embodies a poetic quality through "an incantational, evocative speaking, a primal telling" voice (Pinar, et al., 1996, p. 407). Bagwell (1999) found portraiture conducive to weaving her experience as researcher into a meaningful narrative for a study about African American school principals. The methodology allowed the author to reveal the dynamics of her individual relationship with each of the actors and how that evolving relationship informed her insights about her work.

In embracing portraiture, one recognizes tenets of other forms of qualitative methodology that portraiture has drawn upon: Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, Erickson's (1986) caution to seek confirming and disconfirming evidence and his commitment to the use of vignettes to amplify interpretation. Stake's (1995) call for naturalistic generalization and Yin's (1994) construct validity also resonate in the portraiture frame. What is particularly compelling to me as a researcher is the manner in which Lawrence-Lightfoot has taken the metaphors of one distinct genre (visual art) and distilled them to guide the researcher in discovering a narrative that is hermeneutic and systematic. Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1983) work toward a nuanced yet meaningful text recalls Eisner (1985) when he observes that "over time, descriptive language becomes less mechanical, more incisive, and increasingly literary or poetic" (p. 221).

The methodology of portraiture seeks to understand the insider's point of view from an outside perspective. Beginning with context, the portraitist believes that "human experience has meaning in a particular social, cultural and historical context" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 43). In context, the researcher must be attuned to the experiences of actors that s/he (the researcher) has only begun to know, formulating deepening understandings as a developing, reshaping hypothesis about the nature of and motivation for their actions as they begin to emerge. The authors suggest five characteristics of context to which the researcher must ascribe:

- how the environment plays into what will become the portrait, its "ecological context" (p. 45);
- the researcher's perch, what the portraitist brings to the site which will help her/him guide the reader in joining the "unfolding reality"(p. 49);
- historical/cultural perspective, the institutional culture as it has evolved, ideologies, demographics—what will define its place;
- aesthetic features, symbols and metaphors that call up associations with the place and its inhabitants—recollections of the environment and its artifacts;
- and the shaping process: the changing, shifting realities encountered as the study moves forward.

The portraitist must also be attuned to voice—it is everywhere in the piece: "assumptions, preoccupations and framework . . . in the questions, data she gathers; in the choice of stories she tells," the rhythm, flow and beat of her narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 85). The "voice as witness" describes the observer, discerning, measured in her or his perceptions of the actors, "gathering the details of behavior, expression, and talk, remaining open and receptive to all stimuli" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 87). In considering voice as witness, Lawrence-

Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis ask the researcher to examine the commonplace to discover what is uncommon. Beneath the routine lurks surprises, a terrain that is at first hidden—revealed only through keen and patient observation.

The portraitist honors Geertz's (1973) distinction between thin and thick description, seeking to include both vividly detailed, "low-inference description (thin) and thoughtful, discerning interpretation (thick)" in the text (p. 91). Autobiographical voice recognizes the filters and perspectives of the researcher—the contributions made from her or his experience brought to the site of the study. Smith (1991) sees all hermeneutic writing as autobiographical, in that it involves "a mutual recognition that identity means nothing without a set of relations" and that our understanding of others is mediated by "the story of our shared future" (pp. 202-203). Those insights informed my "Prelude" chapter. I also recognized that shared future as I constructed the "Interpretation" from the many voices I had gathered during data collection.

My attention to voice was attuned first to the actors in the interviews—how they responded to particular questions: their vocal inflections, body language, and facial expressions when responding. Observation was critical during these exchanges, for afterward, I was left with cassette recordings rather than actual memories of events described. My memories of the events were filtered through the memories and lenses of my actors. Watching Sylvia Tierra teach a lesson was not possible. Instead, I interviewed her discussing in detail what went on at the time of her teaching. Then I interviewed others to get their perspectives of that lesson. In some cases, I had videos of Sylvia interacting with her students to analyze. As I transcribed and later read and reread the

results, I actively negotiated among the various voices describing the same event and developed/negotiated images for the portrait.

In portraiture, relationship building with the actors is essential to successful researching and transforming of data into the final portrait. Yet I attempted to remember that the methodology involves reasoned analysis and negotiation of "self and other, distance and intimacy, acceptance and skepticism, receptivity and challenge, silence and talk" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 158). The negotiation occurs as the researcher seeks to accurately document while maintaining an empathetic stance. The terrain explored, the authors claim, between actor and researcher deepens and is "tender and treacherous" (p. 159). My study of Sylvia Tierra, however, was congenial from the outset. It extended to all those who knew her. Sylvia revealed, I believe, an honest self. All the other actors confirmed her unique gifts as a friend, teacher, artist, mentor and colleague. Not one disconfirming statement was uttered by any of the actors—even at my gentle prodding. "Headstrong" was the only suggestion of a character flaw from one of her colleagues and even then, that actor concluded that such a personality trait assisted Sylvia to a much greater degree than hindered her. From my first conversations with Sylvia to the interviews for this project and the followup phone calls, the rapport was begun and enriched through experience—the groundwork, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) suggests, for the possibilitizing of deep understandings.

Portraiture's originator encourages a framework that includes positing presumptive themes—that is, identifying and labeling the kinds of phenomena that may be uncovered during data collection. Lawrence-Lightfoot refers to these conjectures as "anticipatory themes" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 186). As

generative themes unfold through data gathering, they can be compared to the anticipatory themes, allowing the researcher to be guided by and to reshape any assumptive theories s/he may have developed, encouraging her or him to confirm or disconfirm these notions as they are tested against emerging evidence. The authors suggest putting these themes into "resonant metaphors" (p. 198) akin to memos (see Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the sorts of themes envisioned by Erickson (1986).

The metaphors I discovered emerged through interview and document review of the actors. I listed them as I reviewed the transcripts and sifted through the materials left by Sylvia. Rich metaphors resonated from this phase of the research and greatly facilitated the shaping of my "Interpretation." I referred to them as "finding coherence." In exploring the essential motivations for Sylvia's practices, I was informed, at times, serendipitously. Though I transcribed the taped interviews, I would also play them, as I describe in more detail later, while driving in my car, sitting in my office, even in bed at night, stopping the tape to make notes about particular passages that seemed to hold significance.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) explain that triangulation results from the researcher's careful examination of the metaphors to ascertain convergence of data whether it be from interview, observation or document review. The researcher then works "to develop a process and a structure for categorizing the data, for tracing the patterns, for capturing and constructing the themes, all the while trying to preserve the nuance and complexity of real lived experience" (p. 214). "Naming convergence" (p. 215) is the portraitist's opportunity to unite the themes into a coherent whole. The revelation of this coherence would, in standard qualitative models, constitute the findings

section—in the case of this study it is named the "Interpretation" chapter. Convergence happened in small insights and large epiphanies during my data analysis. Certain themes emerged like old shoes that suddenly bobbed up to the surface of a lake, floating there with sudden and unexpected meaning.

One such convergence happened during an interview with a colleague of Sylvia's—Nancy Markham (pseudonym), a fellow teacher and summer traveling companion. Nancy, who taught fourth grade and inherited some of Sylvia's third graders, had marveled at how her friend could describe the intricacies, the nuances of each child's personality. For example, Sylvia had cautioned Nancy, "Tony needs special attention on some days," and "Don't force him to go to the board." Another observation Nancy offered was that in their work as teachers at Kokopelli School (pseudonym) and on the road for two- sometimes three-week adventures around Arizona, Silvia talked about curriculum, but "she always came back to the child. That was her biggest concern—how the curriculum would affect the children's learning."

Later in the same evening of that interview, I had a telephone conversation with Sylvia. On the phone, Sylvia spoke of how, when volunteering in her mom's Montessori school, she enjoyed one thing the most, "observing the children thinking." She was fascinated with how they interacted with their world, the multiple meanings behind their statements, their deepest concerns. She listened to the voice behind the voice. It struck me that Sylvia's "depth of listening" was why her students and their parents developed such allegiance toward her. Her principal, Pauline Gentry (pseudonym) explained that once "the word got out" about Sylvia's teaching gifts, parents requested her more than any other grade level teacher. Sylvia could read her students and respond to their

learning and emotional needs in extraordinary ways—like the wise and warm aunt who takes her position as family mentor seriously. Multiple actors also voiced the word *family* in their portraits of Sylvia's classroom. References to Sylvia's class as a family were described in the interviews in such terms as: *warm, nurturing, challenging, caring, knowledge seeker and giver*—themes that converged from disparate sources.

Critical Storytelling

Sylvia Tierra, the focus of my research, taught for four years in a self-contained classroom. Her teaching had ended the year before I approached her to research her motivations for developing and implementing her unique curricular approach. Without the opportunity for classroom observation, I collected, instead, a range of stories from interviews with Sylvia, her parents, colleagues, former parents and students, and a wealth of documents to weave into a portrait/narrative of the past, a structured reminiscence. To coin a metaphor in the manner of portraiture, the paint is dry on the day-to-day events of Sylvia's life as an elementary teacher.

Portraiture, as originally conceived by Lawrence-Lightfoot, was based on observation of phenomena: classroom events and interactions among various actors, observable school culture. So, the creation of a meaningful and coherent portrait (in the Lawrence-Lightfoot sense) required that I prepare a fresh canvas and palette to repaint remembered events. In other words, Lawrence-Lightfoot's methodology served well as a template for constructing a representation of classroom life based on direct observation and examination of the data, but I found that its guidance for redescription was less clear.

Therefore, as mentioned in the Fore/Word, the story of my search to see Sylvia critically, empathetically and honestly necessitated the adoption of multiple methodologies.

With frame and metaphorical guidelines that followed the paradigm of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997), I incorporated Barone's (2000) critical storytelling; this approach gave me "permission" to re-story the events of Sylvia's life and enabled me to insert a post-modern lens through which to sift information and experience. Barone's notion of critical storytelling reminded me as researcher that qualitative inquirers need "a kind of honesty achieved through a heightened empiricism, a determined scrutinizing of the world around us" (Barone, 2000, p. 192). Through examination and reflection, identification of a significant metaphor or metaphors is possible. These insights, in turn, facilitate "selection among observed qualitative phenomena, while simultaneously serving as a kind of patterning principle for revealing relationships between these phenomena" (p. 196). From such a process of selection, a meaningful portrait can indeed be painted.

Weaving the portrait is an act of merging the realm of art with that of science: "In creating the aesthetic whole, we blend empirical choices and aesthetic sensibilities; we seek to capture insight and emotion; we want to develop a narrative that both informs and inspires" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 259). For the portrait of Sylvia Tierra to emerge, it was necessary for me to analyze the data, then attempt crafting them into a story that remained true to the actors' recitations, yet illuminated the object of the portrait and, additionally, invited the reader to enter in/to the experience (Barone, 2000). Portraiture and critical storytelling informed each other because the resonant metaphors I found while constructing portraiture's frame were ready for use as I

prepared to re-story while writing the "Interpretation." Portraiture provided a stable lens to examine the data: interviews and document review—narrative inquiry offered the lens to shape the information and translate it into the cloak of an illuminating narrative.

Barone's critical storytelling calls for inclusion of the tools of the literary imagination: aesthetic description, development of character and deployment of a "literary conceit" (1997, p. 223). In an award-winning recent work, Barone (2001) used these tools for re-storying the events of his interviews and conversations with the students of a particular teacher, known for exemplary instruction. Barone then examined possible long-term dispositions that may have affected students through this approach. Persuasion, argues Barone (2000), is the ultimate aim of qualitative research. Critical storytelling, what is also now included under the umbrella of narrative research by Barone and others, is a call to the writing of educational research as texts that are both "disturbing" and "transformative"—in that they can represent human phenomena through stories that draw the reader in and, while wrapped in the power of prose, reveal important insights and unmask injustice that might not take root in the reader's mind through less compelling discursive writing.

As I finalized my research design, I recognized that portraiture's structure had guided my analysis of the data, but the guidepost of performing critical inquiry through storytelling was what I needed to negotiate the terrain of remembered (not observed) events and create a representation of my findings. The two methodologies, I feel, worked harmoniously to craft and celebrate the story of Sylvia Tierra's teaching. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) developed a methodology grounded in the traditions of qualitative research that, nevertheless, added aesthetics to the analytical mix. I adopted her design as

it provided me with a framework, a skeleton for qualitative research that combined the empirical with the aesthetic. To put flesh on these structural bones, however, I summoned literary metaphors and devices as advocated by Barone—to free history to speak, to let the characters spring to life from memories as they do on the Shakespearean stage, or in Kabuki theatre.

Barone's (2000) interest in narrative forms of research find their roots in his doctoral work as a student of Eliot Eisner and the genre of "new journalism" as practiced by such writers as Truman Capote and Norman Mailer. Critical storytelling, Barone believes, dismantles the hierarchy of writers over readers and invites a collaboration rather than a reading of a predetermined, fixed-meaning text. Narrative forms have the power to evoke as well as invoke, to express human experience in unique and congruent ways and give enriched meaning to the relationships and connections among authors (see Barone & Eisner, 1997; Egan, 1999; Greene, 1995; Grumet, 1991; Hatch & Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995; Rorty, 1989; Wisniewski, 1995). Storytelling also serves to involve the reader in a collaboration with the writer, a mediated act that can be transformative (Barone, 2000).

Dancing With the Data: The Process for Shaping the Story

My study took place over a period of six months. Sylvia Tierra, the principal actor in this study, graciously consented to a series of interviews that are represented in 14 hours of audio tapes. She has also answered queries made to her through 36 emails, three of them three pages in length. Sylvia and I spoke by phone on 18 different occasions.

Sylvia's parents (pseudonyms: Winston and Miram Tierra), responded to four telephone calls and sent a seven-page, single-spaced email in nine point font with a three-page followup later. It was eloquently written using a narrative format and described memories of Sylvia growing up in Sri Lanka, as well as her adolescent years (including descriptions of Sylvia's experiences in middle and high school); working at her mother's Montessori school; her undergraduate work and anecdotes revealing her personality and interests. My descriptions of Sylvia's "house on the hill," her school and other scenery in Sri Lanka were aided by the Tierra parents' narratives.

Sylvia's fellow teacher and summer traveling companion, Nancy Markham (pseudonym), sat for a two-hour interview and fielded five followup telephone conversations for clarification of points from the interview and to help locate students for interviews. A two-hour conversation with Sylvia's former principal, Pauline Gentry (pseudonym), was taped at her house one August afternoon. Pauline also was most helpful in locating former students. The parents of four of the students and the students themselves (both parents of two and the mothers of the two others) agreed to interviews lasting approximately a half-hour to 40 minutes each. Though my focus was Sylvia, these interviews were intended to contribute to the coherence of this work.

Understanding Classroom Life Through Documents

For document review, Sylvia gave me a large amount of saved work from her former students as well as videos and photographs of class projects. A three-ring binder from her last year of teaching, 1998-99, contains stories, scripts and poems by her students saved from the entire year. The notebook holds 223 pages of work. The papers

demonstrate, among other things, that the students had a good grasp of word processing skills for all the work was done on computers.

Multiple examples of classroom projects were captured through the videotapes showing mock newscasts, talk show interviews and hyperstudio pieces. The hyperstudio pieces, submitted for judging in a county-wide contest, are quite skilled in their production values. Sylvia required that each student produce at least a ten-slide hyperstudio advertisement. The skills required of her third graders to accomplish this task included: conceiving and writing a script, illustrating each slide and producing the piece, learning the hyperstudio software (something Sylvia herself learned in a college class), scanning and importing art work for the slides (in the form of paintings, pencil drawings, and collages), adding sound effects and voice-overs, and putting it together to create a finished video.

The photographs, student stories, poems, raps, journals and research papers from work on a master's degree offered other windows for examining Sylvia's teaching practices and their resultant student artifacts. A student-written story, *The Girl Who Hated Writing*, found in the three-ring binder, was so compelling to me that I decided to make it the focal point for re-storying three sections of the "Interpretation" to demonstrate different aspects of Sylvia's approach to the writing process. I found that it reflected the enthusiasm for writing Sylvia engendered in her students.

Sylvia's stories and research papers written during work toward a master's degree in education demonstrated many of her primary motivations for teaching and the development of her interest in children's thinking processes and how the arts played such a significant role in developing students' creativity. Her master's thesis argued that

cognitive dissonance was a precursor to the creative process. She then made a case for the constructivist classroom as much more conducive to stimulating creativity. Convergence among interviews with Sylvia and her principal's accounts of her classroom was particularly easy to recognize upon reading this thesis. Comparing Sylvia's stated educational positions and Pauline's reminiscences of their conversations achieved strong resonance. In her master's thesis, Sylvia also gives her "take" on creativity and life-long learning:

> An individual must become flexible and possess the skills to continue learning since education is a life-long process . . . Creative thinking lends itself to this life-long education because creative thinking involves making connections and interpretations in new and unusual ways, which results in the expansion of one's knowledge and understanding.

Pauline's response to an interview question on what Sylvia's classroom was like clearly mirrored the educational viewpoint expressed in the master's thesis: "Sylvia had a classroom where children were very spontaneous. Her children loved to learn. She capitalized on children's strengths. Sylvia is very knowledgeable. Her understanding of the creativity component is extremely strong." This indicated another link in the data—the congruence between the stated educational philosophy of Sylvia and her principal's affirmation of Sylvia successfully actualizing it in the classroom.

In her thesis, Sylvia argued that the arts exercise the mind in ways that keep learners from being paradigmatic. She used an exercise with a door as an example. She had her students draw the classroom door closed as if they were looking straight at it. The shape was a rectangle. Then Sylvia opened the door and had the students draw what this action revealed. Her lesson was to demonstrate the concept of perspective and that what we conceive of as being a certain shape, changes depending upon our point-of-

view. The term *point-of-view* was an essential lesson that Sylvia imparted in various modes. As described in the "Interpretation," Sylvia created a large mural of a scene of a flower in a field and a group of people looking down at it. Each examined the flower in different ways for different reasons. Sylvia extended this metaphor to all learning experiences her students were engaged in:

> So now it's like building up a multi-layered perspective of looking at things through multiple lenses. I actually had a scene and I had a huge bulletin board of a scene of an artist looking, a scientist looking through the eyes of a scientist, an artist, a mathematician that he can look at an object through multiple lenses. They're still studying the same thing but you're looking at it through different eyes. So I think that is my philosophy of teaching. To get rich ideas, you need to give multiple perspectives no matter what subject area you're trying to create.

Comparing documents reviewed, such as the master's thesis, with interviews, videos, photographs and student work, I was establishing the level of coherence (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman-Davis, 1997) that I believed necessary for crafting a narrative portrait that was true to the data, using a re-storying of remembered events to create my literary painting (Barone, 2000).

Audio Review by Car, Desk and Bed

Once all interviews were transcribed, I discovered an effective way to search for the underlying metaphors. During 40 clocked hours of driving over the last four months I repeatedly played the interviews on my portable cassette player, which sat on the passenger seat. When I heard a statement that resonated, I would pause the tape and make note of the cassette's odometer reading on a clipboard fastened to the dashboard with a pen tied on a string. Giving programs for the state Humanities Council takes me out of town often, so, on the Interstate especially, this technique was not hazardous.

After arriving home, I would return to the transcript of the same tape and highlight the discovered metaphors. In my office I played the tapes and visualized the events in preparation for re-storying the "Interpretation." At night, on eight different occasions I put headphones on and listened to the interviews while waiting for sleep—a few times waking in the middle of the night to find the headphones askew on my head. This form of tape review, it is interesting to consider, allowed me to perceive and extract more metaphors than through simply reading the transcript. It was particularly true in listening to the interviews with the principal. I am certain it is because I tend to learn better aurally than visually.

Other Sources for Seeking Metaphors

Among other means for bringing coherence to the piece was Internet searching. My favorite site was the Sri Lanka Web Server (www.lanka.net/home/). The links to photography, history, maps, culture, business and many other categories (all related to the island) were excellent. As well, I visited the University of Texas at Austin website (www.utexas.edu/) where I viewed various photographs of the campus, the first edition copy of Shakespeare's plays that Sylvia mentioned, the business building where she took her first classes majoring in that field. and the various sculptures throughout campus (classic and modern) that Sylvia mused over. I also perused scenes of student life such as the law library where Sylvia and her former husband Rasheen (pseudonym) would meet to go on dates, and the imposing brick art building—a series of gigantic cubes where she was inspired by the permanent collection and visiting shows.

Montessori education was a large influence in her life since her mother started three schools using the pedagogy. Checking out books on the subject gave me a sense of the roots of Sylvia's constructivist leanings. The official Montessori website (www.montessori.org) provided a number of articles, past issues of the official journal and links to familiarize me with the culture and dispositions of those who advocate and practice this educational approach. Throughout high school and her undergraduate years, Sylvia spent afternoons at her mother's schools, observing and working in the classroom. This experience provided the impetus for her to go into education. Reviewing the places of her youth and undergraduate years gave me a sense of the places and culture of Sylvia's life. What was in her memory about these places was in some ways revealed to me as I scanned the Internet images and paired them with her reminiscences.

The Voices of the Main Actor

My "Interpretation" was given its richest voice and consonance and pulled toward coherence more than anything else by the conversations with Sylvia herself. Always articulate, Sylvia's interviews were at times compelling in the richness of her ideas and insight. Her answers invite the opportunity for rediscription that Rorty (1989) celebrated as the gift of literary approaches to ethnography. Sylvia Tierra seems to possess a series of dispositions and abilities that were manifested in most unusual ways toward creating classroom communities. When I contacted the parents of former students and the students themselves, I was struck by not only their willingness to, but also their enthusiasm for speaking about Sylvia. Their descriptions demonstrated high regard for and grateful memories of their time with Sylvia.

Dewey (1934/1980) argued that we grow intellectually according to how interconnected our education and life experiences become. Meaning-making, he continues, is negotiated through awareness of experience. Sylvia's interviews reveal that she was a thirsty learner—and she related and applied what she learned to her life. By the time she received her undergraduate degree in the liberal arts, Sylvia had experienced so much aesthetically and intellectually through her parents and school—as an artist, a musician, a thespian and a dancer—that she had learned and excelled in all the arts. She had acquired, moreover, an understanding of the connectedness of ideas through a rich education offered her, particularly in Sri Lanka, but also in America through the good fortune of finding powerful mentors. According to family interviews, caring, empathy and activism toward resolving the problems of others was modeled through her parents' work in the Anglican church and their committed involvement with the underprivileged of Sri Lanka. The personal stories of the Tierra family resonate with warmth, curiosity, humor, and an authentic lust for life. These were the proving grounds for the dispositions and motivations that guided Sylvia as a teacher. These recollections became the art supplies for the portrait that I would soon paint of her life in the classroom and the experiences that had shaped her pedagogy.

Crafting the Research: Interpretation as Story

The transformative power of literature informed by ethnography is classically illustrated by the work of Charles Dickens who, in his professional career as a journalist, went to the boarding schools for male orphans on the north shores of Scotland with pen and pad to record the intolerable conditions there. From that experience, he wrote

Nicholas Nickleby, serialized in a London magazine popular with the bourgeoisie. Through the empathy and indignation created among the readers of this series, significant social change was initiated. In a similar vein, my "Interpretation" chapter offers re-storied events of Sylvia's life and the various actors who shared and participated in those experiences. The permission and methodological rigor to recreate their lives, afforded by both Barone and Lawrence-Lightfoot, have freed me to explore human phenomena in the great tradition of Dickens and others. My use of critical storytelling is intended to invite the reader more deeply into the narrative, challenging them to try on various lenses (denoted by the narrator of the moment).

Those lenses/points-of-view, while all expressed in the third person, enable me to change narrators among the actors. For example, in the first segment of *The Girl Who Hated Writing*, the author, Jennifer Young (pseudonym) narrates for a time. Allowing her to drive the narrative provides an alternative perspective and offers a "kids-eye-view" of the school milieu. While I do identify a particular narrator at times to reveal a particular perspective, I most often incorporate third person omniscient, which represents my attempt to see into the minds and share the fundamental motivations, thinking styles, sets of attitudes, perceptions and dispositions of multiple actors in a scene. This literary conceit is, for me, the opportunity to voice the world views of various actors—a risky endeavor suggests Barone (2000), yet one well worth taking. It is an opportunity to set before the reader an invitation to participate, as Barone (2000) called for, in a "conspiracy," not in the modern negative sense but from the Latin: *"con plus spirare*, or to breathe together" (p. 145). It is, then, as Barone continues,

> A conversation about the relationship between present and future worlds. The reader, a historically situated self, learns from the re-created Others in the text to see features of a social reality that may have gone previously unnoticed. And if the reader, although cautious and wary, ultimately resonates with the interior vision of the text and is persuaded of its usefulness, he borrows it for his own. (p. 146)

Barone offers us a segue to the next chapter: the "Interpretation." For me, it is apropos—for it was my intention that Sylvia's life as a teacher *con plus spirare* with the reader. The lens of portraiture, used to examine the data; to view it from the perches of researcher and researched; to discover voice, and to find coherence and validity—now accedes to the portrait, the story. It is hoped that through critical storytelling (Barone, 2001), the research is given an honest place to unfold, as the events that culminated to make Sylvia Tierra, the third grade classroom teacher, are interpreted by portraitist and reader. The reader is reminded that the actors in the "Interpretation" chapter, in a sense, are redescribed "selves" (Rorty, 1989). Compelling descriptions of others invite empathy for and knowledge of them, as well as those shadows of ourselves that seem traced in their personalities. The circumstances of the actors' lives may be ours—their emotions familiar. My "Interpretation" is an attempt to breathe life back into Sylvia Tierra's story—and allow the reader to participate in discovering the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The "Interpretation" represents a re-storying of vignettes from Sylvia Tierra's life based on interviews from multiple sources as advocated by Barone (1997). The events were sketched in two dimension by the data and here I give them form, shape, color and identity. While the specifics and nuances of my narrative may be my own, I believe they capture the essence of the experiences of the actors—their motivations, concerns and dispositions toward the phenomena they encounter (as described by Rorty, 1989). Particular vignettes were chosen because I believe they represent the most significant, life-changing events affecting Sylvia's personal growth and the lives of those in her frame of reference.

The use of literary devices, accompanying the critical storytelling of Barone (2000), includes denoting quotes in the narrative with a hyphen rather than the standard quotation marks. This technique for designating dialogue was first introduced to me in Leonard Cohen's novel, *Beautiful Losers* (1966). Cormac McCarthy (1993) used the device in *All the Pretty Horses*, winner of the National Book Award for Fiction in 1994. This tale is about a teen-aged boy and his brother, raised on a ranch, who leave home after they discover their parents have been killed, and ride to Mexico. The use of hyphens to set off quotations does need the help of context and the phrasing of each quote so that it stands out from the narrative as it is not otherwise demarked. At some points in the narrative, McCarthy carries the dialogue for up to 10 verbal exchanges between two

characters without denoting the speaker—the identity being embedded in the text. That, needless to say, requires subtle attention to nuance of language, phrasing and structuring of the sentence—intuitional responses to make a logical sequence. In my "Interpretation," it is up to the reader to decide the level of success. Still, I believe it honors Barone's call to invite the reader into participation. It offers the reader an invitation to dialogic interpretation—what in cinema is referred to as "subtext"—the meaning under the layers of intended/unintended meaning (Giannetti, 1993). The other reason I have adapted this approach to the written word is that it allows the spoken word to melt into the textual description—something that happens in real life as we negotiate dialogue with others while dealing on other levels, with our physical environment and the voices/preoccupations of our mind. Others call it Freudian or subterfuge. A passage from *Cold Mountain* (Frazier, 1997) illustrates the technique. The protagonist has just encountered a man kneeling by the limp body of a woman:

—You merit killing, Inman said. He looked to where the woman lay in a heap at the edge of the bluff. She had not moved. I might still feel the need to do it, Inman said.

—Don't kill me, I'm a man of God, the man said.

—Some say we all are, Inman said.

—A preacher is what I mean, the man said. I'm a preacher. (p. 88)

Other literary devices used in the "Interpretation" chapter include italics to denote the spoken word as transposed directly from recorded interviews. Italicized passages are situated just before a section that has been re-storied and act as springboards for that particular piece. As well, the children's poems and stories, italicized throughout, are verbatim from Sylvia's documents. My re-storied text is represented by normal font. The

story by Jennifer Young (pseudonym) is an example of an actual piece written by one of Sylvia's students that appears in the "Interpretation." It should be noted that I have divided Jennifer's story into three sections to use as lead-ins to my re-storying in the same way I have employed quotes from transcripts. That choice seems useful for elucidating particular educational practices or epiphanous events.

Points-of-view switch regularly without a strict schedule or pattern. Instead, my choices were based on how best to represent the vignette. For example, during the first section of Jennifer's story, I incorporated the student's point-of-view. The next two sections are third person omniscient.

At times I found it useful to incorporate three periods before or after transcriptions or re-storied events to suggest passage of time, the entry into or exit from a scene-in-progress. This literary device, used by Zane Grey among others, signals a time change— and can represent a flashback or flash forward.

The actors and their roles are listed in order of appearance. These characters represent constructs of the people from my interviews and document review. All names are pseudonyms. Also, only actors from the re-storied sections are included below— others quoted from interviews, denoted by italics, are used to set up the narrative and therefore separate.

Sylvia Tierra ..... the main actor—a third grade teacher

Miram Tierra..... Sylvia's mother

Winston Tierra..... Sylvia's father

Ganesh..... the Sri Lankan art teacher of Sylvia's primary years

Kumara ..... Sylvia's childhood friend and fellow art student

Sanji ..... an elephant

Ranjit ..... Sylvia's 16-year-old neighbor with the elephant

Sonra ..... Sylvia's childhood neighbor and fellow art student

Chandrika ..... Sylvia's schoolgirl friend and fellow thespian

Master Bryant ..... School master at Sylvia's Sri Lankan academy

Mrs. Ranji ..... Sylvia's second piano teacher

Vice-Principal Thorn ..... Administrator at Sylvia's Sri Lankan academy

Dance Master ..... Kandian dancing instructor

Priya ..... Sylvia's aunt in Austin, Texas

Kumar ..... Sylvia's uncle in Austin, Texas

Mrs. Ruskin ..... Sylvia's high school visual art teacher

Rasheen ..... Sylvia's ex-husband

Jason ..... a college friend of Rasheen

Jennifer Young ..... a student of Sylvia's at Kokopelli Elementary

Pauline Gentry ..... Sylvia's principal

Melanie ..... Jennifer's third grade friend

Cindy ..... Melanie's neighbor and fellow third grader

Candice ..... a third grade student of Sylvia

Nancy Markham ..... a fellow teacher of Sylvia

Marvin Goklish ..... a student of Sylvia

Jimmy Banks ..... a student of Sylvia

Lewis Jordan ..... a student of Sylvia

Tyrone Jackson ..... a student of Sylvia

Danny Winchell ..... a student of Sylvia

Jim Hartman ..... a fellow teacher of Sylvia and morning announcements sponsor

Phillip ..... a student at Kokopelli and sound person for a.m. announcements

Maggie..... a student at Kokopelli, and school studio announcer

Jane..... a student at Kokopelli, and school studio announcer

Cory..... Sylvia's second husband

Jay ..... the researcher

An Island in the Sun

Sri Lanka is an ancient fragment of a continent called *Gondwanaland* by geologists. Clinging to the same continental shelf as India, the four-billion-year-old layer of precambrian schists—heat-strained shelves piled upon each other like gigantic stacks of LP records—hold this island nation in place. It is shaped like a pear, about 270 miles long and 140 miles wide. An underwater umbilical cord, Adam's Bridge, is a sand shoal to the mainland of India—at its narrowest point, only a 22-mile length. White sand shores of palm trees give way to uplands, drenched and verdant in equatorial rains.

Until 1972, the island was called Ceylon—an Anglicisation of Simhaladvipa, meaning "Island of the Singhalese." Tamil and Singhalese people are its main ethnic groups. They have maintained an uneasy alliance—the former Hindu for the most part and the latter primarily Buddhist. The Portuguese occupied the island in the 1500s

followed by the British, whose colonialism and plantations in the 19th century inexorably altered the culture and the island's natural landscape. When Sylvia was born, the native ecosystem had long been transformed into vast fields of tea and coffee.

This is where we begin to focus our metaphorical camera on Sylvia Tierra's life—on a two-acre plot of land with a well constructed whitewashed house—planted in the midst of a gigantic garden of flowers and fruit trees—a playful breeze stirring the air of a warm and yellow morning sun.

The House on the Hill

Sylvia: *I think my earliest memories: my mother—I had an easel in my backyard and it was just this beautiful setting, among trees and on the top of a hill. I must have been about two and one half and my mother can't believe I still remember this. But I remember having—she used to have these big jars of paint and I used to just paint on that paper—and I remember that there was a hole in it because I was painting. It was just that experience more than anything else—just the love of color. I've never been constrained that the picture has to be perfect or the picture has to look like this. But rather it was just painting.*

The Art Lesson

Sylvia swished the brush across the white board.

—Mommy big red flowers for me. White thing colors on it we put. Splash Mommy say, lots of it. So pretty Mommy say. And green put on. Colors in leaf green black yellow blue. See, Mommy say. Find them. Paint them. Look they beautiful. Nice. Use paint lots. So pretty, so pretty Mommy say.

Sylvia's mother, Miram Tierra adjusted her daughter's smock to cover the still-fresh play clothes. The two were up on the green hill behind the house by the flower garden. A short easel cradled a white canvas in front of them—bigger than the child—on her haunches purposefully in front, squatting at the paint jars—brushes sticking out. Kinetic color poised on boar hair. Ready for the magic and chaos of the girl's endeavor. Miram checked herself lest she intrude on her daughter's spontaneity.

—Make a nice painting, Sylvia, she encouraged. Show Mommy lines and shapes. Lots of color. The child squinted in the white sun and lifted her brush from a jar of cerulean blue. She plopped it on the canvas and moved the bright glob in circles.

—Big rock Mommy, Sylvia rejoiced.

—Very nice, her mother replied. Now think about what colors would work with that. Miram looked at the army of palm trees across the back of the property. She loved the disturbed rustling of the fronds—the translucent green of these giants—stolid in the light breeze—elastic and frenzied during the monsoons. The tropical undergrowth behind painted black-green shadows in this sanctuary of an island paradise receding—many forests had been replaced with acres of tea for the English market. However, much of Sri Lanka remained untouched by colonizers or Natives. And here on their manor, for her husband did well in engineering, Miram had created a flower garden out of the acreage, stunning in its color and architecture. Bouganvilla, crabclaw, anterium and orchids burst from low green places in multi-colored fountains of color. On a rise in the back yard, were jars of paint, brushes and rinsing water. She looked down at Sylvia again who was three colors into a whirling dervish. Sylvia will become the artist I cannot be, she thought. I can be the teacher, though.

When Miram looked down again, Sylvia had extended her media to the concrete steps—painting long sweeps in vertical lines—a multicolored field of wheat. That was all right. Tempra washed off with a spray of the hose. Miram looked toward the lowering sun and thought of her husband who would be arriving for dinner soon. She liked to go around to the front and meet him, the long low '65 Cadillac limo rolling to the walkway—Winston getting out on his own—black satchel snapped off the seat with the reach of his dark strong hand, broad smile for her—and a bow of the head in greeting. Then they would walk through the house together, smell the fragrance of dishes cooking and occasional clanking by the cook, a woman in late middle age who could make better red curry chicken than anyone on the island. Into the back yard and to Sylvia who persisted in her climb into color.

This good life was carved from Winston's brilliance at human management and a steel work ethic. He had recently been named manager of operations for a British company that essentially built the infrastructure necessary for the tea and coffee plantations around the island, turning the company from deficit into profit. Miram had not prepared a dinner since she married him—the wife inheriting the husband's cook.

Miram's reverie was interrupted by Sylvia who had just spilled the brush cleaning jar and began sobbing.

—It's fine. Mommy will clean it up, a reassuring lilt in the melodic Tamil dialect. She reached down and took her daughter up by the elbows, plopping Sylvia to her chest giving her a squeeze and kiss on the forehead. My best little artist, the mother said. My little prodigy. Now find Nanna and ask her to wash you up for dinner. Sylvia bounded from her mother's arms toward the bamboo framed door.

—We dinner, Mommy, she exclaimed. We dinner.

Saturday Morning Art

Sylvia: *I think one of the most influential people in my life—when I was in second grade, my mother got an artist—he was not somebody trained to teach art but he was an artist—an old man and we'd meet at my friend's house and he'd come with his little water color tubes and paint brushes and we just watch him paint these absolutely beautiful pictures. I wish I had saved some because they were so beautiful. And we were so impatient because we had to sit and watch him—but at the same time I still could picture his paintbrush just loaded with colors and how he would use it and his hand would just shake as he painted it—and you would see the painting all of a sudden—you saw how he blended colors—how he took something from a very abstract use of colors to very specific—adding details and shading. I mean, it was so powerful that today I think I'm processing some of the stuff he taught me. He just painted—and he would talk about the love of painting. And I remember we used to fight over the brushes . . .*

The slight man with the paintbox and palette knocked at the door.

—Ganesh is here, he heard someone announce from inside. He set his paintbox down and adjusted his white shirt and tie. He liked to dress formally when he called on his art students. The morning sun charged the flower pots on the portico with light. Miram had arranged for three neighbor children to join her own daughter, Silvia, for weekly art lessons on the back veranda. The artist smiled cordially at the servant who nodded him in through the door.

—The girls are on the porch. Have some punch on the table.

—Thank you. He smiled again with a slight bow and turned to walk through the house and into the backyard light.

Sylvia and her friends, lacey dresses and white patent leather shoes, were wrapped in artist smocks two sizes too big. They were drinking passionfruit tea with lemon. Their knees planted in the chair seats, elbows pivoted back and forth on the table holding chins up, discussing the latest boy. Third grade Sri Lankan girls knew there was something different about boys. Louder, sometimes ruder, they could be charming, especially to girls like Rashanti, who was already boy crazy.

The girls waited for Ganesh to finish his demonstration painting. He seemed like such an old man. Wrinkled skin with the white shirt billowing. It seemed to enclose only air, the artist's body lost inside. All except the hands. They grew out of the cloth like gnarled brown branches, delicate fingers instead of leaves. The four students stood at abeyance behind the artist, watching the brush and hand dip a color in the palette, then another—and raise it to the canvas—skillfully smoothing the loaded brush with orange and red across the gesso—lines of sunset forming above a seascape. Miram was entranced by his facility. She knew this part of the lesson seemed long to the girls. Still, Sylvia marveled at how he combined colors with the brush and laid them down magically to create recognizable scenes from her nine-year-old life: a tangle of jungle, the crinkley black and gray rocks of a Sri Lankan coastline—how he dabbed his brush again to sprout the green and red flowered vines that clung to the outcroppings. The plants looked alive and full, as though one could reach into the painting and pick them off the cliffs with the tweezers of thumb and forefinger. Sylvia was at once fascinated with the magic Ganesh made and impatient to start her own. As he worked the canvas,

Ganesh told stories of his love of painting—exhibitions of his work at the art center in Kandy, awards he had won, favorite places on the island and in India he had painted. The veins in his dark coffee hands were like inverted rivulets cut from a hard rain on the dirt pile behind her friend's house. Ganesh continued explaining his choice of palette, what the colors communicated when married together in a certain way.

The art teacher finished his painting and held up his palette to show how the paint had sprung from the splotched board to create a picture on the canvas. This was a scene of a fishing boat pulled up on the beach, seabirds circling in the blue air above. This ritual of the palette raising always signaled the end of demonstration and the girls' turn. The short artists in their smocks, sprung up, knowing this signaled their turn. Like an illustration out of *Madeline*, they stood in line to be given their watercolors and canvases—paper taped to a rectangular board.

—Flat on the ground, little ones, Ganesh said. So the colors will not run. He had them working on a background wash. The girls found their own spots on the slate rock veranda in a circle around a jar of brushes and paint rags and, after being situated with the help of a servant, stared down at their watercolor boxes—little ovals of color in a row—like candy flavors. They began to mix water on chosen pads of paint, working the color and increasing the water until the tiny pool of paint formed to create a translucent tint.

—Remember to rinse your brush thoroughly after each color unless you are making a tint or shade. Otherwise, you will have a picture of mud. He smiled gently. A tint uses the addition of white and a shade uses black. Combine them carefully, a little goes very far.

Sylvia chose red and added drops of water from her brush and stirred, creating a small puddle. She then rinsed her brush, clanking the sides of the metal soup can and swirled the white pad of color. White translucent droplets clung to the brush hairs as it plopped down into the red pool and agitated the colors into pink. Her small fingers dropped the wooden brush handle and lunged to the brush jar to grab a wide flat bristle for applying the wash.

—That's the one I always use, Kumara said, her eyes narrowing and mouth forming a tight knot.

—You can use it after me, Sylvia returned without remorse and applied it with some deftness, smoothing wide swaths of color until she had covered the bumpy white paper. The teacher had demonstrated this technique often to them.

—Now you must think of your motif, Ganesh said, sensing it his instructional duty to add a bit of lecture to this part of the lesson. It will be foreground. Middle ground should frame your motif. And think of your colors, please. Choose your palette and follow through. No adding colors without reason. You want to create uniformity of vision. The four girls nodded earnestly, understanding some of what he said. They had been made aware over this series of Saturday morning art lessons that choice of colors was important to Ganesh. He continually preached the gospel of the palette, reminding his students while they were hunched over their pieces.

—We have guests. Miram's voice. Our gardener, Roshan, is opening the gate for our largest visitor. All looked up and saw Sylvia's mother smiling slyly and gesturing toward the side of the house. Eyes followed the servant as he lifted the gate latch and the long rectangle of aluminum creaked open.

—Ranjit, our guest, is welcome in, Miram said. The neighbor's family pet made her entrance. An adolescent Indian elephant lumbered into the back yard, led by the 17-year-old-son of the owner. A chain from the animal's hobbled rear legs rattled with each step—the trunk swinging like a pendulum.

—Sanji, Sanji, the girls cried. They were up from the ground and running toward the large beast.

—Please slow, Ranjit cautioned. Four beige smocks stopped suddenly.

—We don't want to startle her, Ranjit continued. The girls walked slower but with the same earnestness.

—Oh, she is so pretty, Kumara said. Look at her bow! A tuft of hair above the elephant's head was decorated with a pink neckerchief.

—She can eat some of our grass, said Sylvia. And perhaps she likes passionfruit. Ranjit steadied the elephant, holding down a thick rope that served as a harness and leaning back toward Sanji's left foreleg as the girls formed a semicircle in front, reaching their hands up to pet the long wrinkled trunk that snaked from one hand to another sniffing for handouts.

—Oh she's hungry, lamented Sonra, another student.

—She's always hungry, replied Ranjit laughing. She eats two bales of hay and three bunches of bananas a day. Yes, I believe she would help rid you of the leaves on your Jack trees. Sonra and Sylvia peeled out of the group and ran to the trees, picking the large green leaves and cradling them in their smocks.

—Would you let the girls paint her, Ranjit, Sylvia's mother asked?

—That would be fine, Mrs. Tierra.

—Yes, spoke up Ganesh, a capital idea.

—Where would you like her to pose. Ganesh gestured to a spot on the veranda about 20 feet from the circle of canvases. Ranjit reached into a kind of leather holster that dangled from a hemp rope tied around the elephant's middle and pulled out a long polished stick. He led the elephant over to the designated spot and tapped Sanji's back leg saying Wadi! The animal sat obediently on its haunches and the girls cheered.

—Now then, Ganesh intoned, let us see if you can mix colors to match the skin of your model. The girls heeded the challenge and settled in front of their canvases, rinsing their brushes and attacking the watercolor pads. Ganesh, too, sat at his easel and got out his oils, seizing the opportunity for the unusual subject matter—subject matter marketable to a tourist. The sun turned languid and golden. Elephants grew on to the watercolor paper. Ganesh's gray, a remarkable likeness, the young students from muddy brown to black—and a red one from Sylvia's neighbor Sonra who just decided to make it that way because she was transgressive at heart.

Miram walked out to the veranda from the house carrying a cup of tea. She smiled at the scene and the artists engaged in their work.

—Oh how lovely, she said. What a perfect model sitting for a portrait. All glanced simultaneously toward her, brushes freezing.

—Mom, come and see mine, Sylvia said. I put flowers around my elephant. Her mother loved flowers so much she would really like this, Sylvia thought, who shared the affection. Miram walked gingerly among the paint tins and brushes to her daughter's canvas on the ground.

—Very good, Sylvia, she said. You are controlling the colors well.

—It was a good idea to have the elephant sit for us Mom.

—I'm glad, Miram answered. Ranjit, you're mother called and you need to be on your way home. Thank you for allowing us to paint your fine elephant. Roshan, our gardener, will bring some fruit along for your family.

—Thank you, Ranjit answered with a slight bow and, turning back to his pet, pulled on the collar and barked, Yaman! The elephant swung her trunk back and forth as if to say no, but lumbered forward across the veranda and disappeared around the side of the house.

Music in the House

Sylvia: *Then I remember—I'm going back to my early childhood—I think it was the constant music. My mother and father used to play tunes on the piano. My mother played classical; she couldn't play by ear.*

Like a sweet wind, Sylvia thought. Invisible birds with singing wings. She was finding ways to describe/image the music. Lying next to the piano, her mother playing Chopin on the keys above. The wooden floor felt fresh as she sprawled out her 10-year-old frame, staring at the ceiling. The planks under her were hard and cold. She turned her taut arms in their shoulder sockets rolling new parts of skin on the coolness. The baby grand wept gypsy strains of a mazurka. Her class had learned the dance in school. This was one of her favorite pieces because the melody had some kind of sad joy. She glanced over at her mom's feet working the pedals, then closed her eyes again and tried to see more images of the music. Miram started a Mozart sonata. The first movement was an allegro. Sylvia saw notes in her imagination this time, not images. Notes dancing above

other notes just like on her mother's music. And the notes made their way into a little stream— all black notes and rests mingling with each other and tumbling down a waterfall, washing into a dark pool where the other notes had already played. That's where notes went after they sounded—down the waterfall into the pool and melted in the water to be carried off to the blue green sea.

Her mother had talked about these composers. Mozart was the child genius who played for the kings of Europe in his fancy little outfits. He had listened to a cantata one night in Italy and went back to his suite at the palace. He sat down at a piano and played the piece through perfectly without written music. He remembered every part. Mozart's little fingers flew across the keys. When he ended, the prince stood up and said he was the smartest person who had ever lived. Her mother ended the piece and Sylvia heard pages shuffle. *Fur Elise* began. This made Sylvia think of dancing fairies who sped up and slowed down across a shiny dark waxed floor, twirling and dipping like the ballerinas she'd seen at the ballet in Kandy. And then the part where just one note is playing like a fairy on a tight rope about to fall but doesn't and the rest of the fairies come by and rescue her and everybody dances fast and slow again. It was her own mind-movie for this piece.

Sylvia: *My dad would sit me on the piano stool and teach me how to play the bass and I would pick out tunes. He played more like a jazz style. And he would teach me the chords and also, I couldn't read music.*

He turned to his daughter. She look up at him and smiled, her upper lip curling toward her nose. Winston played piano by ear, he didn't read notes—had seen a blind man playing on the street who showed him a few chords and he was hooked.

—That looks easy, Dad.

—It is. The bass part goes for a walk on the keys. You only need learn where the path winds. Sylvia extended her fingers over the piano's keys and tried the pattern. She stopped midway. Winston played the part again—an octave up and then nodded for her to try. Sylvia got it perfectly this time, her fingers threading the black and whites like a miniature ballerina. The tune was a popular standard from America—*Autumn Leaves.*

—Good, sweetheart, Winston said. Now make it swing—like this. He played it again, this time elongating certain phrases, hesitating in between others. Sylvia followed with a close approximation, slowing the last phrase for dramatic effect and punching the ending with a double forzando, pealing off laughter and looking up at her father. He smiled back with sparkling eyes.

—Let's play the whole thing through. I'll do the right hand.

—Will you sing too, Dad?

— Certainly, Sylvia. He smiled and started at the top.

The School

Sylvia*: It was a British school where the concept of being well-rounded was really ingrained. We weren't supposed to be good at one thing but at many things. From the time I was very young I was always in plays. I was always doing music, doing art—those things very much were a part of being in that school. When I was in fifth grade I was doing Shakespeare—actually reading and performing him along with other private schools where you competed among schools in a Shakespeare festival.*

Rain the night before had left the air hanging with invisible baskets of scent—rich smells of forest soils, Miram's flower brigades, and a subtle dash of the salt sea air sweeping up over the slopes below. The usual tangle of morning bird communities—the long shrill cackle of the crows. The sweet mournful coha. A low hum of a V-8 motor beyond the gate.

Sylvia watched as the driver rolled the limousine to a halt at the cobblestone steps. Miram held her hand as the fifth grader turned toward her mother and they met in a quick kiss.

—Winston. Miram smiled at her husband as he hurried up the walk toward the car. You have a fine day. She pecked him on the cheek and squeezed his palm as father and daughter arranged themselves in the wide back seat.

—Have a good day Sylvia. I'll come to watch the rehearsal.

The rehearsal—yes, Sylvia thought. Her drama club was doing Shakespeare—a dress rehearsal. It was for a set of evening performances toward the end of the week. She was playing Iago in *Taming of the Shrew*. Her lines were solidly memorized. In fact, Sylvia could cue because she knew everyone's lines. Recited the whole play internally as they performed. Her costume was in her hand, pressed and ready. It would be fun to slip into the satin and lace and wear it to Latin class. From there she would be dismissed for theater rehearsal.

The black Cadillac rolled forward, out of the circle and on to the road to town. Winston smiled warmly at his daughter—then opened his satchel and began studying blueprints. He was a technical engineer in charge of infrastructure for the island's plantations. Buildings, bridges, storage barns. It was a difficult job and Winston was very

good at it. A tireless worker, honest to a fault and an excellent manager of people and projects. The limousine passed through sweeping fields of green tea, the open paths of brown soil between the rows rushing past like huge sticks being pushed by some vast hand. They were coming close to harvest. I should paint that tea from a car, Sylvia thought. It is a good vantage point, right here. She would talk to her mother about the palette to use for this moment: the lime green tealeaves against black and rust ground, with the morning swaths of fresh light filtering through great trees in the hills.

Across the pantanas, open rolling grasslands and then down into the commercial area of Kandy. First the shanty near the railroad tracks. Sylvia's parents had spent time in collection drives to help feed the people of that neighborhood. Her father had said: "Jesus, others and yourself"—referring to the order of importance in your thoughts and deeds. Her mother had started a school for underprivileged children near here. Sylvia's father would tell his friends at dinners: Miram just got it in her head to start a school and went forth and did it. Then he would look with smiles in his eyes at his wife.

The limousine pulled through the entrance gate to the school and stopped. On their right was a large pink campus with British colonial buildings. Sylvia leaned over to kiss her father and snatched the strap of her book bag. A stitched purple flower resided on the pink denim. She thanked the chauffeur who held the door and scooted herself off the high back seat, the bag and flower airborne behind. She ran through the gate and immediately yelled toward a classmate.

—Chandrika Chandrika, wait for me. I have passionfruit from our tree. Sylvia caught up to her fifth grade friend and admired the light green muslin sari, a silk paisley scarf of red orange swoops and twirls covering her hair.

—Sylvia Sylvia! Her friend shouted back, overly loud. Their coded greeting and response—the name said twice, rapid fire. Double trouble it means, her father had teased when she whispered their secret to him one day. He found unique ways to humor without hurting her feelings. He said it was looking for the clever without the dagger.

Sylvia held the passionfruit for Chandrika, whose eyes reached out for a short dance with her favorite fruit. Her hand followed gratefully.

—I brought some more for later. When we practice. The whole tree is ripe. Our gardener has to pick them off the ground.

—You know I love them, Chandrika said. They will inspire us to do Shakespeare. We will get the laurels when it is done. Sylvia smiled at her friend. Chandrika was dramatic about things—even off-stage. She loved to quote her lines out of the blue—to see the reaction it would bring to others.

—Fie, fie! Unknit that threatening unkind brow, and dart not scornful glances from those eyes, to wound thy Lord, thy king, thy governor: It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads, confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds, she had exclaimed to a boy who tried to wedge himself into the library line yesterday. Chandrika and Sylvia giggled and the flustered respondent contemptuously melted away from view.

—He'll not tame me, Sylvia had added, smiling at her friend, knowing in this circle only they shared the reference.

Just now the headmaster strode out, bell ringing over his head—across the cobblestone of the courtyard that served as a playground for the children. As usual without a smile—yet he did carry a twinkle in his eye.

—First bell children. Be prompt now. A thick British accent and tweed suit, inappropriate for the sticky hot weather—his trademark nonetheless. The two girls ran by saying good morning sir and Chandrika: I hope you can come by for our dress rehearsal today, Master Bryant. You will enjoy it.

—I hope to drop in if I have time, Chandrika. Thank you. Cordial warmth. A very English trait. Propriety masked as dignity. Both girls knew about Anglophile ways from their fathers, who had explained the reserve and subtle snobbishness as symptoms of a class system prevalent in England. In fact, Sylvia's parents had assumed the manner and dress of the British who were working there. They were Episcopalian and dressed in contemporary western clothing, Miram wearing a traditional sari only for special occasions. Just now, Sylvia thought of her costume in the sack and wanted to get it to the drama room so she could hang it up and keep the wrinkles to a minimum.

The girls walked quickly to the prop room behind the school stage. Chandrika hopped a jig, Sylvia joining as they choreographed their way up the squeaky stairs in the dusty light illuminated by a single bulb next to a stack of chairs. The girls had remarked before how the chairs appeared like a robot solemnly guarding the entrance. Sylvia ran to the metal pipes reaching out from a wall near the rear curtain that served for hanging costumes and carefully unrolled her cloak. She hung it on the pipe and hesitated, staring at the long muslin frock in the dusty light. There was energy in that cloth—a kinetic silence—waiting to be worn, to shine on stage when Shakespeare awoke through rich mysterious lines. She hopped back to Chandrika who took up a kind of shuffle dance as they disappeared down the stairs together, silhouettes sinking into the clatter of footsteps.

School Music

Sylvia: *I started taking piano lessons and I loved the teacher. Unfortunately she died in a car accident and then the worst thing happened—there was a teacher in the schools who actually insisted that I take lessons from her and spoke to my mother—and she killed my joy of learning to read music. It's like a completely different experience. All of a sudden something that was fun was—she gave me too hard pieces. I used to play by ear so if I heard a tune I could play it. But I couldn't keep up going from one finger pieces to waltzes and be expected to play it. So my mother would play those for me and I would, of course, play by ear and if she played it with a mistake I learned it with a mistake.* [The music teacher] *would get so frustrated and I remember she would throw me and the music book out of class because I just couldn't read.*

Sylvia's eyes welled with tears.

—She died instantly, her mother consoled her. She didn't feel a thing. It is very tragic. I am sorry sweetheart. She is in heaven now. She will hear the music of the angels, their harps and trumpets. Perhaps she will join an angel band.

It felt so strange to Sylvia as her mother held her, one hand stroking gently down the back of her hair, warming and soothing. She had just seen Mrs. Jubaric the week before—walking in the house with her stack of music books held with two arms in front like a school girl. She always had a big smile and a deep love of music. She would talk about the composers like they were gods. She encouraged Sylvia without being a slave driver. The music simmered in her soul and it could be viewed through a magic window. And now she had the slave driver alright. Mrs. Ranja had called Sylvia's mom soon after Mrs. Jubaric's death and offered to take the daughter on as a student.

—I know she has great potential, Mrs. Ranja had told Miram. We will have her playing Beethoven promptly. She's very bright and will pick it up quickly.

But Sylvia had not picked it up quickly. The piano teacher tried to force the pieces before her young student was ready. It was like the teacher wanted to impress Sylvia's mom with how good at instruction she was. Sylvia would take the lesson to her mom, frustrated, and ask her to play it. Then, using the facility she had gained through ear training with her dad, she would go into the lesson and play it from memory, reading only one hand. This infuriated Mrs. Ranja and she would soundly scold the young musician. It was no fun at all learning this way—pure misery. And just now Mrs. Ranja had kicked her out of the room—thrusting Sylvia's piano book to her face as if the woman intended her to grab it with her teeth like a dog. The door slammed. Sylvia was relieved, actually. Mrs. Ranja was demanding and sour, like an unripe fruit. It was like she was squeezing the love of music right out—like water from a sponge splashing to the floor and drying up. Sylvia walked down the concrete corridor, past the classroom doors, varnish peeling from wood in silent streaks of yellow and white. Her mother would understand, Sylvia thought. My mother will not make me do things that cause me misery.

While Sylvia had been taking piano, she learned a number of hymns by ear. If she heard a tune, she could play it. Since the school was Anglican run, the students had daily chapel and Sylvia had been designated to play the little organ. She loved entering the quiet sanctuary mornings after arriving at school. The custodian let her in the room, lit only by the two strips of stained glass on the edges of the outside wall. The light refracting through sent streaks of red, blue and yellow on the dark wood pews and bathed the steps of the sacristy. Her footsteps echoed hard whispers across the cement floor as

she pulled her ten year old frame up on to the bench and addressed the organ keys. Turning on the bellows switch, she could hear the muffled whir of air at the pipes in back of her. Sylvia chose her pipe sounds and, pushing toggles above the keys, started in on *A Mighty Fortress is Our God.* She held the sustains after each phrase extra long to hear the intermingling of harmony, the throaty pipes swaying in sound like the branches of a tree in the wind and rasping against each other at the clashing of overtones as the melody passed through dissonance. She loved hymns in particular that ended with the subdominant to tonic chord, the "Amen" part, because the resolution was so sweet and resounding. After about ten minutes of warm-up, students began entering the chapel, the boys in white shirts and green slacks, the girls in white blouses and Hunting Stewart clan skirts.

After the service finished, Sylvia began the postlude as the students filed out of their pews and the teachers rose from their seats at the back. The Vice Principal waited by the door. The aisles cleared. Students talked quietly in pairs out into the halls. The Vice Principal walked toward the organ. He hesitated and retreated back to his first position. Sylvia continued the postlude, glancing to see who was left in the chapel. She swelled the final chord and ended. Footsteps took up the end of the hymn as if some inattentive percussionist continued past the coda. Sylvia glanced up from the keyboard. The Vice Principal walked toward her. He had a painted smile. His eyes betrayed his purpose.

—Lovely job, Sylvia.

—Thank you, sir.

—Sylvia. Mrs. Ranji, the music teacher—asked me to speak to you.

Sylvia, looked gently at him, anticipating the response.

—She asked me to, well, relay a certain concern about the children playing the organ. She believes youthfulness may not grasp full understanding of the operation of the organ. Perhaps an accident could happen regarding the mechanics. I wished to ally her concerns.

Sylvia watched his mouth enunciate each word. She observed how his mustache moved above like a blackbird in flight. She waited for him to finish.

—Yes, Vice Principal Thorn. I understand, was her only reply. She reached for her book bag from the floor and set it next to her on the bench. She stood up and stretched over to a chair next to the organ, to clasp the folded keyboard cover. She placed it on the organ. The Vice Principal adjusted the right side over the top while she fit the left. She looked at the Vice Principal and smiled weakly.

—Study diligently, Sylvia, the Vice Principal said. Sylvia nodded and looked down to step off the organ platform. She walked down the aisle toward the door leaving the Vice Principal standing in front. He looked at his watch and coughed.

Kandyan Dancing

Sylvia: *When I think back to my experiences of dancing, I really enjoyed the medium of expression. The music we danced to was purely drum music perfected through years of Sri Lankan history. This form of dance became art to me because I had to think about the movements of a peacock. Therefore, facial expressions, physical movements and music become one. It is like painting only you express it in physical form. It still captures mood, tempo, rhythm, individual style.*

The students sat along the sides of the dance studio. Their ages varied—from 8 through 15—mostly girls. Some hugged knees tightly, others let their legs sprawl in front. Dress included tights and loose pants with sweatshirt or Nehru tops. It was evident that many were poor from the frayed appearance of the clothes. Outside a large front window, tropical trees moved in a breeze. The floor was cement, slate gray in the low light of the afternoon. A faint hint of must in the air. The dancing master strode in with unaffected dignity and students stood in response.

—Good afternoon, the dance master said, staring ahead but using his peripheral vision to take everyone in. We will begin where we left off. I assume you have warmed up? He looked at an older female student who nodded that she had taken the group through a series of stretches before he arrived.

—Very well. Formal British in his enunciation. Clipped, almost curt. Our position is left foot forward, turned out, right foot back on toe, arms high with fingers spread. Remember—this is the dance of the peacock. You must become this animal, crawl into its skin to be successful. The students assumed the position in varied levels of mastery. The dance master nodded to the drummer sitting in the front left corner of the room—in white muslin cross-legged, facing a single tabla drum.

—One and two and *theiuth, theiuth theiuith thaa, thei thaa thei thei thuth thuth.*

—The dancing master chanted with the drum, each syllable designating a rhythmic sequence. The students moved in mirror to his choreography. Sylvia, on the far right front row gracefully followed the steps, an intent, determined set to her face. Her 13-year-old body, fluid and lithe, expressed each movement as though an easy stroke of

a paint brush on canvas. She moved effortlessly through the dance and when it was finished stood straight with a quiet smile.

—Well enough, the dance master said. And now I must tell you of the exciting plans for our advanced class. He glanced at Sylvia. We have been asked to represent Sri Lanka on a tour of seven European countries. We will train exhaustively in preparation and will represent our country nobly. The students looked about, already knowing who had been selected. Sylvia felt a rush of excitement and the eyes of her fellow students. In humility she continued to stare at the instructor, smiling . . .

Sylvia practiced an hour and a half daily and at least six on weekends in preparation for the tour. Miram had her costumes half done when the news arrived that they would be going to America—prior to the dance tour. Sylvia's regret at missing one opportunity mingled with her enthusiasm for the other.

Austin, America

The First Breakfast

Sylvia: *I was 13 when we moved. I remember we hadn't done any housework and stuff like that and one day we had no maids and we were practicing going to America—learning how to cook* [laughing]. *We had to clean house. And we thought that was the most fun thing on earth! I mean, wow! You get to do this all by yourself!*

Winston sat at a long teak table in the conference room of Barton Limited. His engineering supervisor looked gravely into his eyes.

—It is not good, sir. The insurgency received an arms shipment a fortnight ago, according to some friends in government. Winston pictured himself explaining to Miram

that choosing to move was made much easier by this news. The new house with a view of Kandy Lake and the waterfall that flowed beneath the deck, splashing and frothing down its rocky bed, however, would never be their home. Winston's sister had sponsored him and his family and the visa to the United States applied for two years before was approved. Sylvia's parents had 30 days to decide whether or not to accept. If they didn't, who knows when the next opportunity would come. The government was growing more unstable. Winston's British employers were concerned as well. Not a good sign. The Tamil and Singhalese had lived in an uneasy alliance for some time and factions were becoming increasingly acrimonious . . .

—America. America. Sylvia walked through the house repeating the word. She liked the way it rolled off her tongue. She pronounced it slowly, elongating each syllable. Tried it quickly—rapid fire bursts until the sounds became tangled in her mouth. She enunciated it deliberately—chewing the three phonemes like cud. She tried to say it without rolling the "r" as her aunt had explained the way Americans said it. People in Austin didn't roll the "r" and didn't even pronounce it like an "r"—Ame-ica, they said. She would learn it both ways. She would speak American English and she would speak Austin English. Packing boxes spread through the house. Sylvia stepped around them. Clothes, dishes waited for packing, a few household treasures that would fly to their new home. Everything else had been given away. There was no such thing as garage sales in Sri Lanka. Sylvia's mother had distributed furniture, paintings, clothing—so many possessions they had accumulated over the years—to many friends and causes. They would stay with Aunt Priya and Uncle Kumar at first. Then they would, as her mother had explained, get an apartment—a house connected to a group of other houses—you got

to your house by walking on stairs past your neighbors' doors. Sylvia tried to picture a bunch of homes piled on each other—like giant boxes stacked up. She couldn't visualize how it worked but was excited to find out. Another surprise waiting for her in Austin, America.

The nannies, cooks and other servants had been released. Miram explained to Sylvia and her sister that they would have to learn to cook and clean house so it could be done properly in Austin. That morning her mother had tried making eggs. She turned the stove on and put four eggs in the bottom of the white ceramic pot. She didn't know to add water and the shells began to burn, emitting an acrid smell. The girls and their mother gathered over the pot, staring into it like scientists trying to solve a dark puzzle. Water was suggested and the result—hard boiled balls, shredded and cracked from extended high heat, the whites floating to the surface in strands. They ate them anyway, with burnt toast, celebrating Miram's first breakfast. Sylvia had always been chased out of the kitchen by their grouchy cook—a sullen woman with dark, furtive eyes who told her she would get in the way and ruin dinner. Now Sylvia would be learning how to use all those shiny cooking tools in the drawers. They seemed so special, like instruments at the dentist laid in careful rows and ready for special jobs that Sylvia could only imagine. Let's practice cleaning, they had all said. Hands reached in and various implements were pulled from a utility closet where they were stored. The mother and daughters first held these strange objects limply, then began to manipulate them in ways they had seen the servants perform at work. Finally, each pantomimed the actions of cleaning peculiar to their own tool, taking turns with each implement and laughing at the newness of it all.

The Montessori School

Sylvia: *When my mom had her Montessori school I had to volunteer—I used to spend a lot of my summers there and I noticed that she would have the kids do painting and I used to teach art or read stories. I used to watch her conduct music lessons and the kids would just love being there. So a lot of my teaching's first experiences were actually observing her and her school. It was not—she followed the Montessori program but she was not so stuck on every little detail. There was very much a humanities component to her program.*

Sylvia's mom practically lived at her Montessori School. Within a year after her family had moved to Austin, she started it. Miram found the site with the help of her sister and advertised for teachers. Priya had established a school years before and demand had outgrown space, so clients were immediately available. Teachers of Montessori answered the newspaper ads and Miram set about making her school unique. It was important that the traditional principles of the pedagogy be applied. But more than that, the arts must be integrated into the curriculum, the school would be an aesthetic oasis, fresh flowers throughout, just as Miram had maintained at her home in Sri Lanka. And finally, she wanted to develop a faculty as family, where sharing, cooperation and harmony would be the norm.

To accomplish this, she spent long hours at the new school—painting, ordering and moving furniture—desks, filing cabinets, chairs and tables. Montessori calls for learning kits to be immediately accessible to students in each classroom. Resources for individualized learning include activities for all subject areas. Special kid-accessible shelves had to be built. Winston was there to help. He had trouble finding a job, but was

impressed with his wife's boundless energy and proud of her endeavor. He had no qualms about playing an ancillary role—giving her the glory for this venture. Winston was content with his masculinity and was humble. He also loved his Miram. Winston eventually found a job selling copiers. In a beat up old station wagon, he had been relegated from a chauffeur driven life to traveling salesman. Tough times don't last, Winston would say with conviction, tough people do. To prove it, he won "Salesman of the Month" before long.

Sylvia walked into the school entrance. Her mom's aesthetic fingerprints were everywhere. At the front administration desk were bouquets of fresh flowers. The furniture was efficiently arranged with everything in its logical place. What had been a parlor in a large private residence was now transformed into an efficient and welcoming office. The fragrance of the flowers mingled with traces of ammonia cleanser—for germs and dust were no match for Miram's relentless war on grime and her quest for beauty.

In her second year of high school, Sylvia often visited Miram's school. She loved observing the children—their interacting, their thinking. How did they solve problems? How did they interpret the teacher's instructions? She had the opportunity to talk to the kids, ask them questions. She noticed that even her mother's teachers, carefully chosen for their skills, usually just taught the lesson but didn't actually talk with the students, get to really know them. Sylvia contrasted how she would teach the lesson based on her knowledge of the class to that of the teacher, who tended to focus on the subject. It was as though the students remained strangers, isolated by their real lives from the teachers who, with all good intent, followed the prescribed curriculum—allowing individual freedom to access resources and focused study on issues of interest as prescribed in

Montessori—yet missing something—an engagement with the children through deep understanding of them. Sylvia began to refer to this extra dimension as seeing them as "little people." She visualized her classroom—how she would study the children at their work as an ethnologist, get to understand their deepest feelings and needs through questioning as a caring mentor and use her powers of intellect to find ways to make them successful.

Miram did make certain that her teachers were well armed to link the curriculum to the arts and humanities, bringing in art teachers and scholars for professional development, dialoging in long meetings about ways to integrate humanities approaches into the classrooms. Sylvia was proud of her mother's school and always enjoyed visiting and volunteering. She had discovered that she really liked working with kids.

Struggle and Success in High School

An alien environment. Interviewer: *You came from a kind of liberal arts emphasis to the linear, separated curriculum.*

Sylvia: *Right. Disconnected and separated. And I think what it also brought out was that in my experience in Sri Lanka— there was a tremendous pride of being from the school. You felt like you belonged to something. I felt like in American high schools it was so disconnected, you didn't feel like—I don't know if it was just my experiences—but you just don't feel a sense of belonging to something, or to fight for something. I felt like the arts were something over here, the music was something over there, the theatre was something over here. You got the different subjects over here—and I felt like everything was disconnected. The structure that held it together were rules. The emphasis was rules.*

The tardy slips, the turning in papers on time. The gel of the structure that was put in place were the rules. And it was really weird because when I came from Sri Lanka I expected—you see the movie "Grease"—your stereotype is very different. I expected the kids to have a tremendous amount of freedom and I found that I felt there was actually much less freedom. There was much less as in putting the responsibility into the kids. Rather, it was more like there were rules to keep their behavior in check. It was not like giving the kids a leadership role and saying "I trust you"—that you will take care of this. It was more like: "Well, don't break the rules."

Interviewer: *In a way, was that a kind of wake-up call to your own way of teaching later?*

Sylvia: *I think it was. I think I put those experiences into my teaching. When I taught in the classroom I thought: These kids, whatever grade they are—there is a lack of community, there is a lack of belonging to something—and one of the things a kid told me at the end of the school year was, "I felt like we weren't just friends, I felt like we were all brothers and sisters in this class." And I didn't create that out of "You need to be doing all that." I created it out of situations where they had to work together, where they had to feel there was an identity as a class.*

The halls echoed with a thousand voices. High school voices—an audio vegetable soup—converging and separating, low and resonant, high and shrill—a cacophony of laughter, shouting, slamming lockers and shoes scraping tile. Sylvia moved through this sea of strangers and noise, clutching her books to her chest as a kind of armor. She saw the cheerleaders with the cheerleaders, the gothics with their black garb and chain necklaces and spiked hair, gathered in a ragged circle. Some jocks were

playing hackey sack at a hall corner where a row of beige lockers stood at attention. Little groups, cliques of students. They communed with each other but ignored everyone else. It was so different from Sri Lankan schools. Kids had best friends there, certainly. But there wasn't this separation. Here, Sylvia would take a class and meet new and interesting classmates. Then the semester would be over and they would disappear in a sea of 2000 souls. Sylvia felt adrift, like an anonymous boat—navigating through the currents of the hallways. She would seek solace in Mrs. Ruskin's art room. Her art teacher allowed students to come in at any hour—even during class, since it was a studio format. It was a sweet sanctuary. Sylvia had a couple paintings in progress and thought about them—what she would do next, wondering if the oil paint was dry. This school was cold like a city, no one smiled. Even the sounds of shuffling feet were cars bumping along bridges, brakes complaining. And the sterile florescent lighting—surreal street lamps. It was all one big lonely carnival.

High school art. Sylvia: *And then I was taking art, and I had the most incredible art teacher in high school. She was one of those rare people that her life was her students. And her whole life was teaching art. And I think her most remarkable quality—she recognized that each kid had their own unique style. She didn't try to make everybody paint the same ways. She let you work on independent projects. She let you come in during lunch and before school to sit down at your spot—and actually I had my own table for my last senior year in high school where I just took art for three classes* [laughing]. *I had taken all my requirements so for three hours, three classes a day and I'd just paint.*

She was just a tremendous influence encouraging me. Her biggest influence was in art history. I was painting a picture that looked like an impressionistic painting but I hadn't, but I did not know too much about art history—and she goes: " Well that looks like a Monet." And so I said, "Who is Monet?" and she said, "Go to the library and look up the Impressionists," and I would go into the library and research Monet's paintings and study about the Impressionists. And then I would bring that into my paintings. She was just really, really good about teaching you how to integrate art history and painting together.

Mrs. Ruskin smiled at Sylvia.

—You really enjoy working with oils. Be sure to let the paint fully dry before adding figures to the foreground. Sylvia set her brush down and stepped back, examining her attempt at chiaroscuro, the light and dark contrasts that gave Renaissance and Baroque art their drama.

—Oil does not muddy up like watercolor or even tempera, the art teacher continued.

—Yes, said Sylvia. And oil is so much richer than acrylic.

—It is the medium of many great painters from our past and continues to be the choice of modern artists. Just be careful about breathing too many fumes—you could go mad like Van Gogh! Sylvia laughed open mouthed, her cheeks flaring up, teeth in view.

—You are right about that, Sylvia answered—a voice with a smile embedded in it. I make sure I get lots of air from the window. They both glanced over at the bank of open glass panes—gray from the sky of an overcast fall afternoon. The football field grass—slate spreading distant to the flat-colored tract homes lining the school's property.

They looked back at the painting. It was a copy of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa.* The two examined the painting devoid of a figure, aesthetic eyes examining the ruminating colors of the dense dark background.

—Notice in your reproduction, which I think is fairly accurate—there are those green, almost olive hues around the edges of the far background. The darkness is represented as dense but not black. Da Vinci shows there is still life breathing back there. Don't take monochromatic painting too literally. The colors can still vary widely through the layers, which gives the sense of depth.

Sylvia nodded, continuing to examine the area of Mrs. Ruskin's reference.

—You would be interested in the circumstances behind this painting and the way da Vinci achieved his effects. Help yourself to that large book with the gray cover on the shelves by my desk. It is loaded with the artist sketches as well as his paintings. You can get a good idea of how he approached form—very geometric—it was how Renaissance artists began when they drew the human form. Just like the early artists of Islam approached art. The Muslim religion forbade the depiction of the human figure. So it all became patterns. Those patterns are like the structure of crystals—tessellations of the same shape make up the hardest crystal on earth—the diamond. So in both cases, using geometry reveals a structure of life. Sylvia got a mental picture of seeing endless little hexagons stacked next to each other like potato chips.

—Why don't you grab the book and we'll take a look. Da Vinci was a genius of structure. Sylvia walked over and pulled the bulky volume from the shelves and brought it over to the art table. Other students continued at their work. There were about three or four taking advantage of Mrs. Ruskin's policy to allow students open access to the art

room when not in session. It was lunch hour and Sylvia had brought a sandwich. It was half eaten, still in the sandwich bag on the table by her palette. Mrs. Ruskin took the book and opened it on another table and both gathered over. Leafing through the pages, the teacher stopped at a series of sketches da Vinci had done of his sister and held her right hand fingers in a line under the page of interest.

—His figures always begin with geometric shapes.

Sylvia nodded, smiling at Mrs. Ruskin and then turning to scan the page.

—Thank you. That is very helpful, Sylvia said. She closed the book on a finger and carried it back to her painting where it was reopened and set on a table. She studied it again, reaching for her sandwich, eyes still glued on the page.

Liberal Arts and Love

Sylvia: *I majored in history, minored in art history. A class in college that fascinated me was one on the Constitution. You read the Federalist Papers, the Bill of Rights. And I would say that another person who influenced my thinking was my ex-husband. In my second year I met my future husband through the foreign student center. I had known him in Sri Lanka. Well I think when we initially met he opened a whole new world for me in terms of literature and that I didn't need to fit into some type of mold or whatever. Between the time of my undergraduate degree and master's, I had read every single classical book. I had read— I mean I really did a lot of learning on my own in that time. Purely out of interest. From Plato, philosophy to Jane Austin to all the classics. Reading from Beowulf to Tolstoy because he* [Sylvia's first husband] *had a tremendous library. But I think what ended up happening was that here was a person who was giving*

and opening my mind—and he was threatened by that. And instead of continuing with that he gave me the opportunity and all of a sudden started closing the doors. All of sudden he didn't want me to—he would come out and say it but he would create situations where—other distractions—where it would be hard for me to pursue those lines of thinking.

The Foreign Students Association was holding their reception upstairs in the Student Union. Sylvia climbed the stairs quickly. She knew he would be there. They had spoken on the phone and she was sure she had seen him once on campus. The stairs were carpeted with a kind of red and black checkerboard so her patent leathers tread silently. She reached the top and stopped to arrange her dress. It was a red silk shift. She pulled it down where it had hiked up and adjusted the sleeveless shoulders. No one was in the wide hallway so she quickly retrieved her makeup mirror from her purse, popped it and checked her lipstick and eye shadow. Okay. She looked again into the mirror and reached in her purse again—pulled out a Kleenex and wiped the outer corner of her left eye where some mascara had wandered. The purse opened—compact and tissue in. Sylvia began walking quickly toward a brass post with a sign she could not make out. As she neared it she read the sign: Foreign Students Association Reception. She heard conversation, punctuated laughter and dishes clinking. As she entered the room she saw him. Rasheen was in a suit—very dashing looking. She sensed he knew her entry but he kept his gaze on the recipient of his conversation. Sylvia slowly, shyly walked toward him. Rasheen finished his remark and turned to meet her gaze. He smiled coolly, cordially. He was just like Sylvia had imagined him. An intellectual—had been to Oxford, now finishing his law degree. Self-assured, measured.

—Sylvia. He smiled.

—Hi Rasheen. She reached to take his extended hand. He nodded with a slight bow.

—We've grown up, he said. When I saw you in Sri Lanka you were 12 years old and doing the dance in your grass costume. Sylvia's face reddened above her smile. She had taken six years of Kandian dancing, like girls take ballet or gymnastics in America.

—I can't believe you saw me doing it. I'm so embarrassed. She closed her eyes and shook her head still smiling.

—You were good. Besides it was the thing to do. They had me playing polo. Sylvia, this is a classmate—Jason. We're taking a course on trial law this semester.

—Pleased to meet you. Jason smiled and immediately looked down at her hand as he took it. He returned his eyes to Sylvia and then to Rasheen.

—How's college, Rasheen asked. She had grown up to be pretty, he thought.

—It's going well. I'm taking a class in medieval history that is really fascinating. The professor shows slides of the art and gets so excited about them she sometimes has to sit down. Sylvia laughed open mouthed, easily. He liked that. Rasheen told her about the latest developments regarding the civil war in their home country. It was not good. Part of the reason Sylvia's parents had left eight years before. The Tamil and Singhalese had always been at odds. Now they were embroiled in a civil war. Sylvia's ethnic background represented both groups: her mother the former and her father the latter, Rasheen remembered. Not forbidden—frowned on by some of the older generation though. Sylvia looked into Rasheen's eyes in rapt attention as he recounted incidents of bombing, skirmishes between factions. A Tamil military government, a Ceylonese junta,

was hanging tenuously to power. Rasheen knew he was pulling Sylvia in. She looked at him so earnestly. Yes, processing the information about her dear sweet green land. Yet he detected an attraction, he thought with confidence. Rasheen had taken rhetoric classes in Oxford while on a prestigious fellowship and was now arguing Supreme Court cases in his law classes. He could wax eloquent and he decided she was worth the effort.

—I'll get us some drinks, he said smiling. She looked up into his eyes and smiled back. Was she interested or just congenial? He kept a cool demeanor and pivoted toward the refreshment table. Rasheen thought about Sylvia as he approached the table. He raised two fingers to a server in a rag-eared tux, second rate stuff for a catering service, he thought. She handed him two orange-yellow punches in plastic crystal goblets. He nodded and turned back to see Sylvia and Jason engaged in conversation. She was drawing him out. She had perceived Jason's shyness around girls and wanted to help him to be comfortable. Rasheen saw all this and knew it to be noble—but felt his territory threatened. Rasheen hurried back to the conversation.

—Sweeping this girl off your feet are you? Rasheen said to his friend, sounding international, like a line from *Casablanca.*

Jason got the hint and deferentially stepped a short foot back.

—Jason told me about his home in New Hampshire, Sylvia said. It sounds beautiful. That smile in her voice.

—He invited me back to see it in the fall. Rasheen smiled at Sylvia. I might take him up on it next term.

—Oh, I would love to see New England in the fall, Sylvia said. I read a *National Geographic* that showed pictures of New England in the fall. My friend has a copy of *On*

the Golden Pond. I watched it with her. The lake, the leaves. I would love to paint it, she said.

—Jane Fonda and her father Henry, Rasheen replied. He liked that way she nodded, seeming to acknowledge his subtext. The whole life-imitating-art thing—the Fonda children rumored to have been victims of the vagaries of the father's large ego and stormy personality. Was Sylvia responding to the multiple meanings his response implied? He thought so. A smart girl.

Rasheen made sure he discussed Voltaire and Sartre that evening. He quoted Shakespeare—from *Othello,* choosing a relevant passage to their own discourse: Which ever as she could with haste dispatch, she'd come again, and with a greedy ear devour up my discourse; which I observing, took once a pliant hour, and found good means to draw from her a prayer of earnest heart that I would all my pilgrimage dilate, whereof by parcels she had something heard, but not intentively. I did consent and often did beguile her of her tears.

He had then watched as Sylvia's eyes widened. Her pulse seemed to quicken. He waited to see if she got the courtship reference. Rasheen was feeling every bit the man. Sylvia was young and impressionable. He had made an impression. She had to leave. Rasheen shook Sylvia's hand cordially, guarding against any display of ardor and walked her to the reception's door where she would retrace the hallway to the downstairs Commons and outside to her car. He watched Sylvia's hips grow smaller as she walked away, admiring the way she moved.

Marriage and Life in the Southwest

Sylvia: *The thing he did have when we got married and moved—I had to spend a lot of time alone because he worked long hours and was hardly home—he had a wonderful library of books, a great collection of the classics. I read every single book. So my education really began once I left college. Tolstoy, Victor Hugo.*

—Sylvia could not believe it. Even before she and Rasheen were married, he had signed with a big law firm in the Southwest. His advance with the company had resulted in a new BMW and a beautiful brick house with hardwood floors in the suburbs. Rasheen's reputation had preceded him and the firm was bending over backwards. And now Sylvia stood at the bookshelf perusing his books to find another. She had just finished reading *Anna Karinina*—a wrenching ending. Fated she realized, inevitable. Rasheen on another 12-hour marathon—a long day in trial and then back to the office to strategize for tomorrow. *Les Miserables*, she read the title vertically. That will be my next book. She pulled it out of the shelf and walked to a large blue overstuffed chair by the brick walled fireplace and plopped down into it swinging her feet over one edge like a sunbather floating in an innertube.

The Elementary School Teacher

The Girl Who Hated Writing, Part I

Sylvia: *When I taught in the classroom I thought: These kids, whatever grade they are—there is a lack of community, there is a lack of belonging to something— and one of the things a kid told me at the end of the school year was I felt like we weren't just friends, I felt like we were all brothers and sisters in this class. And I didn't create that*

out of "You need to be doing all that." I created it out of situations where they had to work together, where they had to feel there was an identity as a class. Like one of the awards I won was for my creative teaching—in that I took my childhood experiences of creating clubs and had kids recreate—this was an experiment I did with the kids and I thought: "I hope I don't get fired for this!" And I don't want kids to be wasting time and for it to just be play but what I did was give one hour of time in the morning—and the very first day I said was "form any clubs you want—all right, who's going to be president of your club—then choose what your club is going to be about." And then we brainstormed and they came back with horseback club, computer club and reading club. It's like: O my God what are they going to do!—Helicopter club, that was the science club, and so I was like: What am I going to do, now I'm stuck. And I actually taught action research on this particular thing because I was curious myself about what was going to happen. It was my experiment in my own teaching to see if anything would come out of this. What ended up happening was—the Horseback Riding Club, I was like: "Where are we going to get horses?" (short laugh). *They wrote stuff—they read all the books with horses— children's fiction books, they did reports on horses, they looked up the Internet for different types of horses, they painted pictures of horses, and it was like everyday they would be waiting at the door just to come in to work on their club project.*

The Girl Who Hated Writing

Written and illustrated by Jennifer Young, © 1998-1999

Kokopelli Elementary School, Tierra Classroom Press

This book is dedicated to Ms. Tierra

After a long, long summer all the kids had to go to school. There was one girl who did not want to go to school because she knew she had to write.

While Jennifer was eating her waffles her mom said, "Are you excited about school?"

"No," said Jennifer.

"Excuse me?" said Mom.

"I said NO."

"Why?" asked Mom.

"Because I hate to write and when you are at school you have to write."

"Oh, so that gives you a reason that do not have to go to school?" said Mom.

"Ya," said Jennifer.

"OK, Jennifer. But hurry up and eat your breakfast because I have to go to the store."

"OK," said Jennifer.

So after Jennifer was done eating her breakfast, her mom and Jennifer got into the car. But Jennifer did not know her mom had put her backpack in the car trunk. Her mom had tricked Jennifer. They were not really going to the store, they were going to school.

When they got to school, Jennifer said, "Mom, why are we at school? I said I did not want to go to school."

"I know, but no matter what, you are going to school!" said Mom

"NO!"

"YES!"

"NO!"

"I do not want to start an argument but you are going to school because there are nice people and you can make new friends!" said Mom.

"But Mom, tell the teacher that I don't want to write. OK? Not."

The drop-off zone was jammed with parents depositing their kids for the first day of school. Pauline Gentry, the principal, stood in the center of all the commotion, smiling, reaching down to hug students, greeting parents and watching a myriad of actions—principal cum eagle. Parents were taking their kids into the office to sign up for school.

—Have fun, Jennifer, her mom said. You'll be fine. I'll come meet your new teacher on Friday. Jennifer forced a smile and turned toward the playground. She had a strange scared feeling in her stomach. Like when it was time to go to the dentist. She looked for one of her friends, shifting her new red and yellow Mariah Carey backpack to her left shoulder. It was heavy. That was one thing about her mom. She always got her the best stuff for school. She had the fanciest Trapper Keeper notebook you could get. A large box of crayons, pencil box with a full set of colored pencils along with regular ones, a little penguin sharpener, erasers and a new red plastic ruler.

Jennifer spotted her friend Melanie by the fence talking to a girl she didn't know and ran over.

—Hi Melanie.

—Hi Jennifer.

—Who's your teacher? Jennifer asked.

—Mrs. Gustavson, Melanie said.

—Who's yours?

—Ms. Tierra, Jennifer said.

—What's the Ms. mean? asked Melanie.

—Mom says it's a person who might be married or not but doesn't think it's any of your business.

—This is my neighbor Cindy, Melanie said, looking at the girl next to her. They moved here from Detroit this summer.

—Hi, said Jennifer, not feeling nice because of her stomach but wanting to sound friendly.

—Hi, said the girl.

—She has Mrs. Gustavson too, said Melanie. We walked to school together. I showed her stuff around here. They painted a mural in the lunchroom over the summer. It's really cool. It's a big picture of Kokopelli on top of a canyon and there are Indians around dancing. Summer school did it.

—What's Mrs. Gustavson like? Jennifer asked.

—My sister said she's really nice. My sister's friend had her. She's really into whales. Everything in her class has to do with whales. She likes to go out to play kickball when the kids are good. What's Ms. Tierra like?

—I don't know, Jennifer said. She smiles a lot. I remember from last year that she smiles a lot. The other girls nodded. That didn't necessarily mean she was nice; they looked knowingly at each other.

The bell rang and the girls walked quickly across the patches of grass to the lines by the tether ball courts. They looked ahead and could already see the teachers walking out to the kids who were in line. Jennifer again felt her stomach tie into a knot. The three girls disbanded and went to their respective lines. Jennifer was not in a hurry to get in line. She let some other kids get in front of her. She knew what was going to happen.

They would all get in class, sit in their seats, learn each other's names and then they would have an assignment to write—about what they did during summer vacation or their family or favorite pet or what they wanted to learn in school or what makes a best friend. Something like that. But it was a trick. A trick so the teacher could see how good each of the student's writing was and how crummy hers was. And then she would have to correct her punctuation and write second drafts and it would all be so boring and she would never get her story read in class.

Jennifer looked up to the front of the line and saw Ms. Tierra smiling. It looked like a real smile, not fake at all. And then the teacher laughed and put her head back when one of the students said something. It looked like a real laugh and she seemed happy. That relieved Jennifer because she hated people who faked being happy—and nice. The principal at her last school was that way. She acted happy outside and with parents around. But Jennifer saw her be cross with the custodians a couple of times and at some kids for no good reason. She was grumpy in secret. But Ms. Tierra seemed nice for real. The teacher was walking down the line shaking hands with each of the students and saying something to them or pointing to something they were wearing. She was going to find out how it would all be in class because the other lines started in. Ms. Tierra didn't lecture them about having a straight line. She didn't say anything about how to act when you're going in. The line started moving. Ms. Tierra didn't turn around and put her finger to her lips. She just smiled and kept walking . . .

Ms. Tierra stopped the line outside her classroom door.

—I have name tags for you at tables. That's so I can learn your names. After that we'll be more flexible about seating. I have also assigned cubbies for your backpacks but

you are welcome to trade if you and a classmate agree. This will be your home for the next school year and I want you to feel that it is a fun and safe place for you to be discoverers—of ideas, new lands, of beautiful art and of things you can't imagine. The teacher smiled again. Jennifer's stomach knot began to untie. She looked at Ms. Tierra—dark skin, bright red lips. Large brown eyes in the white part. Black hair down to her shoulders—one solid piece—a sculpture put on like a hat. A colorful dress. Reds and yellows, greens—big flowers, Jennifer thought.

—Come on in to *your* room, let's get started. The children slowly entered, looking all around. It was like no room Jennifer had ever seen. On the back wall was a large colorful mural. It was a scene of a field. Standing over a plant with a big flower were four figures. One had a white coat like a doctor or scientist. Another had a beret on like her mom wore when she went out listening to the blues. That was a woman holding paint brushes. Someone else in hiking clothes was holding a writing pad. Kneeling down was a man with a magnifying glass examining the flower. Jennifer was confused by all these different people looking at the flower, but she like the mural. It was different. She saw her name tag and walked over to sit down. On a side wall were more pictures. Some looked painted, others like they were from magazines or ones you could buy in a store. Every kind of painting in a museum Jennifer could imagine was up there. The wall was like one of the aisles in Michael's craft store where her mother loved to shop, the frames filled the wall in color. In front of the picture wall were five computers. She was surprised to see so many computers. And a bookshelf filled with books. It looked like a library. Jennifer thought she saw a whole row of *Goosebumps*. That was cool. It had other stuff libraries had. It had a rug with a rocking chair where the kids would probably

listen to stories. The class had a corner with the things artists used to hold their paintings up. Jennifer counted six of them—and she saw a whole bunch of brushes and paint jars on a corner table. She liked to paint. She thought that could be fun.

—Good morning, everybody. A smile in her voice, Jennifer thought. I hope you all had a good summer. Welcome to our room. I noticed that you were looking around. If you have any questions about what you see, I'll be happy to answer them. A girl in a yellow dress raised her hand.

—What is the painting with all the people looking at the flower?

—Those are different people looking at a flower—a scientist, an artist, a writer, a naturalist. We will be all of those people this year. We will learn to see a flower, a painting, even an idea from many points of view. That way we will understand more about what we see or think about and how others think and feel. We will be explorers. The students followed Ms. Tierra with their eyes as she walked around the room, explaining all the things she had there. Then the teacher played a name game with them that was very fun. After that, she talked about their first project. The kids would be allowed to form clubs about things they were interested in.

—Okay, let's brainstorm ideas for the clubs and I'll write them down, Ms. Tierra said. She pointed to a picture she had made of a bunch of kids' heads with clouds and lightening over them and explained what a brainstorm was. A girl next to Jennifer, Candice, raised her hand and said a Horseback Riding Club. Jennifer was really interested in that one. She didn't even listen to the others. She was so excited about horses. Her aunt had a horse. Jennifer visited her last year. She got to ride it, brush it. It was a sorrel—a red color. Its name was Canyon. They were at her aunt's for three days.

Jennifer would wake up when the sun was barely awake over a rocky hill behind the house and go out to the corral. The air smelled like a spice her mom used. She would go to the metal shed shaped like a little barn and get a handful of oats. She would run to the corral and hold her hand out with the oats. She held her fingers stiff and flat so Canyon wouldn't accidently bite them. Canyon would come right over to her with his nostrils wide and snorting. He ate the oats with his hairy lips rubbing back and forth on her palm. It felt weird.

—Now that we have these clubs listed on the board, raise your hand if you want to be in the Science Club, said Ms. Tierra. Six hands went up. The teacher wrote names down.

—Who is interested in the Dinosaur Club? Eight kids raised their hands. One did a little roar like a tyrannosaurus rex. Ms. Tierra smiled.

—I hope the Dinosaur Club doesn't get too dangerous! She laughed.

—And what about the Horseback Riding Club? Jennifer's hand shot up. She thought maybe she put it up too fast and felt a little embarrassed. Four other girls raised their hands. Ms. Tierra assigned them to certain tables and began explaining how the clubs would work and what was expected. The kids could use the computer and the library. They could check out books and bring them from home. The could invite speakers in. They could use the Internet. She would teach them how to take notes and organize the information into reports. Jennifer was so excited about her horseback club—she was remembering everything Ms. Tierra said.

The next morning Jennifer had two of her plastic horse models in her backpack along with photographs of Canyon. She couldn't wait to show the kids in her club. The

students were going to be able to work on their clubs for the first hour each day. Jennifer thought of the horses in her pack again. She pretended they were real like in *Indian in the Cupboard*. They were in little traveling stalls she had made with her father out of a Barbie box that had contained a stove for her doll's house. And her pictures of Canyon were in a little album with a pinto design on the cover her mom had bought her. She heard her Mary Janes click like a loud clock on the sidewalk beneath her, moving as fast as she could without running in her dress. Jennifer looked ahead dodging right of some poles and saw kids in line at Ms. Tierra's door. Candice was in line. Jennifer walked faster, straight to Candice.

—I brought some things for the club, she said, trying to control her breath.

—I did too, Candice said, sounding as excited as Jennifer. They both got down on their knees and opened their packs.

Here's Ms. Tierra! they heard.

—Good morning, children. A cheerful voice. Both Horseback Riding Club members stood up as Ms. Tierra opened the door and let them in.

My Creative Friend

Sylvia: *A fellow teacher and I would get in my car and explore various parts of Arizona. We would then apply our summer traveling directly to our curriculum.*

Nancy: *On our very first trip we went north to Christopher Creek. I was sitting just wanting to put my feet in the water and Sylvia took her art supplies to paint a squirrel who was sitting there. This was my first experience with her creativity. She did it automatically. I called her my creative friend.*

Sylvia and Nancy sat at an outside veranda at the Coffee Clatch Café quietly observing a threesome at another table. A tall blonde young man stretched out on his metal chair as if her were flat on a board, long blue running shoes crossed on the floor. A girl, high school age, long brown hair tucked behind her ear, red tank top, beige shorts, studying. The third member was a short wide-faced girl holding a cell phone to her ear talking enthusiastically into it. The boy had just positioned himself and stared ahead without expression. The tank top girl offered Cell Phone Talker suggestions for topics from time to time, as if to ask for her inclusion into the conversation. This seemed to no avail. Cell Phone Talker continued her breakneck phone dialogue for ten more minutes. During that time the tall boy rose, performed ritual cheek kisses and walked stiffly off, as thought the board hadn't been removed.

The two teacher/adventurers looked at each other. Each knew what was in the other's mind. What strange bedfellows these portable telephones had collected.

—It seems so unnatural, Sylvia said. It's like the phone ostracized her friend who was really there—for someone else's electronic voice. Nancy nodded and smirked.

—Sometimes I get so aggravated at the strangeness of it all, Nancy said, that I'll quietly approach the caller and empathetically mention the most recent study that shows the beasts to be carcinogenic. Sylvia laughed.

—You are so bad, Nancy. Scaring the wits out of the poor thing. It could have been their invalid mother in Chicago on the phone.

—Hey, it's true, Nancy replied wryly. Those puppies can kill. Sylvia laughed again.

—Well, Nancy. If anybody's going to save the world from cell phone cancer it will be you.

The two elementary school teachers pulled out a state map and spread it over the wire mesh café table. In the lower right-hand corner below the legend was a picture of the disgraced ex-governor of the state, sitting on a rock overlooking the Grand Canyon and beaming. On the other side were icons of the state symbols—a palo verde tree, cactus wren—even the state neckwear, a bola tie.

—We'll go up a long winding hill north of town, Nancy said. I've been on Highway 260 before, though its been some time. Then we'll go through the town of Christopher Creek. Quaint place. Touristy and all that. I think Heber is about 70 miles.

They made mental pictures of the curve of the road and other landmarks along the route. These forays were explorational and informational. They were both teaching fourth grade and the social studies subject for that level was states and regions in the Expanding Environments curriculum. Describing the places they visited provided a living narrative for their students.

—Well, it looks like a beautiful drive, Sylvia said. We'll be climbing up the Mogollon Rim.

—We'll hit pine forests about 10 minutes out of Payson, Nancy replied.

The teachers paid their bill and walked through the door with a crude sign hanging on a nail with attached string that read "See y'all Later." It rattled the screen as the door slammed behind them. They headed to "Miss Frizzel's school bus" (the car), named for the children's book series about the elementary teacher who could transform an old school bus into vehicles and take her kids on field trips—into outer space, to

Egypt—the adventures were sometimes harrowing but Miss Frizzel managed to guide the troops back safely to their school while offering up unique social studies lessons on location. The adventurers' metaphoric bus was a '96 BMW. Not your typical working class/educator mode of transportation but Sylvia's husband was an attorney who pulled in a six-figure income. The car doors opened and Sylvia and Nancy slid into their seats, Sylvia behind the wheel. Car doors latched shut and seatbelts hummed a quiet whirr as they were pulled to simultaneous clicks. The solenoid complained as Sylvia turned the ignition and the engine started with an urgent whine. The BMW backed out of the parking space and rolled smoothly to the shopping center exit to State Road 260.

—We're left here, Nancy said with the map in her lap folded over to the route. They did everything with purpose, drinking in the sweep of ponderosas that rose beside them as the car picked up speed, noting the passing of a hodge podge of strip-mall centers, convenience stores and junk yards around the bend and into the Sitgreaves forest. On the right was a large metal barn with a field of fresh mowed grass and strands of white fence. A large sign advertised horseback riding and cookouts. Up ahead the two-lane continued its snake through the stands of trees—huge poles of gray—brown, stolid patterns with silver—green broccoli tops.

The car continued up the Mogollon Rim. They slowed past the turnoff to Zane Grey's cabin. Up ahead was Christopher Creek, a small tourist community with summer cabins owned by modern Phoenicians. The adventurers watched for the sign. The car carved a sharp turn.

—Rally driver are we? Nancy said, dead pan.

—Sylvia laughed. I don't know this road very well I'm afraid.

—As long as you promise to keep on the road, Mario Andretti.

The ponderosas gave way to tangles of deciduous—a sign they were entering a watershed. Houses came into view around the next corner and Sylvia slowed for the speed zone. The ground leveled and white canopy covers along the roadside revealed a craft fair. Sylvia and Nancy watched for a turnoff to the creek. There it is, Nancy announced, pointing to the left. Sylvia turned left on to a dirt road, white dust, like sudden smoke, following them.

—It's really dry this year, Nancy said.

—That's why campfires aren't allowed up here, Sylvia added.

—Right here. Nancy pointed to a pasture on the left. Tall cottonwood trees stood in line along the fence. Yellow dandelions scattered across the field. Sylvia turned on a rutted road. The car's suspension, uncertain how to respond, rocked stiffly from side to side as the wheels found their grooves. They lowered their windows and smelled the fragrant air of pitch and wet moss from the creek. Sylvia drove cautiously through the field, following the little road past an open fence and along the trees, rustling leaves high above. The sun flashed dappled through the leaves on the front window.

—Here's the creek, Nancy said.

—It's so beautiful, Sylvia returned. The car doors clicked open and the two travelers pivoted out of their seats and on to the sponge of green mesh. They could hear the tumble of the creek and looked over to the flashing waters. Nancy knelt down to untie her tennis shoes, picturing her pink feet slipping into the cool dark shallows, a sharp slide of nerves up her back as she planted herself on soft peat. She heard the rear trunk unlatch and saw it raise up. Behind was the clank of hardware. The trunk came

down like a door dropping to reveal Sylvia laden with an easel and paintbox looking resolutely ahead. The artist stepped over a curled rut and headed toward the water, her eye fixed on something that Nancy couldn't see. My creative friend, she thought. She does that without a second thought. As though it is as natural as breathing. Where does that come from, Nancy thought—the automatic impuse to do art?

Sylvia was set up, squeezing curled tubes of paint on to her palette when Nancy caught up. Sylvia nodded toward a squirrel on the other bank preening itself—obviously the subject. Taking her cue, Nancy stopped momentarily and measured her steps slowly to a perch by a small pool down from the art session . . .

The car stopped next to the aging Texaco sign—one of those free standers. The paint on the star was peeling and faded to a dusty pink. Rust streaks running from the bolts holding the sign together trailed down the chalk white. The adventurers both emerged with cameras, admiring this ancient bit of Americana. They moved purposefully to preferred vantages and raised their respective 35 millimeters to position. This was a social studies moment for the teachers who would later integrate the photographs into units on their state. For Sylvia, it would include a strand on transportation in the state, the rural outposts served by commerce, and how population distribution shifted to the cities as occupations moved from agriculture to industry. It was summer but Sylvia was already systematically planning her units for the year—beginning with big ideas and themes and reflecting on how they would be integrated through her subjects. These trips with Nancy gave her the opportunity to design thematic units that she was continually constructing mentally, and to gather artifacts and insights to teach the mandated social studies curriculum. In the trunk was a bucket of red Supai sand from Monument Valley.

She could already see this photograph of the old gasoline sign up on the bulletin board, a line of yarn attached and connected to Springerville on a large map of the state. Sylvia would exchange photographs with Nancy, who was good with a camera, and they would be spun into the classroom curriculum—on a bulletin board, as one of a handful of other pictures for story starters and class discussion, Nancy thought as she glanced over and saw those Tierra wheels turning, that following the elaborate transactions in Sylvia's mind as she explored the state with purpose would be to observe an unrelenting efficiency and uncanny ability to multitask one's way through summer vacations, through life.

The adventurers simultaneously rolled up the windows and closed their car doors with cameras around necks, and turned to the gas station/restaurant. As the car clicked to lock, Sylvia dropped the keys into her small black purse. They were famished and hoped the food would be adequate. The place looked Depression era, a couple of rattletrap cars at the side, a horse-tying bar in front of the door and small smoky windows across the top of a gray wood façade. Sylvia and Nancy hesitated at the slabbed door, an old horseshoe-smithed handle inviting them in. They looked quizzically at each other, a signal to beat a retreat if the place failed inspection. When they entered, their pupils opened to the dim light, grabbing what there was, and they made out a bar in the distant corner. Through a small grocery section at the entrance with a freezer of beer and pop, they entered into the sanctuary, an atmosphere of stale cigarettes and beer. At the far left a few locals at a pool table, one hunched over to shoot. At the bar sat two elderly people like bookends, one at each end silently eating. These, they would discover, were husband and wife—the owners. The wife had a bleached beehive hairdo, piled on her head. Only

the husband's narrow bent frame was visible in the dim light. Sylvia and Nancy could not see a menu but were both relieved someone was cooking. They had a feeling this was the last cafe for a while. They silently felt like they'd walked into another era.

Sylvia strode boldly to the beehive hairdo woman and introduced herself, smiling that smile. Her white eyes, miniature spot lights as they talked. Nancy followed. The woman was listing the menu—hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken. Both adventurers ordered burgers and took stools at the bar. The cue ball cracked against its cousins under the dim yellow light. The wife/owner seemed fascinated with Sylvia. She scanned the Sri Lankan without reserve.

—Where ya from, she asked.

—We live in the city, Sylvia answered.

—I mean, what country you come from.

—I'm from Sri Lanka. It is off the coast of India. But I have been in the United States for 20 years. Grease popped at the grill in the corner as the hamburger patties were flipped, only a hand and spatula of the cook visible through an opening in the wall.

—You don't look like the Indians around here, the woman said obtusely but with interest.

—No, I suppose not. Sylvia retained her friendly demeanor. My country is near East India. It used to be named Ceylon.

—Hmm. Alright. Well, you gals relax in your seats there. Your burgers 'll be right out. Nancy, who had been examining old photos of ranches around Springerville, walked over and joined Sylvia at the bar. She was observing Sylvia's interactions with the owner. The woman harbored prejudice, suspicion. Sylvia had disarmed her

completely with her friendliness, curiosity—her spirit of openness and refusal to judge those who judged her. A strange combination of personal strength, transcendence—Nancy wasn't sure—but it always impressed her in these kinds of situations. The lunches arrived and the two ate zealously, starved after a morning hike up a local peak. They talked about how each would weave these experiences into lessons five months away, into the school year. Sylvia wanted her students to get a sense of the openness, even desolation of certain desert landscapes. Students landlocked in a city of concrete, pavement and metal, could not imagine the expanse of these places.

The two adventurers paid for their meals and got up from the bar stools. They thanked the woman and walked toward the door, Nancy pointing out the photos.

—Hey now. The woman's voice. They turned around.

—Yuh take care now. Sylvia and Nancy waved, walked through the grocery section and out the door.

Classroom Norms

Sylvia: *The science club which studied helicopters, I was like: Oh my God now what are they going to do? They built this huge helicopter out of cardboard. I would not have conceptualized how to build a helicopter. They had the propeller and everything. You know it was made out of cardboard and paint. These were ESL* [students] *and Native Americans who worked on this who couldn't—these kids had a harder time reading, but because they were so interested, they went into the library, checked stuff out, and while they were doing these readings I would teach them how to take notes, and* [say]: *"Well this is how you can organize them into reports"—so that actually freed me up when the*

groups were busy to actually work with two or three kids at a time in depth because they were in different stages—and then after club [time] *they would have to report—so this club became something very educational. It was so effective I later on used this idea to do science and social studies reports and integrate it. Then, during my day, there became less time differences—this is science, this is math—you could be working science and math. I would give a lesson but there was time left so the kids could explore the weather and the desert at the same time and use computers and have access to the libraries which I thought—it was really reflected in their writing. It validated that the kids were learning.*

The principal walked the long gray carpeted hallway toward Sylvia's room. She saw three students running ahead of her approaching the stairway.

—Fellas, you need to slow down a little bit. Where are you off to? Three boys stopped and turned around sheepishly. Marvin Goklish, Jimmy Banks, and Lewis Jordan. They were third graders.

—We're going to the library, Jimmy said. Pauline Gentry smiled at them.

—That's a good place to be going. But not too fast on this sidewalk. It's harder than your heads, right? The boys nodded in unison. The principal was a little surprised that these three ESL students were running *toward* the media center instead of away from it. Marvin was a Navajo boy who had some serious LD issues. Lewis was African-American. Had come to Kokopelli reading below first grade level. He had improved last year but had struggled. She was curious to see how he would fare with Sylvia. She thought he'd do well—but this interest so early was a surprise. Good.

—Hope you find the books you need. The principal nodded that the boys could go. The three turned toward the stairs that led to the media center, their shoes scratching a shuffle on the steps that washed up as they descended. Pauline Gentry continued on . . .

Sylvia: *The class has to have just enough tension that they are thriving and there's work going on. If you relax it* [the tension] *too much, it becomes scarce, if you pull it too tight, the rubber band would break. So you have to have the right amount of tension, which is all your pacing. You have to constantly keep everything fresh and new. You also have to create that atmosphere. It's not just something that just happens, where you follow a sequence of events and it happens. You create that. You create the interest, make them have personal connections, talking to people—creating an atmosphere where you can't wait to start on that project because you're burning* [with curiosity]. *Creating that is necessary for this project to go on. It is difficult and frustrating at times. I noticed at the beginning, when you're giving them an idea, until they figure it out, there is a lot of tension among the kids because they don't know what to do, everyone has different ideas, how do you resolve it? And when they've got it, there's this period in the class where it's just intense work. I could disappear—I remember a sub once saying the teacher didn't need to be in there, the kids just all worked. To someone coming in it might appear that the kids are not doing something but in fact some very powerful thinking is going on. Just because you don't have a product right then and there doesn't mean that they're not learning. That's where I did my teacher action research. Each person would write a line, and at the end they had something that was coherent and creative. I had checklists. I would have deadlines. If they were having problems I might go sit with them and support them. Another deadline would be: Have they written a*

rough draft? Does that rough draft make sense? So I'd sit through and look at the writing with the kid and discuss whether it makes sense. I would have them assess it before I would give them any feedback. So not only would I want them to look at their writing, but I would want them to self-assess, and assess each other's work as well. And that's really kind of hard because you had to train them, it wouldn't naturally happen.

Pauline continued toward the third grade pod, stooping to pick up some candy wrappers, then noticing the wainscoting above the classrooms was peeling paint. She made a mental note to tell Max, her custodian. She arrived at Sylvia's classroom door and opened it quietly. Sylvia was sitting in a chair at the reading center. She was reading from her draft book, a soft bound tablet available from office supplies for journaling. Sylvia's class had been going through a lot of them. A nearby screen was pulled down with a handwritten page projected on it from the overhead. The students were seated on the carpet in various positions: cross-legged, knees tucked under, some on the floor supported by hips and elbows. The text on the screen matched Sylvia's recitation. When she was finished she looked up and smiled. Students turned to see Pauline then back to Sylvia. The principal had made it a point with classes that her visits were not intended to interrupt the flow of work.

Sylvia opened the conversation with a question.

—Who has comments on the story? Rory?

—I like how your ideas flow. It makes sense.

—Thank you, Rory. Who else? A boy in the front row raised his hand.

—Tomás?

—Are you going to put more description about the characters so we can get to know them better?

—That's a good point, Tomás. Yes. This is a first draft to help me outline the plot.

Pauline unconsciously nodded while the exchanges continued. Sylvia had been modeling these kinds of classroom dialogues since the beginning of the school year and her students were really beginning to pick up the techniques of questioning and critiquing. They were developing the language of aesthetic critiquing and using it appropriately. Pauline was skeptical at first. These were third graders. Were they developmentally ready to analyze and discuss other students' writing effectively? How would they know the line between advice and hurtful criticism? Sylvia had somehow negotiated them through the maze of that distinction and here they were sounding more like a high school writing course than a primary grade class—confident and sure in their remarks. Sylvia called these activities part of developing her classroom norms. Students *would* learn not only the steps to the writing process, but how to help others be successful. She established the norm of students voicing their ideas freely, breaking down the "shy factor" through different techniques. Pauline didn't understand them all—but she knew this staged modeling had been a regular routine to establish a comfort level for speaking in front of others, voicing opinions with confidence and viewing criticism as helpful to the writer/artist within them.

Sylvia was fascinated by children's thinking and she had devised a number of strategies based on her master's thesis—about creative thinking—and had been engaging her students in various forms of dialogue from the beginning. Sylvia based her approach

on the notion of cognitive dissonance. She had explained to Pauline that the term can be applied to creativity where, whenever someone confronts a problem—in a story, for example—that puts the author in a state of tension. Perhaps the storyline needs better direction. To resolve tension, questions are formed as the person seeks to overcome the dissonance—in the case of a story—perhaps a plot that doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Creative solutions are made through several processes: insight, imagery—Pauline couldn't remember what others. At any rate, using the questioning techniques help point the writer to a solution. Pauline knew that one of Sylva's rationales for integrating the arts so deeply into her curriculum was that finding solutions to a problem in one art area carried over to others through the natural connections the arts have with each other—and they link naturally to other subjects. Sylvia explained this interconnectedness by the image of the artist resolving a line and space dilemma in dance, in visual art, in the blocking of a play, carried to literary invention. Sylvia used Archimedes shouting, "Eureka" and running along the street as an example of the release of the tension through discovery, that third graders had plenty of cognitive dissonance in their lives and she wanted to help them to become problem solvers in all arenas. Pauline had listened to this rationale one afternoon in her office in quiet wonder at this first-year teacher who obviously thought so deeply about things while Sylvia matter-of-factly explained her approach. This woman is on to something, Pauline had thought at the time. She is creating scientists, artists and aestheticians all at the same time. But how do you train teachers to reason this way?

—Jennifer, you had your hand up, Sylvia said.

—Ms. Tierra, when will we know a story is long enough?

—Good question, Jennifer. Who can help answer that question? Six hands shot up.

—Raul, Jennifer said. Another classroom norm Sylvia had established was teaching the students to take the initiative in selecting respondents to their queries.

—Until it starts to get boring. The class laughed. This might have been a gentle poke at Jason's last work called *Jason and James Bond*. It filled up and entire 50-page draft book. Sylvia had brought it down to show Pauline the week before. It chronicled the adventures of Jason as he followed James Bond on a series of escapades. The problem was that it rambled and, another class norm, the children were encouraged to read their writing aloud to solicit editing suggestions and just to share. Jason had read the entire book, relishing his limelight as his classmates patiently listened. Sylvia was telling Pauline the story and laughing about the third grader's wonderful persistence in, first, writing the saga, then reading the entire thing. Pauline had nodded, smiling. She mused about not having heard of a third grader writing a novella before, acclaimed or panned.

—Cindy? Jennifer again.

—When all the elements of a good story are there, the sequence is logical and interesting, the plot builds and has a good conclusion.

—Yeah, but how do you make it have a good conclusion? Jennifer to Cindy.

—I like stories best that have surprise endings. Like in *Goosebumps*, Cindy said.

—Oh yeah. Okay, Jennifer said. Pauline continued to observe as Sylvia went to the overhead and edited her own story, crossing out certain words and replacing them with more active verbs and rich description and x-ing a redundant sentence. Pauline rose and quietly walked to the door. She realized she had a meeting of principals at the district

office in less than an hour. As Pauline walked down the outside corridor between rooms, she tried to envision a systematic way to teach children the techniques she had just witnessed. So much of it seemed intuitive. Yet Pauline had watched Sylvia's approach repeated during the last two years of observing and believed if one were not able to standardize these ideas, at least the set of behaviors or checklist could be identified for use in a training setting. The principal would consider this possibility in greater depth later for right now she saw one of the playground aides quickly escorting a fourth grader known for behavior issues to the office ahead of her.

Dissolution of a Marriage

Sylvia: *And I think he* [Rasheen] *had all these ideas but he was a talker. You know Romantic in his ideas but he was really not a very creative person. He wanted to be creative but he couldn't. He was very frustrated by that. You know he wanted to be a writer but he would never sit down and write a word. And here my actions—when I say something I actually go do it. So I think in that it created a conflict because instead of him pursuing his writing and stuff he started acting that I'm the one preventing him from writing. I'm the one preventing him from being free to explore his self. So in the end that ended up not working because when I look back it was more his insecurity and that just prevented him from growing, so he tried to stop me from growing.*

The carpenters were removing the wall that separated the living room from the den. It was noisy as their crowbars shredded the drywall and creaked out nails from the studs. Sylvia was in a nook of an office working on a paper for a class on situated cognition. She was nearing the end of coursework for a master's in education. Teaching

third grade full time at Kokopelli and extended education classes for the art museum and being a housewife meant attending to time management. Sylvia felt she had been successful with juggling all the schedules and still finding time for her husband, but Rasheen was being belligerent of late. He would come home and insist that she stop whatever she was doing and clean up a small pile of sawdust left by the carpenters—or wash some dishes that had been left briefly in the sink. Always menial tasks—as though he were trying to turn her into some version of a Suzi Homemaker—stop her from her degree, stop her painting, her piano playing. One night he came in late from working at the office. Sylvia's easel was set up in a corner of the living room, a fresh canvas with a red oil wash. Rasheen stormed into the house. She could tell he was looking for a vent to his anger.

—Here you are again, he said—a controlled rage. Painting when you should be cleaning.

—The house is perfectly acceptable, Rasheen, Sylvia returned.

—Why didn't you trim the hedges in the front yard?

—That can be done over the weekend. I have classes after school. It is dark when I arrive home.

—You are neglecting your duties as a wife!

—I disagree, Rasheen. I am busy but continuing to manage the house. Perhaps you would prefer if I had no interests but making sure the floors were polished like glass and the house a sterile laboratory.

Rasheen glared at her, unsure of what to say next but still seeking to vent. He put his briefcase down on a long low black leather couch and paced across the wooden floor, breathing audibly.

—I tire of all your projects. You are neglecting your duties.

—Rasheen, the house is clean. The laundry is done. Your dinner is in the refrigerator. It was ready at six and you come in the door at nine. We both work hard. I do not criticize you for your 12-hour days. Should you me? Sylvia kept her voice even, calm. This conversation was becoming commonplace—as on a tape loop.

—You need to spend more time as a wife.

—You need to practice developing your own creativity so you will not be jealous of my endeavors, Rasheen. I am convinced of that. Why don't you start your great American novel as you used to say. Or keep a journal. Instead you deride me. Rasheen reddened. He had never physically abused Sylvia, but she stepped back watching his anger rise like a teapot about to boil. He stormed passed her to the easel thrusting his arm out and dashing it to the floor—the painting crashing against the fireplace, the paintbox scattering paint tubes across the hearth.

—That will give you something to clean up! Rasheen raced to the door, his wingtips clicking on the wood. He grabbed the doorknob open and slammed the door behind disappearing into the dark. Sylvia heard the BMW roar away.

This marriage will not survive these rages, she thought. He wants me to be his house doll and I will not. I will not live like this.

Principal Gentry

Sylvia: *I would come into the classroom and think: What is the best way to teach these kids where they will love it? I thought my only goal was to teach these kids. What was I supposed to teach? And I would succeed teaching what I was supposed to teach. The kids would love it. I wanted to create an atmosphere where the kids wanted to be there. And I think the arts and humanities build community in the classroom. So when you use literature and you use art or you use music, it brings the class to a common—it creates a bond within the kids because there are discussions that you can relate to your personal life. You can talk about how you see something or you can have meaningful, rich conversations so if you connect literature, music, art, you are getting an even richer experience to draw from. And I found those experiences really useful for having them* [the students] *like to write. One of the biggest things that kids come—or one of the hardest things that is really ignored is: Where do ideas come from? You may have the perfect lesson plan and you tell the kids you need to write a play or a poem and you don't think about the thinking that goes behind it, but rather the process—you're not going to get much depth in it. Same way if you come to art and say: Well, just draw whatever you want—you'll get rainbows and flowers. So how do you get a richer experience in what they create? It's by getting* [together] *art, music, talking about issues from social studies, using literature to talk about those issues.*

Pauline Gentry: *The kids were happy in class. They liked the activities Sylvia was doing with them. They liked her positive communication skills. They liked the writing, the creativity component, they liked the environment of the classroom—warm and child-centered. The next year she had many many requests from parents who wanted their*

children to be in that environment. To me that is an indicator of the perception of parents—the word was getting around to the community.

Pauline Gentry opened the door and smiled.

—Come in. She extended her hand to the researcher. It was narrow and delicate. He took it like someone handing him a pair of soft gloves.

—I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me.

—I'm glad to help, Pauline said. She motioned him in. They walked past the alcove and into the living room. Picture windows revealed a view of a green expanse of manicured grass. The Gentrys lived next to a golf course.

—Where would you like to sit? she asked. The researcher surveyed the rooms. A small table in the kitchen caught his eye.

—How about at the table in there.

—Certainly, she answered.

—I would like to be able to plug my tape recorder in if it is possible. Pauline gestured to a plug in the wall by the stove.

—Would you like something to drink?

—I'm fine, thanks. The two sat down simultaneously facing each other at the formica table. It was round with a slate gray top and chrome legs that disappeared under the table then back out on their way to the floor—art deco, the researcher thought. Nice.

—Well, as you know, the researcher began, I have been studying one of your former teachers at Kokopelli, Sylvia Tierra.

—Yes, Pauline said.

—What qualities do you look for in a teacher?

—In elementary school you need to be a master of all disciplines. You need the whole dimension because you're dealing with the whole child. All children can learn and we need to provide the environment to allow that to happen.

—What sorts of teaching methods do you advocate?

—I came from a district that did a lot of staff development so the teachers had a strong knowledge base. You need to know the standards, the district's curriculum. The needs of the children dictate that. Making information relevant for the child is important. If the child is successful, the child can learn. Personality is a factor. Children need hands-on activities, they need to be involved.

—Can you describe Sylvia's classroom?

— Sylvia had a classroom where children were very spontaneous. Her children loved to learn. She capitalized on children's strengths. Sylvia is very knowledgeable. Her understanding of language arts, the writing process, the creativity component. I mention that because our school used the Learning Network language arts program based on skillful teaching, understanding of language arts, the reading and writing process. The teacher-leader who provided pro development and Sylvia had different opinions on what planning should be like for children. We were accustomed to children coming up with a plan: a web, listing of ideas—people have different methods of planning their writing. Sylvia's view was that you limit your creativity by listing those ideas as the only ones.

—What do you mean? the researcher asked.

—She felt that when you are writing a piece, if you have to follow a plan you lose the spontaneity and creativity that would come from having ideas that you could embellish. If you were talking about a person hitting a golf ball and all of a sudden it hit

the roof and wasn't in the plan, you were limiting yourself. My teacher leaders came back to me and discussed this—where we had not gone in that dimension.

—What do you think prompted Sylvia to feel this way?

—Sylvia is very thoughtful and her understandings are more refined because she does a lot of reading and she very strongly believes in what she feels makes positive impact on children's learning. Sylvia was not swayed by this traditional planning process. Her concerns caused us to reflect on the validity of that approach. She didn't allow her classroom to be a rigid, set of points to be followed. The children dictated to some extent what she taught in the classroom.

—How did you feel about that? The researcher wanted to establish the principal's view of child-centered education without forcing the interview. He didn't want her to lose her true stance.

—Her knowledge base was very broad. I hired Sylvia as a beginning teacher. She is an extremely bright and gifted teacher. Children loved to be in her classroom. If there were corrections to make in her teaching, I would say it would be classroom management to make sure all kids were on task. In her mind she knew that they were. For us observers it wasn't as apparent.

—What made her successful in the classroom? The researcher shifted his position in the chair. Art deco chairs seemed harder than normal ones and his pelvic bones were sore from the hours of sitting at a computer. He pictured the ibuprofen sitting on his bathroom sink that he had forgotten to take.

—Children were very important to her, Pauline continued. She created an environment where they loved to be in her classroom. Parents were very supportive. She

used technology—anything that children would latch on to she provided in the classroom. Sylvia is an artist, a musician. She modeled and taught arts behaviors. She taught them how to think aesthetically. We had parents who couldn't believe their own kids had done the artwork or videos their kids brought home. They entered paintings their children had done in Sylvia's class in the county fair. Bragged about them at PTO meetings. That is partly how Sylvia developed a reputation as such an innovative educator. Our music teacher noticed that students from Sylvia's class were more interested in and attuned to classical music. I have a book of class poems from Sylvia's final year that I will open and read to give me children's perspectives on things. She was very much on the cutting edge of what needed to happen in a creative classroom.

—Another colleague of hers, a fellow teacher, said that when she arrived in the morning, she would walk by Sylvia's classroom and kids would already be standing outside waiting to get in, the researcher prompted.

—The kids were happy in class, Pauline answered. They liked the activities Sylvia was doing with them. They liked her positive communication skills. They liked the writing, the creativity component, they liked the environment of the classroom—warm and child-centered. The next year she had many many requests from parents who wanted their children to be in that environment. To me that is an indicator of the perception of parents—the word was getting around to the community.

—Were you surprised at this? Did you find any hesitancy or even a hint of prejudice—the fact that Sylvia is a person of color? Pauline smiled and nodded.

—If there was prejudice, it was erased within the first two weeks of school. Sylvia had a parent fan club. She cared so much for each student as a unique human

being and found ways to make them all successful. She communicated that to the parents immediately. One parent was extremely concerned about a third/fourth multiage class Sylvia had one year and that her child would be left behind. She was very difficult and Sylvia won this parent over, hands over fist. It was amazing the communication she did with these parents, the time she spent with them. It took a lot of time after school in communicating to win these parents and they were very supportive.

—What else comes to mind regarding Sylvia's work in the classroom?

—What she provided in her classroom she was willing to share with her peers and there was no jealousy. She got along very well with her peers—sharing the information at staff meetings. There was no animosity. Sylvia always displayed a smiling happy person face and she was very open—she wasn't secretive, there wasn't any sense of one-ups-man-ship. Willing to ask ideas if she wasn't sure. A very positive staff member well liked by her peers. That school had a very senior staff. She brought a lot of skills. I never saw a day when she wasn't prepared to go with the children. A lot of enthusiasm. Kids waiting at the door in the mornings eager to get into her classroom. Time just zipped by for those kids.

<u>"She Really Made Things Real for the Kids"</u>

Interviewer: *Other activities or projects that demonstrated her philosophy?*

Nancy: *The Martin Luther King award she got for doing the Martin Luther King thing. I don't know what she did but she did such a great job she got an award for it.*

Interviewer: *Rap songs, videos, poetry, hyperstudio.*

Nancy: *And the funny part about it* (pause) *she really made things real for the kids.*

Interviewer: *Explain that. That's pretty important.*

Nancy: *Martin Luther King Day for many of us—because we're so busy with everything else—maybe we give it lip service, and then whatever pet it is we'll do. You know—I'm trying to work with diversity and tolerance. I'm trying to work with all of those kinds of things to really create a unified classroom. And I think through the creativity of the Martin Luther King thing she* [Sylvia] *perhaps did that.*

Mrs. Jackson stared at the interviewer for the stupid question it really was. Why was it important to teach about Martin Luther King? he'd asked. He's White and askin' that question. Her boy Tyrone could have answered that.

—He knows what discrimination is, she answered with irritation. He came home from the neighbor's house when he was in kindergarten asking why the Olsons would never let him come in their house. His friend who was White invited him a couple a times and the mom would just shake her head and say we're gettin' pretty close to supper. But Jan's other friends might be invited in "bout that same time every afternoon." 'Course they'll have their boy just as prejudiced. They'll be teachin' it. I didn't have the heart to explain it to Tyrone right then and there. His own heart woulda been broke. But he got called "nigger" in first grade so the cat was out of the bag so to speak. We got some place as a people through Martin Luther King. That man put his life on the line to show what a disgraceful way of actin' America was in. Put his life on the line. Everybody needs to know about him. Us Blacks so we can feel proud and equal. The others so's they can quit bein' so prejudice.

—That is a question I am asking various parents. Martin Luther King made a huge difference. I want to know your point-of-view regarding that school project.

—Well, what I know is that Tyrone came home talkin' up a storm about Martin Luther King. Askin' me questions. Wantin' to know if I'd been to Selma, Alabama. Talkin' 'bout the four black girls who died in the bombing, 1954 Brown versus the Board, all that. Pretty soon I was askin' *him* questions about Martin Luther King. He wrote a rap song too that he sang at the award ceremony. Did you hear it? The interviewer had read it in Sylvia's student scrapbook before he came.

Rap Song by the Coolers
(Written by Tyron Jackson and Danny Winchell)

Once upon a time in 1960

Things were bad and it wasn't nifty

Martin Luther King had a dream

love one another and to care for each other!

Fight for the right—get down!

Fight for the right—get down!

Fight for the right—get down!

Help your community help your town

So, you better get down!

One of Sylvia's colleagues, Nancy Markham, had first brought up the MLK award to the researcher. How Sylvia made it real to the kids, she had said. He wished he'd asked Nancy what she meant by real. The researcher noticed the songs and poems from the project in a big three-ring binder given him for document review. After reading it, he was convinced that something epiphanous or transformative went on in that classroom during the project. All the work Sylvia had left with him was deeply inspired and downright good. The researcher was able to talk to the mother of one of the students who participated in the project.

—Was Ms. Tierra a good teacher, Mrs. Jackson?

—She was great by my way of thinkin'.

—What made her so? The interviewer was trying not to press.

—She really cared for the kids. Ms. Tierra cared for my boy. Seems like I heard it every day. And he had fun in that class. He never had to be told to do his homework. Except math sometimes. He wrote all the time in that class. And Tyrone would bring home art and I'd hang it on the wall—not because it was like refrigerator art—but because it was *good*. I got two pieces hangin' in my living room—one with water lilies he did and a desert one with all kind' of cactus.

—Do you believe Ms. Tierra's teaching will have any long-term effects on Tyrone?

—I think he discovered he can paint art. He's planning to take art classes in high school. He still writes rap songs some. He learned how to use books to help him with

reports. His seventh grade English teacher said so. She said he goes to the right places to find what he needs.

—Resources?

—Exactly! See—that's why you're askin' the questions!

—Mrs. Jackson, is there anything else you'd like to say about Ms. Tierra or the other subjects we've discussed?

—That lady was always nice, helpful. Like I said. She really showed care for Tyrone and he lapped it up. Uh, and—he got along with everyone in his class that year. That's different. Tyrone can be cranky. He liked everybody in that class. Everybody liked him. I wasn't sure why.

—Anything else?

—No, that's about it I guess.

The Girl Who Hated Writing, Part II: Projects With a Purpose

Sylvia: *I found when kids are drawing stuff and visual, they're able to translate that on to paper. Some kids might start at the computer because that's their style* [I try], *catering to different learning styles. So they were thinking about the same concept through multiple perspectives while working together. In the end they were asked to come up with ten hyperstudio cards—that was a requirement they had to meet* [criteria for the hyperstudio assignment follow] *what was prior, what was the problem, what did you come up with, how does it address the problem, what is your design, what is needed to fix it, what does it look like working, and what are the problems you foresee in a shoe like this? And then what it would look like in the future. And then they had to write a*

commercial to advertise it using hyperstudio and play it over the school TV. They had an audience so there was a purpose for doing this. I taped them doing the presentation with the slideshow in the background. They pretended they were newscasters and had to write a commercial script. So they had to use a lot of skills in a context to explore an idea, so the focus was the idea and coming up with projects in a rich way.

While Jennifer was at school, her mom was laughing because she did not tell the teacher that Jennifer did not like to write!

So when it came to writing time, Jennifer did not get her draft book out because she thought her mom had told the teacher that she hated to write and did not have to write. But when the teacher was coming around to check on everyone, she came to Jennifer. The teacher stopped and said, "Why don't you have your draft book out?"

"Didn't my mom tell you that I didn't have to write?" said Jennifer.

"Who is your mother?" said the teacher.

"Lonnie."

"No," said the teacher.

"Ya, but..."

"No buts," said the teacher. "Get out your draft book and write now!"

"Why?"

"Because if you don't you will get a detention," said the teacher.

"Fine," said Jennifer. "What is your name, by the way?"

"Ms. Tierra."

"OK, what should I write about? Mmmm... I know," said Jennifer. "How about the girl who hated to write? That's a good idea."

The Horseback Riding Club had finished their collage. It was flat on a classroom table. The club members were hunched over it checking to make sure the magazine pictures were glued down. A tangle of horse cutouts, all kinds and sizes, framed a large colored pencil drawing of the five girls on horseback in a line, like one of those old Gene Autry movie posters where the main characters are smiling into the camera for a publicity shot. It was before school and the club was getting it ready for morning announcements. They would present their poster along with a hyperstudio video of an ad for a dude ranch they had conceived, and discuss the club project. Jennifer had written the script. Sylvia glanced over from her desk and smiled. She was reading journal entries in draft books stacked precariously like the broken bellows of a concertina in front of her. Her thumb and forefinger lifted another written-on post-it note from the pad and placed it in one of the open books. Sylvia wrote a comment: "I like the way you describe the cat moving 'like oil through the hole in the picket fence.' It is a great metaphor—gives the reader a mental image of the movement."

Sylvia looked up again and thought of Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow. These girls had been here for over 40 minutes and the hadn't budged from the project. They were whispering conspiratorially—the Barone connotation. She looked up at the clock and saw it was time for school to begin.

—Come out with me, girls, and we'll pick up the kids at the playground. You can practice a run-thru before we go to the studio. The girls looked up—unsmiling, still lost in the hundred horses of their collage. A little fresh air before morning announcements, Sylvia continued, knowing a break would help relieve the tension of anticipation for this event. Other class members had shared with the school in these morning forums where

the pledge was recited by students, lunch menu and other news read by student announcers and, as today, a special class project presented over the TV monitors perched in a corner of each classroom throughout the school.

It was February. The white light of the winter sun framed geometric shadows of the overhang supports along the corridor in wide swaths. Sylvia and her charges walked toward the blacktop where students waited in line. The girls danced around their teacher like fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The air was cool but pleasant, filled with the rusty scent of dried grass stirred up from children's playground games. Voices chanting singing games, urgent shouts from a touch football game and punctuated laughter all mingled and ricocheted through the long narrow space they trod. The sounds opened up like a big bowl and pushed at them from all sides as they broke out on to the field of morning recess.

—All these kids will be watching us, Candice whispered solemnly to Jennifer. Jennifer looked back and said nothing. On the large rectangle of blacktop framed by two basketball hoops students were already standing in line, crouching of sitting on their backpacks reading. Trained by hours of regimen the lines neatly trailed back from a yellow perimeter line of the ball court. A Frisbee landed near Sylvia's feet and she stopped, picked it up, and threw it awkwardly toward the direction of its origin.

—I'm afraid I'm not very good, she laughed. She followed the arching yellow disc with her eyes as it twisted to vertical and rolled like a wheel along the ground.

Students from the playground converged on the little troupe and surrounded Sylvia like autograph seekers. She stopped to let two girls hug her waist from each side and reciprocated with short pats to their backs.

—Good morning, Sylvia's warm voice.

—We're on TV today, someone said.

—The Horseback Riding Club will share some of their projects.

—We all get to go—Jeannine Welsh, a redheaded girl with a splash of freckles on her milk face, looked up at Sylvia.

—We certainly do, Sylvia smiled. Mrs. Gentry wants us to sing Tyrone and Danny's rap song.

They came upon their line and more students clustered around Sylvia. The bell rang and students from the playground converged on the lines to go in.

—We have lots to do this morning. Sylvia implored her students with her eyes and they fell into a semblance of a short-order drill and headed in.

The school's television studio was located behind the checkout desk of the media center in a room with a wall of VCRs stacked for video feeds to classrooms. Small green lights indicated some were in use. Wires snaked on the floor to their left along the wall to the corner where a studio camera stood facing a large space with a backdrop of a Kokopelli figure with the words "Good Morning!" in construction paper above his plumed head.

The Horseback Riding Club members set their collage and other props on a small blonde formica table in front of the mural. Jennifer carried their hyperstudio video to Jim Hartman, a swarthy heavy-set man—the sponsoring teacher for morning announcements. He was moving chairs to make room for Sylvia's students to the right of the table. He nodded and took the cassette, then turned and walked to the VCRs, inserting the black plastic case into a slot of the machine on top. Two fourth grade boys appeared and

walked purposefully to the camera. One, with spikey hair tinted yellow took the handle sticking out of the back of the camera and moved it back from where Sylvia was arranging the students for the rap song in two rows, the first sitting cross-legged, the second on knees. The other fourth grader put on a head set and adjusted a microphone in front of the table. He lifted the horse collage off it territorially and Candice walked quickly over and snatched it away with a glare. Talking was hushed—for this was serious business to the students—being broadcast to the whole school would cause conversation and remarks from kids who would normally never even look at you.

Now Sylvia was talking quietly to the Horseback Riding Club who were gathered around. The four members then took their places, standing to the left of the table holding the collage in front of their waists, eight sets of small fingers—an ostinato across the top. Two fourth grade girls walked to the table and pulled back the chairs behind and scooted in. They placed sets of papers in front of them and both looked over at the horse collage with interest.

—Are we ready? Mr. Hartman said. He stood back at the VCR bank, prepared to cue the club's video. Nods from Sylvia and the technicians. One announcer cleared her throat and shuffled the papers in front of her.

—Count it out, Phillip, Jim spoke tersely.

—Quiet everybody, Phillip advised. He held his fingers up and counted. Five, four, three, two, one. The video monitor on the side of the room flashed to a tight shot of the two announcers.

—Good morning! They said together.

—I'm Maggie.

—I'm Jane.

—And this is the Kokopelli morning news! In unison again.

—Today is Friday, February 16th, Maggie said. For lunch today we're having corn dogs with French fries and an apple sauce cup. Mrs. Gentry would like to remind everyone that no running is allowed in the school corridors. The cement is a lot harder than your head.

—Fourth graders—it was Jane's turn. If you have not signed up for the faculty—student volleyball game, see Mrs. Hammil by next Wednesday. It should be lots of fun. The cameraman moved the lense back to Maggie, zoomed in too close and then adjusted it back.

—Mrs. Cranson's class is having a bake sale in the breezeway by the nurse's office today. Proceeds will help pay for a—Maggie hesitated not able to make out the next word—aquarium, she decoded—in the library. The camera shifted back to Jane again—a bumpy transition showing on the monitor like the announcers were encountering rough seas.

—And now for our Friday feature. Jane again. Ms. Tierra's class. The camera moved awkwardly up to frame Sylvia's face.

—Good morning, Sylvia said. We are going to share two projects with you. The first is a collage and video produced by our Horseback Riding Club—Jennifer Blakely, Candice Johnson, Teresa Gonzales and Chloe Moore. And then we'll sing a rap song about Martin Luther King written by Tyrone Jackson and Danny Winchell. The camera panned to frame the four girls holding the collage.

—Hi. I'm Candice Johnson and this is the collage we made for our club. We cut out all kinds of pictures from magazines and, uh, drew us riding our favorite kinds of horses. Teresa is on dun-colored Western Saddler, I'm riding a sorrel Quarter Horse, Chloe's on a Morgan, and Jennifer is riding her Pinto. The four horsewomen stood unblinking as the camera zoomed in and panned the collage.

—And now we'd like to show our hyperstudio video. It is a commercial for our dude ranch in Wickenburg called the *Way Out West Ranch.* The monitor flashed to the opening credits of the video—Jim made a perfect segue. The first scene was of the four horseback club members in their western wear with a backdrop of a desert mural in Sylvia's room that the kids had made. Each girl introduced herself and said something about the *Way Out West Ranch.* The next scene incorporated the hyperstudio program, showing a sequence of computer-drawn scenes of dudes standing by a corral. Horse whinny sound effects were heard behind a recorded narrative extolling the virtues of the ranch. Scenes continued to shift through various illustrations: of the camp cook, kids in bunk beds, the sun going down with guests around a fire—all crudely drawn but discernible. The video ended with closing credits and Roy Rogers singing, "Happy Trails." The camera careened back on to the announcers.

Jane's voice again:

—And now for the rap song. The camera shifted to Sylvia's seated class. Heads jerked up, eyes darted to the monitor, then to Tyrone and Danny who tensed to lead the rap. The soundman started a background percussion on a tape deck—four bars. Then the song—the class swaying as they chanted:

—Once upon a time in 1960—Things were bad and it wasn't nifty—Martin Luther King had a dream—to love one another and to care for each other!

Fight for the right—get down! Fight for the right—get down! Fight for the right—get down! Help your community help your town. So, you better get down!

The rap ended with cheers from the class. The announcers again, in unison this time:

—Thanks for watching and have a great day. The monitor faded to black.

The Girl Who Hated Writing, Part III: Reading the Story

Sylvia: *Like the whole idea of writing. If you're writing you reintroduce the concept of writing a story throughout the whole year. It's not just one lesson. If you're studying how to write a report in language arts, you might be revisiting* [it] *in science. Everything spirals and you revisit the concepts, the big ideas over and over again. Especially with my writing: the whole idea of forming ideas, putting them down, organizing them, writing drafts, revising. Those are in place and revisited. Matter of fact, a parent commented that their child did more writing in my third grade class than in sixth grade—because I felt like writing became a natural part, an expected part—you write all the time.*

A class of third-grade students sat in a large circle on a red shag carpet. It was the last day of school. Kids in shorts, t-shirts, 102 degrees outside—early June. The room was bare. This was their teacher's last year at Kokopelli. She was working on a doctorate. All of her stuff was in boxes, stacked in corners and against walls around the room. The students knew something was up—it was affecting her. She was different,

quieter. Like when her name changed back from Samanathan to Tierra. Today was "share your favorite work" day. Children were taking turns with their pet project of the year. Tyrone showed his water lily and talked about Monet. Candice read her poem about a horse. Chloe Moore sang a song with the keyboard. Marvin Goklish performed a Navajo Corn Dance. His dad came in and played the drum. The father was a big man and was wearing a blue cloth around his head. Jeannine Welsh had just read a story about the adventures of a lost cat. A plush toy Persian lounged in her lap. Four children had their hands raised indicating they would like a copy of the story. The teacher wrote on a paper. Jennifer knew she was next and was holding her story. Eyes watched her lift the manuscript.

—My story is called *The Girl Who Hated Writing.* She looked down at her hands holding the paper. The students shifted on the floor to find comfort, not knowing the story's length. Jennifer began. She sounded nervous at first but settled in so it became almost like talking. It was a good story, kind of funny. It was about how Jennifer didn't want to go to the first day of school because she hated to write. But her mother tricked her into it. Jennifer turned the page, continuing. The story explained how Jennifer didn't have her draft book out. Some of the kids laughed at the part where Ms. Tierra told her she would get a detention if she didn't take her draft book out. Ms. Tierra would never do that—but it gave more tension to the story, some of the kids thought. Jennifer turned to the last page and read:

Jennifer started to write and write and write. While Jennifer was writing, she was thinking about excitement and action. She continued to write and write until she had one page left in her draft book.

The teacher was surprised and said, "You actually like to write."

"No, well maybe. Just a little or maybe a lot," said Jennifer.

"I told you," said Ms. Tierra.

"You are right. So can I get my new draft book now?"

"Sure," said the teacher.

"I love to write," said Jennifer.

When Jennifer got home her mom said, "How was your day?"

"Great! I got a new draft book and I figured out I love to write. I just love to write, Mom."

"Wow, interesting. That is very important to me."

"Thanks, Mom, for caring."

"You're welcome."

"You are right, Mom," said Jennifer. "School is fun."

"I know," said Mom. "you should always listen to your mom because they are always right. Go to school and have fun."

The End

Exit Interview

The telephone rang three times—then her husband Cory's voice.

—Hello, he said.

—Hello. Is Sylvia there?

—Just a minute. Jay heard the phone placed on a surface—a jarring clang.

—It's for you, Sylvia. The offstage voice.

—Hello, Jay. How's the dissertation going? That perennially smiling voice.

—Still plugging away, Jay said. Getting closer now but I still have loose ends to tie up. Haven't formatted it. How did you do it on so little sleep?

—Chocolate and coffee. That was my secret weapon. She laughed that warm lost-in-the-idea-of-the-thought kind of laugh. Transcending the rational—into the netherlands. Cory was a help too, she continued. He did most of the cooking and cleaning during the last part of my dissertation. Especially after I had the revisions to do. That was very time consuming. I thought I would never get done.

—Well you did, Jay said mixing private envy with congratulations. How's your post graduate work going in Charlottesville?

—It is going well. We are doing a project where we are looking at school policy changes and how they affect teachers' classroom practices. How teachers have to constantly adjust to what are often very bureaucratic issues that have nothing to do with teaching but impact education at a very basic level, often adversely. I've had to acquaint myself with a whole new body of research.

—And what about life in your new city, Jay asked. Are you enjoying the culture?

—The music scene is actually very interesting. There are bands every night in some parts of the city—and all kinds of music. We haven't been to any plays yet but there is quite an active theater scene here. The weather is very different from the Southwest. The temperature got down to 58 degrees last night. I've had to buy some sweaters. That great laugh again. You could anticipate it coming about the third word because Sylvia's voice would begin opening up. I will never be able to laugh like that—too self-conscious or serious. Maybe both.

—Well, Sylvia. I have one last question for you. This one is particularly interesting to me because I think we are driving good teachers out of the profession by marginalizing it with low pay and, consequently, status. If you earned a decent salary—say $60,000 a year, would you still be teaching in an elementary classroom?

—Yes I would. I think I would.

—Why?

—I love to teach children. I love to see how they respond through thinking and learning. Their engagement with ideas. And I believe it is one of the places where you can make such a significant difference in the lives of people.

—Hmm. So here you are with a Ph.D. You have been through years of schooling, studied educational theory and practice, situated cognition—all that—and immediately landed a job at a Research One university. And you would teach elementary school again if you got a decent salary.

—I would return. I love to teach children.

POSTLUDE

Critical storytelling asks the reader to assist in a rewriting of the narrative, for him/her to interpret layers of the text and to be the concluder, the final voice in the collaborative process from writing to reading (Barone, 2000). Therefore, the findings are embedded in the "Interpretation." In order to ascribe/inscribe that narrative and remain true to Barone's critical storytelling methodology, it was necessary for implications, propositions, and conclusions to be woven into the text of the previous chapter. The answers crawled in and hid themselves among the leaves of the voices, the flowers in Miram's vases, tall proud ponderosas of Christopher Creek, the descriptions of Sylvia's students at work in the classroom. This "Postlude" does not represent a findings/conclusions chapter as found in a more traditional study. Those, after all, are woven among the sections of the "Interpretation." Instead, it shares after/thoughts and implications regarding the research adventure. It offers suggestions for implementing arts literacy programs in teacher education. It is hoped that the reader, if persuaded that arts literacy did enhance Sylvia's capacity to engage her students and give them alternative representational forms (Eisner, 1998) to express and interpret their work and worlds, has envisioned her/his own academic possibilities from an encounter with the previous chapter.

Below are some sketches of where we might start—reflections on Sylvia's development as an artist and implications of how Sylvia's classroom practices influenced her students' parents as they witnessed the academic, intellectual, and aesthetic growth of their children. Some implications for advocacy to involve children in the arts early and

often are included with this discussion. The concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) is revisited briefly as another point of inquiry for the reader should s/he want or need to explore a concept with which Sylvia deeply identified and often mentioned as a guide for her use of the arts and integrated learning. A sample methods course addressing personal literacy and approaches to incorporating arts components into subject matter is also offered. This example might give the preservice teacher the opportunity for a minimal conversancy in four areas of the arts: music, drama, dance, and visual art as well as ideas for their classroom application. One recurring theme arose during my analysis of the interviews that was intriguing enough to merit an afterthought: how Sylvia's work with her students seemed to empower them in unique ways. "Miniature college students" is how one articulate parent volunteer described Sylvia's students when they were at work on projects. Revisiting the "Interpretation," after reflection on these observations/impressions might release more findings or implications to the reader, strategies for replicating the kinds of pedagogical approaches deployed by Sylvia in one's own classroom, or ways to incorporate her unique preservice experiences in a college methods class.

The *Suite of Experience*, an arts-based response to my study of Sylvia and her roots and work as a classroom teacher, concludes this study (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Accompanying the music is a translation/rationale. It is intended as an *authoritative interpretation*. By that term, I suggest that my creation of and verbal response to the music was an attempt at a systematic representation of significant others and experiences in Sylvia's life, based on my understanding of music as a language or communicative representation. The listener is, of course, invited to respond interpretively to the musical

summary of my work according to her or his own experience and translative dispositions.

After/Thoughts

Emphases on Sylvia's Development as an Artist/Humanist:

For those who would have preferred more "nuts and bolts" descriptions of Sylvia's classroom practices regarding the arts and humanities, such explications were of less importance to me than recounting the life experiences that established those literacies and dispositions in their context. Sylvia did not arrive overnight to her place as a multiply talented artist and passionate advocate of humanities-based teaching. Her skills and dispositions were instilled early and consistently, and even hard-won as her burgeoning curiosity and the growing responsibilities of adulthood and marriage caused competing interests and time constraints. There are only 24 hours in the day and Sylvia, according to many accounts, was a perfectionist and workaholic—taking on a project and seeing it through with only excellence intended as the outcome. Her insistence on quality personal achievement while espousing strongly liberal cultural and educational views, and passionate belief in integration of subject matter, were driven by multiple factors—genetic predispositions, the modeling of her parents, the influence of mentors and peers and subsequent praise in response to her successes, decidedly liberal educational opportunities from elementary school on, the Montessori connection and, finally, the blessing of serendipitous and synchronous events that created what Dewey (1934) described as a Hegelian synthesis of experience geometrically building toward Sylvia's self-described search for self-actualization (Maslow, 1973).

Were Sylvia's circumstances and opportunities so unique that we cannot hope to expect to use the lessons of her life to become pedagogical models for preservice/life education to nurture other Sylvias in the classroom? Though we will never have another Sylvia Tierra, I believe that by examining the actors and significant actions in her life as they relate to her education, patterns emerge that suggest transformative ideas for parents and teachers to incorporate into their interactions with pre- and post-secondary students.

Student Empowerment in Sylvia's Classroom

Sylvia did not focus on purely academic or aesthetic objectives; she provided ample opportunities and venues for students to understand and practice justice and fairness. Many interviewees described her classroom with the terms *community* and *family*. When asked to elucidate evidence of this, they contended that unique, authentic democratic/socializing events had taken place that had changed their children's attitudes toward social issues. All the parents interviewed for this study strongly indicated that their children adapted well socially and seemed to have fewer reports about behavior issues. The parents lamented that this level of social, academic, and aesthetic success has eluded their kids in subsequent classes. One wished her son "had had Sylvia for his entire K-12 experience." Students in Sylvia's classes, according to their parents, had more friends the year they resided in her care.

Evidence from interviews with those parents and document review of class work indicated that Sylvia continually made her students aware of prejudice and injustice. She established as a norm that all people have certain rights; that you treat others with courtesy not because you might earn points but because it is an intrinsic right of theirs

and a sincere responsibility of yours. Just and caring behavior was rewarded by the students' daytime caregiver whom they wished to please. Once Sylvia established humanistic ways of acting toward and being/working with others as a class norm, then set them to work on cooperative ventures, her students seemed to shed predispositions about others and became citizens of a community, as reiterated in interviews by students, parents and colleagues. Sylvia created a classroom family whose members had an intrinsic concern for each other. One parent shared a story related to her from a chastened fellow parent that described how the latter had quietly explained to Sylvia at the first of the year that she didn't want her upper-class child sitting next to a certain child from a poorer neighborhood—the classic argument about working-class mentality and indolence rubbing off on more promising "betters" (Bowles, 1975). Sylvia had kindly but firmly explained that both children had a lot to teach each other. As it turned out, these two students became good friends and classroom colleagues.

According to two parents, one who substituted for Sylvia's class and the other who volunteered four hours a week, this abiding sense of humanity that Sylvia engendered, along with the intense project-based learning she encouraged students to achieve, helped them transcend traditional third grade gender barriers as well. These moms found that boys and girls tended to be more comfortable with and amiable toward each other than typical third graders, even visiting with each other as friends at recess or in the lunchroom. To those who have worked with third graders, the gender barrier at this age, though not absolute, can often be strictly observed in social circumstances.

While contemplating the shape that these last pages of my study would take, I have been reflecting on the potential ability of my "Interpretation" (written with the

intention that it could stand alone if need be) to persuade parents—including those in the career roles of legislator and policymaker—of the importance of developing personal arts literacy through an integrative education. Barone called for critical storytelling to move the debate of school reform away from theory and into narratives accessible to the public (1993b). Sylvia's classroom parents became convinced that her practice of introducing students to the arts, assisting them in developing conversancy, and using the aesthetic extensively in class projects, helped the students to learn on multiple levels. The parents believed this interaction with the arts offered their children expressive outlets that increased self-efficacy. The process motivated and sustained academic and aesthetic exploration. It also helped students, their parents contended, to make connections with and critically interpret the wider world.

So I am left contemplating whether those who carry the banner of the basic skills (Carlson, 1992) and standards-based learning (Jones, 1997; McNeil, 1987; Tanner, 1997) find my narrative of the "Interpretation" credible and persuasive. Will it assist them in perceiving an involvement in the arts as important to an educational experience and influence them toward the alternative, as Barone (2000) suggests is possible? The reader is invited to that task. Below are some more after/thoughts during that journey:

"She gave them confidence." Jim (a parent): *I'd like to add my two cents. I think for me, the greatest gift Sylvia gave those kids was confidence. They were fearless. She made them believe in themselves. They would ask questions without fear—and take risks. She gave them confidence.*

After an interview with an enthusiastic mother and her son, I was walking out to my car when the husband, who had just arrived home, walked hurriedly from the garage

to talk to me. He explained that he was most impressed by Sylvia's apparent ability to empower her students. He had accompanied them on a field trip to the Phoenix Art Museum and explained that the students were very bold in the way they conducted themselves at a place most had never visited. They were unafraid to ask questions of the docents, security guards and chaperones; they were self-directed, following Sylvia's advice, after viewing the exhibit, to go to a painting of their choice and do an activity, remaining self-directed and not self-conscious about other patrons walking by and looking over their shoulders. They were comfortable with adults in ways this father found uncanny. Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) asserted that the concept of childhood as distinct and separate from adulthood is a social construction of only 150 years. They posited that psychologists such as Erik Erickson and Jean Piaget, on the heels of the 19th century social reformation movement that removed children from the workplace and gave them attributes that called for specific kinds of nurturing responses toward them, also planted assumptions about biological or developmental stages. This separation subsequently planted ways of behaving toward children that were separate from those toward adults—a transformation that called for protection and nurturance, but also condescension. Sylvia seems to have helped her students to transcend, at least to a degree, that constructed separation by convincing them that they had the intellectual, academic and aesthetic powers no less powerful or sophisticated than those of adults.

Teaching the concept of flow. I have mentioned that one parent entered Sylvia's classroom and marveled at what she described as "miniature college kids at work." Students were serious, engaged in their efforts, apparently finding the activities meaningful and fulfilling. They worked assiduously and cooperatively on their

projects—at times the noise of the room rising to a din, the parent said. Yet, activity was directed and intense—and usually resulted (according to those who witnessed—parents, principal, colleagues and Sylvia herself) in excellent work. On numerous occasions, Sylvia mentioned Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) concept of flow to me. She consciously attempted to incorporate his theories on how active belief and engagement in work creates feelings of worth, transcendence of time and states of bliss. This parent may have been observing flow in action. I have personally encountered what I believe are flow experiences while involved in activities where extended periods of concentration are required, including music and written composition, playing chess and fly fishing. For me, flow is a kind of creative cruise control.

Liberal learning and interdisciplinary approaches. The description of Sylvia's elementary school in Sri Lanka suggests that she experienced a liberal arts education with opportunities for arts-rich experiences. With her mother's strong Montessori influence and being raised in a family culture where connecting ideas was important, Sylvia received strong messages about the significance of interdisciplinary learning. And that, along with her good fortune to find worthy mentors in high school and college, culminated in deep understandings of the arts and humanities and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the students in her own classroom.

Toward this end, it is also possible to set up a teacher preparation curriculum where the humanities are given their due; where courses are truly interdisciplinary so that prospective teachers, whether primary or secondary, have positive experiences with and models for integration of subject matter. Nussbaum (1997) found rich pockets where the liberal arts are threaded in innovative ways to truly show their implicit interconnections.

The Alternative Higher Education Network (www.endrev.org/ahen), for example, is devoted to increasing interdisciplinary liberal arts learning at the college level. The Johnson Center for Integrative Studies at Hampshire College founded a network to provide a forum for connecting and sharing ideas related to alternative post-secondary educational practices. On the elementary level, the interdisciplinary concepts promoted by Dewey are explicated in a recent monograph that studied his experimental school at the University of Chicago. *Dewey's Laboratory School: Lessons for Today* (Tanner, 1997) chronicles the application and results of the educational philosopher's pedagogy, potentially instructive for those who would plan programs for interdisciplinary learning at the elementary level. As the author states:

> The young child is an integrated being who by nature sees the world in an integrated way and whose mind seeks connections. But the school teaches him early to see the world in fragments named science, art social studies, or reading. Later this is bound to cause problems because whatever one's calling, one must connect it with other areas in order to function. No field exists in isolation and the curriculum (whether in elementary school or college) must be designed to show students how to make the connections. (p. 38)

Tanner (1979) examined the history of the lab school from administrative practices to the manner of ordering classroom supplies—illuminating the development and maturity of the school for those who wish to see Progressive theories put into successful practice. In my view, this book offers a worthy template for those interested in examining how Progressive education moves from theory into practice.

The richness of Sylvia's story. The story of Sylvia Tierra, in large part, seemed to tell itself. She is, in many ways, a uniquely talented and gifted person. However, she and I remain convinced that others, if given the opportunities afforded her in childhood, could grow up to be conversant in the arts, philosophy and science. But for this to take

place, a number of events need to occur. For me, the first pragmatic action is for teacher education programs to engender a personal and professional interest in teachers to learn personal conversancy in the arts and in turn, to share their expertise with students. Toward that end, a proposed arts literacy course is included in Appendix A that is based on the narrative of the previous chapter.

And so I am comfortable with my story choices for the "Interpretation." They seem natural as phenomenological epiphanies (Barone, 2000; Greene, 1977; Grumet, 1998; Rorty, 1989). Selected moments, often on the periphery of a big event, reveal much to us because our senses are heightened by the main "show" of our lives. Small and seemingly disparate moments revealed to me in Sylvia's life helped me recognize the importance of experiences that may stand alone as insignificant but add up to carry much meaning and weight. Sylvia had many rich and aesthetic experiences and was, therefore, brought closer to *aliveness* (Greene, 1977). I am drawn back to Maslow's (1973) checklist for self-actualized individuals: personal growth and fulfillment, expression of special talent(s), and the proactive search for reaching one's human potential to the fullest possible degree. Though Sylvia has taught me many lessons through my research, perhaps the greatest is that one must always strive for personal best in anything attempted. Her work demonstrates a consistent search for excellence. The root causes are many for such a disposition. They can be traced back, I believe in her parents' *possibilitizing* (see Grumet, 1978) their future and hers.

The best stories, I feel, are research-based, even if the data sometimes resides deep within us—as a piece of the collective unconscious, (as Campbell [1973] notes, referencing Jung). I am convinced that this story was within me because it makes deep

internal sense and, in a way, because Sylvia and I are soul mates— travelers of the arts and humanities, of living the creative life—the gypsy artists. Sylvia is quite extraordinary in many areas, but chose education because there was something in the eyes of a child that drew her in—like a spell cast upon her she had the need to look deeply into that soul and help it become. Her motivation was not consciously altruistic. Perhaps it was even something of a need. In one interview, Sylvia spoke of a need to share with children the kind of rich arts experience given her. And children intrigued Sylvia with the academic curiosity of a child psychologist. She was also fascinated by their becoming—each little being's potential as a fully functioning human operating in the world—Maslow's hierarchy again. The Hopi have a word for the active process of a leaf in its various stages of development. Our closest equivalent would be *leafing-from-tiny-to-full.* Is Sylvia's curiosity for children and their potential realizable in others? I believe it is. Her story enriched my life and its possibilities. I believe it can enrich other teachers as well, because Sylvia's experiences and successes fused in unique and powerful ways to create an educator who went beyond good teaching practices, by virtue of her deep intellectual, philosophical and practical knowledge of the arts and humanities. These tools coalesced a series of classroom skills that made learning rich and meaningful in unusual and powerful ways.

Hope for Arts Literacy

Establishing literacy in the arts may have its best hope through teachers who learn the skills, the language and establish engagement in arts activities as a norm. Sylvia did multiple arts activities on a regular basis with her students. More importantly,

though, I believe she modeled the significance of naturally including them in everyday life—hanging her own artwork in the room, using photographs for bulletin boards, telling stories of her travels and playing the music she had bought (one of Sylvia's hobbies is to collect tapes and CDs of regional music she finds in her travels). The parents of Sylvia's former students consistently described the budding of their children's art literacy through the instruction and modeling that they encountered with Sylvia. Children were empowered by her conversancy and the zeal with which she shared it. The homes of Sylvia's former students that I visited had their artwork prominently exhibited. In my years as an elementary general music teacher I encountered many educators who devalued their own intrinsic aptitude in music and visual art, the two media most called upon traditionally for use in the classroom. When I solicited assistance with those unrelenting music programs that general music teachers are required to do (e.g., holidays, Spring) few teachers felt confident enough to step forward for help with choreography or drama. Regarding the latter, working with theater translated to classroom teachers almost exclusively as the act of getting students to memorize lines of a play. In my 13 years of teaching, the notion of using process drama (Taylor, 1998) or other approaches with improvisation (see Boal, 1998) was never evident. Teachers relied on arts specialists to provide the services to their students because many had been deprived of the opportunities Sylvia was given at home and in her schooling experiences. To me, they seem unlikely candidates for developing the integrated aesthetics that Sylvia created in her classroom.

In many cases, the parents of America's children missed the opportunity to develop arts literacies and it is too late to give them the gift. For the next generation,

however, I believe it is opportune to begin infusing arts training in preservice teacher education. It is possible to give young teachers the skills to develop conversancy, even expertise in arts areas, in turn modeling interest in and teaching aptitude for the arts to the students. Then, if parents witness the level of engagement in their children's learning that Sylvia's parents attested to, that may build advocacy for the inclusion of more significant arts programs in the schools. When those students who have practiced the arts in school become parents, perhaps they will continue personal involvement in the arts as Sylvia did from her childhood, and model that interest for their own children. I propose a long term and indirect process for spreading an aesthetic gospel across America.

An Arts Literacy Course to Fulfill Teacher Education Arts Requirements.

Nancy (a colleague): *She* (Sylvia) *said the arts reflect the civilization and without them you don't have civilization.*

Greene (1995) contends that the arts offer personal forums on issues that directly affect our lives. They allow us to examine ourselves more objectively through the characters who suffer sadness and scorn so that we might not; who experience abounding joy and celebration so we may too; who think and live honorable lives and model for us to try. The arts provide curiosity, heightened sensitivity toward artifacts, phenomena. They fill one with the mystery of all things. The use of the arts in the ceremonies of Native cultures induced the wonder and fear of the great beyond and within and established and maintained community (Campbell, 1973). Barone (2000) believes that if the "New American Pedagogue . . . invites the student into the having of aesthetic experiences that offer wondrous options for the future," s/he (the student) may discover

> new options for interpreting the world and new possibilities for living. She may have gained greater control over her destiny. She may have redescribed her *self.* With the guidance of a wise and empathetic teacher, she may have written some mighty strong poetry. (p. 130)

Like Dewey (1938/1980), Barone advocates everyday aesthetics as a means for developing personal identity as a story and learning to redescribe it in original ways according to, not some formula prescribed by another, but toward an authentic existence. Not just a redescribed *self* in isolation though. Rather, as a "social being and a moral agent, a responsible citizen of a shared community who, with others, through aesthetic projects, are discovering authentic lives as well" (Barone, 2000, p. 125). The "strong poet[s]" (Sylvia's students) revealed in my "Interpretation" became literate in the arts and the resultant increased aesthetic sensibility enhanced their educational experiences. One means to introduce students to conversancy in arts might be to offer preservice teachers the opportunity to deepen their understanding of arts disciplines and give them the skills to perform and integrate these aesthetic areas across the curriculum, as Sylvia did. By doing so, in some formal way, I believe the future teachers and their students will benefit from the richness of aesthetic learning.

The course syllabus that outlines a possible approach for educators to become more deeply involved in the arts is included in Appendix A. I envision it as a three-semester class in the development of dance, music, visual art, and drama. The planning phase could include representatives from the Colleges of Music, Dance, Art, Drama and Education in a series of forums to first dialogue, then plan an interdisciplinary approach to teaching personal literacy in the arts in the spirit of Eliot Eisner's (1998) "forms of representation." It would be important for the content to have some history to ground the

disciplines and give them cultural context, but to keep that grounding global, in the sense that arts aesthetics are not just confined to European practices. It will be important that, as Noddings (1992) cautions, the subject matter not be detached from student experience. It would, in my view, be important for the activities to be meaningful and project-based and for options to be wide regarding individual student preferences for developing literacy in the arts. For example, the musical instruments one would like to learn, a particular medium or media one would feel most expressive with in visual art, particular dance forms or approaches that are the best fit and preferences in drama that most align with ones communicative style. For I see this first as a way for the teacher education students to discover themselves through art: what areas of aesthetics expression are most individually resonant with their singular worldviews and expressive natures? For many, after all, this may be the first opportunity to explore in depth, working in all four arts areas (McKean, 1997).

Such a course would offer the kinds of collaborative communion as in the relationship between fellow Shakespearians Sylvia and Chandrika, and the Horseback Riding club recounted in the "Interpretation." Creating in the arts can be powerful and meaningful as an individual process. When it is shared with others, such as playing music as an ensemble, I have found it to be among the most rewarding and fulfilling of all human interaction.

The proposed syllabus also lists a component for the study of integrating the arts across the curriculum. Sylvia excelled in finding opportunities for her students to undertake projects that used an art form as a springboard to address concepts. One example was her approach to teaching her students about how life was in prehistoric

times. One group of students addressed this objective by writing and performing a time-travel play. With the classic preoccupation of third graders for scatology, it is not surprising that the plot called from them to be flushed down a toilet into the distant past. While there, they had a number of experiences with people in a stone-age village. To make the dialogue as authentic as possible (a requirement of Sylvia), they researched the lifestyles of period hunter-gatherers, read all relevant juvenile novels on the subject and developed the story based on their findings. The result: an entertaining and compelling method for motivating the students to do research and analyze secondary source material, compare and contrast two very different cultures, write and synthesize their findings in a play that included costumes, props and set—an exercise in the use of various arts skills. The culminating event was to stage it for the class.

Sylvia systematized her steps for introducing and guiding her students through such projects as these that, while social studies-based, covered subject areas across the curriculum that integrated science, math, language arts, and, of course, the arts. Therefore, it seems feasible to include methods for this kind of arts integration as a component of a rigorous course on arts literacy.

Suite of Experience

The muse of music is an elusive collaborator. It remains astounding to me—the volume of melodies, known and unknown on this earth. Many songs are beautiful—timeless. Others wallow in mediocrity. Stringing a limited series of tones into a tune that is unique in all the world as well as memorable is the quest of every songwriter, every composer. That hook, the series of chords that is pleasing to so many sensibilities and

aural tastes, is a holy grail. Steven Foster, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Lennon and McCartney, George Gershwin—the geniuses of the medium stand out.

An Analysis of the Music for "Suite of Experience"

Our lives have been permeated with music from birth. The cliché that it is all around us is accurate. For those of us who have grown up in the dominant cultures of North America, most music has been in the form of conventional harmony. Our ears demand a certain measure of consonance in musical melody, harmony and form. Consonance is the term that refers to this use of conventional musical tonality. It is the use of traditional Western European harmony, from folk and popular forms to classical music beginning with the first experiments of Gregorian plainsong to the Romantic (Beethoven, Chopin, and Brahms) and Neoromantic (Rachmaninoff and the vast majority of movie scores you have encountered).

You may insist that you know little about music. Perhaps so technically. Yet your ears have been trained to discern musical relationships and to associate them with certain events and dispositions. Much of this unconscious instruction has come through television drama and film. Certain conventions are followed unfailingly in these media, for they provide references and buttons to push various kinds of emotional response. Your taste in music has been constructed through the pedagogy of your experiences. Not only the harmonies and tempos (speed) of the pieces, but their instrumentation as well. Try to picture a tender love scene with trumpets and tubas substituted for violins. It would not work, unless the intent was comedic or satirical, because we associate the violin with passion, sensitivity and charged emotion. Composers of the incidental music

for drama must follow the rules of conventional taste or they risk not engaging the listener in the media work; therefore, they risk losing your interest and crafting a "flop." It is true with even the most experimental films that scores often remain stuck in the 19th century. Such popular music has lagged behind other collaborative forms. The references and connections made from past experiences with music and its associations with those accepted harmonic and formal conventions are difficult if not impossible to break. It would require a whole new set of referential experiences of the listener to reframe emotional responses to those alternative musical forms.

An overview of melodic and harmonic structure. The opposite of consonance is dissonance—the use of tones in the scale that are not normally associated with each other in the context of a chord (three or more tones played simultaneously) or harmony (generally two or three but as many as five tones together). Renaissance composers first toyed with dissonance, but only using passing tones—that is, short bursts where the tones clash and immediately resolve (returned to consonance). Before that, certain musical tones were never played in combination. In the Medieval church, the tritone (or, in the C scale, c to f#) was referred to as a *devil's interval*. The contemporary ear is certainly used to dissonance. It is deployed in drama to reference strange, frightening, unearthly or violent phenomena. In short, it is used to create cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1967). In this suite I have attempted to remain within conventional musical language, in part, because Sylvia and my audience understand this dialect and because, in spite of my interest in and knowledge of wider forms, it is still what I speak best.

A short primer on the diatonic or *do re mi* scale for the uninitiated is in order here. Also, during this discussion, chords will be designated by italicized upper case

letters (i.e., *C*) while notes will be lower case italics (*d, e, g*). References to the home tone or chord refer to that which defines the scale. In other words, the scale of C generally begins and ends on a C chord and often the c tone.

The most stable musical relationship known to ears raised on European harmonies involves use of the interval the octave and then that of a perfect fifth. In the major scale of C, that would be the G because it is five notes of the scale from C: c, d, e, f, g. Pythagoras, the Greek mathematician, discovered that by touching a stretched string at its halfway point, it caused a tone to sound at an octave (c above c) is a 1:1 relationship. Touching the string at a third length derived a perfect fifth above the home tone (c). This is a simple relationship (2:1) demonstrates a kind of musical logic. Touching the note at a fourth length causes a Perfect fourth to sound. A fifth of the way down the string provides a major third. When you blow through a ram's horn these same tones are available. The regal sounds of ancient Sumerian or Egyptian bugles as popularized in Hollywood epics, including Cecil B. Demille's movies, are based on the limitation bugle (valveless) horns provide. Much preliterate music of the world contains these tones as well. Therefore, from the most ancient cultures, the main tones of what we refer to as the Aeolian (major) scale have been available in nature as materials for use in song. Taps, the bugle call for lights out in the army camp, is comprised of these tones. The simple relationship actually suggests a sense of peace and tranquility. It also can reference innocence and pastoral simplicity.

The Suite

This *Suite* crosses the intersection between meaning in discursive and musical narrative. Perhaps the most systematic scholarly analysis of music as a set of meaning constructs (though it focuses its discussion narrowly on Western harmony) is Meyer's *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1965). The author defines two schools of musical analysis. The first represent the *absolutists* who believe music has its own internal logic. It can be structurally discussed in terms of an elegant aural-mathematical system. Serial (12-tone) composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, and experiementalists like John Cage, wrote instrumental puzzles where chance and dissonance were the norm. *Referentialists*, on the other hand, believe music can communicate extra-musical concepts, allusions and emotional states. Examples of latter include Romantic and Impressionist composers, the accompanying music to Japanese Kabuki theatre, and sacred music of preliterate cultures, such as the song cycles of the Hopi (Waters, 1984). Meyer, a referentialist, contends that music has emotive powers through harmonic manipulation. Composers recognize ability of music to cause affective response. As discussed above, our dispositions toward music are constructed by our listening experiences.

I have chosen to close this study with musical narrative in the form of vignettes describing important moments or actors in Sylvia's life—individual themes for each as did Prokoviev in *Peter and the Wolf.* Seven pieces are included in the Suite. They are presented in chronological order and include:

1. *Princess* (Figure 1)
2. *The Mother* (Figure 2)
3. *Austin, America* (Figure 3)
4. *The Arizona Trail* (Figure 4)
5. *The Tempest* (Figure 5)

6. *Lament/Lullaby* (Figure 6)
7. *Sylvia Rhapsody* (Figure 7)

The first two pieces of the suite (*Princess* and *The Mother*) represent Sylvia while growing up.

Princess. The opening piece remains close to consonance but includes a surprise at the start of the first section to suggest the beginnings of complexity. The first tone (c#) passes from dissonance to consonance (d). An ostinato remains underneath to suggest stability and activity. It provides a subtle counterpoint. When the structure shifts to the next chord (C), the melody repeats the beginning of rhythmic figure, including the passing dissonance, yet alters that rhythm to offer another allusion to increasing complexity and growth. A new motif is introduced and the rhythmic structure altered for interest and intrigue. The final phrase (beginning with the A minor chord) climbs up to the fifth for tension and releases back to home, representing the resolved storybook childhood of Sylvia (Figure 1).

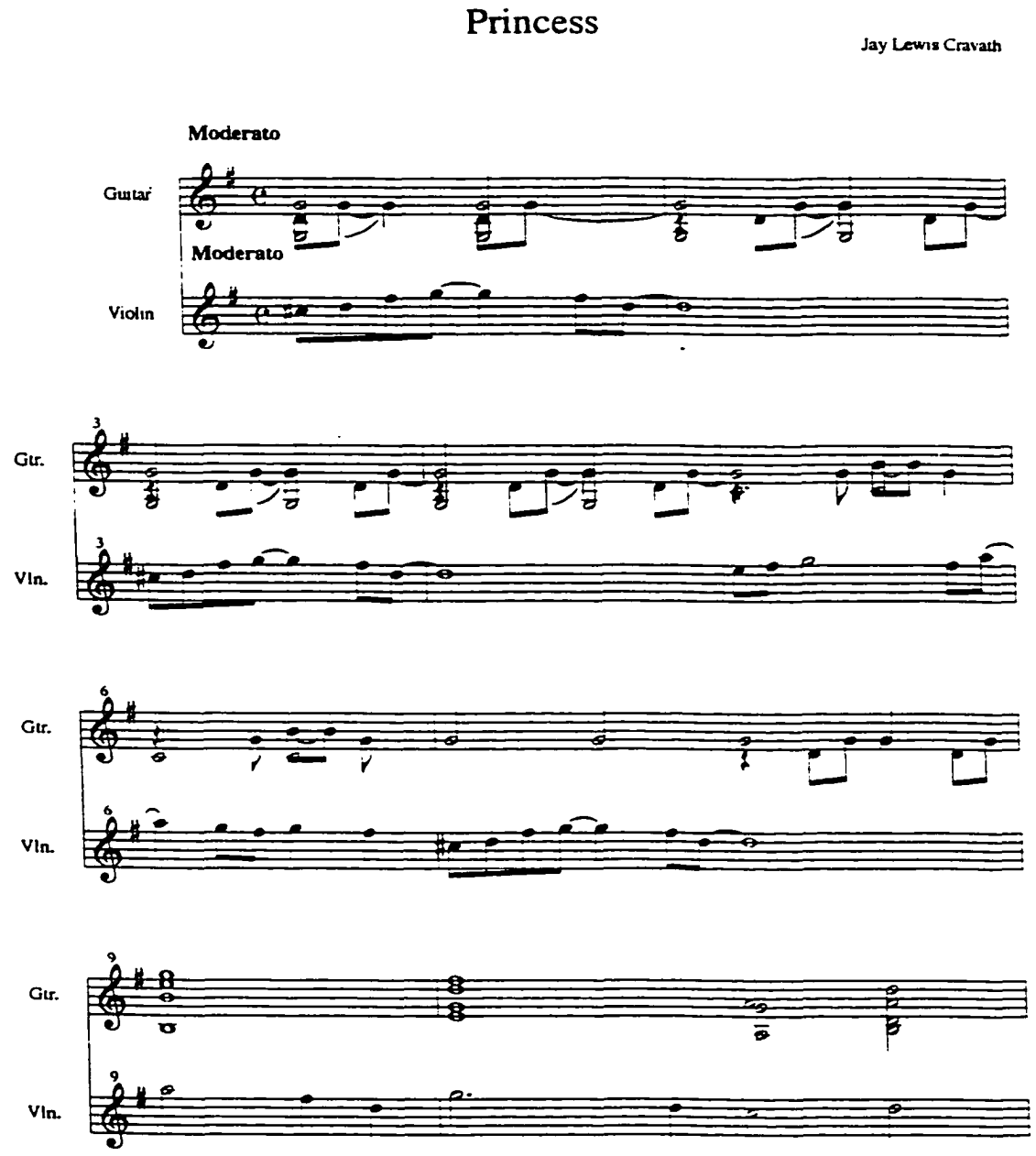


Figure 1. *Princess*

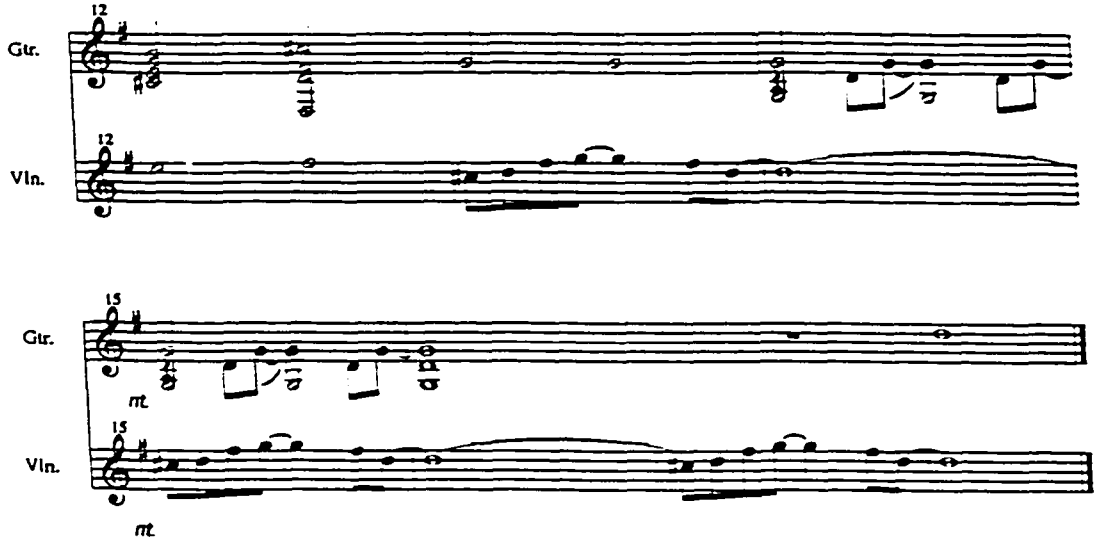


Figure 1, continued

The Mother. Perhaps no single influence on Sylvia's teaching practices and avocation toward the arts was deeper than that of her mother. From Sylvia's first memory of painting in the backyard of their Sri Lankan home when she was barely two years old, to the Montessori schools Miram opened in Austin, Texas and put her unique pedagogical stamp on, the abiding influence on Sylvia's notions of art, aesthetics and learning were guided by her mom. Her mother was and is a complex human being—capable, giving, nuanced—so deeply concerned about her daughter. Miram sent a lengthy email to me describing various phases of her life with Sylvia. The artist in Sylvia was surely nurtured most by those early experiences in Sri Lanka at the easel with her jars of paint—even as a toddler wielding a giant brush, splashing her colors freely. This piece attempts to capture that kind of harmonic flow I felt from my own mother's love and attention and memories of the comfort and solace from the gentle maternal fire.

Opening with a tonic ninth chord (*A* with an added *b* note—*a* being the first tone of the scale and *b* the ninth note after counting an octave). Comfort and complexity are inherent in this intervallic relationship. Unfortunately, in the 70s it was liberally milked in popular music to the point of the maudlin. *Bless the Beasts and the Children* by the Carpenters comes to mind as well as the music of Michelle LeGrand. In those pieces the ninth chord was the centerpiece of the song and slavishly overused. Nevertheless, it can lend an ethereal and spiritual quality to a song, not unlike my own recollections of my mother. In the guitar arpeggio I incorporate the ninth more as a passing tone. The remainder of the piece retains a strong tunefulness. The interlude represents a contemplative side of the mother nature, while the final theme is a variation of a familiar lullaby—that sacred musical communion between mother and child (Figure 2).

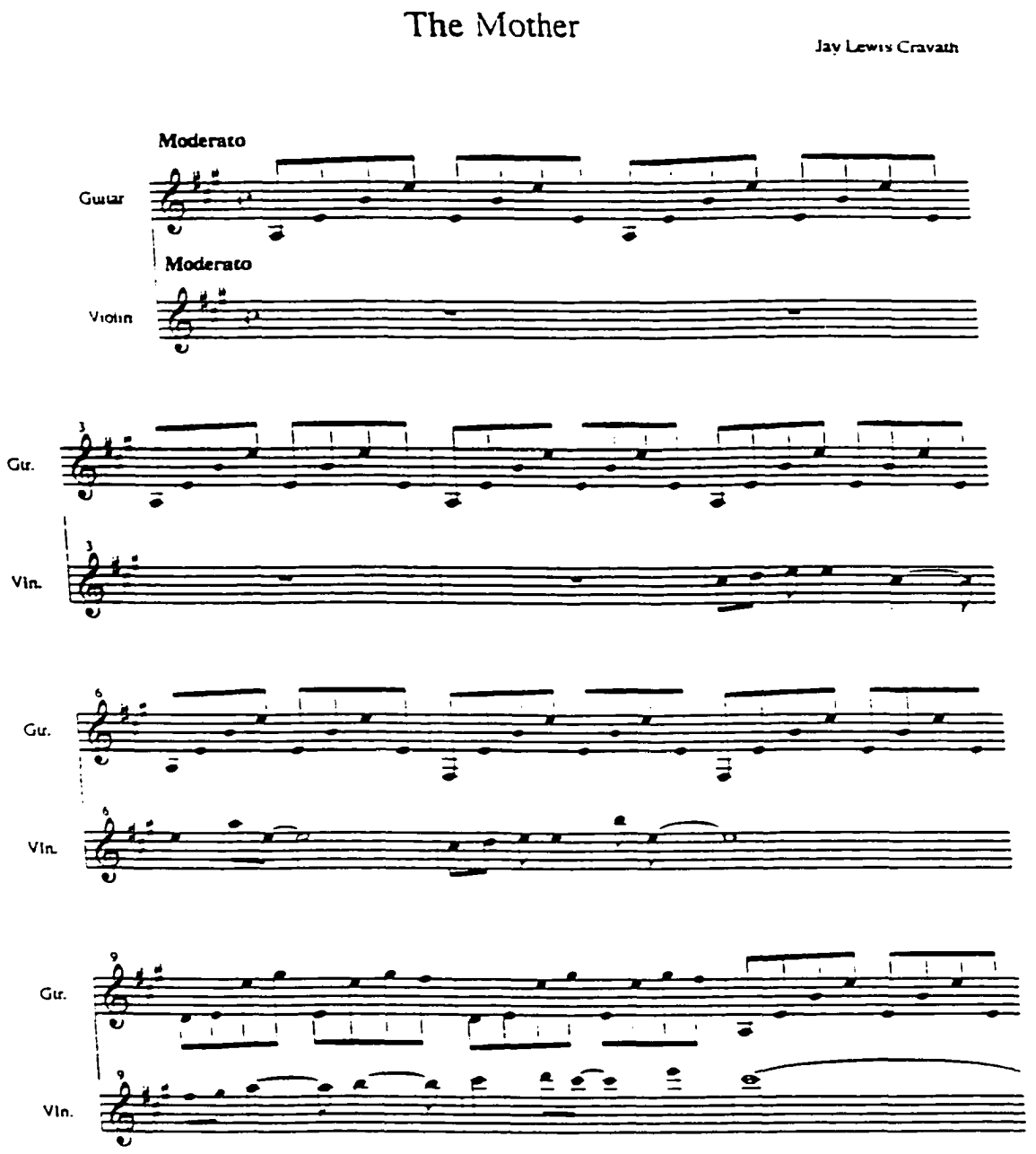
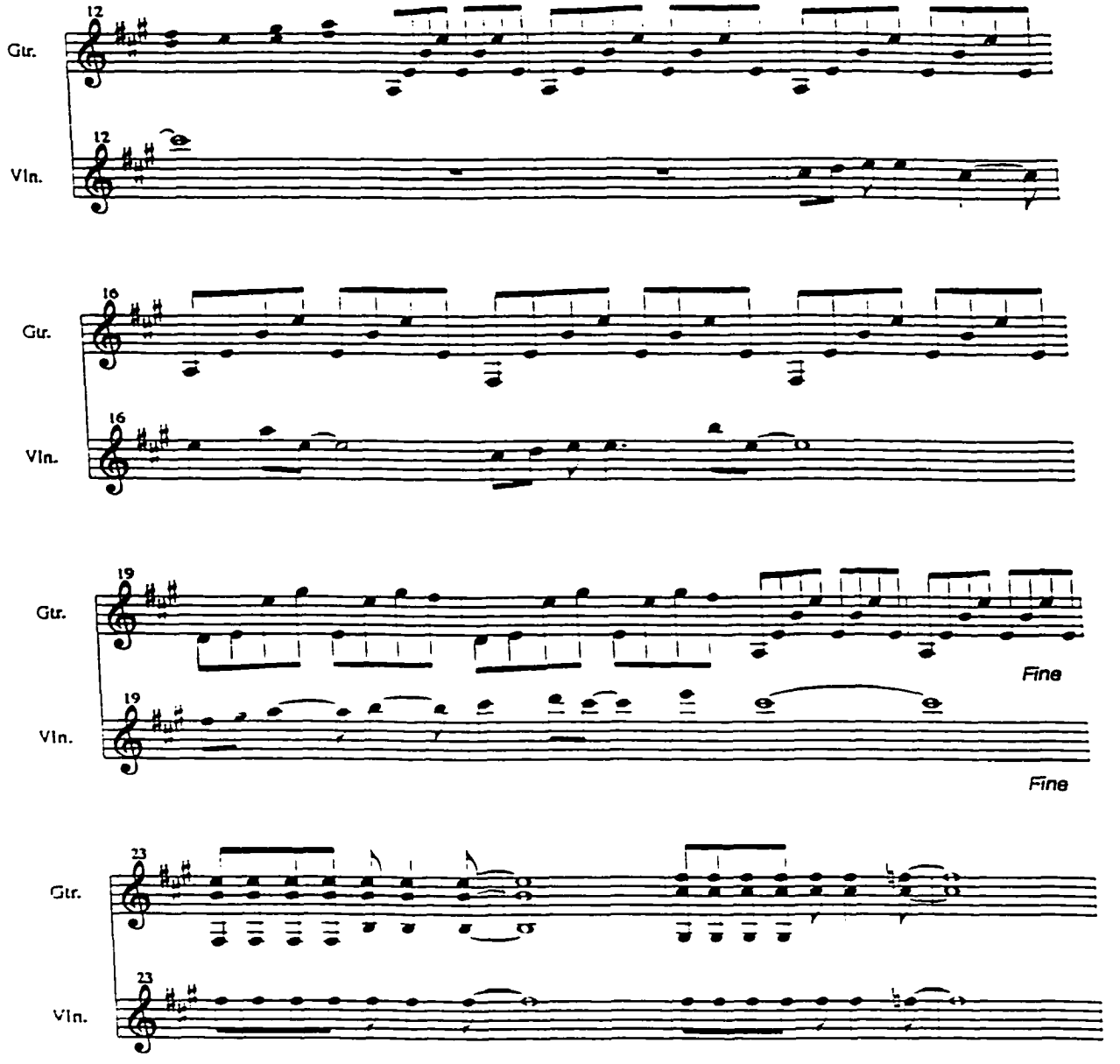


Figure 2. *The Mother*



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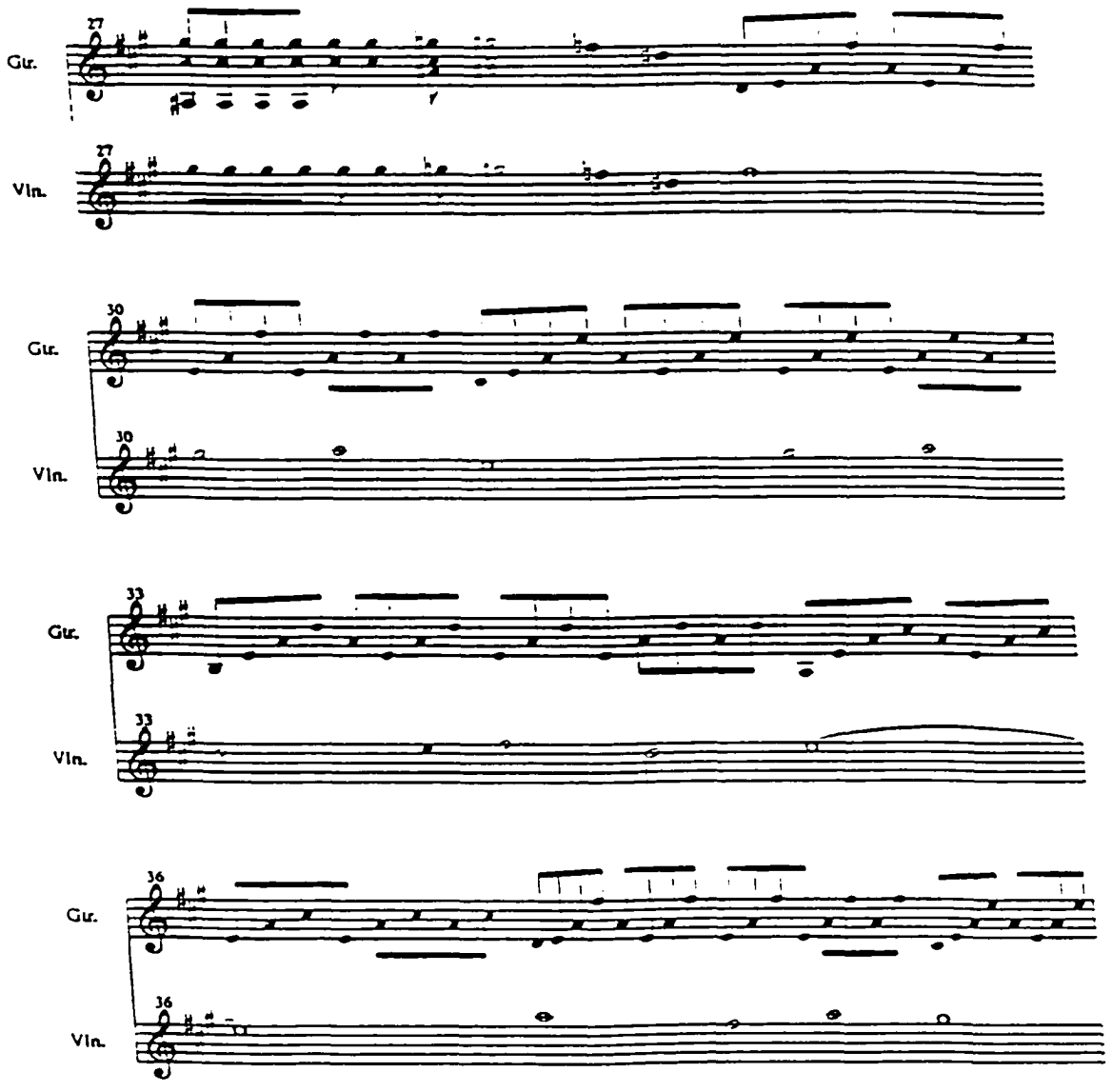

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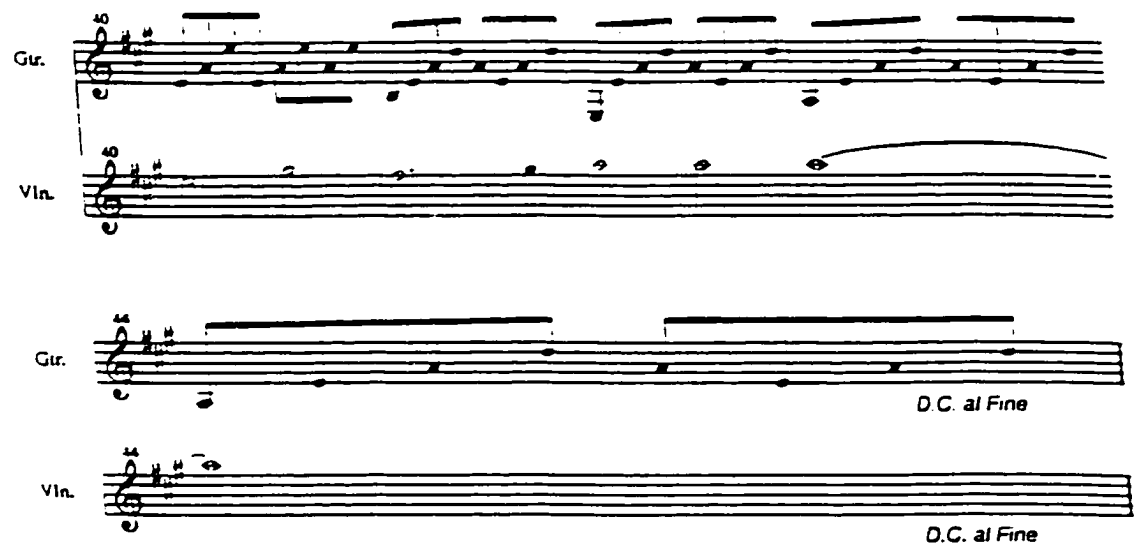

Figure 2. continued

The next two pieces represent Sylvia's move to the United States and, after marriage, subsequent relocation to Arizona.

Austin, America. Sylvia and her family, with the civil war looming in Sri Lanka, saw America not only as a land of opportunity, but as a haven from the undercurrent of prejudice among the disparate ethnic groups and religious faiths in their homeland. When conventional western music seeks to convey nationalism or expressions of religious sentiment, it brings out the faithful Pythagorean intervals—the third, fourth, fifth and octave. I have done so here with *Austin, America* to suggest the hope offered to the Sierra family as they arrived to the promise of a new life. The listener may reference a patriotic song or even an African American spiritual. Music of this type incorporates uncomplicated melody lines (note the predominance of quarter notes) and subtle shifting chords (half note combinations for the most part. Tension is created to keep this anthem from becoming too conventional—some mild dissonance (that is, 4^{th}, 6^{th}, and minor 7^{th} chords) occurs throughout the piece.

Lyrics are included here. I found that some of the pieces of the suite invited them or, in this case—as *Austin, America* was written after September 11—almost wrote themselves as a personal response to that tragedy. For me, the piece has the quality of an African-American spiritual—simple and direct simple chord changes and a dream of a better life, as the lyrics tell us (Figure 3):

Liberty our door is open
Toil and glory are at hand
Bring your trodden bring your tattered
Enter into freedom's land

All are children in this garden
All are seeds of God's great plan
Gentle with the morning's calling
Gentle woman, gentle man

(Bridge)
All the world is sad and weary
Everywhere I roam
Join us in a sweet tomorrow
Welcome to our fold

Come together all ye people
Toil again and rest to pray
Using love we'll change the story
Peace will come on earth some day

Austin, America

Jay Lewis Cravath

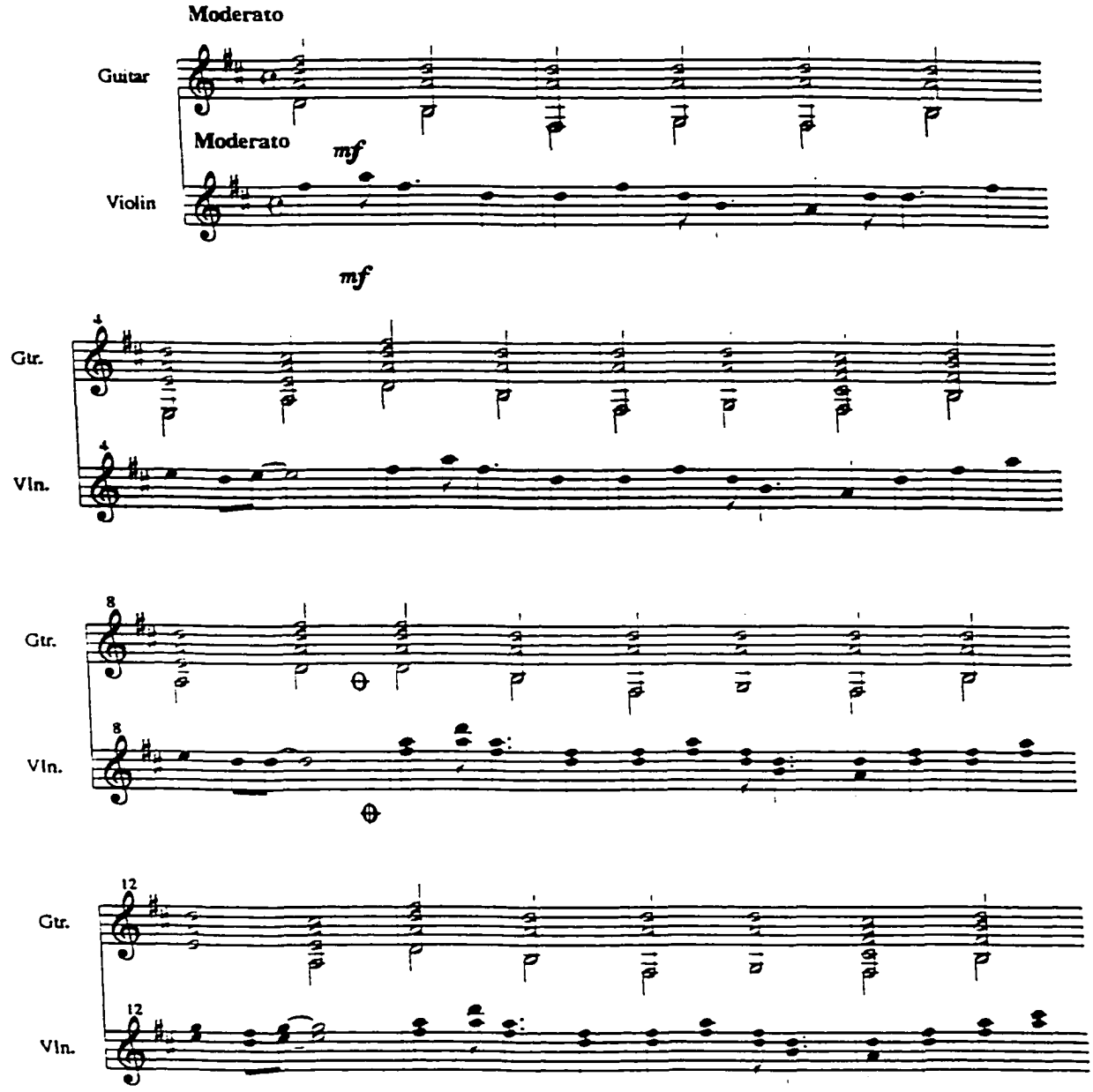

Figure 3 *Austin, America*

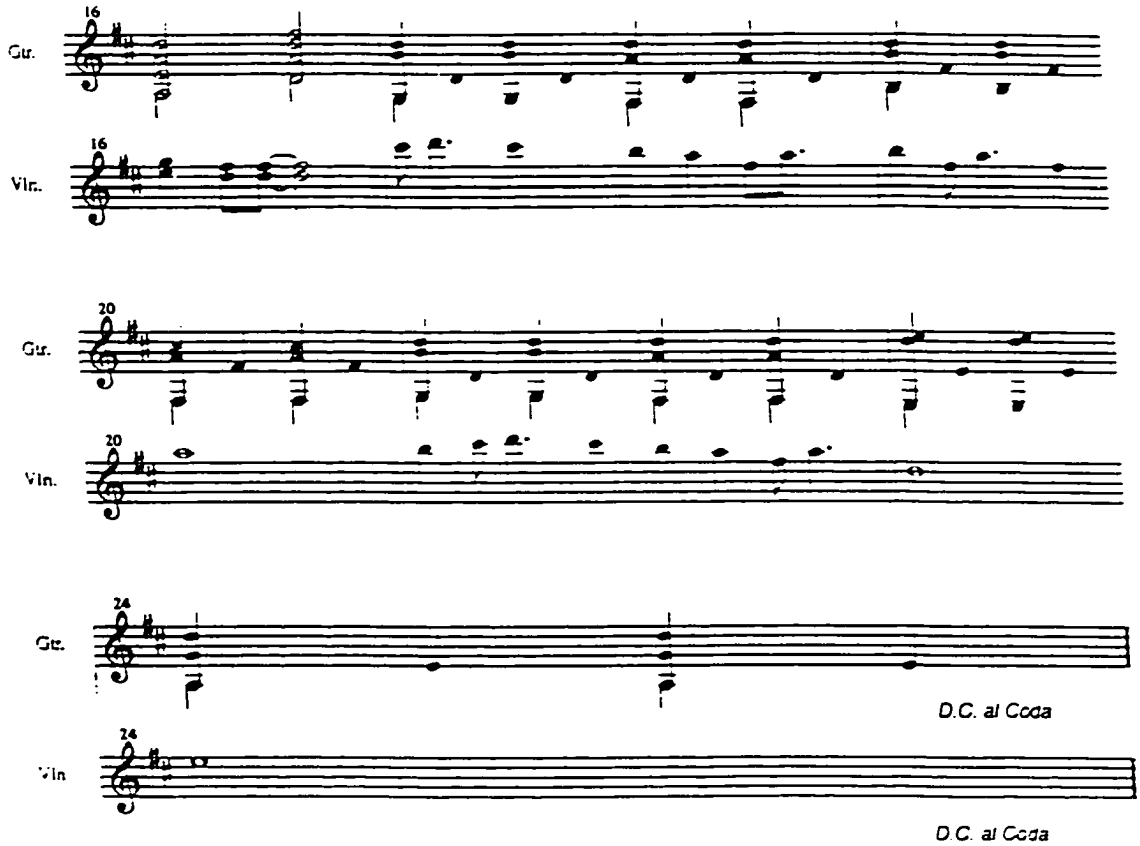

Figure 3. continued

The Arizona Trail. A caricature of a classic cowboy trail riding song this piece includes the triplet rhythmic ostinato of: quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth. It suggests Sylvia's interest in the lore of the West as she anticipated the richness of its history and traditions when moving to Arizona, and how her conceptions of the myth were reconstructed through her experiences—discovering the dark side of western ways: the prejudice and ignorance she had not associated with the life style and the environmental demise of the desert as the cities swallow it up. Musically, while the ostinato is maintained through the piece it is morphed with dissonance. The melody meanwhile, carried by the violin, attempts to follow a consonant line but seems to lose its way, not able to resolve effectively or complement the accompanying guitar (Figure 4).

The Arizona Trail

Jay Lewis Cravath

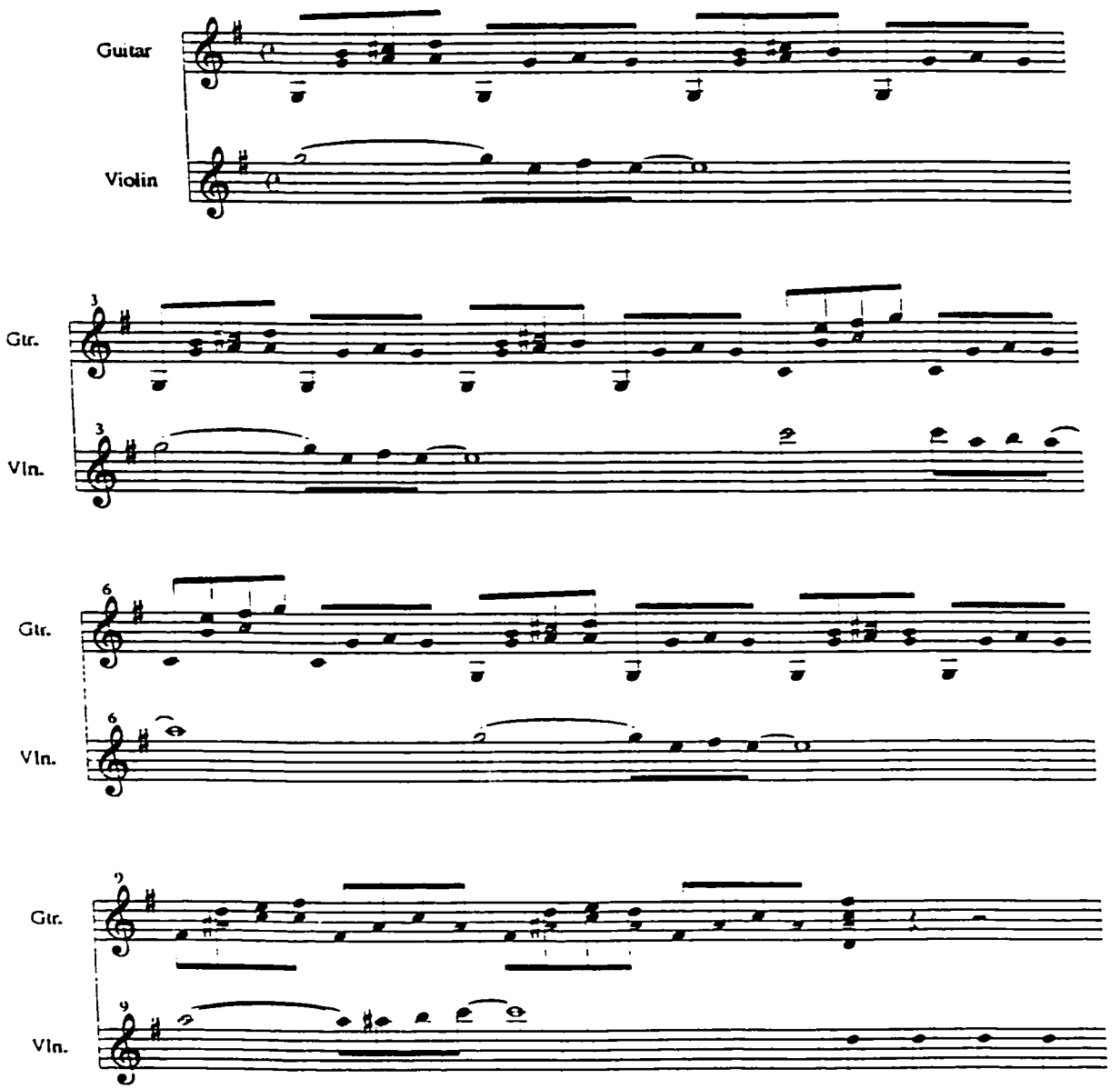

Figure 4 *Arizona Trail*

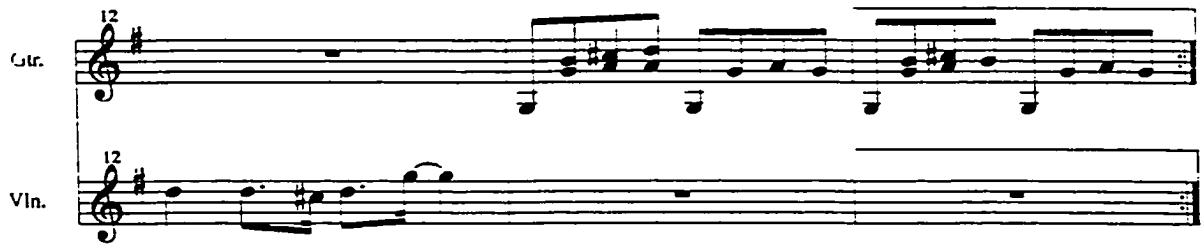

Figure 4, continued

The Tempest. The stormy relationship that ensued after Sylvia and Rasheen joined their lives together is musically recounted here. It was due, as represented in the "Interpretation" section, to the former's continuing education and her growing independent spirit and the latter's resultant jealousy related to Sylvia's diminishing dependence on him. *The Tempest* represents the most dissonant piece of the *Suite*. Tone clusters (dissonant tones played simultaneously) instead of chords are employed—the rhythmic structure jarring and the melody unpredictable. Copland (1988) argues that for music to be complementary to our ears, we must be able to predict its direction and tonality at least 75% of the time. If not, we are made uncomfortable, even repelled by it. My choice of repeated dissonance represents the breakup of Sylvia's marriage, a tempestuous and difficult time. The opening eighth note theme of the piece with its clashing chords in the guitar and violin, gives way to partially resolved quarter notes, suggesting attempts at reconciliation. The dotted quarter and eighth note motif represent quiet, uneven struggle. The final theme climbs perilously to the upper registers of both instruments ending on high *f*, the guitar including in its final note the "devil" tritone (c to f#). (Figure 5)

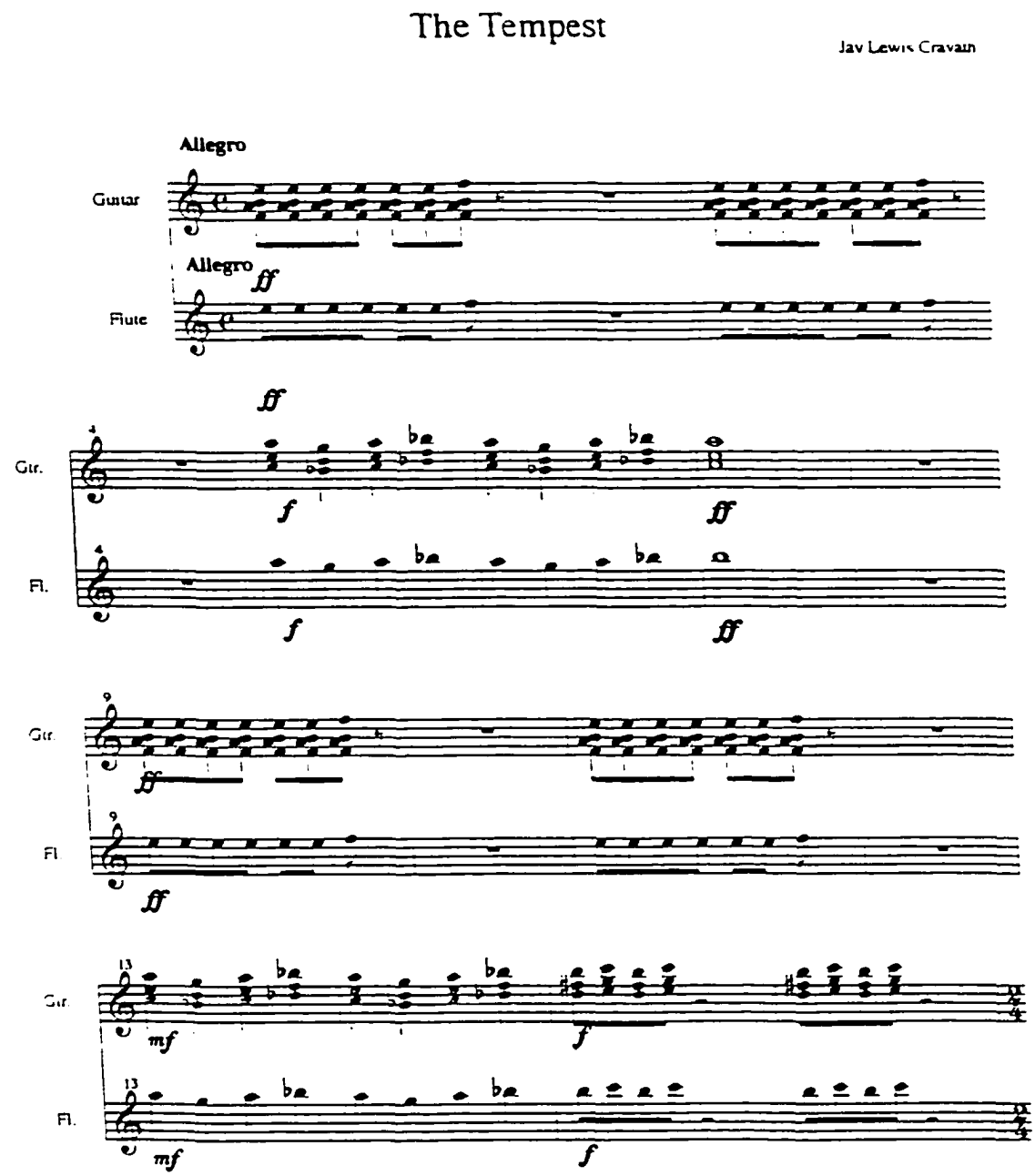

Figure 5. *Tempest*

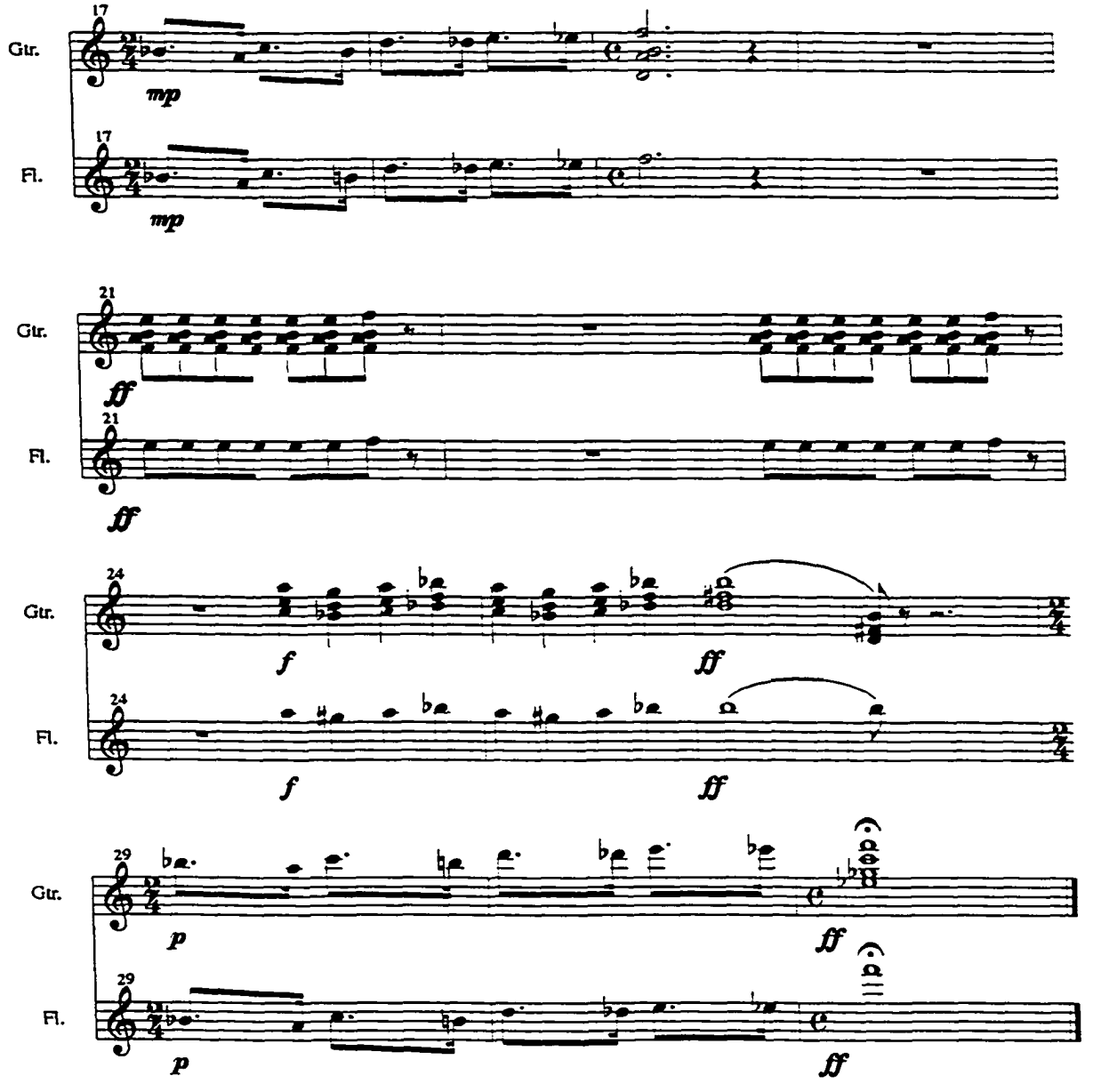

Figure 5, continued

Lament/Lullaby. This piece depicts Sylvia's reflective gifts as she dealt with the end of her marriage. Nancy, her colleague, close friend and exploring companion, marveled at how well Sylvia did after the breakup. She took extra care of herself in multiple ways—exercising, eating right, getting out—the sorts of things one needs when healing. She comforted and soothed herself. The lament and lullaby, forms chosen for this piece, serve almost identical functions. They both represent escape—escape from the uncontrollable. Whether it happens to be retreat from wakefulness—or a trauma deep from loss—sometimes the poetry of music is the only balm. Socrates called the poet a light and winged being, like an angel: someone who can synthesize a truth or image making it intellectually and emotionally profound—cause a resolution to the cognitive dissonance—someone who can soothe. *Lament/Lullaby* was written in the tradition of the romantic preludes of Faure (*Prelude for Guitar and Alto Flute*) and the pavanes of Ravel (*Pavane por un Infant Defunte*). The stable intervals are again incorporated, yet tension is created as the chords, in simple arpeggio, move around a melody that, while jumping from the major third to the fifth below in the opening theme, returns to stability. The second tone of the melody moves upward by one step and holds its position over a series of measures—representing stability and peace. In conventional Western European harmony, minor chords (with the flatted third) connote sadness. While the melody of *Lament/Lullaby* ends on the held-fifth of the scale, the chords underneath move through a series of minor chords—from C#minor to G#minor to F#minor, and finally to the five chord (a B), known as the *cadence* because it resolves back to the tonic or home chord (E). My growing friendship with Sylvia and empathy for the difficult experience her marriage breakup (along with another personal friend and high school classmate going

through similar struggles at the writing of the piece) prompted these accompanying lyrics (Figure 6):

Go to sleep my gentle one
Close your eyes the day is done
The storm has passed your dreams have won
Tomorrow will be golden

Life can be a weary road
Stop and rest, put down your load
Morning sun will shine and so
Tomorrow will be golden

Lament/Lullaby

Jay Lewis Cravath

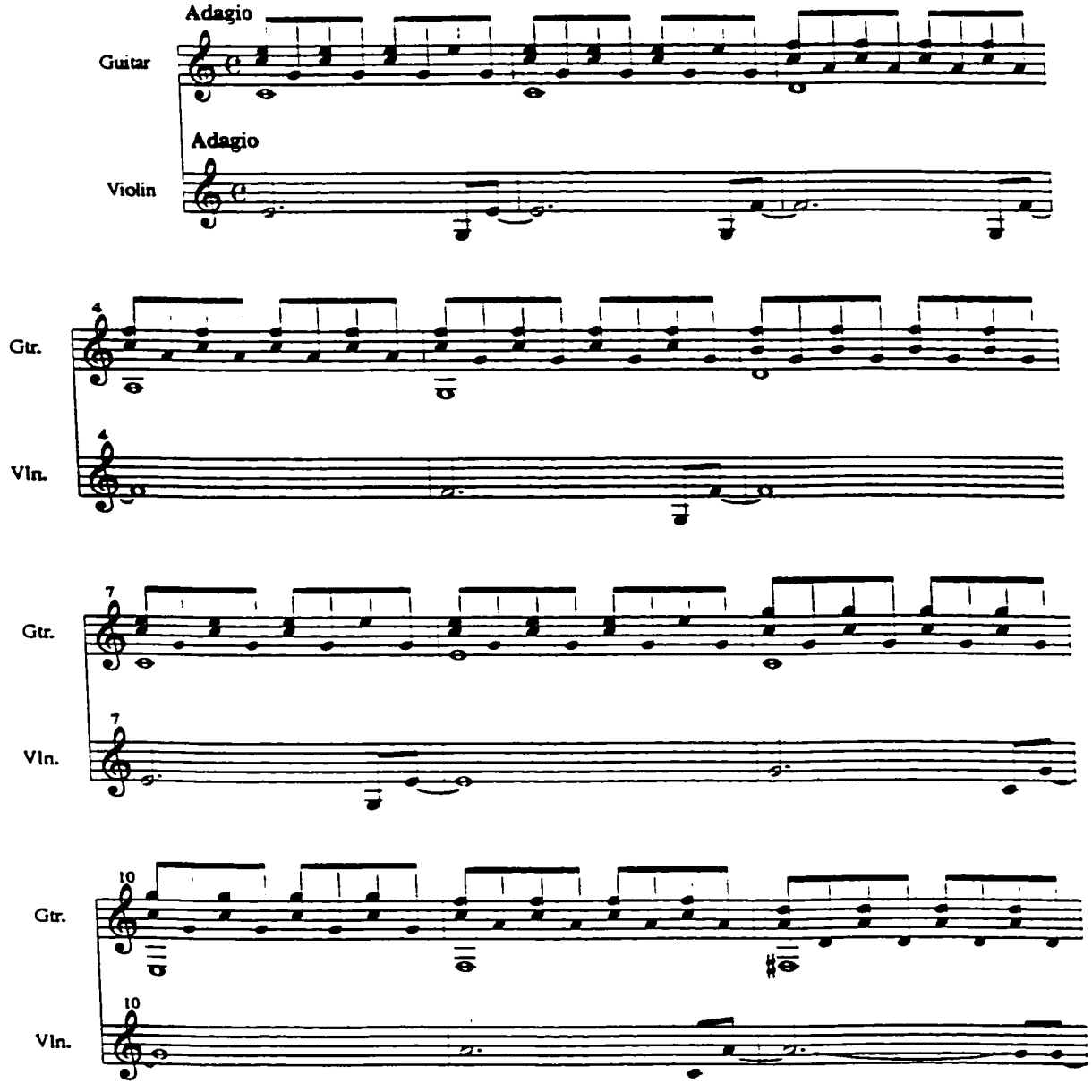

Figure 6. *Lament/Lullaby*

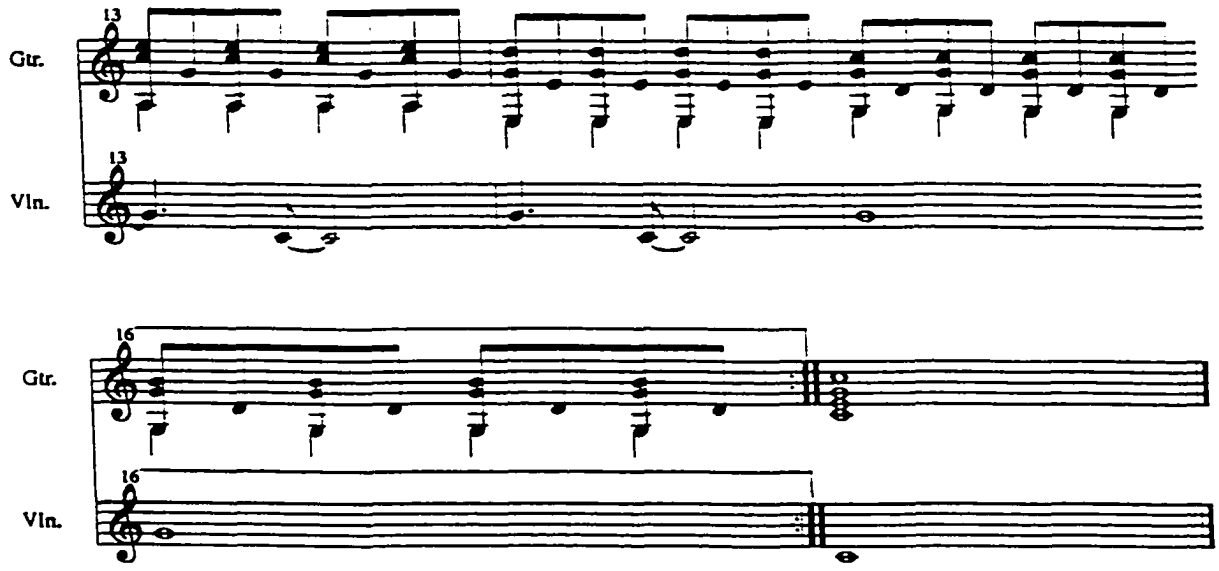

Figure 6, continued

Sylvia Rhapsody. To reflect classroom life for Sylvia, I chose to write a short rhapsody—a musical form that allows the composer to string unrelated themes together as a kind of musical collage. The first theme opens with the violin and guitar playing a simple rhythmic melody in unison (the same notes together) at allegro tempo. The violin repeats the theme while the guitar undergirds with a series of chords. This represents an active, engaged Sylvia classroom, the students in full-tilt mode. The time signature changes from 2/4 (march) time to 4/4 (referred to as *common* time because it is the most universal of all beat counts) and slows to a more contemplative tempo that suggests the reflectivity of the creative process. The violin expresses the muses at work with a simple melody that opens with ascending eighth notes and then settles into half notes while the guitar plays arpeggios (chords that are broken into sections of sound) to lend the sense of the kind of steady intention involved in the creative process. A transition, or bridge follows, so named because it acts just as one to transport the listener back to the original theme. The first theme is revisited and the piece ended.

It is with this final piece, the *Sylvia Rhapsody*, that the *Suite of Experience* comes to a close, and with it my study. For me, it is fitting to let the music have the final say because it has guided me like a good staff over the narrow paths and rock-strewn plains of my life and this dissertation—always there—comforting, inspiring and instructing. Music and the other arts have empowered me to be curious and inventive, invited me to places I did know existed—in the outer world as well as the inner world of my own consciousness. The humanities have given me the language to interpret and contextualize the arts in my life. Without them, I cannot imagine a life worthy of anything more than a brute existing in some dark forest. With the arts and humanities I fly—only slightly

lower than the angels. My profound belief is that with an arts and humanities-based education, and a teacher like Sylvia Tierra, children will find their voices and wings—and reach those high places (Figure 7).

Sylvia Rhapsody

Jay Lewis Cravath

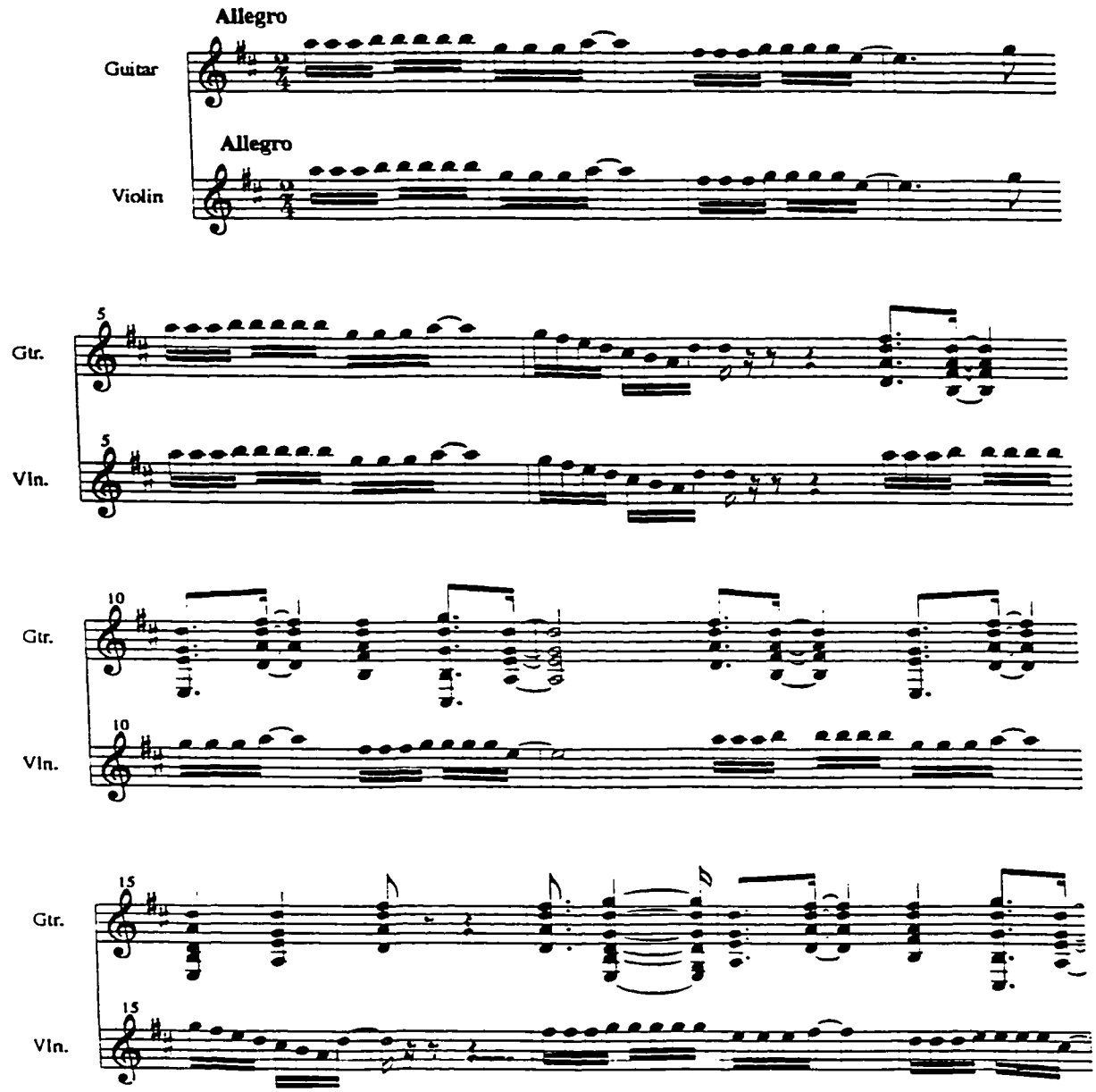

Figure 7. *Sylvia Rhapsody*

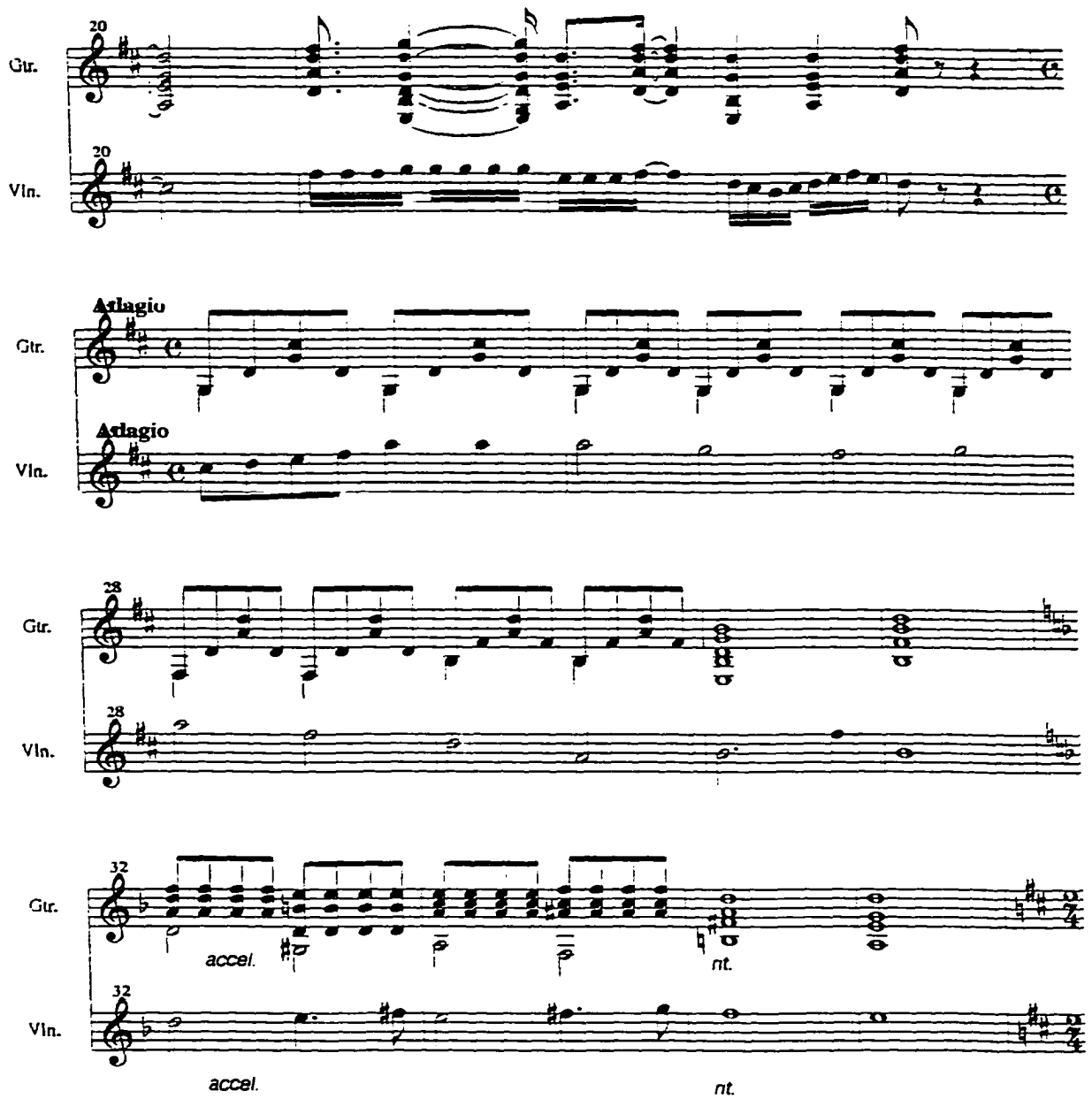

Figure 7, continued

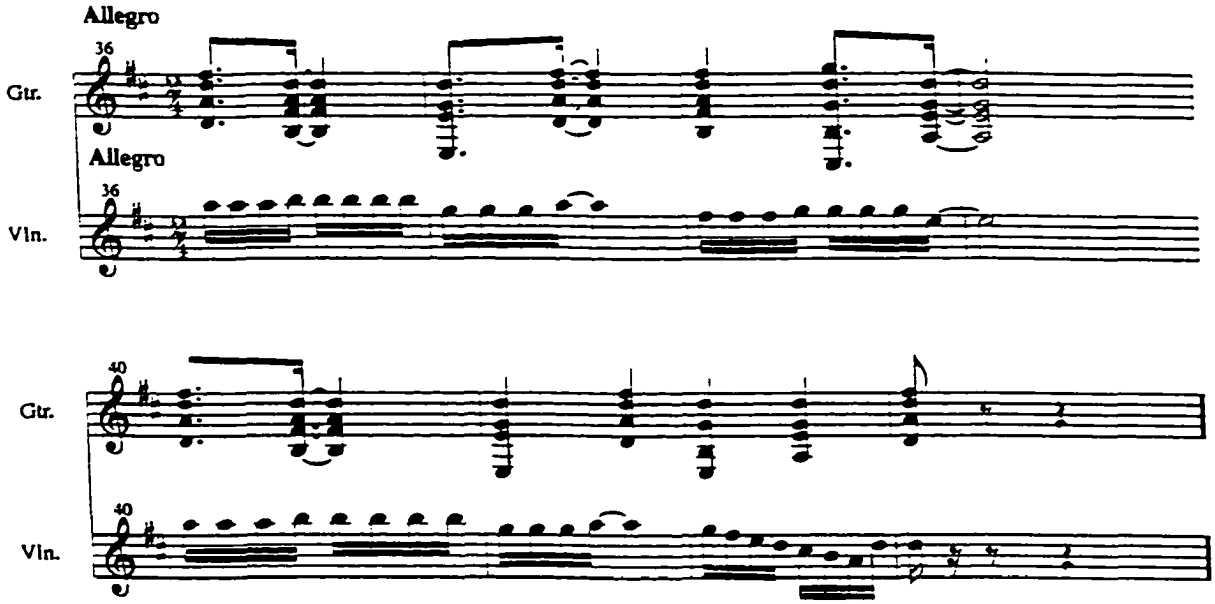

Figure 7, continued

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APPENDIX A

COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE OVERVIEW

Proposed Interdisciplinary Course: EED AL 475- Arts Literacy for the Elementary School(K-3)

Course Background and Description: This is a collaboratively taught course on the methods and materials for teaching arts literacy(music, dance, drama, visual art) is specifically designed for kindergarten through third grade. **Course Goals:** EED AL 475 is designed so that students can:

1. understand the nature of the arts and why they are taught.
2. gain basic skills in the four arts areas (e.g. drawing and painting original art pieces; playing and composing music on an instrument; choreographing for dance, and performing and writing for theatre.
3. design lesson plans for arts instruction.
4. demonstrate a working knowledge of appropriate teaching methods and materials for teaching the arts in grades K-3.
5. implement integrated approaches to arts instruction based on the state arts standards.
6. demonstrate ability to integrate arts into other subject areas, the social studies and language arts.
7. use a range of measurement techniques to assess children's performance in the arts.
8. think constructively about the role of the arts in the elementary curriculum of the future.

9. understand and articulate art in the following ways:

Creating Art: Production of original works

Art in Context: The study of history and cultural influences

Art as Inquiry: Aesthetics criticism

Course Content: We will examine the following topics to achieve course goals:

I. Past and Present rationales for teaching the arts

A. What is the nature of the arts

B. Why do we teach them?

II. Basic arts literacy

A. Music: singing, notating, improvising and instrument playing.

B. Drama: expressing, miming, vocalizing, and stage acting.

C. Dance: bodily isolating, balancing, moving, and choreographing.

D. Visual Art: color, drawing, composition and media.

III. Instructional Design

A. Planning for instruction in the arts.

B. Authentic integration of the arts into other subject areas.

C. Adapting or creating folk opera/musical.

IV. Arts teaching resources

A. Discipline Based Art Education.

B. Project Zero: ARTS PROPEL.

C. Stanislovsky for Kids.

D. Drawing on the Right side of the Brain.

E. Dance: folk, classical and modern pedagogy.

V. Assessing Student Performance

A. Assessing works of art.

B. Developing Arts portfolios.

Course content will be delivered through a variety of methods and materials. The first part of the course will be primarily instruction in the four arts areas. Class format will be such that if the student is currently literate to course expectations in a given art, s/he will have the flexibility to focus on a weaker area or improve the former.

Course Material: All students are required to choose an instrument for accompaniment. Choices include: guitar, portable keyboard, banjo, mandolin or Orff (xylophone). Visual art materials include: charcoal pencils, colored pencils, water colors, drawing and water color paper. No specific materials are required for dance or drama but tights or loose fitting clothes are recommended on appropriate days.

Texts:

~*Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, by Betty Edwards

~*The Artist's Way*, by Julie Cameron

~*Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond*, by Nellie McCaslin

~*Redcoats and Patriots: Reflective Practice in Drama and Social Studies*, by Phillip Taylor

~*Movement Exploration for Young Children*, by Molly Sullivan

~*Music and the Classroom*, by Jean Halvorson

Course Requirements: Course goals will be met through the completion of these course requirements. The student will select from these requirements depending on the final grade s/he decides to pursue.

1. Attendance and Class Participation: Since this is a "Skills Intensive" course, the student will be expected to attend class regularly. Attendance/participation will be assessed on the basis of **completeness** (Did the student miss no more than 1 class period? Was s/he tardy? Leave early?) and **quality.** Has s/he constructively participated in class activities? To what extent did s/he contribute personal arts knowledge to class members and participate? Did s/he come prepared each class for activities and projects?) **10 possible points.**

2. Musical Literacy: The student will be expected to memorize and play 5 chords on your chosen instrument (G, C, D, E minor, A minor) and sing and play a simple melody using the pentatonic scale (g, a, b, d, e) with the following rhythms: quarter notes, half notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests. **10 possible points.**

The student will be expected to understand and discuss basic form (AB, ABA) and harmony (the diatonic major and minor scales, key signatures, and modes) know a moderate amount of information about the major European periods (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern) and differentiate and articulate

the differences between folk, jazz and so-called "serious" music. The student will also choose two non-Western musical cultures (for example, Japan and the Basque of Spain) and explicate their musical forms and traditions. **10 possible points.**

Dance Literacy: The student will be expected to know and demonstrate basic warm-up exercises for dance, six basic folk steps (steps, turns, walks, hand work, skips, bows) six standard classical positions and various contemporary movements (basic mime, tap, jazz, modern) used in class. **10 possible points.**

The student will be expected to understand and articulate the history, aesthetics and technique of folk (from four chosen countries/locales or ethnic groups), classical (basic history from the court of Louis the XVI to George Balanchine) and jazz/modern (from Isadora Duncan through the flappers and Harlem Renaissance to Martha Graham). Content will be based on classroom discussion and readings. **10 possible points.**

Drama Literacy: The student will be expected to know and demonstrate basic physical and mental warm-ups for acting including facial/muscular stretches and vizualization -- drama such as Empty chair, process drama, slapstick/action, Shakespearian and Method acting. **10 possible points.**

The student will be expected to understand and articulate the history, aeshetics and technique of various dance styles discussed in class and readings from preliterate peoples to the serious and recreational modern city dwellers. **10 possible points.**

Visual Art: The student will be expected to know and demonstrate basic skills of the pencil, charcoal and brush, understand and demonstrate shading techniques, vanishing

point, and use of geometry in drawing shapes such as animals. S/he will demonstrate basic watercolor technique and skill in modeling clay. **10 possible points.**

The student will be expected to understand and articulate the history, aesthetics and techniques of various styles and painters through history based on class readings and discussions. **10 possible points.**

Final Project: The student will choose one of two options to pursue for a final project:

1. Submit a small piece of visual art, perform chosen or choreographed dance with a brief oral interpretation to class, sing and/or play a song of your choice or making (may include ensemble) and perform a memorized or extemporaneous drama (may be silent).

2. Write or borrow, direct and perform a brief folk opera or musical. The student must include a dance, song with instrumentation and dialogue or silent acting (mime). Originality in writing will be rewarded.

10 possible Points.

The quality of work done determines the grade received on each individual assignment. Each assignment must be of professional quality to fully meet criteria established for that assignment. These criteria are comparable with the quality of work a "novice" teacher would be expected to perform.

Grade Scale is: 92-100 = A

84-91 = B

72-83 = C

Assessment of all written/drawn assignments will be based on the following criteria:

1. **completeness:** Were all elements of the assignment addressed?
2. **content:** What ideas did the student bring to your work? What level of depth do ideas and thinking represent?
3. **readibility:** How well was the student able to articulate and communicate ideas? Is a high level of correctness represented?

All performance assignments will be based on the following criteria:

1. **focus:** How complete was the student's concentration? Was s/he able to demonstrate sequential patterns in spite of disruption or distraction?
2. **sincerity:** How seriously did you represent the culture or subject matter
3. **technique:** How accurately/authentically did you represent the culture or subject matter?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jay Lewis Cravath was born in Bozeman, Montana, on March 15, 1951. In 1957 he accompanied his family to Whitefish, Montana where he received his elementary and secondary education. In 1969 he entered Rocky Mountain College, ultimately graduating in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music and psychology. He received his education degree from the University of Montana in 1978. That year he moved to Arizona with his wife and daughter and taught music on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. He received his Master of Arts from Arizona State University in 1990 while teaching elementary general music in the Chandler School District and joining the Arizona Humanities Council Speaker's Bureau, where he has continued to lecture on the topics of ethnology and ethnomusicology. In 1994, Jay received the Arizona Humanities Council Distinguished Scholar Award for his contributions to culture in the state. In 1995, he was given the Arizona Cable Television Association Citizen of the Year award. Jay began work on the degree Doctor of Philosophy in 1998 while assuming duties as a faculty associate teaching social studies methods at Arizona State University. He received a Bilingual Fellowship to complete his doctoral studies and became the managing editor of the *Journal of American Indian Education.* He is Past-President of the Arizona Council for the Social Studies and a member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. He is married to Lynne and has two children: Chloe and Jeff.