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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

by

ROSEMARY MONTGOMERY-WHICHER

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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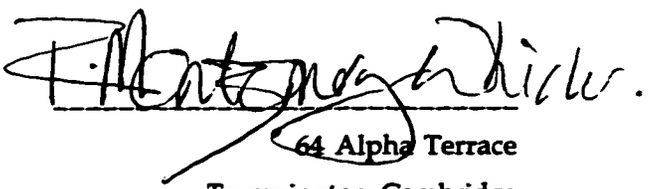

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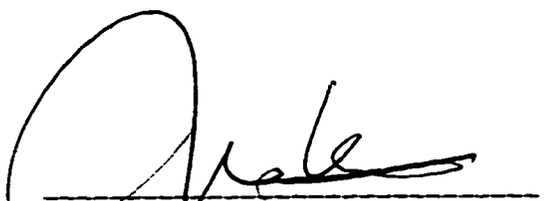

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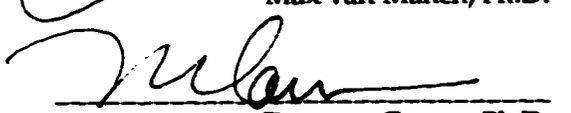

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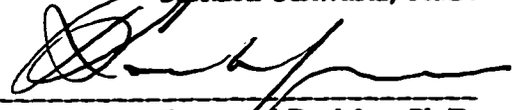

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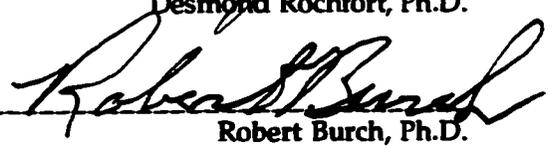

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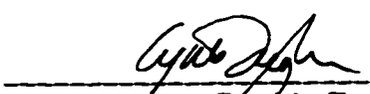

Cynthia Taylor, Ph.D.
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DEDICATION

To my parents

MARY E. MONTGOMERY

and

SCOTT MONTGOMERY

ABSTRACT

This is an inquiry into the experiential meaning and pedagogical significance of drawing from observation. While drawing research in art education has generally focused on how drawing is learned, and on how drawing by children can be encouraged and interpreted, this study focuses on how drawing is experienced in the lives of adult artists, hobbyists and students. In chapter one, the questions of the nature and meaning of drawing are raised in the context of life and art education. This is followed by a selected review of literature dealing with the theoretical, practical and experiential dimensions of drawing. In the third chapter, a conception of phenomenological research and observation drawing as analogous practices provides a way to explicate the aims and attitudes of phenomenology. The hermeneutic phenomenological method employed in this study is characterized by an emphasis on writing as an integral part of a human science research process which aims to make lived meanings explicit in textual form. The path of the inquiry is traced through phases of questioning, gathering experiential accounts, and writing. The existential dimensions of lived space, lived time, lived relation and lived body provide a systematic structure for the four central chapters, each of which takes one of these dimensions as a guide to developing a thematic understanding of the lived meanings of drawing. Descriptions and interpretations of experiential accounts gleaned from interviews and texts are woven together with the researcher's own experiences in a narrative structure, revealing taken-for-granted aspects of drawing. The concluding chapter develops the notion of practice. Drawing to practice is contrasted with a more inclusive notion of drawing as a practice in which the means and ends of drawing merge in the experience of ongoing, pleasurable work. The personal and pedagogical significance of such a discipline dwells in the attentiveness which places practitioners in an attitude of learning and wonder. As a lifelong practice, observation drawing finds its significance not only in the realms of art and art education, but in the broader arena of life practices which focus one's life through attention, effort, and skill.

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CHAPTER 1: SKETCHING THE BACKGROUND

> I must begin, not with hypotheses, but with specific instances, no matter how minute. (Klee, in Edwards, 1979, p. 74)

What is drawing? Situations

At last, the snow has melted, and it feels like the first day of spring. Children are making chalk drawings and hopscotches on the sidewalks, colourful counterparts to the crocuses that have just sprung up in the lawns.

While going for a walk in the welcome coolness of the early morning, a visitor to south India discovers intricate, geometric mandalas, drawn in chalk in front of the doorways of some homes and shops.

A boy is drawing with his finger on the bathroom mirror. It's an opportunity he just can't resist: no matter what else is happening, if there is a steamy mirror, he just has to draw on it.

In an airport lounge, two men sit at a table, drinking coffee and chatting. One, a sculptor, has taken the day off work to say good-bye to his friend. As he talks, he moves his index finger insistently to and fro on the surface of the table, in a drawing gesture. [1]

Two guests are seated side by side at a dinner party in Istanbul; although neither one speaks a word of the other's language, they have a lively conversation through a series of drawings on their table napkins.[2]

During a long wait in a doctor's office, a man surreptitiously draws the other patients in a small sketchbook. Later, his doctor draws a diagram on a scrap of paper to explain to her patient what is happening inside his body.

While walking through an old residential neighbourhood, an architect stops from time to time, and takes a small notebook from his pocket, in which he notes the design of a verandah.

A university student doodles in the margins of her notebook in an effort to pay attention during a long lecture. Later, she spends the afternoon standing, with a sketchbook balanced on one arm, copying old master drawings in an exhibition.

A woman carries a sketch pad on a hike through the mountains. From time to time, she pauses to draw the landscape, making a series of rapid sketches to explore possible compositions for a painting. In the same region, a man sits quietly, making a careful line drawing of a flower for an illustration in a botany book.

A group of people are standing behind easels placed in a circle around a low platform in a studio. Some are chatting, while others unroll paper, and sharpen pencils. A man walks in, clad in a bathrobe. He steps onto the platform, casually flings off his robe, and takes a natural standing pose. The chatting ceases, and the life drawing session begins.

Are all of these examples of drawing? If we read them from the points of view of art critics, aestheticians, art historians, and museum curators, we may argue that many of these situations are *not* instances of "real" drawing, what Judith Dinham calls "drawing drawing" (1989, p. 318). After all, we would be hard pressed to find our doctor's hasty diagram in an art museum's department of prints and drawings. Many of these art specialists would tend to think of drawing in the following ways: as an art form defined by specific tools and surfaces used, as works which qualify as "drawings" because they meet certain aesthetic criteria, as a skilled activity practiced by trained artists, or as mark making activities which have a purely aesthetic or expressive intent. This is because critics, aestheticians, art historians and museum curators deal with drawings *after* they have been made. Their professional interest in drawing is (usually) in *the* drawing: an object, a work to be contemplated and evaluated. This is drawing as a noun. At times, artists and art educators also take on the critic's, philosopher's, or curator's view. And it is from this perspective that distinctions between "drawings" and their relatives—illustrations, diagrams, graffiti, cartoons, etc.—are especially problematic and controversial. Consider for example, the following situation: One day, during a critique in a drawing class, the instructor was looking at a student's recent work. Focusing on two drawings done consecutively, from a pair of models, he pointed to the first one and said to the student, "that is two figures on a page," and then pointing to the second one, he said, "and this is a *drawing*. Do you see the difference?"

If however, we remove the lenses of the art specialists, and read the above examples as descriptions of *a certain kind of human activity*, we might call that activity "drawing." From this broader perspective, shared by many artists and art educators, we may well argue that all of these situations are instances of drawing. Artists and art educators deal with drawing as it is happening as well as after the fact. Their professional (or amateur) interest in drawing is generally in drawing as an activity, a process, a practice. This is drawing as a verb. From this perspective, distinctions between various modes of drawing are fuzzy and less problematic. Considered as a human activity, the question of what drawing *is* becomes as fascinating, and as messy, as the experience of drawing itself. This inquiry, written from my perspective, as an art educator and maker of drawings, is concerned with drawing as an activity, a practice.

Definitions: The difficulty of drawing the line

So "drawing" is both a noun and a verb. The word "drawing" simultaneously denotes a product and a process, something we have and something we do. And since, logically, a drawing is the product of the act of drawing, both senses of the word drawing are inseparable. However, the act of drawing is especially important to the understanding of drawing. What *is* the act of drawing? In an introduction to a small book, entitled "Why draw?" Mary Holmes writes,

> That man has an irresistible impulse to draw, to cover all blank spaces with imperishable or not so imperishable images, to leap with his pencil from the tangible world to divine abstraction, can be testified to by any custodian of public toilets. No hesitancy of doubted taste or skill holds back the lavish outpouring, not even the knowledge that forces of ordered emptiness are lining up abrasives and detergents to obliterate the whole thing. The urge is universal, coexistent with man from Paleolithic caves to subway cars. The question is how to keep people from drawing, not how to propel them into it. (in Weismann & Wheeler, 1974, p. vii)

Embedded in Holmes' remark about the impulse to draw there is a brief but broad definition of drawing: "to cover all blank spaces with imperishable or not so imperishable images" (in Weismann & Wheeler, 1974, p. vii). How have others defined drawing? Some writers on drawing also attempt to be all inclusive in their definitions. For example, Dinham defines drawing as a term describing "a range of activities whereby a person uses a moving point—usually a mark-making tool—to create a pattern of marks on a surface" (1989, p. 317). Daniel Mendelowitz defines drawing in similarly broad terms as "those forms of graphic notation in which an image is obtained by marking upon a background" and then immediately reminds his readers that "no definition, even though it is broad and all-inclusive, can give a sense of the range and variety of activities covered by the word *drawing*" (1967, p. 8). Philip Rawson's

definition is more specific: "Drawing I take to mean: that element in a work of art which is independent of colour or actual three-dimensional space, the underlying conceptual structure which may be indicated by tone alone" (1987, p. 1). John Ruskin, while not as inclusive in his definition of drawing, poetically alludes to its often messy and hesitant nature when he writes: "all good drawing consists in merely dirtying the paper delicately" (Ruskin, in Martin, 1995, p. 10). Unlike many other definitions of drawing, John Berger's definition addresses the personal experience of drawing: "a drawing is an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event—seen, remembered or imagined" (1979, p. 24).

Although each of these definitions are useful conceptualizations of drawing which distinguish it from other activities, they are not descriptions of how we *experience* drawing. *While* we are drawing we do not think of what we are doing as "dirtying" paper, making "an autobiographical record" of our "discovery of an event" or even mark-making on a surface. Instead, we are just *drawing*. But what is drawing?

What makes drawing drawing? How and where to draw the line

Because definitions of drawing, like those quoted in the above section, tend to be broad and all-inclusive, they are sometimes difficult to work with. So, for practical purposes, such as teaching a class, planning a series of works, organizing an exhibition, or collecting drawings for a museum, we may still find ourselves asking, in spite of existing definitions: What distinguishes drawing from other activities? Is it the materials used? Is it the way in which the materials are used—a matter of style? Is it the purpose or intent?

Is the essence of drawing to be found in its use of certain materials? Drawing is commonly distinguished from other activities by the surfaces and media used. Paper is the most widely used surface, and comes in a huge variety of qualities, textures, sizes, and colours. Yet as soon as we define drawing as work on paper, we realize that there are many other possible surfaces on which to draw: board, walls, plastic, glass, metal, even the earth.

Drawing is often distinguished from other activities by the use of black and white media. The most common media are pencil, pen, and charcoal. However, it only takes a visit to an art supply store or an exhibition of old master drawings to realize that drawing is often done in colour, traditionally in subdued colours such as terracotta coloured "red" chalk or sepia ink, but also in the brilliant hues of pastels, chalks, conté, markers, and crayons.

So drawing cannot be defined in terms of particular surfaces or black and white media. What about the consistency of the media? Isn't drawing done with dry media? To define drawing as mark making with dry, as opposed to wet media immediately excludes the traditional drawing media of ink, whether used with a pen, or loaded onto a brush.

New technologies and nontraditional media also present a challenge to an attempt to define drawing in terms of media. Are we drawing when we cut or tear coloured paper, drawings, photocopies, and other ready-made images and arrange them into collages? Is drawing necessarily an activity of the hand[3] in which the most subtle touch or slightest change of direction or pressure is immediately registered on the drawing surface? Does the experience and meaning of drawing change when it is computer mediated? Would we cease to draw if we were to give up paper and drawing boards, brushes and pencils, ink-stained hands and charcoal-smudged faces?

If drawing cannot be defined in terms of media, can it be defined in terms of style? Painters sometimes talk of "drawing with paint," an activity which is clearly different from painting with paint, and suggests that drawing is a particular way of using materials. Drawing is sometimes spoken of as a linear, in contrast to a "painterly," use of materials. In fact, a dictionary definition of (the noun) drawing is "the art of representing something by lines made on a surface, with pencil, pen, etc."[4] Although this broadens the possible range of materials (tools and surfaces) used for drawing, it excludes works, and ways of working which we think of as drawing, such as Seurat's tonal drawings.

Alternatively, we might seek a definition of drawing in its purpose or intention, regardless of the media, or how they are used. Susanne Langer defines "art" in terms of intent when she writes,

> all art is the creation of 'expressive forms,' or *apparent forms expressive of human feeling*. . . . where there is any artistic intent (whether avowed, exclusive artistic intent, or unconscious artistic impulse) there will be some artistic impulse, i. e. some expressive form. (1957, p. 109, italics in original)

Accordingly, if our intention is to explain by making a diagram, to elucidate by making an illustration, or to use restless energy by doodling, we are not drawing but making a diagram, illustrating or doodling. One difficulty with this way of defining drawing is found in Langer's phrase, "unconscious artistic impulse." If, for example, someone found and exhibited Pablo Picasso's telephone pad doodles, we would probably think of them as drawings, not doodles. Or if we watched a child rendering a leaf for a science class, with such attention and care that she

seemed to be expressing her feeling of wonder for its existence, we might say that she was doing more than making a diagram; she was drawing. A second difficulty is that if drawing is defined by the intent to draw, we must first understand what it is to draw. And in this way we return to the question: What is it that makes drawing drawing?

In spite of these difficulties, writers on drawing employ the notion of function or intention to distinguish between different modes of drawing. For instance, Mendelowitz points to three functions of drawing which reflect three different intentions:

> (1) the drawing that is a record of what is seen, (2) the drawing that is a visualization of what is nonexistent (that is, the projection of imagined forms and relationships), (3) the drawing that is a graphic symbol which can be read because the meaning is commonly understood. (1967, p. 8)

These three functions of drawing are roughly equivalent to three modes of drawing outlined by Berger (1987): studying and questioning the visible, giving visible form to memories, and communicating ideas. However, Mendelowitz' second category is broader, and seems to include all modes of preparatory drawing as well as drawing from memory. Combining Mendelowitz's and Berger's three functions yields three broad categories of intention: drawing to study and observe; drawing to give visible from to what is imagined, thought, planned or remembered; and drawing to communicate graphically. Most of Rawson's (1987, pp. 283-316) 17 precisely delineated "kinds of drawing" would fall into these three categories. Seven of these types of drawing are various types of preparatory drawings for other works, two are modes of graphic communication, and three are various modes of drawing from observation: "studies after nature"; "copies"; and "record of fact" (1987, pp. 287-306). Another four are more specialized forms of drawing: as "calligraphic exercise," as "pattern-types," as "enhancement of an object," and drawing for "mechanical reproduction" (1987, pp. 285-287; 306-309). Rawson's final "kind" of drawing is a drawing in its "own right" or a drawing which was not made for any of the other purposes he outlined (1987, pp. 309-316).

The meaning of the activity of drawing quickly seeps through the neat perimeters in which, for convenience, we might want to place it: definitions according to materials, style, or purpose cannot hold the diversity and richness of drawing. In experience, even these frequently used boundaries become as fuzzy as a charcoal line that we are constantly drawing, rubbing out, and redrawing, smudging, softening, each time we look again at the boundaries between drawing and painting, art and design, artist and hobbyist. And yet, in conversation among people who draw, there *is* a common sense understanding of drawing: we speak as if the other knows

already what we mean by "drawing." This is evident in the instructor's comment, "that is two figures on a page, and this is a *drawing*. Do you see the difference?" or when a student says, "I think I'll know it when I'm actually drawing. Here, I'm executing something that is supposed to resemble drawing."

Why draw? Drawing in art and education

Within the tradition of Western art, drawing is widely believed to be the basis of education in the visual arts. This belief has its basis in the association of drawing with the conception of ideas, a notion which goes back to the French and Italian words for drawing—"dessin" and "disegno" (Dinham, 1989, pp. 324, 325). Since then, drawing practice has generally thought to be central to the education of professional painters and sculptors (Rose, 1976, pp. 9, 10; Dinham, 1989; Chan, 1995, p. 10). Artists themselves have been advocates of the centrality of drawing. For example, Alberto Giacometti stated that "drawing is the basis for everything" (in Lord, 1980, p. 111) and according to Jean-Dominique Ingres, "drawing includes three-quarters and a half of what constitutes painting. If I had to put a sign over my door, I should inscribe it *School for Drawing*, and I am sure I would produce painters" (in Chan, 1995, p. 10).

However, it is not only in the education of professional artists that drawing is believed to be important. Educators at all levels of schooling have argued for the foundational nature of drawing in art education. Drawing has been called "the most basic and important artistic skill" (Martin, 1995, p. 10), "a foundational studio skill in art" (Anderson, 1992, p. 45), and a "fundamental skill of the visual arts" (Edwards, 1979, p. 14).

Indeed, whether one aspires to be a designer, an illustrator, an architect, a sculptor, a printmaker, or simply a Sunday painter, it seems that one must first learn to draw. And while one can draw from memory, imagination, and dreams, it is drawing from the observation of things and people in the world which is often thought to be the most basic aspect of this activity. Peter Fuller believes that drawing is the "most significant" teachable aspect of art, saying that he "would like to see drawing of natural forms, especially the human figure, reinstated as the core of an adult education in Fine Art" (1983, p. 31). "Perceptual drawing," propose Al Hurwitz and Quentin Mosley, "should serve as the core of both high school and college programs. . . . art teachers in general find no substitute for skills acquired through drawing directly from objects" (1986, p. 35). That art teachers believe observation drawing to be important is evident in the fact that they are among those who attend drawing classes and

workshops, often to brush up on their observational skills or to renew their original enthusiasm for drawing (Nicolaïdes, 1941; Franck, 1979, p. xiii; 1993, p. 76). Betty Edwards says,

> Even professional artists—individuals holding jobs as art teachers, designers, commercial artists, working painters, and sculptors—have enrolled in my courses and have confided to me their genuine distress at their 'guilty secret': that they cannot draw. Concealment of their inability sometimes requires complex and funny—but sad—strategies and subterfuges. (Edwards, 1979, p. 7)

Beyond its value as the basis of education in the visual arts, educators and artists have made claims for the pedagogic value of drawing practice in general and extra-curricular education. For example, June King McFee and Rogena Degge (1977), Frederick Franck (1979, 1993) and Edwards (1979) write about the practical, personal and spiritual value of learning to "see" through drawing from observation, and John Martin notes the "pedagogical usefulness of the manipulative, perceptual, and conceptual abilities used in drawing" (1994, p. 38), stating that,

> to encourage drawing at all levels is to promote creativity, imaginative thought, and aesthetic awareness. From child to adult, as a basic ability, drawing may become a major means used to record reactions to experience, clarify and express ideas, and heighten observation abilities. (1994, p. 40)

A similar argument is put forward by David Hockney:

> I've come to the conclusion that drawing should be taught very seriously everywhere, in all schools, not just in art schools, because if you can draw, even a little bit, you can express all kinds of ideas that might otherwise be lost—delights, frustrations, whatever torments or pleases you. Drawing helps you to put your thoughts in order. It can make you think in different ways. It naturally gives you a sense of harmony, of order. The longer a visual education is not treated seriously, the bigger the effect will finally be. (in Camp, 1981, p. 6)

So, from the most specialized perspective of the professional artist or post secondary art instructor, to the broad interests of those who teach and learn in the context of general or extra-curricular education, drawing is viewed as an important activity. The arguments which support the practice of drawing (particularly from observation) as the basis of education in the visual arts, and as a worthwhile activity in its own right, are implicitly based on the experiences of those who teach and learn drawing. As artists, teachers and students of art, we know, experientially, and intuitively, that drawing is important. And yet, as far as I know, there are no studies that have made our experiential understanding of drawing explicit in writing. This is what I have attempted to do here. In doing so, my aim has been to come to a deeper understanding and clearer articulation of the significance of drawing in our lives.

The meaning of drawing: Instances which prompt questioning

As well as being central to education in the visual arts, the activity of drawing from observation seems to be meaningful to those who practice it. There have been occasions when I have been moved by the way in which people speak about drawing. The following are descriptions of two such occasions.

During a holiday visit to Toronto, I was walking through an exhibition with my cousins. This is the "artsy" branch of my family: one designs and builds furniture, one is a professional actor, another is an accomplished singer. We see each other only occasionally, but when we do, our conversation quickly and eagerly falls into our shared interest in the arts. That day was no exception, and, in a leisurely mood, after the annual family feast, we were chatting our way through a display of Canadian drawings and paintings. Turning a corner, we suddenly came upon a cluster of drawings by various members of the Group of Seven. John stopped at a drawing of Georgian Bay by A.Y. Jackson. Since all of us have grown up in Ontario and spent many of our summers among lakes and rocks and pine trees, it was the kind of landscape that we all knew well. The composition was typical of the Group of Seven: rocks and foliage in the foreground, overlooking windswept water and a distant shoreline. Although it was a small pencil drawing, it evoked the vast scale and atmosphere of the place. It appeared to have been done quickly, perhaps as a sketch for a painting. After a few moments, my cousin said, "I would give anything to be able to draw like that." There was a certain longing with which he said this, something which put me at a loss for words, something which moved his son to look at him with a quizzical expression, and ask, "Really?" To which John replied, "Yeah, I wish I could draw like that, be able to just sit down and draw a scene like that."

What is it that my cousin wishes he could do? He did not say that he wished he could draw in order to design better furniture, or illustrate a book on Muskoka. His wish to draw is not instrumental, it is not driven by a desire to produce something else, not even a picture. Rather, when he says "I would give anything to be able to draw like that. . . I wish I could draw like that, be able to just sit down and draw a scene like that" he hints that the *activity* of drawing is significant. What does it mean to engage in the practice of drawing?

In the context of art making and art teaching, we usually take our understanding of drawing for granted. Once in a while however, there are moments when a familiar experience is seen in a new light, and impels us to question it. One such moment occurred in the midst of a weekly drawing class in a museum setting: a woman enthusiastically told me, "you know, when I leave

here, I see with new eyes." I smiled. In fact, I was thrilled, for this student's statement hinted at her experience of something that may be central to the practice of drawing, something which calls us back to our pencils, charcoal and conté again and again. What does it mean to "see"? And what is meant by "new eyes"? This woman's words suggest a way in which the experience of drawing may enrich the lives of those who practice it, whether they are beginning hobbyists or like her, experienced professional artists. It was not just the words, "I see with new eyes" but the joy with which she said them, the light in her eyes: clearly, for this drawing student, there is something especially meaningful about seeing "with new eyes," about engaging in the practice of drawing.

Kettle's Yard: Beginning to question

My research about drawing had its beginnings in my experience of teaching drawing to children and adults in museum and community settings. Above, I described an incident in a drawing class which prompted me to wonder about the lived meaning of drawing. This class took place on a weekly basis over two academic years, at Kettle's Yard, a university museum of modern art in Cambridge, England. Once the home of the late British curator, writer and lecturer Jim Ede, Kettle's Yard house contains an exceptional collection of twentieth century painting and sculpture, from the turn of the century through to the 1950's, along with antique furniture, collected stones, glass and books, chosen and placed by Ede with a characteristically "modern" formalist attention to their visual qualities.

One can see the interior of Kettle's Yard as a series of still life arrangements, or a work of modern art which questions the nature of art and its relationship to everyday life, a concern shared with the painters and sculptors whose works are exhibited there. One of my favorite objects in Kettle's Yard is a "found object," which functions like a sculpture: Ede's grandson knew that his grandfather liked to collect unusual objects (the collection includes a Tibetan yak bell, feathers, perfectly spherical pebbles). Once, as a joke, he sent his grandfather the bottom of an old broom, without the handle or bristles. Ede however, accepted the unusual gift quite seriously, and placed the weathered rectangular piece on a window sill where it still sits today, looking like a sculpture, while in another room, a Constantin Brancusi sculpture looks, at first glance, like another pebble. Those who attended the drawing class at Kettle's Yard drew surrounded by these playful arrangements of objects.

When people took pens, pencils and paper to draw in Kettle's Yard, I took comfort in the knowledge that they were doing what art students, apprentices, painters and sculptors had

done since the Renaissance, namely, drawing from observation—a tradition which I assumed every art student should be familiar with. At the same time, I was often keenly—and sometimes uncomfortably—aware that my students' work appeared to have little in common with the works in the adjoining gallery of contemporary art. While many of the artists who exhibited in Kettle's Yard gallery in the late eighties and early nineties used photographs, videos, written documentation, images taken from magazines and newspapers, reproductions of famous art works, wallpaper, candy, body fluids, and scrap metal to question and deconstruct art, political and social issues, their own and others' lives, my students used graphite, ink, paint, and paper to draw their surroundings and sometimes one another, from direct observation. In the midst of a daily onslaught of photographic images from advertising and mass-media, and a contemporary "art world" in which drawings and paintings seem to have been overshadowed by visually and intellectually dazzling multi-media images, installations, constructions, and written documentation, it sometimes struck me as extraordinary that people, of any age, would want to take up drawing at all! Why do people want to learn to draw? And why do people continue to engage in the practice of drawing?

In spite of recent trends in contemporary art and the availability of increasingly sophisticated image making technologies, the people who attended the Kettle's Yard drawing class were eager to learn to draw from observation. The class was composed of men and women between eighteen and eighty years old—from beginning hobbyists to professional painters. These people took time away from their jobs, families, or studies to come to Kettle's Yard to draw. Many of them also attended regular life-drawing classes, and spent time drawing on their own, at home or out-of-doors. Their enthusiasm for learning to draw from observation, and their obvious enjoyment of the activity of drawing—even through periods of difficulty and frustration—prompted me to begin to wonder about the meaning of this familiar practice. Does the pedagogical and personal significance of drawing defy major shifts in the theory, practice and media of the visual arts?

First formulation of the research question

As I began to reflect on what the lived meaning of drawing might be for my students at Kettle's Yard, I realized that although I could cite historical precedence, and quote what artists, teachers and scholars had to say about the value of drawing, I could not articulate what it is that distinguishes the *experience* of drawing from other visual art practices, or what it means in the lives of those who practice it. It is from this position of not knowing that my questioning

began: "In order to be able to ask," says Hans-Georg Gadamer, "one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know" (1989, p. 363).

I formulated my research question as follows: *What is the experiential meaning and pedagogical significance of drawing?*

By the term "pedagogical" I refer to the influence in inter-personal relations, situations, and activities that leads towards learning, formative growth, and identity development—a "process of becoming" which takes place in childhood and throughout life (see van Manen, 1991, pp. 13-38).[5]

A focus on adults

In this inquiry, I have focused on *adults* who draw. There are several reasons for this. The first reason has to do with how I came to wonder about the lived meaning of drawing. During the years that I spent teaching in Kettle's Yard, the National Gallery of Canada, and other museum and community settings, I taught children as well as adults. However, it was my experience of teaching drawing to adults more than my museum education and art teaching experience with children which sparked my curiosity about the lived experience of drawing *per se* .

The second reason is related to the first. The question I posed addresses the meaning of drawing as a practice, an activity that we pursue over the course—or curriculum—of a lifetime, rather than as a dimension of a specific curriculum area, "art" that is pursued over the course of particular school years. I felt that adults who have chosen to devote considerable time and effort to drawing, either as part of being a professional painter or sculptor, or as a hobby, could offer the most fruitful description of drawing for the purposes of this inquiry. Nevertheless, I hope this research will be of interest to those who teach and practice drawing at many levels of education.

The third reason is pragmatic: Since my initial research question was rather broad to start with, I felt that by interviewing children and adolescents, my research would run the risk of becoming too complex and unfocused.

Finally, I hope that by addressing the experiential dimension of drawing for adults, this inquiry will fill a gap in art education research. Within the field of art education (in North America), most of the research on drawing has focused on children, and in particular, how

children learn to draw. There has been surprisingly little research done on adults and drawing. The most notable exceptions are the work of Kenneth Beittel (1972) and Edwards (1979, 1993). I can only speculate about this lack of education research on adults and drawing. Is it due to an unfortunate split between art and art education, in which the former designates the "art world" of serious adult artists, and the latter seems to suggest the realm of children and schools? Most art education research on drawing serves the interests of those who teach children and adolescents in school settings, while those who teach drawing to adults in the specialized contexts of art schools, university art departments, and museums are more likely to rely on teaching practices established through generations of artists than on research which comes out of education. A review of research and writing on drawing follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING RESEARCH AND WRITING ON DRAWING

How is drawing learned? Theoretical literature on learning to draw

In the discussion which follows, I will examine a selection of the theoretical literature on drawing, most of which has been written by art education researchers and artist-teachers, and some of which has been written by art critics and psychologists. Before delving into this discussion however, I must say something by way of explanation for what may appear to be a broadening of focus away from the specific topic of the present inquiry, namely the experience of drawing from observation,[6] and its personal and pedagogical meaning for adult practitioners, into a discussion of theory and research on how both children and adults learn how to draw.

Although there is relatively little writing which directly addresses the lived experience of drawing from observation, theoretical literature about *learning to draw* often contains implicit assumptions about the nature and pedagogical value of drawing experience generally, and the role of observation drawing in art education. For example, the observational drawing exercises developed by Edwards (1979) are based on the premise that drawing is a perceptual activity, that learning to draw is a matter of learning to see. Drawing, according to Edwards, is an experience of seeing, an experience which makes students more aware of the wonders of visible world around them. Alternatively, Viktor Lowenfeld's and W. Lambert Brittain's (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, pp. 179-180) injunctions against copying and Brent and Marjorie Wilson's (Hurwitz, Wilson & Wilson, 1987) promotion of master drawings as a source for student work are both founded on the premise that drawing is a mimetic activity: left to their own devices, children and art students will not draw from observation, memory or imagination, but will inevitably imitate already existing graphic forms—an inclination which Lowenfeld and Brittain want to suppress, and which the Wilsons actively encourage. Drawing in this view is a cultural experience, in which students become aware of established conventions of graphic form. Therefore, because theoretical literature on *learning to draw* shows how art educators have situated the practice of drawing from observation, and how they have conceived of drawing experience and its pedagogical value, I will include a discussion of it here.

Much of the existing theoretical literature on learning to draw addresses how *children* learn how to draw. Adults who have not drawn since early childhood often experience many of the same struggles and frustrations that older children do when they attempt to learn how to draw from observation. Therefore theoretical literature about how (older) children learn to draw is

relevant to the education of post secondary art students and adult learners. Since most people give up drawing at some point in childhood, "most adults draw like children, no matter what level they may have achieved in other areas of life" (Edwards, 1979, p. 62). Graphic symbols developed in early childhood—such as those for a face, hands, or a bird—persist into adulthood if a person does not continue drawing beyond childhood (Edwards, 1979, pp. 62-64; Wilson & Wilson, 1977, p 10). For example, many adults will remember when, as children, they learned to make flying birds with a slightly flattened m-shape: when asked to draw a bird, these people will produce the same m-shape they learned in childhood. In order to learn to draw students must let go of these childish configurations. It seems that whether we learn to draw in late childhood or early adolescence, or whether we take up drawing seriously as adults, the actual process of learning is similar.

Some of the literature on learning to draw however, does deal specifically with how adults learn to draw. The works of Beittel (1972) and Edwards (1979) are based on research as well as teaching, and some of the better "how-to" books, such as those by Kimon Nicolaïdes (1941) and Robert Kaupelis (1966) are based on extensive teaching experience with artists and adult art students.

A letter from writer Quentin Bell to the art historian Ernst Gombrich illustrates the conflict between two ways of teaching art. Bell writes:

> I used to teach school children. With me there was a much better teacher (better in that she could interest and control a class and organize things and was in fact a very admirable and sensible person). One day she came into the room where I had been teaching and found a series of (to my mind) the most surprising and beautiful water colours. "What are these?" said she. I explained that they were copies of Raphael made by eleven and twelve year old children. I would have gone on to explain how interested I was by their resemblance, not to Raphael but rather to Simone Martini, for they had all the shapes beautifully right but none of the internal drawing or the sentiment, but I was checked by her look of horror.
>
> "You've made them copy from Raphael?" she said. Her expression was exactly that of someone who had been casually informed that I had committed a series of indecent assaults upon the brats. And in fact in subsequent conversation it appeared that this was very nearly what she did feel. For her, what she called "self expression" was as precious as virginity.
>
> The irony of the thing was that these creative virgins were coming to school with traced drawings of mickey mouse and pictures from the lids of cereal packets and had indeed been violated 1,000 times over before I ever introduced them to the forbidden delights of the Divine Urbinate, as Claude Phillips used to call him. (in Wilson & Wilson, 1977, p. 5)

As Bell's experience shows, theories about learning to draw differ widely. They have been vigorously debated and contested. Does copying images, as Bell's students did, stifle children's imagination or broaden their range of mark making possibilities? Are colouring books really bad for children? Should children be encouraged to draw from observation? And so on. One way of bringing order to the numerous and often conflicting views in theoretical literature about learning to draw is by grouping theories and research into clusters based on similar orientations to the nature of art and the value of teaching it.

Arthur Efland (1979) distinguishes four conceptions of teaching in art education showing how these are aligned with, and have been shaped by four kinds of aesthetic theories and four psychological orientations. Efland's four part structure provides a theoretical framework for art education practice which is both comprehensive and open-ended. In what follows, I will employ Efland's framework to review a selection of the existing theoretical literature on learning to draw.[7] In doing so, I will extend Efland's original structure to include four sources of drawing imagery by incorporating Tom Anderson's more phenomenological structure "for discussing the visual, intellectual, and emotional bases for drawing" (1992, p. 45). Anderson describes a three part structure in terms of the body: drawing upon the eye, the brain, and the heart are three distinct modes of drawing. By adding a fourth mode of drawing—drawing upon, or with—the hand, I will show how Anderson's structure coincides with Efland's framework to distinguish four orientations to drawing and learning to draw.

It is in relation to other modes of drawing—from memory and imagination, or from other graphic sources—that observation drawing is situated in art education. Therefore, the discussion of expressive, cognitive and mimetic approaches to learning drawing which follow the discussion of a perceptual (observational) orientation to drawing are included to provide a context for understanding drawing from observation.

Drawing from the eye: Looking for form

When we think of "learning to draw" we may think first of learning to accurately represent what we see in the world around us in marks on paper, in short, learning to draw what we see. This conception of drawing is visual and representational, what Anderson (1992, p. 45) calls "drawing upon the eye" or what some art educators (for instance, Clarke, 1979; McFee & Degge, 1977) refer to as a *perceptual* theory of learning to draw. This is roughly equivalent to what in practice, is more commonly known as drawing from observation, studies after nature, or naturalistic drawing. The sources of imagery are found in the visually perceived world around

us. To find examples of drawings with a strong orientation to the visible world we would turn to the work of Henri Matisse, Auguste Rodin, or Hockney.

Perceptual theories of learning to draw align themselves with what Efland calls "objective" theories of aesthetics in which a work of art is seen as an autonomous whole, an object to be understood in its own terms, without regard to the context in which it was made (Efland, 1979, pp. 21, 22). Objective theories of aesthetics include early twentieth century formalism as espoused by the art critics Clive Bell and Roger Fry, and the theoretical orientation of the Bauhaus which, in an attempt to bridge the gap between art and design, encouraged students to experiment with materials and study the formal organization of masterworks in order to develop their visual perception and discover for themselves the "basic principles which underlie all creative activity in the visual arts" (Efland, 1979, p. 29).

An emphasis on the form of things is the characteristic which links perceptual theories of learning to draw not only with formalist aesthetics, but also with Gestalt psychology. This orientation to psychology understands human behavior holistically, and claims that we perceive a thing or a situation as a whole rather than part by part. Perception is a process of finding order and meaning (Clarke, 1979, p. 22). Arnheim claims that people develop "perceptual concepts" about the basic structure of a form perceived visually, and that when we draw, we are not imitating a form, but finding a "structural equivalent" for it in the medium with which we are working (in Efland, 1979, p. 31).

"The classic measure of success" in this mode of drawing, writes Anderson (1992, p. 45) "is the degree of verisimilitude of the drawing to the object that is drawn." An educator's goal for teaching drawing from observation however, may extend beyond representational accuracy and objectivity, aiming to help students to attend to what they see, overcoming what McFee and Degge (in Anderson, 1992, p. 45) call "perceptual constancies" which lead to drawings which are not only inaccurate, but which rely on stereotyped forms. For the beginning art student, what she or he knows about what is seen often overrides what is actually seen. Anderson (1992, p. 45) cites the example of a door which becomes a different shape when it is not seen head on. Because we know that it is rectangular, we draw it as rectangular, when in fact if we look closely, we may discover that from a certain point of view, it is a trapezoid. As many drawing teachers claim, learning to draw accurately and naturalistically is largely a matter of learning to see. Those who can draw well are considered "visual." Learning to draw however, is not only a question of learning to see, but of learning to trust our eyes.

Thus, appropriate activities for learning to draw from observation are exercises designed to help students see more attentively. These include careful visual analysis of proportion, line, texture, shape, and negative space, perspective drawing (Anderson, 1992, pp. 45, 46), studies of the elements and principles of design as advocated by Arthur Dow (Efland, 1979, pp. 28, 29), detailed studies of nature promoted by the Bauhaus (Efland, 1979, pp. 29, 30), as well as "blind contour" and "gesture" drawing exercises originated by Nicolaïdes (1941), and later developed and modified by Kaupelis (1966), Edwards (1979), and Franck (1973, 1993).[8]

Drawing from the heart: Expressing feeling

A drawing is more than an accurate rendering of what we perceive with our eyes. Whether we draw from imagination, memory, or the visible world around us, the forms we draw are necessarily filtered through our feelings. This is the premise on which expressive theories of learning to draw are built. "Feeling" is central to an expressive orientation to drawing, and refers to both emotion and tactile sensation. Accordingly, we may draw from our feelings, memories, dreams, or imagination, from the "inside," even if our subject matter is found in the external visible world. Alternatively, we may draw in response to the sensuous qualities of materials: for example, the texture and size of paper; the tone, colour, bluntness or pointedness of drawing implements. Art, in this view, is understood as primarily subjective expression and response. In Anderson's terms, this is "drawing upon the heart" (1992, pp. 47-49). Others have referred to this orientation as "personality theory" (Clarke, 1979, p. 21) or "psycho-social" theory (Moody, 1992, p. 41). Drawings made from a subjective-expressive perspective are often more inventive, energetic and flamboyant than straightforward observation drawings in which expression, while present, tends to be more subtle and restrained. Exaggerated or distorted forms and arbitrary colour are not considered errors in perception or representation, but means of expression, whether intentional, or unintentional (Anderson, 1992, p. 48; Efland, 1979, p. 23). Some examples of expressive drawings could be found in the work of Vincent Van Gogh, Emily Carr, Picasso, and Cy Twombly.

An emphasis on the artist and on the visible rendering of feeling places this orientation to drawing in line with expressive theories of aesthetics, which define art as the expression of the artist's emotions (Efland, 1979, p. 21). In this view, it is not the subject matter in itself which is important, but the artist's feelings about the subject matter, or in the case of abstract work, the artists' feelings as revealed in expressive gesture.

Franz Cizek was the first to establish an expressive orientation to art teaching in his art classes for children in Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century (Viola, 1936, p. 13). While encouraging his students to freely express themselves in their own manner, he forbade copying, as well as corrections of children's work by teachers and parents, believing that a child's art will develop at its own rate (Viola, 1936). Teaching, in this view is a matter of facilitating personal expression while preventing the influence of others. "When children do only what they wish" said Cizek, "there is the danger that they may copy or imitate or may be influenced by tradition. . . . All copied things are worthless. The slightest thing produced which is the result of inner experience, is worth more than the cleverest copying" (in Viola, 1936, pp. 18, 37). According to Cizek, children's art "is nothing but the natural development of the child's logic. Even when the child scribbles he thinks and creates" (in Efland, 1979, p. 28).

Efland points out that Cizek seems to have been more influenced by the educational ideas of Frederich Froebel than by those of Sigmund Freud, who would have been Cizek's contemporary in Vienna. Froebel advocated drawing as part of a child's education, arguing that it was as important as language (Steggles, 1984, p. 55). By the mid-twentieth century however, Lowenfeld based his theories of art education on the Freudian premise that all human behavior expresses unconscious needs or drives, and that art is therefore an expression of deep feeling in a "sublimated symbolic form" (Efland, 1979, p. 22). To put it differently, drawings make feelings visible. For this reason, as well as a general emphasis on self understanding and self expression, an expressive orientation to learning to draw is closely aligned with psychoanalytic psychology and, to a lesser extent, Jungian analytic psychology which influenced Herbert Read's thinking on "education through art" (1958) as well as Rhoda Kellogg's (1970) interpretation of imagery in young children's art in terms of universal forms.

In an expressive orientation, a drawing is successful to the extent that it expresses the feelings of the maker. Although a such a drawing may have an especially moving effect on the viewer, the evaluation of success in terms of expression is more difficult than evaluation in terms of accurate representation. This difficulty can lead to an "anything goes" attitude on the part of a teacher which is frustrating for confident young people and adult beginners who are attempting to develop skills of representation. However, an educator's purpose for promoting an expressive approach to drawing would be to foster personal expression as well as the student's confidence in her or his own unique manner of mark making. Evaluation is generally made in terms of form, rather than content (Clarke, 1979, p. 21).

Generally, approaches to teaching and learning drawing within an expressive orientation encourage playfulness and experimentation, and involve little or no intervention on the part of the teacher who nevertheless must create a "nurturing and sheltering environment" (Efland, 1979, p. 24). Lowenfeld (later Lowenfeld & Brittain) has been the most well known and influential proponent of an expressive approach to art teaching. He defines self-expression as "giving vent in constructive forms to feelings, emotions, and thoughts at one's own level of development" and believes that "technical perfection bears little relationship to self-expression" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987, p. 18). To encourage children to identify with their art work and with their world, he advocates sensitive questioning by teachers to motivate children to use their own experiences as topics for artistic expression (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, pp. 16-19, 159-160, 165, 243-247, 295, 334-335). Believing that "the arts are supposed to be a means of one's own expression," Lowenfeld, like Cizek, strictly prohibited copying and discouraged colouring books (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, pp. 176, 179-180).[9]

Activities for learning to draw expressively for older children and adults include consciously anthropomorphizing lines and forms, as well as "gesture drawing," in which students learn to capture the "feeling" of a model's pose (or of an object) in a few rapid gestures (Anderson, 1992, p. 49). This orientation to drawing has an affinity with surrealism, making "automatic" drawing exercises useful ways to promote uninhibited and uncensored mark making. These may include activities such as drawing to music with closed eyes, or searching random stains on walls for imagery, a technique suggested by Leonardo da Vinci (Martin, 1994, p. 44). Drawing exercises which encourage students to "loosen up" also foster greater freedom of expression, such as drawing on a very large scale or drawing with unconventional materials. Martin (1994, p. 41) suggests that "for more exploratory and spontaneous work, avoidance of bond paper and grey graphite pencil seems essential."

Drawing from the mind: Revealing what we know

So far, we have examined perceptual and expressive orientations to learning to draw. Cognitive theories of learning to draw share with perceptual theories an affinity with formalist aesthetics, as well as a conception of drawing as a rational process. What distinguishes cognitive theories of drawing however, is the premise that people draw what they know. This is what Anderson calls "drawing upon the brain." A drawing, viewed from this perspective, reveals what the maker knows about the subject matter. Drawings which are made with a cognitive-pragmatic orientation lean "toward the intellectual rather than the emotional pole of inner life"; they may be either figurative or non-figurative, and tend to be "classical" rather

than "romantic": emotionally cool, analytical and precise (Anderson, 1992, pp. 46, 47). Some examples would be drawings by Alex Colville, Jacques-Louis David, Edgar Degas and Ingres.

Cognitive theories of drawing go hand in hand with pragmatic theories of aesthetics which, says Efland, see a work of art primarily as "an instrument that achieves certain effects in an audience" (1979, p. 21). The following discussion of theory and research on children's art within a cognitive perspective shows how drawings are seen as instruments which can tell adults something about what a child knows and understands.

According to this view, a child's drawing reflects her or his stage of cognitive development; furthermore, "a child can draw only what she/he knows, and conversely. . . a child is incapable of drawing what she/he does not know or cannot conceptualize. What the child knows and the way in which she/he organizes it are stage specific" (Clarke, 1979, p. 20). Thus, cognitive theories of art making draw heavily on cognitive psychology, which conceives of human behavior as mediated by previous experience and knowledge, and gives importance to the use of symbols derived from one's interaction with the world (Efland, 1979, pp. 22-24). Lowenfeld's approach to art teaching utilizes cognitive stage theory psychology as well as the insights of psychoanalytic psychology. According to Lowenfeld, children's art moves through specific, recognizable stages, and a child's drawings can give parents and teachers an indication of the child's level of cognitive development, as well as their emotional, creative, aesthetic and social development (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987, pp. 59-70). Kellogg (1970) studied children's drawings from around the world and found striking resemblances between drawings done by children of the same age, in spite of cultural differences. Florence Goodenough (1926) developed a "draw-a-man" test to evaluate children's cognitive development, which was then further refined by Dale Harris (1963).

The evaluation of *children's* drawings in this theoretical perspective is a matter of determining whether characteristics of a particular stage of development visible in the drawing are in accord with the child's chronological age; evidence of cognitive development is found in the quantity and elaboration of detail (Clarke, 1979, pp. 20, 21). Thus the omission of a particular detail is not understood as an error in perception, or as an indication of strong emotion, but as misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge.

The evaluation of adults' and young people's drawings in this orientation would be in terms of the achievement of a particular effect, such as a harmonious or dynamic composition incorporating certain elements and principles of design. Drawing projects within this

orientation may also include work of a conceptual nature, in which success is evaluated in terms of how well the idea is communicated to the audience.

A school teacher who has a pragmatic approach to art generally (rather than pragmatic aesthetics specifically) would see the design and making of functional objects, and the appreciation of the aesthetic dimension of everyday life as worthy goals for art education. Drawing projects may include the design of greeting cards and posters, botanical illustration, map-making, architectural and urban design, school murals and compositional studies. And the study of drawing may be justified by its integration with other subjects in the curriculum. This approach to art teaching was prevalent in the 1930's when the Progressive movement in education advocated the integration of various school subjects.

The teaching of drawing from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective to young people and adults would tend to be directed as much towards design as art, and may include studies of the elements and principles of design (line, shape, tone, colour, texture, and principles of composition such as the golden mean) which are also found in learning to draw from a perceptual orientation (Anderson, 1992, p. 46). Here however, the emphasis is on the inter-relation of various design elements and the potential effect that a particular composition may have on the viewer, rather than the artist's perception of the visible world.

Drawing from the hand: Showing relations

A fourth group of theories about learning to draw are based on the premise that people learn to draw mainly from other drawings. "All of us, children included," declare the Wilsons (1977, p. 5) "draw mainly through imitation and influence." According to this view, we draw what we see—not in the world, but in graphic images, or our memory of them. Art imitates art. In the words of the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, "all pictures owe more to other pictures than to nature" (in Pariser, 1984, p. 145), or as the critic, Leo Steinberg said, "whatever else it may be, all great art is about art" (in Wolfe, 1975, p. 83). And not only great art, but student art as well. Consider when a beginning art student says about her or his own work, after weeks of hard work and frustration, "now *that* looks like a drawing!" Such a statement assumes that for a configuration of marks on paper to be a *drawing*, it must look like something that is part of a tradition. Although copying is believed by some art educators to promote inhibition, dependency, and false security (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, pp. 69, 176, 179-180) as well as social conformity (Read, 1958), within the academic tradition of European art, it is a time honoured way of learning the graphic forms or conventions of a tradition. To copy is to draw

from an image made by another hand, or as Roland Barthes says, to put oneself "in the hand's footsteps" (1991, p. 171). We might call this "drawing from the hand." Some examples would be Van Gogh's drawings after Jean-François Millet, Degas' drawings of works by Ingres, and drawings by Hockney which have been consciously influenced by Picasso.

Theories of learning to draw based on the premise that we learn from graphic conventions are sometimes called "conventional" theories (Duncum, 1984, p. 93; Pariser, 1984, p. 143). This orientation to learning to draw could also be called mimetic as it has a strong affinity with mimetic theories of aesthetics, in which "the quality of the work is judged by its faithfulness to the model" (Efland, 1979, p. 23) whether the model is nature, or in this case, another drawing.

A mimetic orientation to learning to draw seems to go hand in hand with a behaviorist orientation to psychology, which asserts that "learning is acquired by imitation" (Efland, 1979, p. 22). Accordingly, we learn to draw by imitating the graphic marks of others, and we are motivated to continue to draw by the reinforcement that we receive from others for successful copies (Efland, 1979, p. 23). A strictly behaviorist orientation however, would focus on imitating and mastering the *form* of graphic marks, rather than attending—as Edwards advocates—to the ways of seeing, feeling and thinking which shape particular graphic marks (1979, p. 193). Nevertheless, whether copying drawings is conceived of as imitation, or as a conversational relation with another artist, a mimetic approach to drawing gives importance to our relation with others: those who have made the drawings we copy, and those who comment positively on our copies. This focus on others contrasts sharply with an expressive orientation which focuses on the self.

The criteria for success in this mode of drawing is the degree to which the copy resembles the original. The Wilsons contend that "without models to follow there would be little or no visual sign making behavior by children" (1977, p. 6).

In a study of how artists in the past learned to draw,[10] Paul Duncum (1984) points out that art students who later became successful artists, including Eugène Delacroix, Paul Klee, Diego Rivera, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and James McNeill Whistler taught themselves how to draw primarily by copying the work of other artists as well as graphic images from their contemporary popular culture. Efland notes that although "copying as a method of teaching seems largely to have disappeared in the formal teaching of art" many people who teach themselves how to draw, do so by copying (1979, p. 25). And Laura Chapman declares that

"virtually every person who becomes seriously involved in studying art feels a need, at some time, to test or refine his or her skills by copying other artists" (1978, p. 236). The Wilsons (1974, 1977) have done extensive research with children who draw spontaneously out-of-school. Many of these children teach themselves to draw by copying whatever graphic images they can find, frequently from comics. Whether the source of imagery is comics or master drawings, it is, as the Wilsons note (1977, p. 8) simply easier to draw from something that has "already been translated into two-dimensional configurations of lines and forms."

Teaching with a mimetic orientation involves providing models to copy; these models may be of finished works or models of procedures and processes (Efland, 1979, p. 23). Learning involves practice and repetition until the visible mastery of certain predetermined graphic marks or conventions has been achieved. This may include conventions of European art such as linear perspective and the proportions of the human body, or artistic conventions of non-European cultures and pre-Renaissance art. David Pariser (1984, p. 143) suggests that acquiring a repertoire of graphic conventions can, like learning the established cultural forms of music or poetry, offer students "categories for ordering personal experience." One of the most important questions in a mimetic orientation is *what* drawings students copy. Although nineteenth century art educators, such as Henry Cole and Walter Smith, who saw drawing as preparation primarily for industrial arts, advocated the copying of geometric shapes (Efland, 1979, p. 25), contemporary theorists Wilson, Wilson and Hurwitz (1987) propose that children should, like young adult art students, copy the work of established artists. In this way, learning to draw is conceived of as apprenticeship to master draftspersons. In spite of the pervasive taboo against copying among art teachers, learning to draw by copying the works of others, particularly the "old masters" has been part of traditional education in Western art for centuries. In the fourteenth century, Cennino Cennini advised aspiring artists to "take pains and pleasure in constantly copying the best things you can find done by the hand of great masters" (in Hill, 1966, p.108). By the nineteenth century, this had become an accepted part of artists' academic training. Henri Fantin-Latour for example, began copying paintings in the Louvre as a student and continued this practice well into his career as a painter. Copying, for him was an act of "devotion," "of homage" to the old masters (Druick and Hoog, 1983, pp. 147, 164). "I love to do them" he wrote to a friend, "I learn so much" (in Druick and Hoog, 1983, p. 165). Copying is not necessarily a slavish and thoughtless imitation of other's work: it can be a conversational relation. For Fantin-Latour, copying, as well as studying paintings, drawings and reproductions was, as he put it, a way of engaging in "charming conversations with the finest minds in the world" (in Druick and Hoog, 1983, p. 149). Edwards echoes this attitude to learning to draw by

copying when she urges art students to "study the masters, not to copy their *styles*, but to read their *minds*. Let them teach you how to see in new ways" (1979, p. 193). Hockney writes,

> Copying is a first-rate way to learn to look because it is looking through somebody else's eyes, at the way the person saw something and ordered it around on paper. In copying, you are copying the way people made their marks, the way they felt. . . . One shouldn't be afraid of being influenced." (in Camp, 1981, p. 7)

What is implied in Hockney's, Edwards' and Fantin-Latour's attitude towards copying is that the marks made by a hand give direct access to the seeing, feeling and thinking of the one who made them.

The theoretical literature on learning to draw cited above is derived from theories of aesthetics and psychology. Although this writing provides useful ways to make sense of the diverse and sometimes conflicting orientations to the teaching and learning of drawing, it generally lacks attention to the lived experience and lived meaning of drawing.

Research on learning to draw

Much of the research on learning to draw has been conducted to put one or more of the above four theoretical orientations to learning to draw to the test in actual situations with children or adults. Perceptual theories and mimetic theories have been especially controversial. Beginning with a formal hypothesis—or more commonly, a hunch—that a particular theory of learning to draw may have either more or less validity than was previously thought, the selection of studies which I will discuss here use experimental (Salome, 1965; Beittel 1972; Edwards, 1979; Smith, 1983; Pariser, 1984), historical (Duncum, 1984; Pariser, 1985; Carroll, 1994), case study (Wilson & Wilson, 1974, 1977), and analytical (Moody, 1992) means to prove or disprove particular theories.

A study of visual perception by Richard Salome done in 1960's is frequently cited in art education literature on learning to draw. With an interest in the relationship between the development of visual perception and art education, Salome (1965) conducted an elaborate experimental study to determine whether specific instruction in "perceptual training" would significantly increase the amount and complexity of "visual information" in observation drawings by elementary school children. Salome's research is directed towards a specific goal—increased visual perception—which presumably is visible and measurable in detailed, linear and representational drawings. With this end in view, 98 fourth and fifth grade

children were divided into experimental and control groups. All the children participated in a pre test, eight drawing tasks, and a post test in which a lamp, a model truck and a mounted armadillo were presented to draw. The researcher gave the children in the experimental group specific instructions and activities for observing contour lines and points of concentrated information along contour lines, such as angles, curves, and lines formed by changes of colour. With the children in the control group, Salome discussed the visual qualities of the same still life objects but did not offer these students any instruction in contour lines, i.e. perceptual training. The drawings from children in both groups were then evaluated in terms of "communicative symbol," the extent to which the drawing effectively communicated the visual qualities of the object by means of information along contour lines; "closure-clarity," the degree to which the edges of a drawn object were enclosed and described by line; and "proportion" (1965, pp. 21-22).

Salome conducted statistical analyses with painstaking care, and found that the drawings of the fifth grade children in particular benefited from "perceptual training" stating that, "it appears that relevant perceptual training may increase the elementary child's ability to render representational drawings" and more specifically, "perceptual training relevant to representational drawing can increase the amount of visual information fifth grade children include in their drawings of visual stimuli" (1965, p. 32). Salome concludes that "it appears that improved visual perception may not be a naturally occurring by-product of art activities, but a specific objective for which one must teach" (1965, pp. 32-33). This conclusion seems to suggest that art activities may not be the most effective way to achieve improved visual perception. Perhaps what is most interesting about this study is that it reveals an instrumental attitude towards the teaching of drawing, namely that the pedagogic value of drawing is not to be looked for in the experience of drawing itself, but in an aim which may equally well be attained by other means. What then, is the point of including art in the curriculum? Does it trivialize drawing by stating its value only as a means to other, more glorious goals?

Nancy Smith (1983) questioned the commonly held belief that elementary school age children do not, and therefore should not, draw from observation. She points to the work of Goodenough (1926) and Helga Eng (1931) as being partially responsible for the absence of observation drawing in American schools. Goodenough and Eng based their view that children draw from memory and not from observation on the research of a German educator, Georg Kerschensteiner, who, at the turn of the century, collected almost 100,000 observation drawings from schoolchildren. Smith notes that in the context of late nineteenth century Europe,

Kerschensteiner "took training in observation drawing for granted and collected his data to find means of improving its teaching" (1983, p. 23). The drawings he collected were all done from the same assignment: to draw a schoolmate in profile, turned to the left. While most (66%) of the children succeeded in doing just that, the rest either drew their class mate in full face or turned to the right. Smith points out that it is these "mistaken" drawings that seem to have fascinated Eng, Goodenough, and other art educators who overlooked the drawings which had been correctly observed, and focused instead on the smaller percentage of mistaken ones as the basis of their belief that children do not draw from observation.

With a hunch that children do in fact draw from observation, Smith gathered together 12 children between the ages of seven and nine to attend 12 classes in which observation drawing was one of several art activities. The children were offered captivating models from which to draw: a live rabbit, a live iguana, a stuffed pigeon, and a bicycle. Although they were not instructed in how to draw, or told that they must draw from observation, they were "led to look at the models carefully and to explore their previous experiences of and associations to them" (1983, p. 23). On most occasions, the children did choose to draw from observation. After all, it is hard to imagine a child not wanting to draw a live rabbit which she or he has patted and talked about. Interestingly, on the day that flower pots and machine parts were brought in as models, the children showed significantly less interest in drawing from observation. Clearly interesting models make a difference, although Smith does not comment on this.

In contrast to memory drawings, which generally lack detail and complexity, and are drawn from convenient and conventional points of view, Smith found that observation drawings produced by these children were highly detailed and showed observation of complex forms. Moreover, they were sometimes drawn from unusual and difficult points of view, such as drawing a bicycle from head on. In spite of the children's careful observation of contour lines, the drawings did not show the three dimensional volume of the models. She suggests that the children's conception of drawing is concrete: marks on a flat surface, and that the depiction of volume "probably requires conceiving of the medium as a means for creating a visual illusion, rather than as a means for creating an equivalent based on concrete correspondences between object and medium" (1983, p. 25). As well as observing the characteristics of the drawings, Smith also observed the children's processes of working: careful looking, struggling with a shape, and launching right into complex contour drawings without making preliminary drawings.

Both Smith and Salome found that children are capable of drawing from observation. Moreover, with specific instruction, or in Smith's case, active encouragement and appealing models, children can make elaborate and detailed drawings.

Beittel's *Mind and context in the art of drawing* (1972) reports on experimental and case study research conducted during the 1960's by Beittel, his colleaugue, Robert Burkhart, and various research assistants. The purpose of these inquiries was "to understand how drawings get made" (1972, p. 1), specifically, the thought processes and conditions which inform the development of a drawing, and a series of drawings. Beittel began with the assumptions that drawing is a "private dialogue" between the artist and the evolving work, that the drawing process "does not exist apart from the context" of the individual and their environment, and that self-directed drawing is facilitated by an environment which is quiet, supportive, and encourages reflection prompted by photographs taken of work in progress (1972, p. 50). He implies that the thinking processes involved in drawing are most likely to be visible in self-directed drawing.

The research subjects in Beittel's studies were university students, both "art majors" and "nonart majors" (1972, p. 2). The experiments and case studies were carried out in the controlled environment of a "drawing laboratory" where student-subjects came one at a time to draw for one hour sessions over several weeks. A wide choice of black and white media was available, as well as an unlimited supply of 12 by 18 inch drawing paper. Although there was a still life in the laboratory, the choice of subject matter was left entirely to the students; they could even bring a friend to pose for them. Above the table where the student drew, a camera was installed unobtrusively to take time-lapse photographs of individual drawings, and series of drawings as they progressed. These photographs were then shown to the student at the beginning of the next drawing session, when the student was encouraged to recall and discuss the process of drawing with the researchers. To encourage further discussion of the drawing process, the student's accumulated drawings were gathered together from time to time and put up on the wall. Beittel describes the atmosphere of the drawing laboratory as "open, accepting and facilitating" (1972, p. 49), "private" and "neutral" (1972, p. 127), while the observing researchers were "interested" and "responsive" (1972, p.49). Beittel emphasizes that their role was not to teach, but to observe, describe, and listen in a non-judgemental manner.

While examining the time-lapse photographs taken for a "learning experiment" in which students worked from a still-life, Beittel and Burkhart noticed two distinct manners of working, or "drawing strategies" (1972, p. 67). They named these strategies "spontaneous" and "divergent" (1972, pp. 71-79). Briefly, drawing with a "spontaneous" strategy involves

beginning by suggesting the whole composition in broad terms, and later incorporating accidents; "spontaneous" drawings have broken, varied lines, and show evidence of movement and large gestures. Drawing with a "divergent" strategy on the other hand, involves beginning with detailed rendering of a small area, and gradually discovering, rather than planning, the composition as one goes along. "Divergent" drawings show control and an interest in pattern; the line tends to be fine and regular. Further experimental studies of these "strategies" revealed, as one might expect, that those who used a "spontaneous" strategy often had more art training than those who used a divergent strategy (1972, p. 78); nevertheless, both strategies are evident in the work of novices. Beittel notes that these two strategies are clearest in the work of "trained artists" who are able to manipulate them at will (1972, p. 79).

Beittel conducted further research using a case study approach with individual students drawing in the laboratory. In addition to discussions focused on photographs of drawings in progress, students wrote about their process of drawing. This research revealed that in the drawing laboratory, where their work was not evaluated or critiqued, novices felt freer to use "forbidden procedures" such as working from photographs; they also used "cute" and "sentimental" subject matter that would normally be frowned upon in an art class (1972, p. 128). Beittel believes that the use of such subject matter and procedures permits people to develop and express personal "idiosyncratic" meaning in their drawings. The case studies also revealed that the course of a series of drawings is positively affected by accidents and chance events, which are experienced as welcome surprises (1972, pp. 171-172). In a series of self-directed drawings Beittel found that some people go through a "low point" followed by a change of direction evident in their drawings. He suggests that such a low point is "symptomatic" of a vague awareness that the direction of one's work does not have personal meaning (1972, p. 188); one is dissatisfied and bored with drawings which are close to what one expected to do. Beittel implies that drawing is most engaging when it is a process of discovery.

Beittel wrote this book at a time when his orientation to research was in a transition from experimental to qualitative methodologies. The tension between the two approaches to research forms the subject matter of the second last chapter, and, perhaps, explains some of the interesting incongruities throughout the text. One senses a tension between Beittel the scientific researcher—working with painstaking precision towards generalizations about the minutiae of drawing, writing in an often turgid style—and Beittel the artist who, because he knows that the creative process of drawing will forever elude scientific explanation, prediction and control is on the verge of discarding his lab coat forever.

Edwards' popular book, *Drawing on the right side of the brain* (1979) grew out of many years of teaching drawing in which she had noticed that her adult students' ability to draw realistically was associated with a particular way of seeing. Her curiosity about this observation led Edwards to explore theories of how the brain functions, in which she found an explanation for how her students learned to draw. "Split-brain" experimental studies suggest that the two hemispheres of the brain are designed to specialize in two distinct modes of thinking. The right side of the brain is especially suited to drawing from observation as it is characterized by perceptual, spatial, global, concrete and analogical thinking. Difficulty in learning to draw is explained by a cultural bias which favours conceptual over perceptual thinking; consequently, our thinking tends to be dominated by the left side of the brain which is verbal, logical, linear, analytical, temporal, and abstract. Learning to draw is a matter of gaining access to the right hemisphere's mode of thinking. To this end, Edwards developed a series of drawing exercises designed to help students to gain access to the ways of thinking and seeing characteristic of the right side of the brain, which would enable them to draw perceptually.

What is interesting about Edwards' book is that she attempts to give a scientific explanation for what she already knew experientially: that in order to draw things we must see them in a certain way. And yet, does a right brain mode of thinking fully account for what goes on in the experience of drawing?

As well as many quotations from artists, scientists and philosophers which attest to the different mode of thinking which characterizes drawing, Edwards includes descriptions of students' experiences in learning to draw. Her inclusion of frustrating experiences and reproduction of unsuccessful student drawings is particularly revealing.

Having used some of Edwards' exercises in teaching drawing, I can support her claim that they do help students to see differently. However, these exercises do not seem to appeal to all students. There are three factors that may account for this. First, the popular presentation of the book is deceptive; while it may be true that almost anyone can learn to draw from life with reasonable accuracy, it is rarely an easy, do-it-yourself process, and Edwards' program of drawing exercises demands many hours of patient and concentrated effort. Second, her suggestion to use small paper and pencil, along with an implicit demand for accuracy, do little to loosen up the inhibited drawing of beginners or encourage the expressive use of line or drawing with whole arm, or body, movement. Third, these exercises place so much emphasis on

the visual aspect of drawing that they tend to alienate students whose orientation to the world is more tactile and spatial.

Duncum (1984) begins the account of his research by noting that within the history of art education few practices have received as much criticism as copying and the use of popular imagery. He goes on to review the Wilsons' (1977) research into the spontaneous drawings of children, in which they found that copying is children's preferred way to learn to draw. Learning how to draw, they claim, is a matter of learning the conventions of a sign system.[11] Duncum points out that the Wilsons' position is aligned with Gombrich's thesis that each new generation of artists first acquires mastery of the schemata of the previous generation of artists. Taking his cue from the Wilsons' use of historical precedent, Duncum set up a systematic inquiry into the early graphic work of 35 artists, illustrators, and writers born between 1734 and 1900, who as children and adolescents, drew prolifically. The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were chosen because of the increasing availability of popular imagery.

Using biographical and autobiographical writing, along with collections of drawings, which, although admittedly "fragmentary and possibly unreliable" Duncum compared "the frequency with which different drawing strategies are reported, and where strategies involve an influence from a graphic source, to compare the frequency with which different kind of imagery is reported" (1984, p. 94). He categorized learning strategies for drawing as: copying, tracing, studying pictures, observing others, verbal instruction, self-instruction, and drawing directly from life. While 30 of the 35 people studied copied, only 16 drew from life: "There were more reports of children copying than reports of any other single strategy" (1984, p. 97). Duncum found only slightly more instance of copying from popular sources than from art sources. Observing others was the second most frequently reported way of learning to draw. Duncum writes, "observing a picture emerge as if from nothing, seemingly by magic, seems to have had a profound effect on subjects' desire to draw" (1984, p. 97). While only a few of the children engaged in self instruction through how-to books, more than two-thirds of them received some kind of verbal instruction, in some instances from a parent.

Of particular interest in Duncum's article are the quotations and anecdotes: John Singer Sargent sketching in watercolour while travelling with his mother; George Stubbs being given bones to draw by a local doctor; Holman Hunt standing, hidden from view, for hours, watching an artist paint the burning houses of parliament. In conclusion, Duncum states that his historical survey, in spite of its incompleteness, supports the claim that children learn to draw through several strategies, and that copying plays a significant part in the acquisition of graphic conventions

and skills; virtually none of these children learned to draw exclusively from life. Duncum's study could be critiqued however for relying entirely on frequency as a measure of truth, and not giving more attention to the instances which stood out as being different from most others. Isn't it significant that Picasso was one of the few artists studied for whom there is no evidence of learning to draw by copying?

Pariser's (1985) in-depth historical study focuses on the youthful drawings of three artists whose adult work is known for its exceptional graphic quality: Klee, Lautrec (Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec), and Picasso. Pariser was especially interested in whether there was "anything special" about the childhood work of these artists which would contribute to the understanding of artistic giftedness (1985, p. 192). To this end, he examined roughly 3,400 drawings produced by these artists before the age of 20.[12] His examination of the drawings was supplemented by a study of biographical and autobiographical writing related to each artist. Assuming that the drawings in collections and archives (containing drawings in school notebooks and textbooks) are representative of the artists' work, he tabulated each artist's work in terms of subject-matter. Interestingly, he found that 83% of Picasso's youthful work focuses on the human figure, in contrast to the concentration of landscape (76%) in Klee's drawings, and an interest in animals (42%) evident in Lautrec's early work (1985, p. 193).

Pariser's main interest in the drawings however, was to use them as a means to describe the stages of each artist's graphic development, and to compare this to the graphic development of "normal" children. Pariser's analysis of these artists' drawings revealed two common characteristics of their youthful drawing practice which are shared by "normal" children. First, like most youngsters, they went through an "early adolescent slump" (1985, p. 198) in which lively, imaginative childhood drawings were replaced by awkward, laboured work. It appears that all three artists passed through the same struggles that normal children do with developing skills of representation, although Picasso and Lautrec progressed at a faster rate than most. Second, like many children, these artists simultaneously engaged in public and private, formal and informal kinds of drawing. While developing skills of representational drawing through formal education in art academies, all three artists simultaneously engaged in more personal and imaginative drawing. For example, Picasso's playful drawings in his home newspaper and school books are concurrent with the drawings he did at the academies in La Coruña and Barcelona. A third characteristic shared by these three artists which would distinguish them from other children was enjoyment of the challenge of mastering academic

drawing. Pariser notes "the amount of sheer drudgery and practice which all three artists undertook in their formative years" (1985, p. 199).

Pariser concludes by noting three "signs of giftedness" in these artists' youthful work (1985, p. 199). The first of these is a wide range of quality among their drawings; the drawings which are of an exceptionally high quality identify them as "special" (1985, p. 199). A second sign of giftedness is the ability to draw rapidly, fluently, and with assurance. This, together with the ability to imitate, is especially evident in Picasso's drawings. Pariser suggests that the youthful discovery of art as a vocation is a third sign of giftedness: "that is, all three artists discovered at a certain point, that they *had* to become artists" (1985, p. 199).

A third historical study of drawing is by Karen Lee Carroll (1994) who, guided by a conviction that art educators may discover "pedagogical cues" and gain insight into artistic processes by studying the early work of artists (1994, p. 8), made a thorough study of Edvard Munch's work between the ages of 12 and 20. These works are housed in the Munch museum in Oslo. As a background to her study, she investigated art historians' writing on Munch as well as art educators' research on artists' early work including the studies, mentioned above by Duncum (1984) and Pariser (1985).

Many of the 500 youthful works by Munch in Oslo are drawings, suggesting that by the time Munch was 12, he had already established the practice of drawing. In contrast to art historians' discussion of Munch's early work, which focuses almost exclusively on drawings and paintings from observation, Carroll notes that Munch employed copying and observational strategies simultaneously. Munch's drawings from observation reveal his struggle to master the conventions and media of representational drawing, in a range of subject matter, beginning with interiors, then landscapes, and eventually, in his late teens, figure and portrait studies. Munch employed a drawing device, a common practice among naturalistic artists in his day, which enabled him to render observed scenes in perspective with greater accuracy. He also began keeping a diary as well as a sketchbook in his youth. That Munch learned to draw and paint by copying as well as through observation studies is evident in a watercolour study of a well known painting in the Oslo National Gallery, along with sketchbooks filled with images of distant times and places.

Although it is tempting to search Munch's youthful drawings for early signs of the tormented images that haunt his adult work, Carroll points out that apart from unpeopled interiors and landscapes which suggest loneliness and isolation, Munch's early work is characterized by

careful observation, increasing fluency in the conventions and media of drawing, story-telling, and humour. The collection also includes drawings by his mother, aunt, brother, and two of his three sisters, revealing that he grew up in a family which promoted drawing as an activity. Carroll was especially fascinated by numerous tiny narrative drawings done by Munch and his younger brother. These include sequential images, clothes and props for characters who take part in complex stories, set in a variety of scenes, as well as small books for their sisters showing animals and buildings around the world, and exercise books for the drawing of various subjects.

Carroll's remarks on the narrative drawings reveal that she is studying Munch's work with an art educator's rather than an art historian's perspective by alluding to the personal and pedagogical meaning that the activity of drawing had for the young Munch. She writes: "this is work that rises out of pleasure, out of the need to make things special, out of a desire to bond with one's siblings, to have gifts to give, to make others happy, to laugh and make others laugh" (1994, p. 13). Carroll concludes that,

> without the pleasure discovered in the drawing act, and without the inclination to think visually and pursue visual problems, representational styles, and technical expertise, Munch may not have turned to art as an adult. . . . drawing and painting offered him opportunities for concentration, control, mastery, humour, delight and pleasure. (1994, p. 15)

Carroll argues that Munch's early work confirms that people who grow up to be artists use multiple strategies simultaneously to learn how to draw, including copying from popular and fine art images and narrative drawing.

Carroll's, Pariser's and Duncum's studies are fascinating to read as they examine the education of artists by uncovering the nature of the early drawings and practices of people whose adult work is already familiar to us. This retrospective approach differs from most research on learning to draw which usually focuses on groups of children who may—or may not—grow up to be the next generation's Munch or Picasso.

Perhaps the most frequently cited, and most controversial study of how children learn to draw is the Wilsons' article, "An iconoclastic view of the imagery sources in the drawings of young people" (1977). Based on years of research, the Wilsons offer a reasoned and scathing critique of the expressive orientation to teaching drawing which has dominated school art teaching (in North America) for most of the twentieth century. They suggest that the fascination with child art and the belief that children's art making will naturally develop,

> leads to practices which suppress—at least in art classes—the most obvious adult influences while subtly 'motivating' children to produce adult conceptions of what children's art should look like. . . while turning a blind eye to the very drawings—the copied ones—that could reveal the true nature of artistic learning. (1977, p. 5)

Acknowledging that the art of young children, up to eight years of age, is spontaneous and contains universal symbols, the Wilsons argue that older children are ready to and indeed want to acquire adult conventions of drawing through imitation. This, they believe, is "the most important [process] of any in artistic development, for this is the process which will remain operational for a lifetime" (1977, p. 5).

To find out if their theory that children learn to draw by imitation corresponded with the drawing experience of young people, the Wilsons interviewed 147 high school and college students. The interviews included drawing (from memory) as well as talking about drawings and the process of drawing. The interviewees were asked if the forms in their memory drawings were derived from anything else, or whether the interviewee had originated it. The Wilsons found that virtually all the images their interviewees drew were derived from other graphic (or photographic) sources, found in popular culture and in the drawings of other children and young people.

Whereas drawing is usually understood to be a process of representing real objects, the Wilsons contend that a drawing is not a representation of an object but a sign for an object. According to the Wilsons, drawn marks are not isomorphic, (and presumably their makers do not intend them to be). They argue that learning to make "configurational signs" is much like the process of learning to use language, that "the child learns to form configurational signs of his own mainly through configurational-sign-making-behavior of others" (1977, p. 6). Borrowing from theories of artificial intelligence, the Wilsons believe that people develop specific "programs" for drawing particular things, based on memories of previously seen graphic signs (1977, p. 7).

It is easier to draw from the two dimensional anamorphic signs than from objects in the world. Drawing from observation is a process of modifying existing programs in one's repertoire. As an example, the Wilsons cite the "centuries old practice employed by artists—that of beginning the drawing of a head with an oval shape" (1977, p. 9). Through studying the drawings made by interviewees, the Wilsons hypothesized that a person's drawing program for one thing may be much more practiced and sophisticated than the same person's program for another thing.

Thus through practice, an individual may develop fluency in drawing one kind of thing, and yet draw something else quite awkwardly. Those who are good at drawing are able to use hundreds of drawing programs combining, modifying and extending what they know to invent new configurations, in other words to generate new images from already existing images. Lack of exposure to graphic images and lack of practice in developing and modifying one's own programs leads many people to give up drawing. The Wilsons conclude by pointing out that an adherence to an expressive orientation to the teaching and learning of drawing too often leads to no instruction at all in drawing, and that the lack of adult graphic influence in art classrooms leads children to look for graphic images outside the fine arts.

Certainly a critique of unquestioning use of expressive theories of drawing is necessary, particularly when this leads to complete lack of instruction. However, one has to question whether the Wilsons take a position which is just as extreme and one sided as those who maintain that learning to draw is entirely a matter of the untrammelled development of personal expression.

In an effort to understand to what extent children learn to draw through visual perception and through learning graphic conventions, Pariser (1984) set two drawing exercises for the elementary school children whom he taught. This study differs from others I have discussed here as it was conducted with children the researcher knew, as a teacher, over the course of a school year. Throughout the article, we sense Pariser's relation with and interest in the children. In some instances, he is able to interpret a drawing because he knows the child and the child's other drawings.

One exercise, designed to register visual perception, was given to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children. Students were asked to draw a classmate or three dimensional object by looking constantly at the model, focusing their eyes at a point along a contour or edge, moving their pencil slowly along this contour, as if it were touching the model, while *not* looking at the paper on which they are drawing. This exercise, originated by Nicolaïdes (1941) is known as "blind contour drawing."[13] Pariser analyzed 11 of these drawings. While the blind contour drawings done by one child who does a great deal of cartoon drawing rely more on stereotyped forms and less on direct perception, most of the drawings are un-conventional renderings, and some even demonstrate an accurate depiction of three dimensions. Pariser notes that in this perceptual drawing exercise,

> it is clear that the children's representational schemas were modified to reflect specifically perceptual information such as surface texture, disposition

> of limbs, and orientation. . . . it is also clear that the capacity to record perceptual cues varied considerably from child to child, and was limited by the coarseness or fineness of the conventional schema at the child's disposal. (1984, p. 150)

The second exercise, given to children in grades one, two, and three, was a copying task, intended to see to what extent these children attended to graphic conventions. Pariser began by reading Kipling's "How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin" to the children, and showed them an enlarged copy of a woodcut of a rhinoceros by Albrecht Dürer, explaining that he had copied it, drawing their attention to the variety of marks used in the drawing of the rhinoceros. The children were asked to use Pariser's drawing as a starting point to illustrate some part of Kipling's story. This assignment elicited a diverse group of drawings ranging from a highly patterned drawing which relied entirely upon cues from graphic conventions to a sensitively observed contour drawing; other drawings included both perceptual and conventional elements. Contrary to what is usually presumed, these children's drawings show that even without understanding the conventions of perspective drawing, children were able to render unusual views of three dimensional objects with convincing accuracy, and that copying from other drawings does not necessarily produce stereotyped, uninteresting drawings. This may however, be partly attributable to the imaginative and engaging lesson that Pariser taught, and the fact that he, as he points out, "did not insist on accuracy of representation, but encouraged the children to use the oversize image of the rhinoceros as a starting point for their own work" (1984, p. 152).

Based on this research, Pariser argues for a balanced approach to teaching drawing which employs a variety of drawing strategies to facilitate meaningful expression. "The unresolved task" he writes, "is to discover when it is developmentally appropriate to make children aware that the act of drawing consists in choosing forms which are derived from the world of graphic convention and the perceptual world" (1984, p. 156). To this end it would be interesting, as a follow up to Pariser's study to set a copying task for older children and a perceptual drawing exercise for younger children.

A balance among several competing approaches to teaching drawing is also called for by Larrie Moody (1992). He begins an analysis of drawing programs[14] for early adolescents by noting that youngsters of this age want to draw in a representational manner, but often feel a lack of confidence in their ability, and give up easily. With a wish to encourage adolescents to keep drawing Moody reviewed and compared six programs of study, published as books.

A comparative analysis of these programs revealed similar concepts with which Moody grouped programs together according to three orientations. Mona Brookes (1986), Edwards (1979), and McFee & Degge (1977) share a focus on the development of perceptual ability "to identify, differentiate, and discriminate visual phenomena" (Moody, 1992, p. 41). A book by the Wilsons (1982) and another they authored with Hurwitz (1987) emphasize what Moody describes as the cognitive dimension of development (which is related to, but somewhat different from what I have called a cognitive orientation to learning how to draw): the "mental ability to code information symbolically, remember concepts and constructs, and reason abstractly" (Moody, 1992, p. 41). Finally, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) focus on the psychosocial aspect of development: feelings, experiences, and relationships (Moody, 1987, p. 41).

Moody is careful to point out that while each program emphasizes one aspect of development, it does not entirely exclude others. Each program however, has drawbacks which arise from its emphasis: for example, Moody upbraids Brookes and Edwards for assuming "that drawing can be taught much like typing skills" (1992, p. 43), points out the absence of attention to visual perception in the Wilsons' programs, and notes that although Lowenfeld and Brittain advocate naturalism, they discourage the direct teaching of observational and technical skills which would contribute to naturalistic drawing. In conclusion, Moody reminds his readers that "programs do not teach drawing; art educators do" (1992 p. 45), and cautions educators against unthinking adoption of one program; instead he wisely urges them to select from varied sources according to the developmental needs and cultural contexts of their students.

As the studies cited above show, research on drawing consists mostly of studies about learning to draw, investigating one or more "strategies." In this way, existing research seems to be preoccupied with the "how" rather than the "what" or "why" of drawing. Research on drawing is often distanced from the experience of drawing: Moody analyzes published programs rather than drawings or drawing, and two of these studies (Salome, 1965; Smith, 1983) focus more on drawings than drawing to theorize about learning to draw. Duncum (1984), Carroll (1994), Pariser (1985) and the Wilsons (1974, 1977) however get closer to the experience of drawing by using experiential accounts garnered from interviews, biographies, diaries and letters in addition to drawings. And Edwards (1979), Beittel (1972), and Pariser (1984) rely on their experience of teaching drawing in addition to analyzing student drawings.

As a group these studies show that there is more than one orientation to, or strategy for learning to draw, which different individuals, at different times in their lives and artistic development

can adopt. This implies that one's experience of drawing would be hindered and impoverished if one only employed a single strategy for learning to draw, whether this is drawing from observation, or another approach. It seems there are no easy prescriptions for when to draw from observation, from imagination and memory, or when to copy. As Moody notes, it is the art educator who must adapt drawing programs to the age and interests of the students. An experiential understanding of drawing could help teachers to be more responsive to the drawing experiences of their students.

How to draw? Practical literature on learning to draw

At the beginning of my first interview with a sculptor, he paused while reading the information sheet and enthusiastically leapt up to get his well used copy of *The natural way to draw* by Nicolaïdes (1941). "I found this in a second hand book store last year. It's an old book, but it is the *only* book on drawing which I have actually found useful." He was slightly astonished and delighted when he discovered that I had already read it.

When I chatted casually about my research with a retired couple who both paint, Oris said, "Oh there's a good book on drawing by a man who taught at the Art Student's League in New York a long time ago. Now what was his name? . . . " "Nicolaïdes?" I ventured. "Oh yes, Nicolaïdes, that's it. Wonderful book."

At the end of a drawing workshop I attended with Franck, he cautioned everyone against most books on drawing. "There is one book though, which is very good—besides my own of course" he said with a characteristic twinkle in his eye, "and that is the book by Nicolaïdes."

As the above instances suggest, the book based on Nicolaïdes' drawing classes taught at the Art Student's League in New York in the 1920's and 30's is a favorite of artists and art teachers. Nicolaïdes emphasizes *learning* to draw through the diligent practice of carefully sequenced exercises: "the job of the teacher, as I see it, is to teach students, not how to draw, but how to learn to draw" (1941, p. xiii). Like many teachers, Nicolaïdes argues that learning to draw is a matter of "learning to see—to see correctly" (1941, p. 5). What distinguishes his approach however, is his instruction to use all the senses as they are experienced *through* the eyes. Nicolaïdes writes,

> Because pictures are made to be seen, too much emphasis (and too much dependence) is apt to be placed upon seeing. Actually, we see through the eyes rather than with them. It is necessary to test everything you see with what you can discover through the other senses—hearing, taste, smell, and touch—and

> their accumulated experience. If you attempt to rely on the eyes alone, they can sometimes actually mislead you. (1941, p. 6)

Nicolaïdes' book is designed to offer students opportunities for drawing practice. Each chapter contains a "schedule" for fifteen hours of drawing "because the work is the important thing" (1941, p. 1). Nicolaïdes' instructions to spend a specified amount of *time* on each exercise are unusual among "how-to-draw" books, and counteract the impression that many such books might give, that learning to draw is as quick and effortless as reading a "how-to" book. Nicolaïdes cautions his readers that "it is a fallacy to suppose that you can get the greatest results with a minimum of effort" (1941, p. 4). The drawing exercises are arranged in a sequence which allows the student to gain cumulative experience in various aspects of drawing, from line to gesture to volume.

The practical wisdom acquired through years of teaching, and the assured, yet humble tone of Nicolaïdes' writing makes *The natural way to draw* stand out among the abundance of "how-to-draw" books. Other good "how-to-draw" books include those by Kaupelis (1966), Nathan Goldstein (1977), and Jeffery Camp (1981).

What is it like to draw? Experiential writing on drawing

Experiential writing about drawing is written by artists, artist-teachers, and art critics. It generally addresses a wider audience than theoretical writing. The tone is more personal, the style of writing autobiographical or conversational.

For many years, Franck's writing has inspired my drawing and my teaching. Franck's books about drawing include vivid descriptions of experiences and reproductions of his own drawings. While each of these books has a particular focus, the four that I have read (1973, 1981, 1989, 1993) are all informed by a unified and inspired approach to the practice and teaching of drawing from observation. Therefore, rather than reviewing each of these books individually, I will discuss Franck's approach to drawing, quoting mostly from his most recent, and most comprehensive book, *Zen seeing, Zen drawing* (1993).

Although Franck has drawn for most of his life, it was not until 1960, while working as a dental surgeon in Africa, that he coined the term "seeing/drawing" (1993, p. 5) to express his understanding of seeing and drawing as two aspects of one process which reinforce each other: "my response to what I see has been to draw, and the more I have drawn, the greater has become my delight in seeing and my wonder at the great gift of being able to see" (1993, p. ix).

Franck distinguishes between "looking-at" which we use for survival and recognition, and "seeing" which is "that specifically human capacity that opens one up to empathy, to compassion with all that lives and dies" (1993, p. 39).

Franck has been deeply influenced by the Zen Buddhist tradition. This is visible in his writing which is infused with wisdom and humour, and speckled with quotations from Zen writings. The influence of Zen is also evident in his attitude to drawing which he regards as neither a profession or a hobby, but a practice of "meditation-in-action" (1993, pp. xii; 113-122), "a way of being in total contact with life within and around me" (1993, p. x). For Franck, drawing from observation is an act of reverence, a "response to life" in which one sees the uniqueness of what or who one draws, the "as-is-ness of things. . . their intrinsic, unhallowed sacredness" (1993, pp. 9, 25).

Insights, surprises and discoveries is jointly written by two Montreal artists, Ghitta Caisserman-Roth, who teaches drawing, and Rhoda Cohen who is a psychoanalyst. The book is based on four years of taped conversations following regular weekly life drawing sessions in a shared studio. Although, as they insist, this is not another how-to book, the left hand pages include many suggestions for drawing and drawing exercises. These are interspersed with their own drawings, reproduced in colour, and quotations from artists. The right hand pages present the edited, yet candid dialogue between Caisserman-Roth and Cohen. They discuss aspects of the experience of life drawing which are often overlooked, such as the artist's feeling for the model, and how this together with the "mood and physicality" of the model affects the drawings (p. 23), the experience of sharing a studio and drawing together, the studio as a lived space, undoing artist's block, and the experience of using various materials. Their discussion is also interesting for what it omits and assumes, namely the value of drawing from life as a regular practice.

Although one would not expect to find lively and insightful first person accounts of drawing in the writing of an art critic, I have found three essays by Berger which are just that. The first, originally written in 1960, is a short essay entitled "the basis of all painting and sculpture is drawing" (Berger, 1979). The essay begins with a comparison of drawing with painting and sculpture, in which Berger argues that in contrast to the public exhibited orientation of painting and sculpture, drawing is a private act of discovery. Berger points out that drawing differs from painting and sculpture not only from the perspective of the maker but also from the perspective of the viewer. To look at a drawing is to identify with the artist, and "to gain the conscious experience of seeing as through the artist's own eyes" (1979, p. 25). The second part of

the essay is a first hand account of drawing from a model which shows that Berger draws as well as writes. Berger employs evocative analogies to describe and interpret the experience of drawing. There are several passages which are of particular phenomenological interest, such as Berger's description of feeling that he inhabited the body he was drawing. However, Berger's manner of writing about this experience of drawing reveals his art school training: drawing from the model is presented as an analytical and emotionally distant act. Although he writes in detail about many taken for granted aspects of life-drawing, he completely takes for granted the sheer presence of a naked man who poses to be drawn, who seems to be a collection of verticals and horizontals, planes and angles rather than a person.

A second article by Berger written in 1987 is more analytical, distinguishing between three ways in which drawing can function: studying and questioning the visible, recording and communicating ideas, and drawing to exorcise memories. Berger's analysis addresses the artist's experience as well as the viewer's experience of these three modes of drawing. Also of interest are two drawing anecdotes, taken from Berger's own experience, which he uses to introduce ways of drawing: drawing from life in art school and having a dinner conversation with a woman who did not speak English by means of a series of drawings on table napkins.[15]

In a third essay about drawing (1993) Berger describes drawing his father's face just after he died, and then his experience of living with this drawing afterwards. In contrast to Berger's earlier writing about drawing, these descriptions have a personal tone and emotional depth which lead him to insights about drawing and time.

Another source of valuable experiential accounts of drawing is found in the personal letters, journals and autobiographical writing of artists. Artists whose writing I have found especially relevant to an understanding of drawing from observation are: Hockney (1993), Matisse (in Flam, 1973), Anne Truitt (1984), Van Gogh (1938, 1973), and Wassily Kandinsky (1964).

In a book entitled *A Giacometti portrait* (1980), James Lord gives a candid account of posing for Giacometti in the 1960's. Like Caisserman-Roth and Cohen's book, this is the product of a friendship as well as a formal working relationship. The account is as interesting for how it was accomplished as for what it describes. Before leaving Paris, Lord had planned to sit for a "quick portrait sketch on canvas" (1980, p. 3). After the first sitting however, it became apparent that it would take longer. Lord writes that after studying the picture, Giacometti said,

> "The head isn't too bad. It has volume. This is a beginning, at least."

> "A beginning?" I asked. "But I thought we were going to work only once."
>
> "It's too late for that now," he said. "It's gone too far and at the same time not far enough. We can't stop now." (1980, p. 9)

And so, the portrait continued for a total of eighteen sittings. With a view to writing about the experience of posing for Giacometti, Lord wrote detailed notes about the sitting each evening, after posing. And sometimes, when Giacometti left the room, he quickly jotted notes into a small notebook. He did all this rather secretly because he feared that if Giacometti knew the process was being recorded, it would "inhibit the spontaneity of his work and of our talk" (1980, p. 116). However, Lord did openly photograph the daily progress of the portrait. The book takes the form of eighteen chapters, each one describing one sitting, and opening with a photograph of the painting as it was at the beginning of that session.

Giacometti's process of working was one of painting, scrubbing out, and repainting the same canvas, over and over again. The painting, a monochromatic sketch, was not "finished" so much as stopped by Lord and his need to leave Paris. Lord chronicles the daily creation and destruction of his image, along with Giacometti's fluctuating optimism and despair. Apparently unmoved by international fame, Giacometti despaired almost daily at the seeming impossibility of rendering what he saw, repeatedly threatening to give up drawing, painting and sculpture forever. And yet, daily, he persevered, and continued to work. Often, a day's work would end with Giacometti's remark that he had succeeded in making a "beginning" or finding an "opening" (for example, Lord, 1980. pp. 9, 54, 87, 93, 103, 110).

In addition to recording the daily evolution of a portrait, the book recounts Lord's conversations with Giacometti about art and artists, and experiential dimensions of posing and portraiture: the daily routines, the arrangement and atmosphere of the studio, the bodily experience of posing for hours each day in the same posture, and the relation between artist and model. Lord's friendship with Giacometti infuses the whole book with sensitivity and humour. In setting out simply to record the experience of posing for Giacometti, Lord has produced an unpretentious account which offers insight into the process of drawing and painting as well as Giacometti's idiosyncrasies.

Lord's work is probably the most systematic of the first person accounts of drawing experience I have reviewed here. While experiential writing about art making is generally less disciplined than academic writing, it offers a rich source of material for phenomenological research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Drawing from life: Practicing phenomenology and art

Human science research, particularly of a phenomenological nature, has suffered from some of the same popular misconceptions that plague the visual arts. When well done, phenomenological writing, like drawing, may look deceptively easy. The years of consistent effort, the dozens of drafts that have ended in the waste basket or the computer's trash, the pounds of drawings on newsprint which have long since been recycled, are all invisible in the published paper or framed picture. So the naïve reader or viewer may think that to draw or do phenomenological research one must either possess a rare and mysterious talent, or that drawing and phenomenology are not really serious activities, which anyone can learn to do, with little or no preparation.

What this naïve view misses is an understanding of drawing and phenomenological research as *practices*. A practice implies not only a repeated and disciplined engagement of mind and body in an activity, but, most significantly, certain attitudes, a *way* of doing and being which takes time to learn, and which one continues to learn over the course of a lifetime.

While we may find it easy to consider the performing arts of music, dance and drama as practices which demand years of almost daily exercise to develop and maintain skills, along with the patience and perseverance to endure many frustrations and unsuccessful efforts, we are curiously less likely to think of the visual arts in terms of practice. Thus the beginning art student, unlike the beginning music student, may want to quit a drawing class if after a few weeks she or he is not producing drawings that resemble those of da Vinci or Hockney. The artist-teacher Nicolaïdes urged his students to consider learning drawing, like learning the performing arts a matter of practice:

> Don't worry if for the first three months your studies do not look like anything else called a drawing that you have ever seen. You should not care what your work looks like as long as you spend your time trying. The effort you make is not for one particular drawing, but for the experience you are having—and that will be true even when you are eighty years old.
>
> I believe that entirely too much emphasis is placed upon the paintings and drawings that are made in art schools. If you go to a singing teacher, he will first give you breathing exercises, not a song. No one expects you to sing those exercises before an audience. Neither should you be expected to show off pictures as a result of your first exercises in drawing. . . .

> The things you do—over and over again—are but practice. (1941, p. 2)

The contemporary art educator, Peter London (1989, p. 16) is even more emphatic about the importance of practice when he says, "Do you want to draw like Rembrandt or Degas? Simple! Just draw ten hours a day, six days a week, for forty years!" Ingres encouraged aspiring artists to practice by saying that, "one must always draw, draw with your eyes if you cannot draw with a pencil" (in Chan, 1995, p. 10). Not only is progress in drawing made through practice, but drawing is meaningfully experienced in its practice. Franck, for example describes drawing as "the discipline by which I constantly rediscover the world" (1973, p. 6).

In the first chapter, I made a distinction between thinking of drawing as a noun, an object, a finished product and thinking of drawing as a verb, an activity, a process, a practice. In this chapter, I aim to extend the notion of practice to include the activity of research,[16] particularly the attitudes which inform the activity of phenomenological research.

While my own experience of drawing and teaching drawing has prepared me to think of drawing as a practice, it was not until I was immersed in the process of research and writing that I recognized that my research can also be thought of as a practice, and moreover, that the attitudes which inform the practice of hermeneutic phenomenological research have some striking similarities to the ways of thinking which guide the practice of drawing from observation. That human science research necessitates attitudes and abilities which are analogous to those required of the artist has been noted by various scholars.[17] Max van Manen describes human science research as a "textual practice" (1990, p. 38) which is "not unlike an artistic endeavor, a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive" (1990, p. 39). Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote that phenomenology "*can be practised and identified as a manner or style of thinking,*" (1962, p. viii, italics in original) and likened phenomenology to the work of literary and visual artists:

> It is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry and Cézanne—by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world and of history as that meaning comes into being. (1962, p. xxi)

While Merleau-Ponty and others have likened phenomenology to painting, poetry, or art in general, I will try to show how phenomenology may be likened specifically to the practice of drawing from observation.

In what follows, I will attempt to explain some of the aims and guiding attitudes of hermeneutic phenomenological research by drawing analogies with observation drawing. My intention here is not to equate the practices of drawing and phenomenological research (nor to suggest that research is art), but to draw analogies, showing how an experiential understanding of drawing can illuminate, and prepare one for the practice of phenomenology, suggesting that a conception of research as a practice is fitting for an inquiry into the practice of a visual art. Following this analogous explication of the attitudes—the "manner or style of thinking"—which informs phenomenological research, I will write about some of the characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology which distinguish it from drawing and from other forms of inquiry. Then, in the third and final section of this chapter, I will offer an account of the particular research activities in which I have been engaged. Included in this section is a piece entitled "living with the practices of drawing and research" in which I have written in a more personal tone about how the practice of phenomenological research has taken me back to a meaningful engagement with the practice of drawing.

Beginning and ending in the lifeworld

The practices of phenomenological research and observation drawing arise in the same place, namely the everyday world in which we live. This is not a world composed of what we think or conceptualize, but of what we "live through," (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. xvi-xvii) the world of our experience, the "lifeworld." This is the world which is "always already there" before philosophical reflection begins (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. vii). Thus, the lifeworld can be understood "as giving birth to our reflective awareness" (Valle, King, and Halling, 1989, p. 10). It is in these familiar surroundings of our everyday world that we find our subjects. In both the practices of drawing and research, we draw from our experience, and what draws us could be any aspect of our lifeworld, sometimes the picturesque, but more often, the everyday and the familiar. The subjects that we draw may be people in the midst of conversations in a café, the familiar face of our lover or friend, the tree that we walk by each day. The subjects of phenomenological research in education are taken from the familiar world in which we live as teachers.

Drawing from observation begins and ends in the lifeworld. Even when we are not actually drawing, we may go on seeing as if we were drawing. It may happen that a particular person, scene or object never quite looks the same after drawing it. The act of drawing has discovered contours, tones, textures, revealed aspects of its being we had not previously seen.

Alternatively, the appearance of the world in general seems to change; we find ourselves seeing more, as if rendering the world in drawing has made it more visible.

Similarly, phenomenological research ends in the lifeworld (van Manen, 1990, pp. 35, 36). Human situations and experiences which we have re-searched and rendered in writing may be more visible. Van Manen points out that "seeing is already a form of praxis—seeing the significance in a situation places us in the event, makes us part of the event" (1990, p. 130). This transformation in the way we see ourselves and others, however slight, can inform our actions, our living.

Searching for a renewed contact

Artists sometimes speak of drawing as a process of searching for a meaningful connection with their subject. This interest in making contact with the subject may take precedence over achieving a likeness. Similarly, the phenomenological researcher does not so much aim to make an accurate representation of the subject in question, as to regain an original contact with it. In Merleau-Ponty's words, this is a matter of "re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world. . . . reawakening the basic experience of the world" (1962, pp. vii, viii). To do phenomenological research is to reacquaint ourselves with the familiar, to grasp what may have become submerged in the sophisticated language of theory, to "return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. ix, italics in original). The purpose of phenomenological research is not to establish "effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world" but, like art, to discover "plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 9), insights which may prompt us to act differently.

Seeing with attentiveness and wonder

It is often said that learning to draw is a question of learning to *see*. The manner of seeing necessary for drawing from observation is an abstraction of the way we usually see: to draw we must carefully attend to shapes, angles, lines, proportions, and relations. At the same time, this seeing constitutes an attitude of wonder at the visible: seeing things as if we had not seen them before. Those who learn to draw from observation must learn to see anew. Although learning this manner of seeing takes an effort, drawing students also experience delight in their new found vision: for example, the woman who, in the midst of a weekly drawing class, told me, "you know, when I leave here, I see with new eyes."

Thus, it could be said that drawing from observation "consists in relearning to look at the world." This is exactly how Merleau-Ponty defines what he calls "true philosophy" (1962, p. xx). The attitude or way of seeing necessary for phenomenological research, like that required for drawing, can be described in visual terms. Just as people learning to draw learn to temporarily set aside their usual conceptual knowledge of their subject matter in favour of vivid perceptual analysis, researchers must learn to see "with attentiveness and wonder," to see the everyday and familiar as worthy of attention, to see through surface appearances and worn-out clichés, to attend to what we ordinarily overlook, in short, to re-search. Drawing and researching are not only matters of learning to see anew, but of learning to trust our senses.

Because our capacity for wonder is all too often anaesthetized by overuse and habitual ways of seeing, in order to see freshly, it may be necessary to consciously and methodically set aside our usual way of seeing as well as our beliefs and knowledge about the phenomenon we want to study. In phenomenology, this process is sometimes called "bracketing" a term inherited from Edmund Husserl (1970). As the term implies, we take what we already know—our pre-conceived ideas, theories, and thematizations, together with our own personal biases and preferences—and hold it in abeyance (van Manen, 1990, p. 185). Bracketing constitutes a shift in attitude, from what Husserl (1970) named the "natural attitude" (one's taken-for-granted view of things which is naive and pre-theoretical) to the "transcendental attitude" (in which one overcomes the natural attitude).

Another term for this shift in attitude is the "reduction." The attempt to see human experiences and situations as "pure phenomena" stripped of previous knowledge about them is akin to the way in which an artist endeavors to see things "purely" in terms of colour, shape, or tonal value. In both art and phenomenology, this manner of seeing may seem rather artificial and effortful, as it is in fact, an abstraction, which nevertheless is intended to allow us to see the structures of experience (or if we are drawing, the structures of objects) which we usually overlook. Merleau-Ponty points out that we engage in the reduction,

> not because we reject the certainties of common sense and a natural attitude to things. . . but because, being the presupposed basis of any thought, they are taken for granted, and go unnoticed, and because in order to arouse them and bring them into view, we have to suspend for a moment our recognition of them. (1962, p. xiii)

In this way, the phenomenological reduction enables us to see what is essential to the subject of our inquiry, "to see past or through the particularity of lived experience toward the universal, essence or eidos that lies on the other side of the concreteness of lived meaning" (van Manen,

1990, p. 185). The phenomenologist's search for the essential structure of an experience is not unlike the artist's search through numerous drawings for the essential structure of an object. And yet, in the phenomenological quest for the "essence" of an experience, we do not completely lose sight of the concrete and particular. To do phenomenology is to move between the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete (van Manen, 1990).

In addition to "bracketing" or the "reduction," a third term, or image, to describe the shift in attitude necessary for phenomenological work was coined by Merleau-Ponty when he noted that "reflection does not withdraw from the world. . . it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice" (1962, p. xiii). I prefer this manner of describing the shift in attitude necessary for phenomenological work. "Reflection" implies a contemplative attitude, and the image of "slackening the intentional threads" implies a subtle shift in our relation to things, a gentle loosening of our usual connection with things, rather than an abrupt cutting off (bracketing) or a scientific operation (reduction). Furthermore, the image of "slackening the intentional threads" acknowledges the way we are stitched into the fabric of the world. This is the notion of "intentionality," a term to describe "the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 181), and the way in which consciousness is always conscious of something. Phenomenological research, like drawing from observation directs attention towards some-thing—an experience or situation—in the world. "The phenomenologist" writes J. H. van den Berg , "should not direct his glance 'inwardly' but 'outwardly.' Expressed paradoxically, true introspection is effected by means of the physical sense of sight; we are seeing ourselves when we observe the world" (1972, p. 130).

A personal view reveals a shared meaning

Drawing and phenomenology both view phenomena from a particular vantage point, situated in the lifeworld. Thus, our descriptions—whether in marks or words—are necessarily interpretive.

Drawing from observation is necessarily a "view from somewhere." If, for example, in the midst of writing this, I were to set aside the computer keyboard, reach for my sketchbook and pencil and draw the garden, the drawing would be of the garden-as-seen-from-this-upstairs-window. If I aim to adhere to the convention of one point perspective keeping my head and body very still as I draw, closing one eye as I peer out the window, the drawing will show what I see from this vantage point. Or will it? If, while looking through this window, I use both eyes instead

of one, my view will change slightly. And if I move my eyes, even without moving my head, I can instantly shift my focus from the sky above to my elderly neighbour working in her garden below. By moving my head just a few inches to the right, my view will change more dramatically: those two clothes pegs will be in a significantly different position in relation to the flower bed below them, and I will see even more of the trees two gardens to the left. Thus, drawing strictly from one point of view is an exacting and laborious process. Moreover, the resulting drawing may not actually show what I see from this window. For I am not a camera with a single lens poised on a tripod. I see the garden with two eyes in a mobile living body, a body which when I am drawing naturally moves a little this way or that way. As Merleau-Ponty points out, "vision is attached to movement" and drawing (like painting) is an embodied action (1964, p. 162). Commenting on what we might call "drawing with paint" in some of Paul Cézanne's still life paintings, Merleau-Ponty says, "Cups and saucers on a table seen from the side should be elliptical, but Cézanne paints the two ends of the ellipse swollen and expanded. . . . To say that a circle seen obliquely is seen as an ellipse is to substitute for our actual perception what we would see if we were cameras: in reality we see a form which oscillates around the ellipse without being an ellipse" (1993, pp. 63, 64). This, Merleau-Ponty suggests, is why Cézanne "indicates *several* outlines in blue. Rebounding among these, one's glance captures a shape that emerges from among them all, just as it does in perception" (1993, p. 65). Do these characteristics of drawing—multiple outlines, lines that are broken or change width, objects that are omitted or moved—describe our lived embodied vision more accurately than visual images made by mechanical or photographic means? Certainly when we look at a drawing done from observation, we know right away that this is some *body's* view from somewhere, or to put it differently, we not only acknowledge, but value the subjectivity of the specific vantage point. In art, subjectivity is a strength.

The subjective view from which we necessarily research and write is also a strength. It is our subjectivity which breathes life into our descriptions and interpretations. The fact that we render experience from our own vantage point in the world gives writing perspective, and personal interest. And yet, just as a fully developed, finished drawing or painting differs from my rapid and unreflective sketch of the garden on this particular afternoon, a phenomenological description differs from a written "sketch" of a personal experience. Hermeneutic phenomenological writing is not merely "just mine" and yet it is "unavoidably linked" to oneself:

> It is not something produced by a method which anyone could wield. However—and here is the paradox—what the interpretation is henceforth

> about is not me and my past experiences, but that of which I have had certain experiences. . . .
>
> Even though interpretive work is not possible without a living connection to its topic, it is the topic, not the fact of a living connection, that is the center of interpretive work. (Jardine, 1992, pp. 59, 57-58)

In phenomenological research, the terms "subjectivity" and "objectivity" take on different meanings, and are not mutually exclusive:

> Both find their meaning and significance in the oriented (i.e. personal) relation that the researcher establishes with the 'object' of his or her inquiry. . . . Objectivity means that the researcher is *true to the object*. . . . Subjectivity means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of study *in a unique and personal way*—while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions. (van Manen, 1990, p. 20)

This orientation to the object of study is evident in Cézanne's mature work. His approach to the objects of his painting could be described as phenomenological, as it is characterized by "thoughtful discernment, an assiduously reflective search for invariant structures" and "the emergence of an objectivity and realism within the very dynamic of Cézanne's subjectivity" (Williams, 1993, p. 166). The achievement of Cézanne's late work has been described as "*objectivity without the sacrifice of individual perception*" (Williams, 1993, p. 166).[18]

Similarly, even the most "objectively" cool and analytical drawing that I might make of the garden as seen from this window would be informed by my subjective mood and experiences. My drawing would necessarily be an interpretation. When I draw, it is with the awareness that there are always other drawings, other interpretations possible. Similarly, when I write phenomenologically, I am mindful that my description is an interpretation, and that it is only one possible interpretation (van Manen, 1990, pp. 18, 25, 31). In the practice of research, like the practice of drawing, "one can never say fully what one wants to say" (Gadamer, 1992, p. 69). And yet one dares to say something.

A life like rendering

A successful drawing can be described as "an organized expression of how it feels to be living in life. . . . of what life feels like" (Weismann, in Weismann and Wheeler, 1974, pp. 5, 9). To put it differently, a drawing from observation has the capacity to render lived experience, showing us what some aspect of lived life is like. Of course not all drawings from observation succeed in having this living quality, but some do. For example, Degas' late pastel drawings of women

engaged in the daily tasks of bathing and combing their hair show what it is like to bathe, to comb hair, to dry oneself. Degas attempted to show these experiences as they were for French women at the turn of the last century, rather than as they might be. His models were neither especially young, nor especially pretty. He drew them in realistic, often unflattering poses. They do not seem to be posing for us, the viewers; instead they are unselfconsciously absorbed in their tasks and their thoughts. Looking at these drawings, we think, "ah yes, I know what that's like." A successful phenomenological description elicits a similar response. And even if we do not recognize a phenomenological rendering of an experience as one we ourselves have had, we "recognize" it as a possibility, finding traces of "'memories' that paradoxically we never thought or felt before" (van Manen, 1990, p. 13). This has been called the "phenomenological nod."[19] It is not a yawning nod of "oh yeah, I already know that," but a nod of revelation: "I didn't know that I already knew that."

How to make a rendering of experience so life like—whether it is a description in marks or in words—is more difficult to articulate than the effect of a completed and successful rendering. Merleau-Ponty simply says that "it is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analysing. . . . [of giving] a direct description of our experience as it is" (1962, pp. viii, vii). It is also a matter of practice—of consistent and repeated efforts, to develop skills, to familiarize ourselves with the media of pastel or charcoal or words. Phenomenology, like drawing from observation, can only be learned by "actively doing it" (van Manen, 1990, p. 8).

Attention to form

The practice of phenomenological research, like the practice of drawing is a creative endeavor. As such, it shares with drawing a certain tension between the processes and products of practice. In artistic practices, there is a means-ends tension between practice for the intrinsic value of engaging in the activity and practice with a specific end in view (Howard, 1982, pp. 161, 167). Finding our balance between the demands of process and product can be understood as a question of our attitude to the *form* of a graphic or phenomenological work. Too little attention to form produces work which may be self-indulgent or undisciplined. Here however, I will focus on what may be a more common danger, namely, giving too much attention, particularly anxious attention, to the form of a work. Both the practices of drawing and phenomenological research require a willingness to engage in a playful, unpredictable, messy process, balanced by careful attention to the finished form of the work, so that a concern with form does not turn into a preoccupation which inhibits practice or leads to reliance on ready-made formulas.

The word "form" used in reference to drawing refers specifically to forms—shapes and their composition, as well as to all the formal aspects of the work, including the size, shape, and surface of the drawing, the choice and use of materials, the quality of line or tonal marks, the relation between light and dark areas, figure and ground. And because the form as well as the content of a drawing conveys feeling and meaning, it is important to be aware of the difference that form makes.

However, a preoccupation with form can inhibit drawing practice by preventing spontaneity, risk taking, and the sheer consumption of paper and materials necessary to develop facility. Almost anyone who draws will have done some of their worst drawings on expensive drawing paper, and the drawings they deem to be their best—or most interesting—on newsprint, small scraps of paper, table napkins, or the lined paper and margins of notebooks. It is for this reason that beginning art students often work on newsprint. For many people, it is easier to work on inexpensive paper not only because it is simply available wherever we may want to draw—in a restaurant or in a classroom—but because most drawings are, for their makers, "experiments" or "events" of practice, and not "art objects" (Franck, 1989, p. 10)· Would it benefit the practice of research to regard many of our research projects and preliminary drafts of texts as "experiments" or "events" of practice? Does a preoccupation with form inhibit creative risk taking in the practice of research? Nevertheless, form is an important consideration in written work. In Van Gogh's words, "it's as interesting and as difficult to say a thing well as to paint it, isn't it?" (1938, p. 27). The crafting of a phenomenological text is just this: "to say a thing well"; to be attentive to the form of language, so that language is not merely a vehicle for content but the use of language, the very form of writing conveys meaning (van Manen, 1990, pp. 130-132).

A reliance on ready-made formulas is a second way in which an over concern with form can hinder practice. While the authors of some how-to-draw books do their best to convince the beginning drawing student that learning to draw is simply a matter of learning a few easy formulas, those who are more experienced know that it is the acuity of our vision and our willingness to engage in practice on which we must rely in order to learn to draw from observation. "And how to draw birds?" asks Franck, "an ellipse with head and tail added? No, a bird is all atwitter, achatter, and aflutter. . . there is no other way of drawing a sparrow or an eagle than to draw it ad infinitum, until the bushes on your paper are fuller than any bushes ever were, and you know sparrow and eagle inside out, having been them yourself" (1973, pp. 60-61). Just as drawing is not a mechanical process of connecting ellipses or connecting the dots, phenomenology is not paint-by-number research. Although the processes of research can appear

to be orderly and sequential in theoretical writing about them, they are more likely to be disorderly and simultaneous in practice (van Manen, 1990, pp. 29, 30, 34). In human science research, as in the Western tradition of drawing, the practitioner invents forms, finding new ways to question and render lived experience and lived meaning, on the basis of a tradition.

Characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology

So far, I have referred to the methodology of this inquiry as "phenomenology" and more specifically as "hermeneutic phenomenology." Phenomenology is located within the larger family of "human science research" methodologies which are linked by a common interest in understanding and explicating the meaning of human experiences. There are, however, many approaches to doing phenomenological research. These in turn, are derived from different philosophers, theorists, and schools of thought. The approach which I have adopted here is the hermeneutic phenomenology developed by van Manen (1990) which is informed by the thinking of various Continental philosophers, notably Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Gadamer. This methodology is built upon the work of early and mid-twentieth century European educational theorists: the interpretive (i.e. hermeneutic) methodology of the German "human science pedagogy" and the more descriptive (i.e. phenomenological) methodology of the "Utrecht school" of phenomenological research in education and psychology (van Manen, 1990, pp. ix, 2). Van Manen has extended these methodological traditions to create a distinctive hermeneutic phenomenology. This approach to research can also be described as "existential" to the extent that it attempts to describe "how phenomena present themselves in lived experience, in human existence" (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). In what follows, I will outline some of the salient characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of this methodology is an emphasis on writing as an integral part of the research process.

Studying experience

As noted above, phenomenology and drawing begin and end in the realm of lived experience. Moreover, both practices are oriented outwardly, towards the world. However, while drawing tends to focus on the visible and visual qualities of things, others, or landscapes, transforming these into marks on paper, phenomenology makes human *experience* the explicit focus of its work. "The aim of phenomenology," writes van Manen, "is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (1990, p. 36). The aim of a phenomenological study is to

articulate the lived meaning of a particular kind of experience, "a determinate meaningful aspect of one's life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 38).

Examining assumptions and pre-understandings

In the practice of phenomenology, like drawing, one views phenomena from a specific and personal vantage point. However, the personal viewpoint with which the subject of research or drawing is approached necessarily carries with it assumptions, biases, theoretical knowledge and pre-understandings. In both drawing and research, one endeavors to set these aside in order to see the subject-matter anew. Because drawing is a not a verbal practice, and because it does not aim towards a systematic understanding of its subject, it is not necessary to *articulate* either the contents of this accumulated knowledge or the manner in which one sets it aside, in order to proceed with the act of drawing. Hermeneutic phenomenology, on the other hand, uses language as its medium of inquiry and aspires towards a *systematic* understanding (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). Thus, before proceeding, and along the way, it is necessary to verbally unpack one's baggage, as it were, and lay the contents out to view. It is not a question of leaving assumptions, biases, theoretical knowledge and pre-understandings behind. Rather it is necessary to examine the contents of these, keeping them in one's peripheral vision while working, being aware of how they shape, distort, and conceal one's understanding. This is the "stuff" that one has gathered on life's travels, conceptual souvenirs of education and professional experience. The difficulty in phenomenological research is not that we "know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much" (van Manen, 1990, p. 46). Thus, making assumptions and pre-understandings explicit has two purposes for the researcher: first, to see what one knows, and to acknowledge the ways in which this affects one's approach to the phenomenon in question; and second, to approach the subject matter less encumbered, better able to see it with renewed wonder. Articulating assumptions and pre-understandings also serves the readers, by showing what the writer brings to the inquiry.

In this text, I have attempted to make my vantage point—with all its attendant assumptions, biases, and conceptual understandings of drawing—explicit at various points in the first three chapters. In chapter one, I described how I came to the question of drawing; in chapter two, I outlined the theoretical perspectives which have informed me; and later in this chapter, I will make my biases and pre-conceived knowledge about drawing more explicit as I describe the process of researching and writing.

Making lived meanings explicit

In a previous section, I cited Degas' drawings of women bathing and drying themselves as examples of life-like renderings of an everyday experience. These drawings, done after 1890, of solitary female figures engaged in ordinary, personal tasks are rich and ambiguous images which lend themselves to varied and opposing interpretations (Kendall, 1996, pp. 141-157). Are these images voyeuristic? Or are they an attempt to depict women as they are for themselves in private moments? It is precisely this ambiguity which distinguishes art from phenomenology. The latter aims to make meaning explicit, while the former often leaves meaning implicit and open to multiple interpretations (van Manen, 1990, p. 19). Or, to put it differently, what characterizes hermeneutic phenomenology and differentiates it from art is the attempt to systematically articulate lived meaning through a sensitive use of language.

Writing as research

Language is the medium of phenomenological work. Thus the act of writing is inseparable from the act of research (van Manen, 1990). In this way, hermeneutic phenomenology is distinct from forms of research in which writing is conceived of as a "writing up" or reporting, an activity which takes place after researching. While phenomenological research proceeds through phases of questioning and investigating lived experience, reflecting and writing, language is involved at each step along the way. For example, formulating a research question, engaging in conversation with interviewees, reading, keeping a research journal, or even jotting down notes to oneself are all linguistic processes which may precede or accompany more finished phenomenological writing. From the outset of a phenomenological inquiry, writing is the means of research: questioning, thinking, reflecting, and searching take place through writing. The quality of phenomenological writing is searching. In this sense, a good example of phenomenological writing is like a drawing in which we can catch the artist at work, sense the process and excitement of discovery. Through writing, we uncover and discover lived meaning. "How do I know what I have to say?" asked W. H. Auden (in McEachern, 1984, p. 279), "until I've seen what I've said?" In phenomenological writing, as in poetic writing, it is the act of writing that makes our seeing visible. Phenomenological writing, like drawing "exercises and makes empirically demonstrable our ability to 'see.' Writing shows that we can now see something and at the same time it shows the limits or boundaries of our sightedness" (van Manen 1990, p. 130).

Tracing a path of inquiry composed of three lines

There have been three modes, or "lines" of inquiry which constitute the path of this study: the evolution of the question; gathering descriptions of lived experiences of drawing; and reflecting on and interpreting these experiences through writing. Initially, these three modes of inquiry proceeded in a sequential fashion: the initial formulation of my research question was followed by the gathering of material, which, in turn, led to writing. But as the research progressed, these three lines of inquiry affected one another in such a way that their timing overlapped, and each one began to affect the others. Perhaps the most obvious change which came about through the process of doing research was a change to the question itself—from its formulation as a question about the experience of drawing generally, to its more specific formulation as a question about the experience of drawing from observation.

In what follows, I will attempt to trace the path of my research as it has been constituted by questioning, gathering and writing. For the sake of order and readability, I will present these three lines of inquiry in sequence. However, in describing this sequence, I will also try to also show the fluidity of the three lines and the way in which, like three hues of ink placed at close range, they have merged, changed direction, and changed each other.

The line of questioning: Transformation

When I initially formulated my research question my intention was to "open up possibilities and keep them open" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 299). A question is posed to open a way, to set a direction and perimeters allowing us to move forward into the openness of the unplanned and unpredictable. A research question posed in the phenomenological tradition offers a direction for a journey of discovery, a quest, rather than a predetermined itinerary of the destinations or the sights along the way.

When I conducted an initial round of interviews, I asked people to describe particular experiences of drawing, without defining "drawing" for them, and without specifying sources for drawing, such as from life, other works, memory or imagination. I also did not specify drawing media, style, or intent. I did this because I was mindful of the wide variety of experiences which could conceivably be described as experiences of drawing. The drawing experiences people told me about included: life drawing, still-life drawing, cityscape, seascape and landscape drawing, portrait drawing—both formally and informally (such as drawing friends while they are sleeping or watching television), drawing people in restaurants and

other public places, drawing from photographs, making preliminary sketches for paintings, (what Rawson calls "first thoughts"), drawing with paint (abstractly or non-figuratively, and as preliminary structure of painting), making drawings based on mythological or allegorical figures using life models and photographs, drawing from memory and imagination, and doodling in notebooks during lectures.

As I continued the process of research and began writing, I became increasingly aware of the sheer breadth of possible drawing experiences. Concerned that the thesis topic had become too broad and the writing was in danger of becoming unfocused, I reread what I had written. I also had a suspicion that the text might not function as a response to the question I had posed. Was there a deeper or more specific question lurking between the lines of my text? Gadamer cautions against assuming that a text necessarily functions as an answer to the question the author thought she or he posed, and (following Collingwood), suggests that in order to understand a text, one must reconstruct the question to which it is an answer (1989, pp. 370-374). It was in this spirit that I set out to reread my text.

When I reread what I had written about the lived experience of drawing in terms of the existential dimensions of time, space, body and relation, I realized that the question to which they were a response was clearly a question about the experience of drawing from observation. Surprised, I looked again through interview transcripts, and discovered that, in spite of my carefully phrased requests to describe particular experiences of "drawing," and in spite of the fact that the people I interviewed included professional and semi-professional painters and sculptors, as well as BFA students and adults participating in drawing classes, experiences of drawing things and persons in the world were the kind of drawing experiences most of my interviewees told me about. Even artists whose work is abstract, expressionistic, surrealistic, or derived largely from photographic images, told me about drawing from observation. This is *not* to suggest that drawing from observation is a more widely practiced or more significant form of drawing than working from other possible sources of imagery, but simply that this is the kind of drawing experience which many of the people with whom I spoke chose to describe when I asked them to talk about particular experiences of "drawing."

Had these people been in conversation with someone whose own practice of drawing was completely non-figurative, or mostly from imagination or memory, they might have described more of these kinds of drawing experiences! From the beginning, I was well aware that most, although not all, of my own drawing is done from direct observation, and that because of this, I bring to my research a preference for a certain mode of drawing, as well as a fascination for

other kinds of drawing experiences. This unavoidable bias is a strength, as my own experiences of drawing and teaching drawing are what motivates my research, and it is from the vantage point of my own experience and interest in drawing that I am able to engage in meaningful conversation with others who draw, and to interpret my own and others' experiences.

Rereading what Gadamer has written about questioning offered me the courage to transform my question in light of the fairly extensive interviewing, reading and writing I had done. One sentence in particular struck me as an apt description of the process in which I was engaged: "As a rule," writes Gadamer, "we experience the course of events as something that continually changes our plans and expectations" (1989, p. 372). Here Gadamer reminds us that it is the course of events which is important; our plans and expectations always lag behind. Research, like life, offers us opportunities at every turn to perceive and follow the course of events, rather than blindly forging ahead with a predetermined plan.

And so, I reformulated my question as: *What is the experiential meaning and pedagogical significance of drawing from observation?* This was not so much a change of the research question as a discovery of my question through the experience of doing research.

Drawing from observation: A working definition

I intend the term "drawing from observation" to serve as a focus for this inquiry rather than a hard and fast line between one mode of drawing activity and others. As a focus, it *includes* related modes of drawing which are found on its periphery, in an attempt to reflect this mode of drawing as it is lived. People who draw from observation usually also draw from memory, imagination or other works, and "draw" with paint as well as traditional drawing media. Somewhat broader than the term "drawing from life" or "studies after nature" the term "drawing from observation," as I will use it here, simply signifies drawing from actual visible things in the world. This is a process which inevitably involves memory and imagination; or, to put it differently, observation is always interpretive, even though one endeavors to see and draw things as they appear. In addition to the traditional practice of drawing from the observation of people, landscapes or three dimensional objects, I will also refer to experiences of drawing from two-dimensional works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and collages, as well as experiences of combining observation drawing with other sources of imagery. Nevertheless, it is the experience of "drawing from life" which is the focus of this inquiry.

The route through studios and libraries: Gathering descriptions

Through conversational interviews with people who draw at various levels of experience and commitment, I gathered accounts of lived experiences of drawing. Later, I returned to five people for second interviews—and in two cases third interviews—in which our conversations took a more interpretive turn by focusing on drafts of chapters I had written. In addition to this, I read published personal accounts of drawing experiences, and generated my own experiences through regular drawing practice. Together, these have provided the sources for descriptive and interpretive writing.

Interviewing

Van Manen distinguishes between two kinds of interviews, those which are used primarily to "*gather* lived-experience material (stories, anecdotes, recollections of experiences, etc.) " and those which,

> serve as an occasion to *reflect* with the partner (interviewee) of the conversational relation on the topic at hand. . . . the *gathering of* and *reflecting on* lived-experience material by means of conversational interviewing may be two different stages in a single research project. (1990, p. 63)

The aim of my first set of interviews then, was to *gather* descriptions of experiences as sources for understanding the lived experience of drawing. Thus I began the process of interviewing by collecting descriptions of drawing experiences through conversational interviews with 37 people over a period of nine months, between May 1994 and February 1995.

Some accounts of lived experience are more "telling" than others, and some people are better able to give an account of how an experience felt without lapsing into explanation or interpretation. Therefore, I wanted to collect a substantial body of such accounts to ensure that I would have at least a few that were workable. I quickly discovered that the process of doing conversational interviews was an unpredictable one. It took its own course through a network of people, and it took its own time. For example, when I thought I had completed this first round of interviews early in 1995, I received a phone call from someone who had been too busy in December to do an interview, but who was eager to talk about his experiences of drawing. "Is it too late?" he inquired. "Not at all," I replied. It turned out to be a remarkable conversation. And so, just as I did not know in advance when I was going to be offered an especially "telling" anecdote, I did not know ahead of time how many people I would need to interview in order to

feel informed about drawing. Thus, I interviewed a relatively large number of people to ensure that I would feel sufficiently "'in-formed,' shaped or enriched" (van Manen, 1990, p. 62) by numerous experiences of drawing. From the outset, I wanted to engage in conversation with a range of people who draw, including hobbyists and professionals, younger and older adults. I kept interviewing different people until I felt saturated—soaked in rich and varied experiences of drawing. The enormous amount of material generated from these interviews permitted me, as an author, to choose from a variety of experiential accounts, *and*, the liberty *not to use* accounts that were less revealing. This process is creative, but not merely haphazard. It is rather like an artist collecting a large variety of still life objects, and then consciously selecting those which will be most suitable for a certain kind of picture. The art of writing, like the art of drawing, is sometimes the art of leaving out.

I began the process of interviewing by contacting—and interviewing—two acquaintances who draw. One of these people introduced me to his drawing colleagues and friends, who, in turn, introduced me to others. At every stage in the process of interviewing I was surprised and touched by the interest shown in my research by professional artists, students, and hobbyists alike, as well as their willingness to engage in conversation about drawing, and their generosity in helping me to find others to interview—very often without my asking.

I had hoped for diversity among the people I interviewed, and within five months, I was in contact with a wide range of people who draw. Of the 37 people I interviewed, eight are professional painters or sculptors, all of whom have at least one degree in studio art. At the time of interviewing, six of these people were enrolled in MFA programs. Four interviewees are what I would call semi-professional artists—people who exhibit and sell their work, but not as their main source of income. For example, one is a hairdresser, another a retired drama and art teacher. None of these four people holds a degree in studio art. Eight interviewees were enrolled in BFA or Bachelor of Design programs at the time they spoke with me, and three other interviewees were university students taking studio art courses as electives. One of these interviewees was an art education student. The remaining 14 interviewees are hobbyists—people who draw, and in some cases also paint or sculpt, more or less seriously, more or less regularly, but without an aspiration to be a professional, exhibiting artist. This group included a secondary school English teacher, who, since she began to draw and paint, now teaches art as well. Also among the hobbyists was a bus driver, a real estate agent, a housewife, a retired doctor, and an unemployed scientist. The range of ages was as diverse as the range of interest in art: from nineteen and twenty year old university students to people in their seventies. Among

the interviewees were people who had recently immigrated to Canada from Asia as well as from Eastern and Western Europe. Also, I made an effort to interview a roughly equal number of women and men.[20] What all these people had in common was an active engagement in drawing.

I conducted interviews wherever it was comfortable, quiet, and convenient to meet: in homes, in studios surrounded by an interviewee's own work and accompanied by the lingering smell of paint; in charcoal smudged offices adjacent to studios, and in my own comparatively bland office space; in a quiet lobby, an empty cafeteria, an unused classroom. Perhaps the most unusual setting was a colourful hair salon after business hours—with a tape of tropical birds playing in the background, while snow fell silently on the street outside. The conversations were all at least an hour in duration, and some continued for two or more hours. With five people, our conversation spilled over into a second meeting.

I generally began each interview with the necessary formality of signing the consent form, and followed this with a request to the interviewee to tell me about their "life-in-terms-of-art." This gave me an opportunity to understand the extent of each person's interest and education in art, thus providing a context in which to place what she or he later told me about a particular experience of drawing. Frequently, this information helped me to formulate relevant questions. For the people I interviewed, this was a way to begin talking; even those who seemed a little shy at first quickly opened up and loosened up when they discovered they had a receptive listener. For many of the hobbyists, this was the first time they had reflected on their lives as "artists." And, not surprisingly, most of the interviewees who are now professional artists alluded to a lifelong enjoyment of drawing in comments such as "I can't remember a time when I didn't draw" or "I was always good at drawing."

Following this brief autobiographical sketch, I asked people to tell me about a particular instance of drawing. This presented the sometimes difficult task of "translating" a largely non-verbal experience into language. Over time, I found four ways to ask for these experiential accounts of drawing.

At first, I asked interviewees to describe the making of a particular drawing, narrating in as much detail as possible the sequence of events, the circumstances, the feelings, thoughts and sensations involved. Although this request yielded some rich descriptions from some, others had difficulty focusing on the making of a particular drawing.

So I developed a second way of requesting an experiential account of drawing. I asked people to bring some drawings to the interview: recent ones or ones memorable for the experience making them. The presence of the drawings gave a tangible focus to our conversation, and prompted recollections of the process of making them. However, there were difficulties inherent in this manner of requesting experiential accounts of drawing. The conversation—particularly with art students accustomed to critiques of their work—would easily slip from a focus on the lived experience of drawing to the aesthetic and technical qualities of the drawing itself (the quality of this line, the success of the foreshortening in that limb, etc.). Furthermore, if the drawing was especially strong, it seemed to function as a third presence, sometimes reducing our conversation to rather inarticulate comments about it ("look at this," "mm"), as if it were already "speaking" in visual terms which overpowered our attempts to bring the experience of making it to language.

When conversations using drawings as a starting point became difficult, I found a third approach, in which I asked for a verbal description of making a drawing first, and then asked the interviewee if we could look at the drawing together. In some cases, the interviewee offered to show me the drawing before I asked. On one occasion, a woman who had just recounted, in great detail, the making of a pencil and watercolour picture, asked me, with a mischievous smile, to turn around, and there on the wall behind where I had been sitting was the picture she had described. Looking at the drawing afterwards proved to be more satisfying: having already made the effort to articulate the experience of making a particular drawing, looking at the drawing together afterwards constituted another phase of the conversation in which the presence of the drawing—instead of hindering—helped to enrich and fill out the previous description.

Although my requests for accounts of making "a drawing" or "specific drawings" elicited some very good experiential accounts, I began to feel that there was something artificial about this. Was talking about making "a drawing" already directing the conversation towards the making of an object and thus undermining my purpose, namely understanding the lived experience of drawing? My requests for experiential accounts of making "a drawing" began to sound false and hollow to me because what is meaningful about the experience of drawing has to do with its practice, and not, in fact, with the making of a discreet object "a drawing." I recalled Nicolaïdes' words: "The effort you make is not for one particular drawing, but for the experience you are having" (1941, p. 2), and Picasso's: "all my life I've been in the habit of

drawing. . . . It's not that I wanted to excel, rather to work—that's what one must always do" (in Chan, 1995, p. 10).

And so, eventually, I developed a fourth approach to asking for accounts of specific instances of drawing. The process of doing so was gradual, and not as reflective or as deliberate as this account would suggest. Increasingly, I found myself simply engaging an interviewee in conversation about drawing experience generally—subjects, media, places, time, and so on. Then, at appropriate points in the conversation, I asked for specific instances of, for example, drawing a close friend, the feel of charcoal, drawing out of doors, or losing track of time. This fourth approach worked well and allowed the conversation to flow naturally from one topic to the next.

The ability to describe an instance of drawing verbally varied from one person to another, but seemed to have little to do with the interviewee's level of drawing experience. I was offered lucid descriptions of drawing from beginning hobbyists and experienced professional artists alike. Similarly, I found that some of the less experienced and less educated interviewees were just as inclined to be over-interpretive as more sophisticated interviewees.

Almost all the first set of interviews were audio-taped. With two people who expressed reluctance to be taped, I took notes while they spoke. And with two others, the tape machine did not work. In one of these cases, I made notes immediately afterwards, and in the other case, the interviewee generously agreed to a second meeting when I explained what had happened (although of course, the second conversation was quite different). Even though most people were able to overlook the tape recorder after the first few minutes, inevitably, some of the most interesting conversation took place before, or after, the tape machine was on. When this happened I listened as attentively as I could and made notes on the spot, or immediately afterwards.

I listened to all the recordings, and made content notes on each one. Selections from all but five (less interesting, less descriptive) interviews were transcribed, and for 17 interviews, I transcribed the whole tape.

The second round of interviews, which I conducted in December 1995 and June 1996, had a more hermeneutic nature. In these my aim was to *reflect* on the *meaning* of drawing experiences by engaging in conversations with five people I had previously interviewed, using drafts of chapters, or sections of chapters, in which I had made a thematic interpretation of some of the

experiences described in the first interviews. It is important to note however, that my purpose in returning to some interviewees with my writing was not to seek their approval or verification. David Jardine points out that "for a reliable reading" of a particular instance to take place,

> it would never be enough simply to say what I think it means and leave it at that. Neither is it enough simply to turn it back to the 'respondent' and ask whether she *intended* to mean something about. . . as if calling out to the author [interviewee] might save us the task of interpreting the text. The author's (respondent's) reading of her own story is not the lynchpin of hermeneutic work. . . . this does not mean that the connection to the author is severed. It means, rather, that, in the face of this text, the author is *one of us* and not in some 'authoritative' position. Certainly the author is in a special position regarding the *experiences* she underwent, but, once erupted into a text, she is not in such a position in regard to what those experiences might *mean*. (1992, p. 58)

The five people to whom I returned for further conversations all responded warmly to the selections of text I had given them. None of them had read phenomenological work before, and one woman commented that because it is academic writing she had expected it to be dry, difficult reading; she was surprised to find it otherwise. All of the interviewees found themselves "nodding" to aspects of drawing which they recognized. One person read with a pencil in hand, writing an emphatic "yes!" in the margin whenever this happened. "I just had to say something in response while I was reading it," he said. In this sense, reading and writing phenomenological work is conversational. Sometimes this "nodding" gesture prompted the telling of other experiences. The conversations were also opportunities for me to ask interviewees to elaborate on specific details of an experience of theirs I had written about. Each of these interviewees took issue with something I had written, and the conversations that followed helped me to arrive at a deeper understanding and clearer articulation of some aspect of drawing. For example, in response to reading what I had written about the hand, Christopher pulled out a calendar he had with reproductions of paintings by disabled people who painted with their mouth or foot. Talking about this clarified that the mouth or the foot substitutes for the hand; one doesn't choose to paint with one's foot or mouth. So what is significant for drawing (and painting) is "handedness" or what the human hand can do. This conversation, and another, also helped me to reconsider the importance of the eye-in-conjunction-with-the-hand.

These follow-up conversations were livelier, and more personal than the first interviews had been. At times, the dialogue seemed to bounce back and forth between the interviewee and

myself, until we were finishing each other's sentences. By this time of course, we knew one another better, and simply felt more relaxed and open. Also, for two of these interviews, I did not use a tape recorder. Although my notes did not capture as much of the conversation as a tape machine would, the quality of these conversations was especially relaxed, open and friendly.

Reading

My search for accounts of drawing experiences took me to libraries as well as studios. I found descriptions of drawing *experiences* in artists' writing—letters, diaries, and autobiographical writing. Sources that I found especially rich were the journal of Truitt (1984), the dialogue between Caisserman-Roth and Cohen (1993), the writings of Franck (1979, 1981, 1989, 1993), Hockney (1993, in Camp, 1981), Kandinsky (1964), and Matisse (in Flam, 1973), as well as the letters of Van Gogh (1938, 1973) and Rodin (in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971). I also discovered a few accounts of drawing experience in philosophy and art criticism: in the works of Merleau-Ponty (1964, 1993), Barthes (1982, 1991), and Berger (1979, 1987, 1993). In art history, I found thought provoking descriptions of drawing experience in writing on Giacometti (Lord, 1980), Degas (Kendall, 1996), Frank Auerbach (Hughes, 1990), and Fantin-Latour (Druick & Hoog, 1983). In addition, there were several books and essays *about* drawing which I found particularly informative: these were the works of Rawson (1987), Chan (1995), Dinham (1989), Bernice Rose (1976), Michael Ayrton (1957), and Mendelowitz (1967).

Living with the practices of drawing and research

> To reach an understanding in a dialogue. . . [is a matter of] being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were. (Gadamer, 1989, p. 379)

Earlier, I tried to show, by an analogous relation to drawing, how research can be understood as a *practice*. Here, I will return to the notion of practice, shifting the focus to the personal meaning of my practices of research and drawing. To do phenomenological research is to bring a particular dimension of human experience to life in the form of a written work. The process of bringing to life is one of living with both the research process and its subject matter. I have been fortunate to have lived with a special correspondence between the topic and methodology of my inquiry.

The conversations I shared with people about drawing provided what seems to be a relatively rare opportunity for hobbyists, art students and practicing artists to speak about their own process of art-making. Since my purpose in these conversational interviews was to understand

the experience of drawing, rather than to evaluate works, the people with whom I spoke were not required to defend their work, as in a formal critique, to explain it, as in a statement for an exhibition, or to sell it, as when approaching a gallery or granting agency. The nature of these conversations was informal and yet more focused, and more probing, than much of the "shop talk" about techniques, materials, imagery, and the formal elements of artwork that is frequently a part of studio and classroom life. Several of the people I interviewed commented that simply talking about the lived experience of drawing was unusual and in itself elicited a certain thoughtfulness and a deeper understanding of their artistic practice. For example, one person remarked at the end of our first conversation: "I sure had a lot to say! . . . I haven't talked about my art like this in years. . . . We don't share these feelings with other artists, really." In our second conversation the same person said, "Artists don't talk about this kind of stuff. . . . You always make me *think* about things!" Another painter paused in the midst of our conversation and said that through talking about his work he was more aware of the process involved in making it, and was discovering what it is that he is aiming for in his work. He hardly ever talks about his drawing and painting this much, or in this much depth. "I don't usually talk about these things," he said, playing with a long-empty styrofoam coffee cup. "You draw out things I haven't thought of before."

This drawing out of understanding through conversation was mutual. While my interviewees surprised themselves by speaking, often at length, and with eloquence, about aspects of drawing experience that usually remain unspoken, I surprised myself by rediscovering my identity as a maker of drawings. I began to notice that, in speaking about the process of drawing, and experiences associated with being an artist, my interviewees used the pronoun "we," and on one occasion a painter paused in mid-sentence, and said, "of course *you* understand because you're an artist." I smiled at her in recognition—and in surprise—as this identity has, in recent years, been submerged beneath that of "teacher," "researcher," and "doctoral student." Nevertheless, these other identities seemed to peel away whenever I walked into a painting studio, and found myself breathing the air, thick with oil paint, solvents, oils, and charcoal dust, inhaling great gulps, as though I had just walked into the most fragrant garden. As though I had come home. Frequently I left these studios with hands "itchy" to draw. I also noticed how we spoke about artists of the past: when one of us mentioned Picasso, Klee, Kathe Kollwitz or Matisse, it was an entirely different experience from dropping names to make oneself sound important; rather, it was with a certain fondness and respect, as though one of us had mentioned a favorite uncle or aunt. We have a common ancestry, and thus, a sense of kinship. Truitt describes this feeling of kinship as being "drawn together into a kind of tacit intimacy by being artists, which

we handle in different ways. We are gently curious about one another, as if we all had the same disease, could compare symptoms and treatments" (1984, pp. 22-23). Albert Borgmann calls this "the kinship of the focused life" (1992, p. 122).

While I was touched by my interviewees' recognition of me as a fellow maker of drawings, I was also aware that I had been so absorbed by the practice of research that my own drawing was somewhat *out* of practice! And so, at various points in my research, I made a commitment to the practice of drawing, either on a daily basis, or on a weekly basis by attending a life drawing session. In the summer of 1994, I attended a drawing workshop with Franck, whose writing and drawings I have long admired. Resuming the practice of drawing wasn't always a pleasant experience. To engage in the practice of drawing seriously is to confront oneself. After an absence of months or weeks, the first marks I made on paper, or the first few drawings in a life drawing session showed me how out of shape I was. The lines looked flabby or inflexible. And sometimes frenzied. The model's body fell awkwardly off the edges of the page. I was out of step, out of tune, out of line. And then after a few hours or days of practice, suddenly I was drawing: my hand moved fluently, the work was bigger and bolder. And I seemed to see more: with increasing facility, the marks I made surprised me, revealing hitherto unseen facets of myself and the subjects I drew. This practice brought my research to life and, I hope, ensured an honesty in my writing. Eventually, while working on my doctoral dissertation, drawing and researching became parallel practices: My favorite pens and pencils have resided on desks, been placed momentarily on a library bookshelf, been poised for use by an easel. They have been loaned and lost (and occasionally found). They have been transported, in knapsacks and pockets, from home to university and back again, across oceans, through mountains, around exhibitions, to other desks, to beaches, on trains. They have been loyal scribes in lectures and conversations; they have become extensions of my hand, giving shape to sight and form to thought.

What began as an "academic" inquiry has taken a path back to my own practice of drawing as a personally and academically necessary vantage point for the practice of research. With Truitt, I can now say of both research and drawing, that "I cannot help doing the work I do, which feels to me as vital as my breath" (1984, p. 112). Research and writing, like drawing, is a practice with which we live, a practice which has the potential to inform and subtly transform our living.

In addition to collecting descriptions of drawing experience from others, I used my own drawing experiences—from the past and the present—as sources for reflection and writing. In the first

paper I wrote about drawing, I began by writing about my own experiences. One incident which stood out in my memory, not because the drawings were remarkable, but because it was a meaningful experience, was drawing my sister on a train several years ago. It proved to be a phenomenologically fruitful experience, as well as a useful narrative device. And so, the four central chapters of this thesis have a narrative structure which is based on that experience of drawing my sister. Other incidents derived from my own experience of drawing appear here and there throughout the thesis. Some of these experiences were concurrent with the writing of this thesis.

The path of the pen: Phenomenological writing

It is the usual practice in academic writing to give only a passing nod of acknowledgment to the labours—and the pleasures—which brought the finished text into being. As if, through the sterile forces of method the text emerged scrubbed and smiling from an anaesthetized author. Nothing could be less true of phenomenological writing. Hermeneutic phenomenology does not present the would-be author with ready-made and guaranteed methods. There is a tradition, there are examples (van Manen, 1990. p. 30). Yet, there seems to be no way to anaesthetize the sometimes painful efforts of writing, nor to suppress those rare and unplanned moments when the text seems almost to write itself. It is impossible to avoid the messy and unpredictable processes which are necessary to create a text which is original, not merely new. At its best, a phenomenological text is a renewed contact with the origins of the phenomenon in question. A newly created text stares back at us, at once familiar, and never seen before. The process of generating such a text is also a return to origins—creating, and discovering, a yet untrodden route home. In what follows, I will attempt to expose some of the labours that brought this text into being.

Working with descriptions and anecdotes

The time I spent in studios and libraries, in conversation with artists and hobbyists, and drawing on my own or with others, generated numerous accounts of drawing experiences. These were generally of two kinds. "Experiential accounts" or "lived experience descriptions" are particular experiences of drawing, narrated, in as much detail as possible, from beginning to end. (An example of an experiential account appears later in this section.) "Anecdotes" tend to be much shorter narratives of drawing which, although not as detailed, have a significant point (van Manen, 1990, p. 116). While, as a researcher, I had to ask people for experiential accounts, anecdotes are often given voluntarily. Our daily lives are full of anecdotes, which we

use to explain, to advise, and to interpret our experiences (van Manen, 1990, pp. 119-120). I live with eyes and ears open for anecdotes of drawing. An example of a drawing anecdote is the following account about the artist, Giacometti, which I found on an exhibition label.[21]

While staying in a hotel in Zürich, Giacometti did a series of pencil drawings of the small round table in his room. He was especially fascinated by the tablecloth which was draped over the table, and (as the drawings suggest) fluttered in a breeze. One day, when he was out of the room for a few moments, the chamber maid came in and removed the tablecloth in order to have it cleaned. When Giacometti came back to the room he was very upset to find the tablecloth missing, and insisted that the maid not only return the tablecloth, but arrange it *exactly* as it had been on the table.

This anecdote seems to say something about how drawing alters our relation with things. For example, it shows how an everyday object becomes special when we draw it. Because a thing that we draw takes on a special significance which others don't see, drawing may alter our relation with those who also use or own the object. While drawing it, Giacometti considers the tablecloth as his; it now belongs to him and not the hotel. Furthermore, not only the continued presence, but the *unaltered* presence of a particular thing may be vital for the completion of a drawing or series of drawings. Thus, a little anecdote can generate many meanings.

In an essay replete with metaphors of the garden and of animal life, Jardine (1992) writes about the "fecundity of the individual case." This phrase, derived from Gadamer (1989, p. 38) describes the way in which interpretive forms of inquiry (hermeneutics, hermeneutic phenomenology) focus on particular experiences, generating numerous meanings from an individual incident. These new interpretive understandings emerge like "regenerative tendrils out of the 'old growth'" (Jardine, 1992, p. 56), regenerating our previous understanding of the phenomenon by reinterpreting it in light of this incident. Thus, the lived experiences which form the "data" (that which is given or granted) of human science research are like living and growing plants, or breathing bodies, organically connected to their surroundings, their history and their future. In this way, the "substance" of interpretive inquiry contrasts sharply with the Cartesian notion of "substance" as "that which requires nothing except itself in order to exist," the *isolated* incident, which forms the data of scientific research (Jardine, 1992, p. 52). When we reflect on an incident from a human science perspective, we discover that it is neither "*identical*" to any other instance, nor is it "simply *different*"; instead it is "vaguely familiar, vaguely recognizable, something that bears a 'family resemblance' that bears further investigation" (Jardine, 1992, p. 56, italics in original). In interpretive inquiry we acknowledge

the uniqueness (the particularity, unrepeatability) of the incident as well as its "kinship" with other, similar incidents, and, our "moist and fleshy familiarity" with it (Jardine, 1992, pp. 52, 53). While conventional scientific inquiry "uproots" the phenomenon it studies, rendering it into an object and ourselves into "knowing subjects" (Jardine, 1992, p. 53), human science inquiry prefers to leave the phenomenon intact, rooted as it is in our lives, in order "to bring out this evocative given in all its tangled ambiguity, to follow its evocations and the entrails of sense and significance that are wound up with it" (Jardine, 1992, p. 55). We accomplish this through writing, and rewriting, living with the particular incident over "a period of time," in much the same way that a gardener must be willing to get involved in a messy process, patiently living with an unknown plant to understand its ways and the "territories and terrains" to which it belongs (Jardine, 1992, p. 58).

Although almost any account of lived experience will, upon reflection, yield meaning, among the many texts of incidents of drawing that I gathered, some seemed to stand out. When I first heard these, or read through them, they seemed to shine with meaning. Although grasping and articulating meanings was a long and laborious process, I had an immediate sense of which anecdotes or descriptions were especially fecund. The following experiential account is one of these. It is my edited version of a drawing experience told to me during an interview. As much as possible, I have endeavored to keep the interviewee's own words, while rearranging the order in which she described her experience to make a coherent account.

> It was a Sunday evening in the autumn. I had been on a walk, a *very* long walk; I mean probably ten miles. And when I came home I felt very tired, but also quite loose, relaxed. As I came into the living room, I saw the bouquet of sunflowers that I had placed there earlier in the day. These were sunflowers that I had grown, that I had picked, very big, and very beautiful. I had left a huge amount of stem on them, probably two or three feet, so this was a massive bouquet. They are one of my favorite flowers; looking at them, I had a warm feeling about them. I said to a friend that was with me, "You know, I feel like I'd like to put this down on paper. So I'm going to do this right now."
>
> So I just left the flowers in the vase where they were, and got myself organized with pencil and paper and easel. I chose an ordinary HB pencil, and a large sheet of creamy yellow paper, with a rough surface that reminded me of linen. I took a piece of plywood and laid it on a chair in front of me, a kind of

impromptu easel, so it was at a good angle and just the right height when I was sitting on a chair.

I started it at the bottom of the page, and making very light marks with the pencil, I gave it a container, a boundary. I said, "this is as high as it will go, and this is as low as it will go; it will be here, and it will be here, and it's in that space that I will place this." So then I drew from the bottom to the top. The vase gave me the proportion and the right spacing and then the rest followed. And there's some joy in that. It's almost like it was coming out of the ground. You know, something growing.

Quite honestly, when I began, I didn't think I could even do it. I mean, I could make *something*. I could make an attempt, but I didn't think it would really look like much. I soon realized that I was drawing differently than I had during the past four weeks that I had been attending an introductory drawing course. I wasn't drawing straight lines anymore. I mean, I wasn't getting a firm line, or clear lines even. This drawing was much more fluid. I was no longer sketching with timid little lines, but as the drawing progressed, I began to use my whole arm to draw, holding my pencil rather loosely at the end, moving my arm freely. And to my surprise—and delight, I could even get the proportion. But what really interested me was how suddenly, I just began to *draw*, and that it actually looked like what it was that I was drawing. I think that is the greatest pleasure to me: I am learning to draw what it is that's in front of me, rather than out of my imagination. And it looked like something. It looked—really very good. But, what was new to me was that I did not draw it leaf by leaf. I was doing something else, which was very spontaneous, and very, as I said, fluid. It was just like it's pouring out of me, and yet I was actually drawing that thing out there. And I really was. I was really focused on it. It was nothing mystical, you know. To be honest with you I was hardly even looking at it, at the drawing, at the paper. I was looking at the flowers.

And I *felt* different about it: that's the thing. While I was drawing it was like I was humming. Just a real "h-m-m-m." Harmonious kind of thing. A warm feeling. Was there a certain resonance, between the picture, the flowers, and myself? I haven't tried to put it into words before but that's how it was going.

What was interesting about it was that there was no copycat anything in it. It was like this has never happened before this picture. The pleasure I'm sure, was like at birth itself. And it has as much to do with me as the picture. A part of me had birthed. There was something about me in the drawing that hadn't appeared before. Like I can look at that now and say, "I drew that, and I know darn well nobody else did." It was an expression of me that was me. The most I have seen of myself in any of my drawings so far.

My friend was still around, she was in and out of the room, making a drink for herself. But her being there didn't bother me; I don't care if people watch me draw. When the drawing was finished, I *thought* it had been about 10 minutes, or 20 at the most. So I said to my friend, "that's the quickest I've ever worked." And then as I got up, I realized that I was terribly stiff; I was so stiff I could hardly stand up! And my friend said, "well, you've been there for an hour and a half!" And I laughed, and said "well I haven't used an eraser for an hour and a half," 'cause I nearly always draw something and then erase it and do it again. And this time, I just didn't.

I must say I went back after a while and fiddled with it. I was just scratching on it, doing the centres, you know where the seeds are. So I was just getting more depth to the centres, and that was it. Later in the evening, I came back and looked at it. Actually it looked alive. That was what I liked about it; it was just alive. And it did look like those flowers. I mean you would recognize it, but it wasn't that it was a snapshot. It wasn't a literal, how can I say it? It wasn't – wasn't like a botanical illustration. It was not like a photograph. And yet I was looking at it and appreciating it for the actuality of it.

It wasn't something that's a big deal, but I still have a residual good feeling about it. I come back to the drawing classes and want to do it again. Like "this is alright, yeah, I can do this." That drawing had a certain power of convincing me that, "yeah, you can draw." I actually tend to throw things away after I've done them, but I saved that one, because there was something new in it. I'm very pleased with it, and I've shown it to a couple of people and each time I look at it, it looks better.

How does one begin to work with a lively experiential account such as this? It seems to have something significant to contribute to our understanding of drawing. But how does one get at this? How does one begin to find order among dozens of such accounts? How does one begin to write phenomenologically? These were the questions I asked when I read through the numerous accounts I had gathered. Where to begin? Perhaps an examination of how one might approach this account of drawing sunflowers will offer a view into how I dealt with the material I gathered.

What does this account tell us about drawing? Because it is an especially fecund account, it lends itself to many possible interpretations. Is it about the experience of drawing something that is especially meaningful to us? Is it about circumstances which are conducive to drawing: a relaxed mood, familiar surroundings, a personally meaningful still life, a comfortable way to sit and draw, an appropriate distance from our subject, just the right paper and drawing tools? Is it about transcending one's usual sense of time? Is it about losing awareness of one's body? Is it about drawing with the unintrusive presence of another person? Is it about discovering that we can indeed *draw*—fluidly and confidently? Or is it about discovering that achieving a likeness is not only a matter of rendering something which looks like sunflowers, but rendering the vibrant aliveness of sunflowers? Is it about the pleasure of drawing from life? Is it about a harmonious state of being which comes with concentrated attention? Is it about the uncanny experience of seeing oneself in a drawing of something "other"? Is it about developing artistic confidence?

When we ask what an incident is "about" we are asking for its *meaning*. The task of phenomenological reflection and writing is to grasp and articulate the "essential meaning," or, "structure of meaning" of a certain kind of human experience (van Manen, 1990, p. 77). Each of the above questions is an attempt to pinpoint the meaning of drawing from observation as it is expressed in this incident. To put it differently, each question is a possible response to the larger question "what is this example an example of?" (van Manen, 1990, p. 86). Each of these questions could be reformulated as statements. For example, "the act of drawing can be so absorbing that we seem to lose our usual awareness of our body and time" or "drawing something 'other' may reveal a hitherto unseen aspect of oneself." These sentences are (tentative and preliminary formulations of) *themes* of drawing, distilled from this description of drawing sunflowers.

Developing a thematic structure

"Theme" is a word we use in everyday conversation as well as in critical and historical writing about literature and the arts. A phenomenological theme however, is quite different from any of these (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Therefore, before going on to further describe how I composed themes from accounts of lived experience and developed the thematic structure of this text, I want to briefly explain my understanding of the nature and function of "theme" in hermeneutic phenomenology.

There are several metaphors which I have found helpful in understanding phenomenological "theme" or "structure of meaning." Ronald Valle, Mark King, and Steen Halling (1989, p. 14) use a metaphor of "melody." Like a well-known melody which can be played by different people, on different instruments, in different times and places, the meaning structure of a common human experience is recognizable: we know what it is (although we may not be able to name it) when we "hear" it. Thus, the recognizability of a theme is an indication of its truth to experience. Van Manen (1990) evokes images of things which gather and hold: "fasteners," "threads," (p. 91) and "knots" (p. 90) to express the phenomenological attempt to come to grips with meaning. A third metaphor for themes is found in the image of "stars": themes are like points of light which enable us to "navigate and explore" areas of meaning (van Manen, 1990, p. 90).

These metaphors suggest an important function of phenomenological themes: namely, that they serve as guides, pointers, place-holders. They are not "objects," generalizations," "conceptual formulations," or "categorical statements" (van Manen, 1990, p. 90). Phenomenological themes are significant for what they do. They "give shape" (van Manen, 1990, p. 92) to the amorphous nature of unreflected lived experience, enabling us to reflect on it and grasp its meanings. In this way, the phenomenological quest to "seize the meaning of the world or of history as that meaning comes into being" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xxi) is much like the artistic impulse to find order by giving shape to experience. The manner of seizing or grasping meaning however, is not with a tight grip, but with a gentle and tentative hold; because a theme is a necessary "simplification" which can never fully contain the meaning of an experience, it remains open to reformulation (van Manen, 1990, p. 87).

My first attempts at thematizing were not much more than an echo of the usual conceptualizations of drawing. For example, some of the headings in my first draft were:

drawing as discipline, drawing as enjoyment, drawing as creation, drawing as a skill, drawing as mark-making. In order to bypass my theoretical understanding of drawing, and see it anew, I needed a completely different way to approach the descriptions of lived experience I had gathered. The broad existential categories of "lived space," lived time," lived body," and "lived relation" served to guide my thinking on drawing along fresh, phenomenological and existential lines. Furthermore, these "four existentials" (van Manen, 1990, pp. 101-109) provided a *systematic* structure for my reflections and writing. Because time, space, body and relation are basic dimensions of the lifeworld, they are useful guides for thorough and well-rounded reflection on most human experiences (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). Thus the four central chapters of this thesis take one of these existential dimensions as a guiding theme. Of course, there is an element of artifice in this approach. In life, we experience these four dimensions simultaneously. But for the sake of systematic phenomenological writing, we focus on one dimension at a time (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). In the process of writing, it was sometimes a difficult task to work out where to write about certain aspects of drawing experience; I found that each existential dimension seemed to invite the other three. For example, the issue of drawing alone or with others is tied to where and when we draw, so when I began to reflect on the lived relations of drawing, I found myself considering lived space and lived time.

The "four existentials" enabled me to ask questions about drawing I had not asked before. When I began each of the four chapters, I scoured the accounts of lived experience I had gathered looking for appropriate material. For example, when I began the chapter on the lived time of drawing, I was surprised to discover a wealth of material: not only what I expected to find, namely, one's experience of time while drawing, but also memory, the aging of one's subject, living with a drawing over time, and practicing drawing over a long period of time.

The thematic writing which my reflections on each of the four dimensions generated began in the form of notes and phrases, which gradually developed into paragraphs, pages, and whole chapters. Of the three approaches to composing thematic phrases from lived experience descriptions, outlined by van Manen (1990, pp. 92-93), I used both the "wholistic" approach, in which one formulates a sentence which captures the meaning of the account, and the "selective" approach, in which one selects especially telling words or phrases. In the above section, the way in which I formulated thematic sentences about an experience of drawing sunflowers exemplifies the "wholistic" approach. For this account, and others in which the speaker's own words seemed especially revealing, I also used the "selective" approach. For example, the

following are some of the phrases that stood out as I read the description of drawing sunflowers.

> suddenly, I just began to *draw*,
>
> it was like I was humming. Just a real "h-m-m-m." Harmonious kind of thing. A warm feeling.
>
> spontaneous. . . fluid. It was just like it's pouring out of me, and yet I was actually drawing that thing out there. . . . I was really focused on it. . . . I was hardly even looking at it, at the drawing, at the paper. I was looking at the flowers.
>
> A part of me had birthed. There was something about me in the drawing that hadn't appeared before. . . . The most I have seen of myself in any of my drawings so far.

Composing and developing phenomenological themes is a process which, it seems to me, works in two directions simultaneously. One direction is "creative" and "inventive" (van Manen, 1990, pp. 79, 96)—gradually building a text around a thematic structure. And the other direction is one of "discovery" (van Manen, 1990, p. 88, 96)—slowly peeling away layers of assumptions and taken-for-granted understanding to discover meaning, and reveal a deeper understanding, in the experiential accounts of others and in our developing text. Both directions are necessary and both yield insight (van Manen, 1990, p. 88).

Journal writing

Alongside the more formal writing of this text, I have kept a research journal. I began writing it when I started interviewing in May 1995. The journal has been a place where I have kept thoughts, questions, remembered snippets of conversation, descriptions of interviews (the context, the people), quotations from my reading, descriptions of my own drawing experiences, remembered dreams... anything really, which seemed directly, or indirectly, connected to the topic and process of my inquiry.

While the term "journal" may conjure up an images of a well-worn fabric-covered note book, my journal has been in the form of a computer "document" which, from time to time, I print out and put into a big loose-leaf binder. In spite of its mostly "virtual" location, this journal has become

a "home" for my research, while this text of thesis is more like a garden, which is open to public view.

Like a home, the journal is not only a practical and private place to store things, but a place to start out from, and a place to which I return. Some of the thematic writing began in the journal. Especially at times when the formality of the thesis seemed inhibiting, or my writing seemed stale or stuck, it has been immensely helpful to have a textual place to write freely, playfully, even incoherently. A place where, as it were, I could kick off the polished shoes my writing wears when I try to write academically. Then, treading barefoot, I realize, after days of laboured formality, that I am moving effortlessly. Here, I know the turnings, know where it is possible to move, sense where the openings are, chinks of light, even in dark moments of doubt. Soon I catch the rhythm of this work, sliding into sentences and syllables. I know how to move here, what pace, what gait. To write in the journal is to come home, and also to get in touch with the sense of adventure that this project holds for me. To write in the journal is to walk again in a place of my own making, settling into familiar surroundings, honed and cultivated over two years of writing.

Writing and rewriting: Tending the text

Much of this thesis has been written, and rewritten, in the house where I now live, in England. My desk faces a large window overlooking the garden. It is a narrow garden, so my view encompasses neighbouring gardens to the right and the left, each with its own configuration of lawn, flower beds, trees and the ubiquitous garden shed. For many months this view has been subtly incorporated into my writing. Possible formations of sentences mingle with the pattern of bare branches on the laburnum tree, a line of thought trails off along a neighbour's clothesline, punctuated at irregular intervals by weathered clothespegs. From time to time, when I work on paper, the spaces between the words fill up with little drawings of blackbirds or doves perched momentarily on a branch or a fence.

As well as looking out the window, I often go out and work in the garden. During these intervals I have sometimes reflected on how gardening presents a possible—and playful—metaphor for the process of phenomenological writing. Like a gardener, I began this phenomenological project with great enthusiasm. I reviewed theoretical knowledge and gathered accounts of lived experience which I hoped would bloom and bear fruit. Soon however, it was clear that the process of phenomenological writing is unpredictable and messy. Whether working on a computer, or on paper, my process of writing is often akin to the cutting and pasting processes of

collage: transplanting segments of text, and then depositing cuttings from my own work and others into files and folders, which, over time becomes like a fertile compost heap. After my initial creative labours, much of the writing has been re-writing. Sometimes this involved a complete upheaval of an entire section; at other times it was more like raking through part of a text to remove what may be overgrown or unnecessary. I have tended the text in progress in much the same way I tend a garden: roaming randomly through chapters, lovingly nudging, tugging, digging, shaping, ordering. I use my aesthetic sensibility to attend to the composition of the evolving text, and the sound, tone and rhythm of language. All this is a slow, organic process. The text changes almost daily, subtly or dramatically, until, one day, like a garden, it seems complete.

A passage in Michael Ondaatje's novel, *The English patient*, connects gardens with reading and a slow, contemplative process of writing. Lying in a room that is an indoor garden, "made up of trees and bowers painted over its walls and ceiling" (Ondaatje, 1992, p. 3), the English patient admonishes the young nurse, who reads aloud to him:

> Read him slowly, dear girl, you must read Kipling slowly. Watch carefully where the commas fall so you can discover the natural pauses. He is a writer who uses pen and ink. He looked up from the page a lot, I believe, stared through his window and listened to birds, as most writers who are alone do. (1992, p. 94)

Here, Ondaatje's character draws attention to the fact that a text is something which has been constructed—with pen and ink, words and punctuation. When, like the English patient, we know how something is constructed, we see the process of making which is invisible to an untrained eye, and our reading becomes a richer, more textured experience. Like a garden painted on a wall, a text is a work of artifice. In the making of a phenomenological text, one tries to use artifice skillfully, to make the lived experience of a phenomenon palpable, vivid, "real." The English patient's comment is a reminder that a text is created by a person, who worked with certain materials, in a particular context, at her or his own pace. All of these variables inevitably shape the text.

CHAPTER 4: THE LIVED SPACE OF DRAWING

What is a place for drawing?

It's late afternoon in a big city train station. My sister and I hurry through the crowds toward our train. There are only three minutes left before departure time. "There it is, platform two, and that must be our train!" As we board the train, we spot some empty seats at the end of the car; there is no time to choose where to sit, and so we quickly claim all four of them: two for us and two for our shopping bags and coats. "Phew, we made it," Eleanor says as we collapse into our seats. After a day of sightseeing, shopping, and an extended conversation along miles of city streets and parks, we both welcome the long journey home. As the train fills with last minute passengers, my sister and I chat about our day. Then, as the train pulls out of the station, our conversation gradually subsides and the city disappears into rolling countryside.

I would like to draw my sister as she sits there opposite me on the train. When will I have an opportunity like this again? I'll wait a few minutes though. If I start drawing Eleanor now she is sure to notice and we'll both feel self-conscious; I'll wait until she begins to read.

Perhaps if I start to read, she will also begin reading. So I open my packsack, and reach inside for my book. Taking it out, I say something about having more than two hours to spend on the train. I open the book and search through the pages to find my place: Where was I? Here? No, I've read that bit already. Must be a little further on. (I should really use a book mark.) There. I do not begin reading immediately, however. Now that I have found my place in the book, I need to settle into my place on the train. I wiggle around a bit in my seat, uncross my legs, pull one leg up onto the seat under the other, and lean on the arm rest, and against the window. For a moment I glance outside at the late afternoon light, diffused and gentle over the landscape. Then I look about at my fellow passengers and notice that several of them are also reading. The woman across the aisle has opened a book, and the man opposite her is reading a newspaper: clearly an experienced commuter reader, he has reduced the awkward size of the newspaper to a more manageable size for the train through a series of neat folds, something which, I think as I turn again to my own book, I have never been able to manage. Now my sister reaches for her book, and we exchange smiles, as if we are parting for a while to go to different places.

Before delving into the world of my book however, I cannot help but contemplate for a moment, that a train is not really a place designed for reading. This is not a library, a quiet study, or a comfortable living room. It is neither silent nor still, and there are many potential distractions.

Although we have all curled or slouched into some semblance of our favoured reading posture, I am quite sure that none of us are actually as comfortable as we would like to be: after a long day, I would like to stretch my feet out and rest them on the opposite seat. But if I do the conductor will scold me. And yet, in spite of all these apparent limitations, here we are, my sister, myself, that man with his newspaper, and the woman with her book, reading. And what about drawing, I wonder: Will I be able to draw here?

Is a train a place for drawing? In a little while I will take out my sketchbook, but when I do so, it is with the awareness that here I cannot work on a large scale or spread out my materials. Moreover, both I and my subjects are constant motion, and unless I am very discreet I will become the object of curious gazes.

What makes a place for drawing from observation? Does drawing actually require a specific place in which the contingencies of light, sound, movement, and the presence of others is controlled? Does drawing necessitate a large space in which in which we can spread out and make a mess? To what extent are these requirements, or merely preferences?

Drawing in a studio

Much drawing is done in studios designed specifically for this purpose. For example, there is a studio where I attend a weekly life drawing session: if ever there was a place designed for drawing this is it!

I remember the first time I went there: several flights of stairs, long hallways and small passageways led me to a spacious room in an old building, all the more intriguing for being so difficult to find. "Is this the place where the life drawing class is held?" I asked a man who was sharpening his pencil with the utmost care, while the debris floated freely to a welcoming floor, already greyed by years of charcoal dust and pencil shavings. I need not have asked: of course this was a studio! Three large north facing windows let in the evening light. Inside a man adjusted a spotlight, while a woman arranged colourful cushions and covers for the model at one side of the studio in front of an old fireplace. An array of still life objects, some forgotten pencils and conté sticks decorated the mantelpiece. Scattered around the rest of the room was an inviting clutter of easels, high stools, and straight-backed chairs. The once white walls were covered with drawings, tracings of the room's activities.

Recalling the comfortable clutter of this drawing studio reminds me of the studio of a sculptor whom I recently visited. I entered the studio alone and found myself in a space populated by

charcoal figures on the walls, and an unfinished clay figure in the centre of the room, illuminated by a spotlight. There were a few completed sculptures around the edge of the room, a small chair, a roll of masking tape, and a charcoal smudged coffee cup scattered on the floor, as well as photocopied reproductions of drawings and sculptures. As I looked around the studio, I realized that by working in here for a year, Henri had transformed what would otherwise be a plain and windowless rectangular room with a concrete floor and drab walls into a space that is alive with creative activity.

Like many artists, Henri puts his own drawings up on the walls of his studio, selecting those which are currently and personally meaningful. His recent figure drawings are done in charcoal, on cheap newsprint. They have the appearance of being hung in a hurry, with large pieces of masking tape, to be seen from a distance. They are there for a purpose; yet, they may be discarded at any moment. Although these drawings are neither decorative nor superfluous, there is a generosity, an assurance of generativity in Henri's casual treatment of his drawings: there will always be more where these came from. And a sense of anticipation: the studio walls, like the walls in the life drawing studio, await tomorrow's drawings, next week's drawings. Here there is always unfinished work, more to be done. The ambiance of this studio is warm and welcoming; it tugged at me; my hands felt restless, and I wanted to draw.

What is it like to work in a drawing studio? A few minutes after arriving for the first time in the life drawing studio mentioned above, I was comfortably settled: my sharpened pencils were ready and waiting at arm's length just beneath the old chair I had chosen. My neighbour had offered me a pile of magazines to put under my feet so that my drawing pad would rest on my legs at an angle that sloped toward, rather than away, from my head and hands. The woman behind me stood at an easel, while the man beside me sat in a chair and held a large drawing board almost vertically on his knees with one hand. As the model took her first pose, I sat up straight in my chair. I marveled at how still she sat and how unselfconsciously she received the gaze of eighteen pairs of eyes. As all eyes focused on her, the studio was filled with silent watchfulness. Only the occasional screech of a felt pen threatened to disturb the quiet.

This studio is an inviting space in which to draw; indeed it pulls me back week after week. There I am undistracted by the contingencies of everyday surroundings. With enough room to spread out, tacit permission to disregard charcoal smudges and pencil shavings, good lighting, a comfortable posture, concentrated quiet, and a subject who welcomes my gaze, it is a place designed for drawing. Its arrangement and atmosphere are shaped by those who currently use it, as well as by the culture of which it is a part. Entering it, I enter a long tradition of drawing

from the model. And yet, there is something rather contrived and artificial about this setting. Or is this precisely what makes it so inviting?

What spatial conditions make it possible to draw?

A painter who does most of his work in a city studio where he has painted for decades, says that it was several years before he could do "a decent work" in the studio he built at his summer cottage. A studio in which one can work is more than a well-equipped and spacious room: it must feel inhabited, having taken the shape of the habits of the artist or artists who work there. An inhabited studio, such as Henri's, tends to reflect the personality and the character of the one who works there. It is not just that there is sufficient light, perhaps a sink, as well as an easel or desk, a stool or chair and storage space, but that the arrangement of these things suits our particular purposes, that things are available when and where we need them. If we work with a variety of materials in response to the needs of the moment, then it is important that anything we may need at any given moment is within our arm's reach. Like a well worn sweater, an inviting studio is comfortable and familiar; we already know how to move in it, in fact, it fits our needs so well that we can ignore it.

A brand new studio space, like an unsuitable place for drawing, may demand so much of our attention that it distracts us from our work. Cohen describes how she felt when she first drew from a model in her new studio space. While the model took a break, Cohen confided in her friend and fellow artist with whom she shared the studio:

> I walked in and found a place to sit where I could make it dirty and sprawl out. I chose the table and ended up on the floor, halfway out the door. It takes me time to get used to a new space and a new mood. I'm almost uninterested in the subject. I'm more interested in working with my materials, getting comfortable, settling down. . . . When she takes up the pose again, I'm going to roll up the carpet and move close to her. (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 19)

Drawing for the first time in this studio, Cohen is aware that this space already has its own mood. Rather than focusing on the model, she is preoccupied with exploring the space itself and finding her place within it. She seems to be testing the boundaries of this new studio: How much space can she occupy? How far away from the model can she sit? How free can she be with her materials? She needs to spread out and make a mess. She is not just being untidy; instead, this her way of establishing her own order and inhabiting the space. Cohen suggests that unless she goes through this process, she would not be able to draw here. She is *making* room to draw. A new studio space is not yet inhabited, not yet (dis)ordered. In a new studio space we may feel,

however large the room is, that we don't have enough room; whereas a familiar space which we have ordered according to our needs, can feel spacious, even when it is actually quite small. Bollnow points out that our lived space "is lost through disorder and can be restored through order." In this way, "human activity can create space" (1961, p. 37). Simply by working in a new space, we begin to create our own order. Speaking about the prospect of moving into a new studio, Duncan says that,

> What I really need to do is just start something. The new space will begin to acquire some personal history very quickly just by starting to work. I feel that as soon as I make those first few stains on the floor, it will be OK.

The activity of drawing creates a certain kind of order, and thus a certain kind of space experience. But of course, what is creative order for one artist may look like disorder to others. Because the activities of drawing vary so widely from one person to another, the way in which a personal studio space is ordered varies widely from one person to another. The studios of two contemporary artists—Colville and Auerbach—present a dramatic contrast in their appearance and atmospheres. Yet, each studio space has been ordered by its occupant to suit the manner in which he draws.

A photograph of Colville drawing in his studio shows a room which is, in a sense, exceptionally austere and spacious. And yet it would be difficult to imagine Cohen or the sculptor whose studio I visited drawing in this space. These artists may feel cramped and stifled drawing in Colville's sparse studio.

The photograph shows Colville standing at an old fashioned drawing desk, apparently working with great concentration. He is dressed as if he were employed in an office, in a white shirt and trousers. The studio, situated on the third floor of his Nova Scotia house, is so empty, so clean, and so impeccably tidy that one immediately notices the background: the geometry of wooden beams, floor boards, storage shelves for paper and completed works. An oval mirror, gleaming with reflected light, contrasts with the predominance of straight lines and dark wood. The studio's starkness and careful design recalls Colville's paintings. It is also a remarkably clean room: the floor looks as though it has just been polished, and as though it has never been the willing recipient of pencil shavings or charcoal dust. The walls are empty, and with the exception of a few tiny smears of colour that mischievously escaped from the edge of a painting, they are perfectly clean. Here is a place for drawing, a place where everything is under the artist's control: the desk is at just the right height, and just the right angle; there is

just the right amount and intensity of light; the temperature is comfortable enough to work without wearing a bulky sweater or jacket, but not so warm as to feel lazy. Silence reigns over this studio: there is no telephone, radio, tape or CD player visible in the photograph.

But, we may wonder, what is he drawing? What is there to draw in this empty and austere studio? While Colville's paintings and prints depict domestic and outdoor scenes with people and animals, they are the outcome of long hours of studio work. So in this photograph of Colville in his studio, we can imagine that he is working out the composition for a painting, drawing from his own photographs and other drawings. Does he find it easier to focus on the development of his imagery in an empty room? Does the spaciousness of the studio allow more space for his imagination? Does the ordered geometry of beams, boards, doors and mirror provide an appropriate background in which to organize the space in his works?

The very different nature of Auerbach's work and artistic concerns creates a different atmosphere in his studio. He works directly from the model, usually a person with whom he has a close personal relationship, and whom he has drawn and painted hundreds of times. Whereas Colville's drawing are generally small and careful, and executed in pencil, Auerbach's drawings tend to be larger, expressive works, layer upon layer of drawn and erased charcoal on thick paper. Robert Hughes offers the following description of the London studio in which Auerbach has worked for more than three decades, and in which Hughes posed for a drawing.

> Auerbach's door opens on a scene of dinginess and clutter. The studio is actually a generous-sized room, but it seems constricted at first, all peeling surfaces, blistered paint, spalling plaster, mounds and craters of paint, piles of newspapers and books crammed into rickety shelves, a mirror so frosted with dust that movements reflected inside it are barely decipherable. It is a midden-heap. Because Auerbach paints thick and scrapes off all the time, the floor is encrusted with a deposit of dried paint so deep that it slopes upwards several inches, from the wall to the easel. One walks, gingerly, on the remains of innumerable pictures. Where he sets his drawing easel this lava is black from accumulated charcoal dust. . . .
>
> The high north window has not been cleaned in years. It does admit light: on fine May days a tender Rembrandtian gloom, in February a grim Dickensonian one. . . .
>
> The position of each easel is fixed. The wooden chair in which the sitter poses is also fixed, with a white circle drawn on the floor around each leg. To the left of the chair is a pedestal paraffin-heater, unlit, on which the sitter balances a cup of strong coffee and an ashtray. To the right is another heater, mercifully red-hot, with another locating circle of white paint drawn around its base. You know you may not move it, and do not try to. You roast on one side and freeze on

> the other. The distance between Auerbach's surface and the sitter's face is always the same. The sitter has only one way to sit: facing the easel, staring back at the stare. . . .
>
> An hour into the session the sitter blows his nose and finds his snot is black. The studio is like a colliery; the drawing easel is black and exquisitely glossy from years of carbon dust mixed with hand grease. (1990, pp. 13-15).

In spite of the very different atmospheres of their studios, it seems that both Colville and Auerbach have created working environments for themselves which offer a sense of stability, a predictable personal "order" in which the unpredictable, creative nature of their work can flourish.

This is not to suggest that certain kinds of studios automatically produce certain kinds of drawings, that we would draw like Auerbach surrounded by decades of charcoal dust and accumulated clutter, or that we would draw like Colville in a stark and well ordered room, but rather that the place in which we draw makes a difference. Wherever we draw, in a studio, or elsewhere, we are always already in a particular kind of place. Our experience of being in the atmosphere, dimensions and prevailing quality of order of this place is part of our experience of drawing here, and inevitably influences the size, media, speed, subject and quality of our drawings. In a studio, we have more control than elsewhere over the character of the space in which we work; the way in we inhabit this space, ordering it according to our needs, makes room for the personal character of our drawing.

What spatial conditions make it impossible to draw?

Degas is said to have once asked a model who took an artificial "studio" pose to stand as if she were buying radishes at the market. While like Degas, we may lament the artificiality of drawing from a model in a studio, we may also find that when we venture out of the studio to places where there are interesting subjects to draw, it seems difficult or almost impossible to actually do so. If, for example, we were to draw in a supermarket, where would we place ourselves in order to observe people? Although Nigel regrets the lack of an inconspicuous place to draw in a supermarket, he explains why he feels inclined to draw there.

> I have always wanted to draw in a big supermarket. Whenever I go shopping I find myself looking at people. I like the expressions on people's faces there. Everyone is rather prosaic, not trying to look their best. You see, because there's something at hand, the task at hand, they're not particularly self conscious.

> They're concentrating on something so they are often a bit abstracted and you can see if someone is actually worried or carefree or whatever. So when I go to the supermarket I look at people, but instead of drawing on the spot, I draw from memory when I get home.

What would happen, if, on a busy Saturday morning Nigel were to take his sketchbook to the supermarket? It seems like a great opportunity to draw people in real life poses and gestures. Imagine, that looking around for an interesting subject, Nigel sees a woman selecting radishes. She seems so absorbed in her occupation that he is sure she will not notice if he draws her. Moreover, he feels confident that he will have a minute or two to draw. So standing at some distance concealed behind the oranges, he opens his sketchbook and takes out a pencil. But almost as soon as he begins to draw, she looks up and glares at him, as if she can feel his pencil scratching along the edge of her nose. Embarrassed, Nigel closes his sketchbook and goes home.

We may tolerate a stranger drawing us in some public situations where we almost expect to be looked at, such as in a restaurant, or while we are waiting for a subway, or an airplane departure. We are less likely however, to tolerate an artist's scrutinizing look in those places where, because we are unguarded, we become interesting subjects for drawing. A locker room is such a place. As I walked into the women's locker room after a run one day, I realized that this setting presents a different spectacle to me than it does to most of its users. For this is not only the sight of many bodies of all sizes and shapes dressing and undressing, drying legs and brushing hair. To my eyes, this is a genre of western drawing and painting come to life: the female nude, Aphrodite and Venus, the bather, the mistress, and the artist's model are all here. There is one of Degas' bathers bending over to dry her feet; here is a radiant and youthful Renoir, a matronly Rubens. Three of Picasso's bathers come prancing in from the swimming pool engaged in lively conversation, while a Botticelli goddess brushes her hair next to an austere Klimpt. The pose of a woman standing by her locker and the pose of another seated on a bench recall simultaneously the poses of a model in a recent life-drawing class and a painting by Seurat.[22] For a moment I wish I had an easel, a drawing board, masses of large paper, a selection of pencils, charcoal... but of course, it would be completely inappropriate to draw people in a locker room: imagine realizing that someone is calculating the length of your back in relation to the length of your right leg, or noticing that the tip of your nose is on a direct vertical line with your left knee while you are getting ready to go swimming?

Yet even without picking up a pencil to draw I frequently find myself seeing this way, as if my eyes go on drawing wherever I am. An artist who is fascinated by social interactions finds

herself observing people in bars and cafés, at parties with her friends. Like Nigel in the supermarket, when she does not have a sketchbook, she studies poses and facial expressions.

The prospect of drawing in a supermarket or in a locker room calls attention to competing needs for a place with interesting subjects to draw and a place where we can open our sketchbook, or quietly sit down with a drawing board, spread out our drawing materials, and study people in action—yet still be unnoticed. We want a place where we can look, without becoming a spectacle for others.

The sketchbook as a drawing space

As the train travels through the countryside, I have been elsewhere, immersed in my thoughts and the book I am reading. A glance at my sister who sits opposite me, reading, tells me that she is also far away, in another place. How I would like to put away this book, which after all I am not really reading, reach into my packsack for my sketchbook, and draw her while she reads. Isn't this simply exchanging one book for another? They are even about the same size, and I can sit here with a sketchbook on my knee as unobtrusively as I can sit here with a book—or can I?

More than a book of mere blank pages, the sketchbook is a *place* to draw. Together with a pen or pencil, it serves as a portable studio. As soon as I open my sketchbook, in a park, a café, a market, or here on the train, I have opened a place to draw. The covers of the sketchbook are like a doorway through which I enter into my own world of drawing. Here are my drawings: last month's drawings, as well as the ones I did this morning in a museum, the ones which succeeded and the ones that didn't. Like works taped to walls of a studio, they remind me of where I have been and where I am going. As I enter the sketchbook, I step away from the park, the café, the market; I draw back from my place on the train. Moments ago I may have been walking in the park, busy with the buying of vegetables, talking with a friend over coffee, or with my sister here on the train.

Now conversation falls silent, and I am almost still. There is a gap between myself and my surroundings, an awkward moment perhaps: am I drawing attention? I want to draw these people in the midst of their actions, but I don't want them to realize that they are part of *my* act. The sketchbook sits on my lap, and I am still here where I was, but now that the book is opened, it begins to create an invisible wall around me, and I peer as if through a window, at the scene before me. The covers of the open sketchbook seem to shelter me from unwanted

intrusions and distractions. I am here in the sketchbook, alone with a blank page. Picking up my pen, I look, as though over a distance, at the scene before me. Drawing, I pull the scene closer, bring it into my sketchbook; within my grasp, and feel its essential forms. And yet, I must remain hidden in the covers of the sketchbook, and take care not to draw attention to my drawing.

Where are we while we draw from life?

A studio makes drawing physically possible, yet we need a place that is more than merely functional. We want a place that inspires us, that draws us in. And so there is a tension between possible and impossible, artificial and real places to draw. Do we need a studio space, or is a place for drawing the place where we find ourselves drawn to pick up a pen or pencil, whether at home, in a studio, a museum, a meadow, a train, or an airport?

Drawing is distinguished from most other visual art media by its portability. Art teachers often tell their students: "carry a sketchbook at all times; you never know when you might want to draw." Taking this advice, I find myself drawing in unexpected situations: a bank line-up, an airport departure lounge in the middle of the night, or, as this evening, on a train. In each of these situations I am waiting for something else: a line to move on, a departure announcement, the arrival of our train at its destination. So I draw to pass the time. Then while drawing, crowds become individuals and faces lose their anonymity. I am no longer just waiting, and the uneasy feeling of being here only for the sake of going somewhere else disappears. No longer restless, I settle into my seat or find the most comfortable way to stand. Waiting time, passing time, becomes drawing time. And a bank, an airport, or a train becomes a place to draw.

The relative stillness of my body and the paper on which I am working is so much a part of drawing experience that I tend to take it for granted when I draw in a predictable situation, such as a studio, or a place that I have created for drawing at home. There I have a comfortable place to stand or sit and a drawing board, easel, or sketchbook placed at a suitable height and angle. On a train however, everything serves to remind me that this is not really a place designed for drawing: the rhythmic motion of the train that promises a wobbly line no matter how carefully I hold my pen, the precarious balance of my drawing book on my knee, and my constant awareness that the people around me do not share my interest in drawing. Moreover they may not want to be drawn or even to be looked at. Here both hand and eye are limited; yet more often than not I find myself drawing in a place that was not intended for drawing.

In the studio, drawing is ruled by stillness as well as quiet: the model is almost utterly still, while those who draw her seem to move only their head and hands. Even the slightest motion is noticed: the model tires and slouches by two or three inches; I move my head, or shift from one foot to another, and my view changes. But on the train everything is in motion: the passengers move and sway with the rhythm of the train. Without warning, the man I have begun to draw folds his newspaper differently and thus holds his head differently. I am obliged to turn the page and begin another drawing. My pen makes a bumpy ride across the page as the train continues its bumpy ride through the countryside.

Drawing out of doors, like drawing in the train, is characterized by unpredictability. As I climb the fence to better survey the view and draw, I do not know how long I will stay there nor how long I will draw. Drawing in these meadows I have slightly more control over movement than I do on the train. While precariously perched on a fence I am stationary and the landscape before me is relatively still. That tree will not get up and walk away but a sudden breeze might blow its branches in a different direction, changing its appearance and character. The same breeze might blow the edge of my paper, curling it over my drawing hand, or blow my hair across my eyes. Unlike the studio, the quality and direction of light out of doors is completely out of my control. And as I begin to draw one of the cows in the meadow, I find that she too will not hold a pose and is as unpredictable as the passenger in the train. My own body does not move against my wishes as it does on the train, but the sheer discomfort of this fence on which I sit may make me move away sooner than I would indoors.

A museum can also be an uncomfortable place in which to draw. I must make an effort to remain unmoved while my body is bumped and jolted by other visitors jostling for a glimpse of "the original," the painting that I too have come to see—and draw. But with feet firmly and achingly planted on the museum floor, I am determined to draw until closing time undaunted by the movement around me. Drawing has a place in a museum, but never quite its own place, as it always seems to be overshadowed when placed side by side with the old masters.

As the above examples show, it is of course possible to draw in many situations which are characterized by movement and unpredictability rather than stillness and control. In fact the portability of drawing lends itself to such situations; we can draw in places where we could not, easily, paint. Nevertheless, we experience our cramped posture, our aching back or feet, the crowd that jostles us, the jolt of the train as it comes to a stop, the wind that blows our paper as intrusions. And we experience the light that changes, people who move before we have finished drawing them, as distractions.

The studio is a controlled environment: there movement is controlled, lighting is controlled, the model is controlled—moving only at predictable intervals of three, eight, thirty, or forty-five minutes. In the train, almost everything is out of my personal control: not only movement, sound and light, but my "model" in particular is beyond my control, changing his "pose" at a whim; I cannot say "would you turn your head, just ever so slightly to the left? Yes, that's it." And "would you hold that for a few minutes?" In the train everything and everyone moves according to wishes other than my own: even my pen is less inclined to do what I wish. The drawings that I do in these circumstances are rarely careful studies, as they might be in a studio, but they sometimes capture the sense of the place. And yet, is it the very unpredictability of the train, or of cafés, parks or meadows that invites me to draw? Sometimes it feels as though I am involved in a game: how long will that person stay in that pose—turn the page, look the other way, or get up and leave, disappearing altogether? Will a cloud suddenly obscure the sun and change the light that now falls across his face? Will the conversation of other passengers unexpectedly draw my attention away from my drawing? I go to the studio to attend a "life-drawing" session, to participate in the long established tradition of drawing from life. But in which place really, am I drawing from "life" as it is lived: in the studio or here in the train?

CHAPTER 5: THE LIVED TIME OF DRAWING

The train rumbles into a small railway station, the first of several stops on our journey. My sister glances up from her book with a questioning expression. I stand up and pull down the window, in an attempt to locate where we are. The stone walls and the iron benches tell me what part of the country we are in, but not exactly where. Glancing at the sign, I read the name of the town: its rhythmic four syllables mean little to me. But there, the clock—with its large round face and authoritative hands informs me more precisely than the place name where I am: "five-twenty-two," I announce.[23] "Oh, well, we still have a long way to go then," Eleanor replies. The clock moves one hand in a motion so precise that I can almost hear an audible click: five-twenty-three. Realizing that we have more than two and half hours of travel ahead of us, I sink back into my seat.

Two hours and thirty-three minutes: what a long time! On any other Thursday evening, the hours that mark the transition from afternoon to evening are never quite long enough, as I hurry home, go for a run, shower, help to make dinner, eat quickly, and rush off to a life drawing session. But here in the train this suddenly free time stretches out before me in a leisurely length like the railway tracks which appear to go on indefinitely across the countryside. And yet, the time of our journey is of a limited duration and very precisely defined: the whole trip is two hours and fifty-three minutes, and now it is two hours and thirty-three minutes from here to there.

The station clock clicks again from five-twenty-three to five-twenty-four, and the train obediently jolts into motion and resumes its journey. "What shall I do?" I wonder. Is this really "free" time? For I have little freedom of choice about what I can do in this confined space. Does the time here on the train feel so long because my activities are limited? Of course the train provides an opportunity for thinking and reflecting, staring into the landscape as it passes by the window. Still, two hours and thirty-three—now two hours and thirty-two minutes—is a long time to think gazing through a train window. Perhaps I will draw my sister. Or I could read: I wonder if my book will last for the whole journey? It is a collection of essays which so far, I have been reading in chronological order; perhaps now I will skip ahead and read something else. I look through its table of contents. There is an essay with an intriguing title, "Drawn to that moment." Is it about drawing? About time?

The duration of drawing, drawings that endure

The train leaves the town and continues its journey through the autumn landscape. I settle once again into my seat, and turn to the essay with the intriguing title. The first sentence immediately grips my attention: "When my father died recently, I did several drawings of him in his coffin. Drawings of his face and head" (Berger, 1993, p. 146). Reading this, I recall the poignancy of drawing my grandfather, many years ago, just before he died. I was keenly aware, as Berger was while drawing his father, that I would not see this face again. Yet, somewhere in one of those black hard cover sketchbooks, my grandfather's face remains in the drawing. And somewhere in France, Berger's drawing of his father hangs in front of the table at which he works. The father and the grandfather have gone; the drawings endure.

Do we draw to outwit time, to preserve what time will inevitably consume? Berger states that to draw is to "challenge disappearances" (1993, p. 149). It is not only when we draw a beloved face for the last time that we draw "what will never again be visible, which has occurred once and which will never reoccur" but, as Berger suggests, "the visual is always the result of an unrepeatable, momentary encounter" (1993, p. 146). Always? I wonder. I look out the window. The landscape rushes by: a tree, a field, a hill come into view and then quickly leave. My eyes drift back to the page I have been reading only to find Cézanne's words which are so well suited to this fleeting landscape: "one minute in the life of the world is going by. Paint it as it is" (in Berger, 1993, p. 146). But, I wonder, if I were to take this journey again next week, wouldn't the same sight that I saw a moment ago recur at precisely five twenty-nine? I would certainly recognize that tree, that field, that hill; in this sense the sight would recur. But what if it rains next Thursday? Then this landscape would look completely different. Even if the weather were as fine as it is today, the clouds would not have the same formation, the sun would be slightly lower in the sky, the tree would have lost a few more leaves. And wouldn't this scene look different through next week's eyes? This evening, after a day in the city with my sister, the landscape has a certain softness, an openness which seems to invite my reflections.

I look at my sister, reading in the seat opposite me. How differently she appears now than she did earlier in the day: absorbed in her book, her face is relaxed and—visibly tired. If, in a few minutes, she falls asleep, she would look different again. And so it seems, from my brief observations of the sights around me on the train, that although appearances remain constant enough for us to recognize them from one moment, one day, or even from one year to the next,

when we look more closely everything we see "will never again be visible" exactly as it is—right now.

This constant "changing of dimensions and colours" is what van den Berg calls the "tempo" of things (1970, p. 118). He contrasts this temporal aspect of things with their "duration," the relative constancy of colour and dimension which permits things to have identity over time (1970, p. 116). Drawing compels us to look closely, to acknowledge the tempo, the temporaries of appearances. These are my thoughts as I reach for my sketchbook and pen, and prepare to draw Eleanor just as she is, now, at this moment, this evening on the train. I have never drawn Eleanor before and I feel somewhat shy as I am confronted simultaneously by the blank page in my drawing book and by her face. The blank page is so beautiful in its pristine whiteness, and Eleanor looks so lovely just now, her head held at an angle over the book, her glasses perched quaintly on her nose. What will the drawing do to the paper, to my sister? Why this sudden shyness? I pause, pen poised above the page. This is a familiar feeling. It recalls the time, years ago, when I was first learning to draw. The hand is momentarily immobilized, gripped by the thought, "can I draw this?" The eyes too are overwhelmed by the subject when glancing upwards; then, glancing downwards, my eyes are overwhelmed by the empty whiteness of the paper, which faces me like a field of newly fallen snow. Yet it invites me. Dare I disturb its whiteness? Having faced both paper and subject innumerable times, I coax and cajole hand and eye into cooperation. I tell myself that if it doesn't work out, I can start again, I can turn the page, I can even tear it out! I think of Kandinsky's words, "I have gradually learned not to see the resistant white of the canvas to notice it only for instants" (1964, p. 35).

And so, after several moments of looking alternately at Eleanor's face and the blank page in my sketchbook, I begin. But not quite. I take several long moments to trace the shape of Eleanor's head with my pen held just above the surface of the paper on which I am about to draw. Round and round my hand moves, finding the shape of her head, finding the place on the paper.

Now, at last, my pen lands on the paper and begins to edge around Eleanor's head. Starting at her forehead, I draw downwards, attentive to that curving of her cheek that is so characteristic of Eleanor's face. I look down at the paper: yes, that's it, keep going. I hold my breath and steal another glance at her face, careful now not to draw her attention to my gaze. My pen moves along the page. My head moves up and down, from my sister to my drawing, from my drawing to my sister.

Pausing for a moment to see where to go next, I glance at my watch. I am surprised to find that only a few minutes have past. The drawing is barely begun, yet I have looked at Eleanor countless times in these few minutes. Is there any other human activity in which we look at someone or something again and again, with such concentrated attention, over a prolonged time? Of course, we look at people and things all day long, but it is not quite like this. As I sat opposite my sister in a café this morning, I looked at her throughout a long conversation. There my attention was focused on our conversation, and not specifically on the contours and structure of her face. I looked, but I did not see her as I do now. A drawing is made up of many moments, minutes and sometimes even hours or days of repeated looking. "The drawn image" writes Berger, "contains the experience of looking" (1993, p. 149). Even these few lines in my sketchbook already hold innumerable looks at my sister opposite me. Drawing, even at a rapid pace, takes time; this drawing may take the whole duration of our journey. Drawing takes time in another sense as well, seizing moments and holding them still in lines and marks on paper. A drawing is time captured.

Drawing presents a contradictory experience of time: this drawing of my sister, when completed, may contain an hour, perhaps two, of my looking at her, yet it will look as though it is Eleanor seen in one moment, reading on the train. Thus, writes Berger, "what is unchanging in a drawing consists of so many assembled moments that they constitute a totality rather than a fragment" (1993, p. 150).

Time to draw

Making time and finding time

In some respects, time on the train is like time in the studio. When I enter the studio each week to draw from a model, the two hours ahead of me look long, just as the length of time between here and our destination appears long. The time between five-o-three and seven-fifty-eight is set aside for our train journey; on most Thursdays the hours from eight to ten is time cut off from other times, time set aside for drawing. If I did not attend this weekly life drawing session, would I spend two hours drawing on Thursday evenings?

The time in the studio seems long, at first almost without end, and yet for each pose the model takes, I am keenly aware of the limited time. Beside the model a kitchen timer methodically ticks away the passing seconds, as hands grasping pencils, pens, charcoal, and conté rush across papers: "faster, faster" I urge my pencil, "this is only a three minute pose—no time for details;

look for the gesture, the essential form." How different this is from the leisurely pace of the thirty minute pose, when I feel I have time to stop and look, to move my pencil slowly along a contour, to study a hand, or start again. Continuing to draw, I am suddenly aware of how long these three minutes are for the model as she sits on the floor hugging her knees, enduring the slow passing seconds. Even more than the ticking timer, her face shows when the time is nearly over. My drawing is finished, but I can't allow myself to stop before the time is up. I must continue, I must keep moving my pencil along the aching edge of her back once again. I feel obliged to fill the entire three minutes as if I would lose something, miss something, if I stopped early.

How strange: when I draw in other situations I have no sense of finishing a drawing early or late. "Each place has its own time" (van den Berg, 1970, p. 121) and in the life drawing studio time moves according to the pace set by the length of various poses: three, five, ten, twenty, thirty minutes. The duration of my drawing must conform to the ticking of the timer. Not only the duration of this particular drawing, but the duration of my drawing time must conform to the schedule of the weekly life drawing session: every Thursday at eight, regardless of whether I am inspired or indifferent, I draw. In the studio, with the door firmly closed, surrounded by others who are drawing, model, easels, and paper, I am bound to draw; there is nothing else to do here. This is how I make time for drawing.

Drawing at home however is more a matter of finding time, searching the spaces between other commitments for small pockets of time. Truitt, whose early career as a sculptor coincided with raising her three children, writes in her journal about how she found intervals of time in which to work:

> The periods of time left over from my practical responsibilities were spent in the studio. If there were fifteen minutes between shopping and carpool, I used them. If I had an hour, or two hours, I rejoiced, but didn't even waste time feeling happy, just worked. (1984, p. 126)

Similarly, when I draw at home, drawing time is time taken, sometimes stolen, from other times: from conversational time, writing time, gardening time. The time I spend drawing at home is any time and part of everyday time. There drawing comes and goes between other times: two hours of drawing time includes watering the garden and stirring a soup. Perhaps these are not really interruptions.

Losing time

This evening as I draw my sister, the other passengers, the interior of the train, and the countryside beyond blur out of focus and almost disappear. I am oblivious to the conversations of people around me. I am alone with my sister, my paper, and pen. I look at Eleanor's face almost continuously. My hand moves slowly around the paper, following this contour around her chin, then up towards her ear, registering the angle of her jaw line that reveals her tense concentration. I too am alert and concentrated, yet I do not focus specifically on her mood, or think "look at her tense concentration" but attend wholly to the movement of this line, as I see it, now.

My pen spontaneously takes a detour round the back of her head and makes a rapid sweeping line along her collar and down towards the edge of her book. Now back to her eyes. My hand hesitates as I estimate the placement of her features: here the left eye meets the top of her nose; no, there. I continue drawing, slowly registering the structure and features of my sister's face, looking up, looking down.

Suddenly I feel the train slowing down, and simultaneously notice that the light has changed, the shadows have disappeared. I realize that I have not even glanced out the window for a long time. How long? Books are closed and bags are reached for as some passengers prepare to leave. I attempt a few hurried marks on the page in my sketchbook before Eleanor moves. Then, with a final squeak of the wheels, I am completely jolted out of my drawing and along with my fellow passengers, who have been immersed in conversations, newspapers, books, thoughts, and reflections, returned abruptly to the train. I close my drawing book, exchange glances with the other passengers and a few words with my sister. We peer through the window to the train station, notice the name of the town, the travellers, the trains. And the time. It's almost six o'clock! how could that be? I felt I was drawing for only a few minutes. Then with a shout, a whistle, and a slamming of doors we resume our journey. The steady motion of the train and the lengthening shadows across the landscape lull me into reflection.

Where did the time go while I was drawing? Where have I been when I have lost track of time? Drawing is often like this. When I am "into" a drawing, it seems as if I have entered a place with a different time. When my drawing is interrupted, as it was just now, or when a drawing is finished, the time according to the clock is never quite right. Sometimes it has gone too slowly, but more often it seems to have passed too quickly.

Isabel speaks about losing time while drawing; she took up drawing when her husband died, attending a weekly class for "beginners." She draws to pass time, especially in the evenings which are very long. She is pleasantly surprised when she actually loses track of the time:

> These drawing assignments that I do at home, I will think, "Oh, I've got an hour; I'll go and draw." Two hours go by! The time just speeds by! So that's good, for somebody who is trying to fill in a few hours.

Isabel's comment provokes the question: is drawing only a way to "fill in a few hours"? Have I been drawing my sister this evening only to "fill," and thus to "lose" the apparently empty time on the train? Is drawing not more meaningful than a pastime, a pleasant way to while away the hours? If I was merely passing time however, I would remain within the predictable tempo of time by the clock, and not lose track of its passage in minutes and hours. When I step back from a drawing, the time on the clock takes me by surprise, as if I have been somewhere else, quite outside of time's domain, no longer subject to its rules. Gail describes how she "lost" more than an hour while drawing a bouquet of sunflowers.

> When the drawing was finished, I *thought* it had been about ten minutes, or twenty at the most. So I said to my friend, "that's the quickest I've ever worked." And then as I got up, I realized that I was terribly stiff; I was so stiff I could hardly stand up! And my friend said, "well, you've been there for an hour and a half!"

Often, it is our friends or family who bring us back to the ordinary passage of time, sometimes with a jolt. Diane was drawing at home one morning, when she was startled into an awareness of how much time had elapsed. This is how she described it:

> We used to live right next to the school. So the kids would go to school at 8:30 and they'd come home at 11:30 for lunch. Well, I'm working away. I've got things tied up so I started drawing at nine. And I was working. Then when I heard someone walk in the door, I thought we were being burglarized! And it was my son. It was 11:30. And I thought, "how can that be?" Like, "where was I?" I'd worked for two and a half hours, and I didn't know it, hadn't even thought of the time. I just worked away on it, just forgot about everything else. Wonderful. It's just wonderful. It happens a lot.

Each of these women felt a certain delight in losing time. Although the realization that time has passed can be annoying, it is also gives us a feeling of victory. We may have lost time, but more importantly, time has lost us: while drawing, we have been out of time's reach, temporarily released from its relentless grip.

Drawing in time and outside of time

Our train speeds through a small station without stopping, and for a moment I see clusters of people, old and young, waiting, eating and chatting. Isn't it extraordinary how we can sometimes see so much in so little time? In a flash my eyes have absorbed details of posture, gesture, dress and facial expression. I remember reading about Franck drawing people seen for a moment while standing in a station before his train arrived,

> On a blustery November day, when I stood waiting on a platform of Kyoto station for the Shinkanzen, the bullet train to Tokyo, my eye was struck by three elderly Japanese. Two women were sitting on a bench, an old man on his haunches in front of them. They were eating sushi from cardboard lunchboxes. A few yards farther away, at the kiosk, students—the boys in their black school uniforms, the girls in the usual navy blue sailor suits—were kidding around, buying sodas and things to nibble. It was as if I were watching some miraculous supernatural pantomime. I itched to draw it, but the train was to pull in at any moment for its precise two-minute stop. Still, without realizing it, I must have unscrewed the cap of my drawing pen, for suddenly I felt my hand starting to move all by itself. It flew over the paper of my little sketchbook in precise synchronization with what my fascinated eye perceived. I did not have a split second to glance at what appeared on the paper. The pen kept on gliding, leaping, dancing, from the old people on the left—it even touched some little figures in the background—then jumped to the students on the right-hand page, and back. (1993, pp. 80-82)

Franck's train came in at its appointed time, and he managed to put away his pen, pick up his bag, and leap onto the train just in time to feel the automatic doors close behind him. "Within seconds factories and buildings flew past," along with "hills and pale green rice paddies" (1993, p. 83). Still feeling a little shaky and out of breath, Franck, then eighty years old, sat down, and waited a few moments before he dared to look at the drawing.

> It seemed impossible! How could this have happened in no-time? I was delighted but felt a bit frightened at the same time. Was I dreaming? . . . . Yes, it drew itself indeed in no-time. For while seeing/drawing—I had been aware of it before—time may expand and contract. A minute can contain an hour, an hour may shrink into fifteen seconds. Inner time becomes totally disconnected from linear time, clock time. I looked at what had happened. I was definitely not dreaming. It was as clear as it was wonderful and a bit scary: All inhibitions had evaporated, as if at long last—at eighty! (Franck, 1993, pp. 83, 86)

Franck's term, "no-time" expresses the ambiguity of drawing time: sometimes we draw a great deal and then realize that it took almost no time at all; at other times we discover that much time has elapsed when we felt we had spent almost no time drawing. While drawing, we seem to stand outside time's predictable and monotonous passage on the clock, and inside an arbitrary stretching and shrinking time. On the station platform in Kyoto, Franck drew as if he were outside of time, temporarily immune to the precise timing of a Japanese train. And still, he completed his drawing just *in* time to leap through the automatic doors.

Would Franck have seen these elderly people and young students, would he have drawn them, with the same intensity, the same clarity of perception, if he had not been so acutely aware of time, in the way that one is aware of time on a train—the approach of the train to the station, its two minute stop, the automatic doors that will shut whether you are ready or not? When time frames experience so precisely as it does on a train, we become more conscious of other dimensions of experience: of being face-to-face with others, of place. When time is limited, as it is on a train, or highly structured, as it is in a life drawing studio, we are more likely to experience "no-time."

Drawn to the present and into the past and the future

Time may pass us by, it may contract and expand, while we are drawing; yet we feel, while drawing directly from observation, that we are in the present. In fact, we seem to be more keenly in the present than we usually are. Often it is the subject that draws us into the present, and invites us to be attentive to this appearance that "will never again be visible" just as it is right now (Berger, 1993, p. 146). Berger writes about "submitting to the urgency of what is" while drawing his father in his coffin (1993, p.147). This experience is, of course, unusual; yet, it serves to show how a compelling subject urges us to give it our full attention. When our attention is undivided we feel that we are present.

While drawing my sister a few moments ago, it seemed as though I was completely in the present, here and now, so much so that I "lost" time. But was I only in the present, as if cut off from the past and the future? I turn again to the book I have been reading, and a passage from Berger's essay catches my attention:

> To draw is to look, examining the structure of appearances. A drawing of a tree shows, not a tree, but a tree-being-looked-at. Whereas the sight of a tree is registered almost instantaneously, the examination of the sight of a tree (a tree-being-looked-at) not only takes minutes or hours instead of a fraction of a

> second, it also involves, derives from, and refers back to, much previous experience of looking. (1993, p. 150)

As I was drawing the contour around Eleanor's cheek, I thought, "Yes there is the line that is so characteristic of her face." How would I have recognized this particular curving as "characteristic" if I was not drawing on all my past experience of looking at this face? And it is not only when we draw a face or a thing that is familiar to us that we refer back to previous experience: when I draw from a model who I have never seen before, I "know" when a leg I have drawn is too long, or when a foreshortened foot is not large enough; all my past experiences of observing the human figure, in life, and in art, come into play.

And yet when we are drawing we feel that are in the present. The present however, is not a discreet, measurable moment that is arbitrarily clipped off from the past and the future, a "now" that is distinct from "then." For when is now? A split second? A minute? Today? The present, as we experience it, holds the past and promises a future.[24] And so as I draw my sister, I recognize her looks, I remember her face in other moods, on other occasions. As my pen moves around the page and around her face I feel the past that has shaped this face. I recognize her and yet I also see qualities that I have not seen before; drawing her, I begin to wonder about her future.

Here on the train, I am drawing directly from observation; drawing my sister as she sits there this evening. I feel I am in the present, a present that opens up, and through which I am pulled back into the past and forward into the future. There are other modes of drawing however, which more explicitly draw on past experience. For instance, when we draw from memory, we draw, in the original sense of this word as "pull" (Skeat, 1958, p. 182), and pull something from the past into present, giving it a concrete form in marks and lines. If I were to draw one of Eleanor's children beside her on this page I would rely on my memory, on my past experience of my niece and nephews. They are not present, now or here. And while I draw them, I would not be present either; I would hardly be here on the train, but there where they live, or there, where we spent a summer holiday together last year.

For the viewer as well as for the maker, a drawing can give access to the past and the future. And when we live with a drawing for weeks, months, or years, it can change for us. Berger describes how the drawing of his father that he chose to frame has changed over time. "There are several ways of describing the change" he writes,

> The content of the drawing increased. The drawing, instead of marking a site of a departure, began to mark the site of an arrival. The forms, drawn, filled out. The drawing became the immediate locus of my memories of my father. The drawing was no longer deserted but inhabited. For each form, between the pencil marks and the white paper they marked, there was now a door through which moments of a life could enter: the drawing, instead of being simply an object of perception, with one face, had moved to become double-faced, and worked like a filter: from behind, it drew out my memories of the past whilst, forwards, it projected an image which, unchanging, was becoming increasingly familiar. My father came back to give the image of his death mask a kind of life. (1993, pp. 147-148)

As a "completed" work, Berger's drawing of his father takes on, in his eyes, a life of its own, with a past and a future. Like the pulling and pushing movements of the drawing pencil, the finished drawing now pulls memories from the past, and the image pushes itself towards the future. The term "completed" here is interesting, as one can ask: is a drawing ever completed? It is the spare nature of many drawings which invites the viewer to complete them, to invoke a past and a future.

To draw time

The surprise of seeing a familiar face for the first time

The train rolls steadily through the countryside. The colours in the sky are beginning to lose their intensity. I return to the drawing of my sister, eager to complete it by daylight. Then, suddenly, in the midst of drawing Eleanor as she sits there reading, the familiar face, the public face, the face that had been a tourist today, admiring views and old buildings, chatting enthusiastically over coffee, fades away. "When drawing a face, any face, it is as if curtain after curtain, mask after mask falls away," says Franck (1973, p. 71). As my pen edges round the corners of Eleanor's mouth, a sentence I once read resounds in my mind: "you can see someone's face for nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and then see the person's face again, as if for the very first time" (Chesterton, in Halling, 1983, p. 122). Now I see my sister as if for the very first time, across from me on the train and before me on the paper. I have, of course seen my sister's face countless times, but now, this face which I thought I knew so well surprises me with its unfamiliarity. Thus, "newness rises from repetition. It is the unfamiliar found in the midst of the most familiar sight" (Hughes, 1990, p. 10). Seeing my sister's face anew, I realize how dear she is to me. In this way, "familiarity may breed the very opposite of contempt. To draw a person you know really well, your father, your brother, your wife is to enter into a brand new relationship. It is as if you never saw them before!" (Franck, 1989, p. 111). Perhaps a

relationship is not so much "brand new" as re-newed through the repeated and focused attention of drawing.

The experience of seeing someone or something as if for the first time often takes us by surprise, like this, in the midst of drawing. It is also a way of seeing which we can cultivate. Hence Matisse's advice that the artist "has to look at everything as though he saw it for the first time: he has to look at life as he did when he was a child" (in Flam, 1973, p. 148).

When the passage of time becomes visible

Drawing the little wrinkles around Eleanor's eyes, I suddenly notice that she is getting older. Yes, of course, my sister has always been much older than me, but I never thought of her as middle-aged or aging. Drawing her eyes and forehead it is as if I now see through her eyes; I feel the cares and concerns that she carries around with her: each of her children is visible in her face. I pause for a moment, almost overwhelmed by how intimate this drawing has become. Returning to the book I have been reading, I note that Berger also saw the passage of time in his father's face,

> As I drew his mouth, his brows, his eyelids, as their specific forms emerged with lines from the whiteness of the paper, I felt the history and the experience which had made them as they were. (1993, p. 147)

Looking at my drawing, I am taken aback by how old I have made Eleanor look. My pen has scrupulously and unflatteringly recorded the face before me; suddenly the subtle changes which have taken place in her face in recent years are visible to me. "Time goes on" writes van den Berg, "but the realization is more profound and more genuine when I perceive the changes in things" (1970, p. 107). Time, like the wind, is abstract, and so we may ask: Who has seen the time? In fact we do not perceive time directly, but drawing permits us to glimpse traces of its passing in things and people. A face changes so slowly, so imperceptibly that we easily recognize the face of someone we know, even when many years have elapsed since we last saw them; we can recognize a friend's face in childhood photos taken long before we knew them. "The *duration* of things tempts us to assume that they do not change but remain the same" (van den Berg, 1970, p. 116). Of course, a face does not remain the same from one year to the next, or sometimes, even from one minute to the next, but how often do we notice this? When we draw a familiar face, we are suddenly aware that a face does not remain the same. While drawing, we not only look for the recognizable and enduring characteristics; we study this face as it appears right now. We draw, in van den Berg's terms, both the "duration" and the "tempo" of our subject.

To draw someone or something is to draw its existence in time and as time. And in the process of drawing, or in the drawing itself, we suddenly see the changes that reveal the passage of time. Does the surprise that we may feel in seeing time's imprint in a face suggest that in our day to day looking we are mostly blind to the "tempo" of people and things? Or would it simply be too overwhelming to constantly be aware of growth and decay, of the barely perceptible changes that mark time?

Franck writes about seeing a model change and age before his eyes while drawing.

> The first night in the Soho basement where for a few dollars one can draw from life all evening without being interrupted, there was a male model. The sullen youngster kicked off his jeans and started to take his routine poses, bored, defiant. Moping he went through his repertoire and I sat there scribbling half-heartedly resenting the waste of money, time and gasoline. But then came the moment of the ten minute pose. He flopped down on the grimy platform and lay there, one knee pulled up, brazenly staring at nothing. I caught the staring of that hostile eye, saw the narrow shifting pupil. Forgetting my anger, I started to draw without haste, yet fully aware of the ten minute limit, and as I went on drawing I gradually saw this callow, naked brat change. As on a film I saw him in flashback, an ugly screaming baby, saw him growing into the kid who was lying there wretchedly making his few dollars, saw him instantly aging into an unhappy, middle-aged man, then to a decrepit oldster. . . . then lying, made up with grease paint, in a cheap coffin.
>
> The timer tinkled. He got up and so did I. I had lived and died a life in these ten minutes. It was enough, and I drove home. (Franck, 1989, pp. 100-102)

Franck is acutely aware of time, the actual time of the pose, and the possible time of the model's life. Within the arbitrary limit set by the ten minute pose, Franck perceives the limits of the young man's life. As he draws, time is accelerated, moving backwards, and then forwards. He sees the past that has shaped the sulky youth, and he sees how the model's present manner and bearing may shape his future. While drawing, Franck sees the movement of time. And yet, he draws the model as he is now, unmoving on the "grimy platform" for these ten minutes. When we take the time to still ourselves, seeing and drawing someone who is also still, we are better able to perceive the movement of time.

If instead of coming face to face with this young man for ten long minutes in a Soho life drawing session, Franck had seen him at a glance while walking through Central Park, would he have seen the child, the man, the "decrepit oldster" in the languid youth slouching on a park bench? Drawing offers an opportunity to see—not only the actual changes, such as the changes I observed in my sister's face—but possible changes, and the very possibility for change, in what we draw.

Must we take time to perceive the passage of time? While drawing we look intently at things, or persons, longer than we usually do. The sheer length of time we spend looking, even if this is just ten minutes, or even two minutes, permits us to see change and time in our subjects. It seems that we are more likely to perceive the "tempo" of things and persons that we draw—their constant change, temporariness and ultimate disappearance—when our time, like theirs, is limited.

Looking out the train window, I notice the lengthening shadows across the fields. Checking my watch, I see that it is ten past six.

CHAPTER 6: THE LIVED RELATION OF DRAWING

My sketchbook rests on my knee, opened at the page with the partially completed drawing of my sister. My pen lies dormant in my hand. The train is no longer a place to draw, but has resumed its usual function of transporting me to my destination. The view out the window is just a view and not a landscape. Eleanor, sitting opposite me, looks as familiar as ever, and is no longer a configuration of lines and angles. Exchanging a few words of conversation, we are present for each other in our usual way. Now that I am not drawing, it is not I who consciously withdraw from the potentially curious looks of the other passengers, and I now notice how some of them have retreated into their own worlds within their books, newspapers and daydreams. My fellow travellers are no longer possible drawing subjects, nor are they potential companions who might draw with me. While I was drawing, I was in a different kind of relationship to my surroundings, my sister, and the others on the train. And so there seem to be three kinds of relations which are altered in the experience of drawing from observation: first, my relation to the world; second, my relation to who or what is the subject of my drawing; and third, my relation to others who are in my immediate surroundings, whether I am withdrawing from them or drawing with them. How do our relations to the world and to others change when we draw?

Drawn into the world

Peering out the train window, I look at the landscape, but do not really see it. I have an impression of green hills, and a wide expanse of sky. Yet the hills roll by my gaze, their particular contours unnoticed. This view is a background for my thoughts; it is not the subject of my attention. My gaze is that of one who thinks or daydreams: my eyes wander dreamily across fields, over hills, far into the distance and back again, all in a few moments.

Suddenly realizing that my gaze is without focus or purpose, I recall what a student told me about why she likes to draw: she enjoys looking at things closely, and drawing, she says, extends that enjoyment by adding discipline to it, forcing her to really study something rather than half seeing it in a day dreamy haze. Yes, I think, looking out the train window, if I were to draw this view (even in motion), I would begin to "see," giving myself to this landscape, following its lines with my pen, studying what now escapes my dreamy gaze. It is often said that learning to draw is a question of learning to *see* (Berger, 1969, p. 23; Edwards, 1979, pp. 2, 4, 78; Nicolaïdes, 1941, p. 5). Yet, is it not the experience of drawing what we see in the world

around us that teaches us to see and disciplines our looking? "The gift of the visible," says Merleau-Ponty, "is earned by exercise; it is not in a few months, or in solitude, that a painter comes into full possession of his vision... his vision in any event learns only by seeing" (1964, p.165). It takes time to learn to see. And it is not in solitude that an artist earns this "gift," but *in relation* to what is seen, and in relation to others. When we say that an artist is "gifted," are we saying that she has a gift for making her way of seeing visible? How do we see the world through eyes that draw? And how does this seeing differ from our usual manner of seeing?

To forget the name of what one sees

When we stopped at the railway station a little while ago, I looked at the signs, I looked at the people. How did my looking there differ from seeing my sister while I was drawing her a few minutes earlier? When I looked at the people in the train station, I identified women, men, children, elderly people, workers and business people. But, I did not study the details and proportions of faces, bodies, postures, and gestures which distinguish one individual from another. Instead I looked, and saw "travellers," coming and going. In the commotion, my glance was pulled momentarily here and there, to a child playing, a greeting, a farewell, a last minute run for a train. I gave the people, activities, and things I saw only enough attention to identify them. I looked at the sign momentarily, just long enough to decipher the place name. To do this I overlooked the colour, style, and size of print, just as I usually overlook the details of Eleanor's face as they appear on this particular day. I can instantly identify my sister in a crowded room, just as I can read the name on a train station sign. This "rapid glance of pattern recognition" (Hughes, 1990, p. 12) names and identifies. It is, of course, very useful; in fact, it it is essential for survival. Yet it can sometimes leave us feeling empty, as if we had not been present. John Fowles describes his experience of identifying, but not seeing a rare orchid:

> I came to my first Military Orchid, a species I had long wanted to encounter, but hitherto never seen outside a book. I fell on my knees before it in a way that all botanists will know. I identified to be quite certain, with professors Clapham, Tutin and Warburg in hand, (the standard British Flora), I measured, I photographed, I worked out where I was on the map, for future reference. I was excited, very happy, one always remembers one's 'first' of the rarer species. Yet five minutes after... I suffered a strange feeling. I realized I had not actually seen the three plants in the little colony we had found. Despite all the identifying, measuring, photographing, I had managed to set the experience in a kind of present past, a having looked, even as I was temporally and physically still looking. (Fowles, in Zurmuehlen, 1986)

How differently I had seen my sister while I was drawing her: she was no longer just the bearer of a name, "traveller," "sister," or even Eleanor, but a face that wordlessly confronted me with

its individuality as if for the first time. If Fowles had taken even just a few minutes to draw the orchid would he have felt that he had seen it? Matisse believed that seeing "is itself a creative operation, requiring an effort" (in Flam, 1973, p. 148). Drawing demands the creative effort of "seeing" things as if we had not seen them before. Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say as if we had not *named* them before. "To see" said Paul Valéry, "is to forget the name of the thing one sees" (in Levin, 1988, p. 65). Conversely, as Fowles' story demonstrates, naming can sometimes prevent one from seeing.

When a pear is not a pear

When Gertrude Stein asked Matisse if while eating a tomato he looked at it the way an artist would, Matisse replied "no, when I eat a tomato I look at it the way anyone else would. But when I paint a tomato, then I see it differently" (Stein, in Edwards, 1979, p.4). What is the difference?

I remember buying pears to make a still-life arrangement for a drawing class. I was the only customer in a small fruit and vegetable shop. "Good morning," the grocer said. "Good morning," I replied, "I'd like a dozen pears—but do you mind if I choose them myself?" "Not at all," the grocer responded politely, although I knew he was restraining himself from his usual practice of selecting and weighing fruit for his customers. Then, as I spent about ten minutes choosing pears, I could feel the grocer's perplexed and questioning look. "Why is she taking so long," he might have thought, "it's just a matter of choosing between Bosc and Bartlett, ripe or unripe." To my eyes, however, the pears were no longer Bartlett or Bosc, but a splendid array of yellows, greens and golds, round shapes and long shapes, tumbling over one another.

How to choose? I want twelve pears to draw, twelve pears to draw my students' attention. I pick up one pear after another, hold it momentarily, feel its particular weight, shape and texture in the palm of my hand, then turn it over, studying its colours and contours. This one? Yes, I'll take this one with its stem turned to one side and the bulge on the other side that makes it look as if it is shrugging its shoulders. That one as well: speckled and yellow here, still green there. And so it goes for another ten pears.

Buying pears to eat is quite different: "I'd like a dozen pears please—yes Bartlett, four of them to eat in two days and the rest for the weekend." There is no need to choose them myself, to hold them one by one in my hand to see their individual colours and shapes. When I buy pears to eat, I look at them as a grocer would: that is why I leave it to the grocer to select the fruit.

An "artist's eye" isn't necessary when looking for pears to eat; it's a matter of a dozen Bartletts, four of them almost ripe.

Edwards would explain the difference between seeing a pear to eat and seeing a pear to draw in terms of the difference between a verbal, analytic mode of seeing and a non-verbal, spatial and relational mode of seeing, attributing these different ways of seeing to the two hemispheres of the brain (1979, pp. 46, 48). Although Edwards' theory may provide a scientific explanation of how the brain functions while drawing, it fails to describe how we *experience* the difference between pears to eat and pears to draw. When we draw, we don't feel our attention shifting from one part of our brain to another! Instead, it is the pears that look different, inviting us to wonder about them. Perhaps this involves a "cognitive shift" (Edwards, 1979, p. 55) but what we experience is a shift in *the appearance of things*.

The appearance of lettuces is not unlike that of pears. We may have looked at hundreds of lettuces, but, as Franck points out,

> start to draw one and you realize the anomaly of having lived with lettuces all your life but never having seen one, never having seen the semi-transparent leaves curling in their own lettuce way, never having noticed what makes a lettuce a lettuce rather than a curly kale. (1973, pp. 26-27)

A woman attending a drawing workshop for the first time remarked, "I have grown geraniums for thirty years, but, believe it or not, I never knew what a geranium looked like, how it was made, until I drew one today" (in Franck, 1973, pp. xviii-xix). When we draw things we may find ourselves, like this woman, understanding what we are drawing in a new way. That seeing is more than simply visual is implied in our everyday usage of the word. "Seeing" has connotations of knowledge as well as sight. For example, we say "I see" when we understand something, and the word "insight" suggests a mode of knowing in which one sees into the nature of things. The link between sight and knowledge can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, who had related words for seeing and knowing: *idein*, meaning to see (from which the words idea and wit are derived) is related to *oida*, meaning to know.[25] Furthermore, "seeing" like this defines a different experiential relation with the things of our world. This is a "seeing" relation, but also a "knowing" relation.

When seeing is not seeing

Although we must give attention to our subject as a whole, the attentive seeing that is involved in drawing from observation is not a matter of seeing it all, but of seeing the unique qualities and

characteristics that make a subject what it is, whether our subject is a geranium, lettuce, pear or person. Drawing my sister, I do not draw everything I can see; instead, as I look at her, I search for the lines, shapes, angles, and relations among these which are most characteristic of her face. While drawing, the process of overlooking unnecessary details that we experience in everyday looking becomes conscious. Drawing from a complex scene becomes "the art of leaving out" (Franck, 1973, p. 37; 1989, p. 66). A woman who has recently started drawing, describes how she discovered this while drawing a landscape:

> Initially I attempted to duplicate what I was seeing. I tried to put everything I could see into my drawing. I quickly got frustrated, and then I realized that I had to eliminate some of this. So out came the eraser! There is too much detail in nature! Including everything would only clutter my drawing. For instance, with the mountains, I selected just certain mountain peaks. There were probably eight to ten mountain peaks that you could see in the particular view: too many of them! So I chose the ones I wanted, and positioned them the way I wanted. I eliminated all the others that were either outcroppings or independent peaks further back, so that I wouldn't have all that detail. I ended up with just three mountains, but the drawing looked fairly true to nature.

Perhaps this drawing looks "true to nature" because the view that it shows is—in contrast to a photograph—closer to the "edited" version we see with our eyes. While drawing, what we choose to overlook and leave out may be as significant as what we include. In this way, the seeing that is involved in drawing necessitates what a novelist calls "not seeing what's there" (Hollingshead, in Foran, 1995, p. 71).

Drawing order out of clutter and chatter

When we choose to "not see" all the detail of the face or scene before us, we engage in a process of finding order in the clutter of the world. We discover order "out there" as we create order here on the paper.

> Whenever you draw, like it or not, you make choices, you create some kind of order out of chaos, whether you draw a clump of trees or a messy table full of plates, knives, bowls, glasses, fishbones. You start to draw and willy nilly you see order emerge. (Franck, 1989, p. 119)

While drawing reveals order in the external clutter of the world, it also brings quiet harmony to the internal clutter of a constantly chattering mind. As the world becomes uncluttered, so do

we. Drawing is a way "to gag the commentator, to hush the noise of useless interior babble that keeps [us] from seeing" (Dillard, 1974, p. 32). While drawing from observation, the attention that we give to our subject is so complete that many of the thoughts and concerns which usually preoccupy us seem to disappear. An artist told me about how the "trivial chatter" of his mind disappeared while he was engaged in a landscape drawing. If that's not there, I asked, what's happening? He replied: "Hmm. . . " while making a long, even humming sound, and continued, saying,

> Usually my mind is busy with trivial things, like a monologue that's continually playing itself out. And it really doesn't have much to do with anything. It's just chatter. You know, what I have to do today, and what I did yesterday, why I'm angry with my employer, and so on. That all goes away, and it's replaced with just a hum. The only sort of mental things that come up are: What shape or value? How long? Compare this to that. How dark? How light? Big or small? But even this is not constant. It's just a peaceful state.

Gail also refers to humming, when she describes how she felt while drawing a big bunch of sunflowers from her garden:

> It was a Sunday evening in the autumn. I had been on a walk, a *very* long walk; I mean probably ten miles. And when I came home I felt very tired, but also quite loose, relaxed. As I came into the living room, I saw the bouquet of sunflowers that I had placed there earlier in the day. These were sunflowers that I had grown, that I had picked, very big, and very beautiful. I had left a huge amount of stem on them, probably two or three feet, so this was a massive bouquet. They are one of my favorite flowers; looking at them, I had a warm feeling about them. I said to a friend that was with me, "you know, I feel like I'd like to put this down on paper. So I'm going to do this right now."
>
> And as the drawing progressed I *felt* different about it than I had about previous drawings: that's the thing. While I was drawing it was like I was humming. Just a real "hmm . . . ." Harmonious kind of thing. A warm feeling. Was there a certain resonance, between the picture, the flowers, and myself? I haven't tried to put it into words before but that's how it was going.

What does it mean to hum? Whereas the quality of chatter is random, jarring, and dissonant, humming is not the absence of sound, but harmonious, smooth, ordered sound. It is not uncommon to find ourselves humming when wordlessly absorbed in a task with our hands. When we hum, we feel focused and sometimes hum in order to focus our attention. The peaceful "humming" state that is brought about through concentrated attention on a bunch of flowers, a landscape or a face may account for why some people think of drawing as "relaxing." Edwards supports this conception of drawing by claiming that while engaged in the "artist's mode of seeing" we are "resting " the more verbal, logical capacity of our brain (1979, p. 57). Nevertheless, those who draw extensively are more likely to agree with Franck when he says that "if I want to relax I don't draw, I take a hot bath" (1989, p. 62). Drawing is recreational, however, in the sense that we are re-creating the world and ourselves as we draw.

Seeing relations among things

A sense of order in what we draw is sometimes felt in the perception of relationships among things. "One might say" as Franck does, that drawing "is essentially a matter of making relationships palpable and visible" (Franck, 1989, pp. 78-79). I look at Eleanor, and I see how she sits now, how differently she sits than when we first began our journey. I feel how much more comfortable and relaxed she is. I see how her head is nestled into an uplifted shoulder. I see the shape of the space between her head and her shoulder. I notice how the top edge of her book is parallel to the line of her eyes, how both these lines are at right angles to the arching of her neck and other shoulder. I see all this at a glance, without thinking it through verbally. As I gaze at Eleanor out of the corner of my eye and contemplate drawing her, her appearance dissolves into what Franck calls a "web of internal relationships" (1989, p. 83). While I take this manner of seeing for granted, I wonder if those who do not draw, would ever look at Eleanor, and see the relationship of lines and angles between her eyes, her neck, her shoulders and the edge of her book? Would they notice how that curve of her cheek distinguishes her face from all other faces? To draw Eleanor as she is this evening on the train, I must see the relations of lines and shapes which are unique to her and to her posture at this moment.

Writing about the days and evenings he spent drawing at art school during the second world war Berger recalls how he learned to see analytically and questioningly:

> I learned to question with my eyes the mystery of anatomy and of love, whilst outside in the night sky, I heard the R. A. F. fighters crossing the city to intercept the German bombers before they reached the coast. The ankle of the foot on which her weight was posed was vertically under the dimple of her neck . . . directly vertical. (Berger, 1987, p. 57)

Even the sounds of war could not distract this young art student from the attentive observation involved in the process of drawing the model. Drawing accurately from life is a matter of perceiving the relations between various aspects of our subject, between the model's ankle and a dimple on her neck. It is also a matter of perceiving "negative space"—the shape of space between and around things. Does this way of seeing demystify drawing, as some art teachers might hope, or does it make us more aware of the mystery of what we see? When we do not make this effort to see relations, we may quickly lose sight of the subject as a whole and consequently lose our grasp of proportions. An art student comments on a drawing he made from a model:

> I drew this figure from the bottom up, beginning with the feet and ankles. What narrow ankles he had! As I was drawing, I was thinking, "narrow, thin" but boy, did I ever make them narrow! I don't think he could even walk with ankles like that! Then I drew his calves. I saw the negative space between them and I drew that. And these two legs belong there, above the ankles. But, where are they in relation to everything else? You see, the hips don't quite belong: when I moved upwards I had no consideration for where the rest of the figure was, or for the page as a whole. I did not compose. As soon as I stepped back and looked at it as a whole, I could see right away that it didn't work. You see his arms are totally out of proportion. I've noticed when I don't observe, my scale goes way off. It's just individual lines, tacked together.

How do we see and draw the relations between the various aspects of the person before us? In order to see relations, we sometimes do what one woman calls "peeking through a pinch" made by our fingers to "measure" one part of our subject in relation to another. Alternatively, we may hold a pencil vertically or horizontally in an outstretched arm to see the angle of an edge more clearly. In these ways, we seem to physically feel the relations and proportions which distinguish this body, face, or pear. Franck describes a more strictly visual process of what goes on as he draws from a model:

> How do these shoulders relate to one another? Which one is higher, which one lower? When scribbling the model's arm I begin to realize that I am not so much drawing a thing-called-arm, but that what I am perceiving and following is the veritable web of relationships: of shoulder to elbow to wrist to hand, and of the hand to the crest of the hip on which it rests. There is more that I discover: the relationship of arm to ribcage, to spine. . . .

> In short I become aware of how every line, or dot that appears on the paper is related to every other line or dot, that both that body and my scribble are not "things" but fully alive webs of relatedness. (1989, p. 83)

Again, my eyes rest on my sister opposite me. Now with my pen, I begin a second drawing, following the edge of her head nestled into an uplifted shoulder. As I do so, more intricate relationships of lines, shapes and spaces become visible. In this careful, analytical seeing, I feel somewhat removed, "withdrawn" from Eleanor, and simultaneously, drawn into a more intimate proximity.

The ordinary becomes extraordinary

> Drawing is the discipline by which I constantly rediscover the world.
>
> I have learned that what I have not drawn I have never really seen, and that when I start drawing an ordinary thing I realize how extraordinary it is, sheer miracle: the branching of a tree, the structure of a dandelion's seed puff. (Franck, 1973, p. 6)

A woman reading on an evening train is an ordinary sight, but now that I have started to draw my sister, it becomes a fascinating sight: look how her posture shows—even without noticing her book—that she is reading; look at how her face is now relaxed, unguarded, revealing tensions and fatigue that were hidden during the day. She is only inches away, yet so far away.

Similarly, a suburban house is an ordinary sight. There may seem to be little about it that would distinguish it from neighbouring houses: it may be built of the same materials, with the same design, the same configuration of manicured lawn and driveway. Nothing about such a house would seem to make it stand out: it lacks character, it is not picturesque. How could it possibly attract our attention? Nigel once thought of drawing his own suburban house:

> I can see a scene that is attractive to look at, but when I start considering how it is going to look on a sheet of paper, everything kind of changes. When I looked at my house with a paper and pencil, I couldn't see anything that I wanted draw. It was too bland.

It is easy to see how Nigel found little to hold his interest when faced with a suburban house, paper and pencil in hand. We can understand how he took his sketchbook to an older part of the city offering views of back lanes with uneven fences, unmatching houses, a variety of textures, and light filtered through old trees. But what might he have seen had he stayed at home and

looked more closely? An art student made a drawing of the suburban house in which she grew up.

> I began with an old snapshot from the seventies of the house I grew up in. In the snapshot, there is our house on a summer afternoon, with the lawn and the driveway and some of my family standing around. I made a large drawing, and later a painting based on that photo. It was quite realistic; I was just trying to make an honest rendering of the house. And I was amazed at how people responded to it. People were going up to it and saying "Oh, my goodness this is suburban Ontario" or "it's just like the house I lived in." And I don't think any of my classmates had ever thought about how much impact a picture of something that we're so used to looking at—something you walk home to everyday—how much impact that could have. It wasn't the most beautiful house in the neighborhood, that kind of thing—something that hobby painters might go for. It was just a little bungalow. I like to take things like that as a source for my work: something that I can relate to.

While Nigel was attracted to less familiar, but picturesque scenes, this student was drawn to the familiar ordinariness of her house, and in drawing it, she seems to have seen it afresh. It is her home, perhaps more so after drawing and painting it, a house shaped by her family's living in it in such a way that it is, in fact, quite different from neighbouring houses. At the same time, it is "the suburban house" recognizable to her classmates. She has drawn something she "can relate to" and in doing so, has renewed her relation to her house, to her classmates, and, possibly, to other suburban houses. Our relation to what we draw makes both the experience of drawing and the drawing itself interesting and meaningful. This may not be readily apparent to those who engage in drawing as a hobby. The art student mentions that her house "wasn't the most beautiful house in the neighborhood, that kind of thing—something that hobby painters might go for." Here is a significant difference in the experience of hobbyists and those who engage in drawing with a more committed attitude. To be committed to a practice, one must be willing to undergo effort and discomfort. It requires effort to see the ordinary and familiar as if for the first time, and while the experience may be uncomfortable and disquieting, it is also deeply rewarding. Hobbyists tend to stop at the edge of real difficulty, preferring instead the recreational pursuit of the picturesque. Avoiding effort and discomfort, they miss out on the deeper meaning of re-creation as the transformation and rediscovery of the ordinary.

The world looks back at us, inviting us to wonder

Earlier today, I sat in a park and drew a building nearby, an old stone building. Only after I had been drawing for some time, did I notice the gargoyles that perched playfully beneath the roof and peered round the corners. If I had not drawn that building, would I have ever seen those gargoyles? Once I noticed the gargoyles, I began to draw them. The more I drew, the more I saw in their strange stone faces. They seemed to come to life. Isn't it peculiar I thought, people walk by here every day and many of them may never notice those wonderful gargoyles. If I lived in this city and walked by this building every day, I could not help but see those gargoyles, now that I have drawn them. It would be impossible for me, now, to walk by here without feeling those faces wink and grimace at me. By seeing with the attentiveness necessary for drawing, we seem to bring things to life. We become aware of a living quality in apparently inanimate things, a subjective life of things, which we may experience as things looking back at us. Klee says, that while in a forest, "I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me" (in Merleau-Ponty, 1961, p. 167). Kandinsky describes how things look back at him:

> Everything "dead" trembled. Not only the stars, moon, woods, flowers of which the poets sing, but also the cigarette butt in the ashtray, a patient white trouser button looking up from a puddle in the street, a submissive bit of bark that an ant drags through the high grass in its strong jaws to uncertain but important destinations, a page of a calendar toward which the conscious hand reaches to tear it forcibly from the warm companionship of the remaining block of pages—everything shows me its face, its innermost being; its secret soul, which is more often silent than heard. (1964, pp. 23-24)

Here, Kandinsky suggests that drawing fosters a way of seeing which is receptive and respectful, inviting things to confide their secret subjectivity. Rodin described the artist as "the confidant of nature. Flowers carry on dialogues with him through the graceful bending of their stems and the harmoniously tinted nuances of their blossoms. Every flower has a cordial word which nature directs towards him" (in Edwards, 1979, p. 5). By giving attention, we are receptive to things.[26] It is as if we "listen" with our eyes, becoming aware of the silent speaking of things.[27] Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo about his perceptions of the aliveness and vulnerability of things:

> In all nature I see expression and soul as it were. A row of pollarded willows sometimes resembles a procession of almshouse men. Young corn has something inexpressibly pure and tender about it which awakens the same emotion as the expression of a sleeping baby. The trodden grass at the roadside looks tired and dusty like the people of the slums. A few days ago, when it had been raining, I saw a group of white cabbages, standing frozen and benumbed, that reminded

> me of a group of women in their thin petticoats and old shawls which I had noticed early in the morning standing near a coffee stall. (Van Gogh, 1973, p. 197)

After drawing, we may find ourselves looking at the world with new eyes. "When. . . I see, suddenly I am all eyes" (Franck, 1973, p. 6). Or we may find that even when we are not actually drawing, we go on seeing the world as if we were drawing. Like Klee, Kandinsky, Rodin, or Van Gogh, we may find that things seem to look back at us, as if "seeing" them enables them to reciprocate our gaze. While driving home from a drawing class a woman found that she was so "involved" with what she was seeing, that she actually had difficulty driving. Another woman, whose husband is a painter does not like her husband to drive at night, worrying that he will be so fascinated by the sparkling coloured lights of the city that he will not see the road. Not only might such "seeing" be dangerous, but it overwhelms us at unexpected times. Truitt describes how, one morning, "steaming coffee mug in hand, facing across the pale sand into the rising sun," she found herself thinking of "what to do with the sunrise," and then asked herself, "Why. . . do I always feel compelled to turn everything into something else? A tiresome habit of my mind, I sometimes think" (Truitt, 1984, p. 132). Seeing the world in terms of potential works of art can be experienced as "tiresome" because the intensity of seeing in this way is tiring. Kandinsky writes about how he feels he is constantly working:

> Entirely without consciousness I steadily absorb impressions, sometimes so intensively and incessantly that I feel as if my chest were cramped and my breathing difficult. I became so overtired and overstuffed that I often thought with envy of clerks who were permitted and able to relax completely after their day's work. I longed for dull-witted rest. . . I had however, to see without pause. (1964, p. 33)

There are occasions however, when "seeing without pause" is neither tiresome nor tiring, but pleasantly surprising. Suddenly we are seeing the world anew; how marvelous it is! Lord tells of two occasions, when, walking with Giacometti between the studio and a café, a familiar route to them both, Giacometti was suddenly struck by the appearance of the trees. On one occasion he remarked "Everything looks different today. Everything is more beautiful," and when they arrived at the café, Giacometti stopped and gazed at the trees: "'I've never seen them like that before. . . . I've never seen the trees like that before'" (1980, p. 76). On another day, in the same place, Lord tells how Giacometti paused on his way out of the café, and looked down the Paris street, "where the leaves of the acacia trees were fluttering in the sun."

> 'It's beautiful,' he said, nodding. Then he murmured, 'One should be a tree.' For another five minutes, at least, we stood there, while he gazed down the long

> vista of trees, nodding his head slightly, seeming physically to absorb the scene. (1980, p. 58)

Drawn to others

The invitation of the other: Being drawn to draw

I would like to continue to draw my sister as she sits there opposite me on the train. Draw my sister—isn't it interesting how we are more likely to say "I would like to draw my sister" than "I would like to make a drawing of my sister"? What does it mean to draw someone? What would I mean if I said "I would like to make a drawing *of* my sister"? That seems to suggest that I would like to make an object, a finished work, a portrait perhaps, something to keep. "A drawing of my sister" separates the drawing from my sister: here is the drawing and there is my sister. The drawing would be a representation of my sister. But no, I do not want to make a representation of my sister, a picture of her. After all, I've already done that earlier today. I took a picture of her with my camera in a park. When the film is processed and printed, I will have a picture of Eleanor, something to keep.

So if I don't want another picture of my sister, what do I mean when I say "I would like to draw my sister?" This seems much more personal and direct than the thought of making a drawing of my sister. Could this have something to do with the structure of each phrase? In the phrase "to make a drawing of my sister," *drawing* is a noun, the object, and *of my sister* describes the drawing rather than its making. The phrase "to draw my sister" is quite different: here *draw* is an action, a verb, rather than a thing and *my sister* is the object of my drawing activity. To draw my sister, it seems, is to do something to her. No wonder I hesitate! Is it that I hesitate to make Eleanor the object of my drawing? Am I held back by a concern that I would objectify her? To draw her, do I see her in the same manner in which I would see the interior of the train if I were to draw it? Is she not the subject of my drawing?

As I look out of the window, wondering whether Eleanor will be the subject or object of my drawing, I notice that she seems absorbed again in her book. I breathe a quiet sigh of relief: I will be able to continue drawing freely, knowing that she is unaware of being drawn. Like the phrase "to draw my sister," "being drawn" suggests that to draw my sister is to do something to her. Yet, hasn't her presence already done something to me? Hasn't her being there, sitting opposite me, invited me to draw her? Am I "drawn," in the original sense of the word as "pulled" (Skeat, 1958, p. 182), by what I see to draw it? When she is at home, far away in another country, it doesn't even occur to me to draw Eleanor. Here, her visible presence, her

appearance before me has drawn me, pulled me to pick up my pen and sketchbook. In this sense she is the agent or subject of my drawing. It is she who draws me, and holds my attention.

How are we drawn to draw? "Sometimes," a painter told me,

> there is something about a person that strikes you, and you feel that you just have to draw that person. That happened to me once with a woman who had bought some of my work: she had this incredible face! So, finally I said to her, "You know, I have to draw your face! "

In a letter written in the early 1880's, Van Gogh describes his relationships to both his audience and his subjects: he wants to reach out and touch others by drawing what has touched him. He confides in his brother Theo:

> I want to make drawings that *touch* people. . . . I want to reach so far that people will say of my work: He feels deeply, he feels tenderly—notwithstanding my so-called roughness, perhaps even because of it. . . . This is my ambition, which is founded less on anger than on love, founded more on serenity than on passion. . . . In the poorest huts, in the dirtiest corner, I see drawings and pictures. And with irresistible force my mind is drawn towards these things. (1973, p. 158)

Another artist describes how he was moved to draw in a restaurant:

> At a nearby table I saw a father holding his baby. The tenderness with which he held his child—just—it touched me. And I thought, "this would be a nice drawing," so I took out my pen and paper and drew—quickly, before they moved, and it worked out.

Interestingly, these artists describe their relations with what or who they draw in terms of touch rather than sight. And yet, how else could we describe the often intimate contact between artist and subject? David Levin points out that the word "behold" has its roots in "being held," that vision is intimately connected with touch: "To behold is to be held by what one sees" (1988, p. 257). It is often when someone or something catches our eye, and holds our attention that we take pencil or pen in hand to draw. A sculptor told me about a drawing he made on a train,

> I saw a man reading, through the window, on another train, while the train I was on stopped at a station. I saw him very briefly—just a few moments really—and I was quite taken by his pose. You see, he had been reading his

> newspaper, holding it open in front of him; he fell asleep, and fell right into the newspaper! His legs were still crossed, his hands were still clutching the edges of the paper, but his whole upper body was leaning forward into the newspaper and was completely obscured by it. I had a drawing book and a pen in my pocket, so I took it out and spent the rest of the journey making this drawing.

The sculptor was "taken" by the pose; it caught his eye. "The eye" says Merleau-Ponty, "is *that which* has been moved by some impact of the world, which it then restores to the visible through the offices of an agile hand" (1964, p. 165). We could also say that the eye is that which has been touched by the world. The eye is held by what it beholds. The sculptor was touched by the sight of a man asleep on the train, and moved to pick up a pen, moved to show what he had seen. It is in order to be moved, that people who draw tend to live with eyes open, always on the look out for a sight which might become a sight to draw. This is not the "predatory" eye of an aggressive snapshot photographer hunting for "a good shot" (Sontag, 1977, pp. 14, 64, 123), but an eye that is open and receptive, an eye which is willing to let itself to be caught by the world, and drawn into it. "The painter," says Klee, "must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it" (in Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 167). To be penetrated by things, to feel the pull of things to the point where we are moved to draw, our eyes must be more than just physically open. Is this what it is to draw: to be touched, to feel deeply and tenderly, to reach out to others with drawings that acknowledge the pull that things have on us? The "other" that we draw is not necessarily a person. What moves us to draw may be anyone or anything, any aspect of the world.

Capturing a likeness, uncovering a likeness

"I like to draw in restaurants," Matthew told me:

> There is one I liked to go to quite often with my sketchbook. I'd order a coffee, and after a while, when I thought my presence was as taken-for granted as the homely, old-fashioned furniture, I would open my sketchbook and begin to draw people in the restaurant. There was a woman, who, like me, was a "regular" there. For a small fee she read customers' tea leaves. I was fascinated by her. I sensed she enjoyed reading people's tea leaves as much as they liked having it done. It seemed to me that she was a little lonely, and in this occupation she was making an effort to reach out to people. She was neither beautiful nor

young, but there was a certain charm, an aura of mystery about her. Maybe she really could read tea leaves, who knows? Anyway, I drew her several times. That is, I tried to draw her. Whenever I began to draw her, she would either change her posture, do something, or get up and move away from where she had been sitting, making it impossible for me to complete a drawing. It was as if she knew I was drawing her.

Then, one day, there she was, just a couple of booths away, facing me, reading a customer's tea leaves. She was particularly involved in this reading, staring into the customer's tea cup with an air of great seriousness, speaking in a hushed voice. She appeared to be so engrossed in the reading that she would not notice me drawing. Very carefully, almost stealthily, I opened my sketchbook, a small hard cover book, that I balanced, unobtrusively I thought, against the edge of the table. I began drawing her, and this time she did not cover up as she usually did. Within a few minutes I had a decent drawing: it looked like her. It *was* her. I captured her. Almost as soon as I finished my drawing, she finished her reading and got up from the table where she had been sitting. As she walked by my table, she looked at me. A direct look, penetrating and severe. As our eyes met, I knew—although neither she nor I said a word—that she knew I had been drawing her. And, she did not approve. It was as if I had taken something very personal from her without her permission. She seemed upset about my drawing, but there was nothing she could do about it. I felt victorious, yet vaguely guilty, as I left the restaurant that day, with my sketchbook stowed safely into my packsack, the tea leaf reader permanently inscribed on one of its pages.

Is there, between the artist and the tea leaf reader, a mutual and tacit understanding of each other's activities? The artist gazes at people's faces, bodies, gestures; the tea leaf reader gazes at the tea leaves left in people's cups. Both are sensitive observers of human character. Each in their own way has learned to decipher the subtle shades of meaning that inhere in the forms of things, in appearances, in patterns. Thus, Merleau-Ponty appropriately describes the painter's vision as characterized by "clairvoyance" (1964, pp. 166, 171) and "occult operations" (1964, p. 169).

In Lord's account of having his portrait painted by Giacometti, he tells how, at one point, Giacometti exclaimed, "I've got you. . . You can't escape me now" (1980, p. 73). We often say of a

drawing or a painting that bears a good likeness to the subject, that it "captures" him or her. In what sense does drawing "capture"? We do not, in fact, usually say that a drawing captures an "appearance" but that it captures this particular person, or a certain look or mood. For instance, when Matthew described his long awaited success in drawing the tea leaf reader, he said "it looked like her" and then continued emphatically, "it *was* her. I captured her." It seems that what a drawing captures is internal and intangible. Some aboriginal people refuse to have their pictures taken because they think that it might take something of their soul. Can a drawing "take" or "capture" the spirit of a person? Does drawing sometimes constitute a relation of appropriation? When Matthew "caught" the tea leaf reader in his sketchbook, it seems that he, like another gypsy, stole something from her while she wasn't looking. Perhaps this, more than self-consciousness about our drawing ability, is why we sometimes feel we must be cautious and clandestine in drawing people without their permission. There a certain "clairvoyance" at work in "capturing a likeness": the artist's "clairvoyance" sees appearances, and sees through them, or rather *in* them, the unique qualities of character, of spirit that makes this person who he or she is.

In the midst of drawing my sister on the train, I glance momentarily at the page and think, "yes, this is Eleanor's face, gradually taking shape on the paper, this is my sister." Then as I look at my drawing again, I am taken aback by how old I have made Eleanor look; not just older, but surprisingly different from the sister I thought I knew. Yet this drawing has an uncanny likeness about it. This is not a likeness to the face she usually wears. Rather the drawing shows a likeness to a face hidden from public view. This resemblance is disquieting—and intriguing. To see someone with "clairvoyance" is to see through the façade and draw out something of the interior, to show what is usually unseen, to expose "the raw truth about it" (Auerbach, in Hughes, 1990, p. 19). "One learns to look behind the façade," writes Klee, "to grasp the root of things. One learns to recognize the undercurrents, the antecedents of the visible. One learns to dig down, to uncover" (in Goldwater & Treves, 1947, p. 444). In this drawing of my sister, I have not so much captured a likeness, but uncovered a likeness.

The seeing that sees through and sees into what I am drawing is more than an optical vision. Yet the insight that I gain while drawing happens through my eyes. How is it that in the midst of faithfully rendering what my eyes see, I find myself "seeing" more than what I merely see with my eyes? As my eyes scrutinize my sister's face, I suddenly "see" her: I see her face with my eyes and my seeing sees through the face she shows to the world. How does this happen? Why should it be so surprising that my gaze slides into "seeing" in spite of my effort to

maintain a cool, dispassionate gaze, calculating angles, mentally measuring this width against that length? Attending to the subject of my drawing seems to alter my relations with the one I draw. I may feel distant, as if I have temporarily suspended relations while measuring proportions and assessing angles and tones. At the same time, I may feel surprisingly close to my subject. Our relationship seems to be intensified by being temporarily suspended.

Now in the midst of drawing Eleanor's face I suddenly find myself blushing. I cannot help but feel that my pen, as it touches the page, also touches my sister's face, caressing here, poking there. My pen moves slowly, tenderly on the paper. "Is this you?" it seems to ask. We are not talking, and although I am looking intently at Eleanor, we are not looking at each other. Yet, I feel closer to my sister now than I have all day. In this silent conversation conducted between my eye, my hand and her face, between my pen and paper, I see her, I meet her.

Sometimes while drawing a person, whether they are a stranger, or someone who is already dear to us, we can feel suddenly overwhelmed by feeling for them. It is at this point that we know we have begun to "see." Franck describes a cardinal at the Vatican Council:

> I often drew Cardinal Ottaviani. He fascinated me. I saw him as a Grand Inquisitor. He was no Apollo. He was old and half blind. One eye was glassy, the other drooped. He had a confusing multiplicity of chins.
>
> As I continued drawing him I began to see him differently. Where I had only seen arrogant rigidity and decrepitude, I saw the human being—until I realized I was seeing him with a kind of love. (Franck, 1973, p. 104)

Just as a stranger's face can become familiar and lovable by drawing it, a familiar face is rendered mysterious and unfathomable. In drawing his wife, Claske, Franck discovers how her face suddenly draws him.

> She takes splendid, natural poses after thirty years of being my favorite model among the hundreds of young, old, white, black, yellow men and women I have drawn. . . .
>
> I have drawn Claske thousands of times through the years. Did it become boring? On the contrary: each drawing brought me closer to her once-occurring way of being human. Each time I drew her face there were still unexplored, unfathomable depths. The Mystery deepens with the seeing. (Franck, 1989, p. 111)

While I was drawing my sister, while Franck was drawing the cardinal and Claske, while Matthew was drawing the tea leaf reader, we studied the appearance of our subjects' faces. We studied them intently, closely: the proportions of the features, the bone structure, the colour and

texture of the skin. We searched for the visible details that made each of these faces unique. Looking closely at the visible features of a face, suddenly the person becomes visible. This view can take us by surprise. It can evoke compassion, pity, tenderness, repulsion, and countless other responses. Looking for what makes something or someone appear as they do necessitates a gaze which is so attentive to the visual details of lines, shapes and spaces that it sees—not so much through appearances—but sees *within* appearances what usually hides. In this way, the artist's vision is "clairvoyant." The personal qualities and moods that we generally think of as being invisible, intangible, become plainly visible when we begin to see attentively, when we draw. According to Merleau-Ponty, painting "gives visible existence to what profane vision believes to be invisible" (1964, p. 166). The same could be said of drawing.

Attending to the other: Seeing oneself

In the process of drawing my sister, I sometimes saw others in her face: her daughter, our father, a cousin, an aunt. And then, for a split second, while drawing around her chin, and again drawing the arching of her brow, I caught a glimpse of myself. This is an obvious way in which I may see myself in the process of drawing another. It is also possible that this drawing I am making of my sister may turn out to look more like me than her. However, a more uncanny, and yet more common experience is to see oneself emerge in one's drawing of someone or something completely other. Immersed in the process of drawing, "you can only draw as the person you happen to be. . . . this absolute contact with that 'not-I' you draw seems to bring you face to face with who, or what you really are" (Franck, 1989, pp. 27, 21). For example, while drawing her sunflowers, Gail was surprised to find that although she focused on the bouquet, she could see herself in the drawing:

> But, what was new to me was that I did not draw it leaf by leaf. I was doing something else, which was very spontaneous, and very, as I said, fluid. It was just like it's pouring out of me, and yet I was actually drawing that thing out there. And I really was. I was really focused on it. It was nothing mystical, you know. To be honest with you I was hardly even looking at it, at the drawing, at the paper. I was looking at the flowers. I think that is the greatest pleasure to me: I am learning to draw what it is that's in front of me, rather than out of my imagination. And it looked like something. It looked – really very good. What was interesting about it was that there was no copycat anything in it. It was like this has never happened before this picture. And it has as much to do with me as the picture. There was something about me in the drawing that hadn't

> appeared before. Like I can look at that now and say, "I drew that, and I know darn well nobody else did." It was an expression of me that was me. The most I have seen of myself in any of my drawings so far.

An art student describes his experience of drawing a model:

> I learned a lot from these drawings. Especially looking at the model. Because I was very concentrated in my looking. Looking instead of—imagining things. By looking at something, by describing what's there, just putting it on the paper, I think the drawing is much fresher, much truer to what's there. When I am drawing I forget myself sometimes. Just forget that *I* am drawing, and pay attention to that person or that thing. I am trying to make—make myself one with what I am drawing. Trying to forget about what I am, just trying to feel what that thing is that I am drawing, or who that person is that I am drawing. That way you get the feeling of it. Otherwise you're drawing yourself. Although you are always drawing yourself. You are always putting yourself into your drawings. But that comes from the *way* you draw and from the *way* you see things.

When I do not give my full attention to what I am drawing, I only draw what I already know or imagine. It is as if I don't let go of myself, and in doing so, may feel self-conscious about the emerging drawing. The resulting drawings tend to be stylized and uninteresting. But when I attend fully to the subject of my drawing, I lose myself in that face, body or bouquet in front of me, and my drawings are more interesting and more true to the subject. "You're most likely to get it right," says Auerbach, "when you're least self-conscious, when you have given up any hope of producing an acceptable image—because you're permeated wordlessly by the influence of the thing" (in Hughes, 1990, p. 32). Then, the process is one of discovery, and later, I discover myself in the completed drawing. The drawing may materialize a feeling or aspect of myself which I had previously not seen. I may seem to see more of myself, "something about me in the drawing that hadn't appeared before," as if in the process of drawing this person or these flowers, I have become them, and I have been enriched and enlarged. Or, as if the drawing traces a new relation, revealing a new aspect of myself, a subject that is neither just me, nor just the other: instead the subject is me-and-the-flowers, me-and-my-sister. In such drawings, I "express myself" without trying to do so, more honestly and unselfconsciously, than when I make an effort to be expressive.

Withdrawing from others

When I draw one of the passengers on the train, I am constantly aware that they may not want to be seen, and moreover, that I do not want to be seen looking at them. So I sneak a look at my "model," a quick clandestine glance. I try to hide the fact that through drawing, I have cultivated a relation with some of my fellow travellers. Meanwhile, I have temporarily suspended my usual relation with my sister in order to draw her. Although some of our most interesting subjects are to be found out of doors and in public, to draw them directly from observation, we are always confronted with the possibility of their seeing us drawing, as well as the possibility of passers-by peering over our shoulder. Wherever we draw we feel the presence—or absence—of others. To draw is to be in relation with others, even if this relation is sometimes characterized, on our part, by a certain withdrawal.

Drawing as conversation, with oneself, with another

Drawing is often described as a private art form, and drawings as personal works. For example, while walking around an exhibition of his drawings from the last forty years, Hockney said,

> I looked round and I thought—they're not bad, actually. Not bad. Quite a variety for somebody to look at. But once it was full of people, I didn't care for it. Drawings are so personal, you know. I felt as though an awful lot of strangers had come into my living room. (in Chalmers, 1995, p. 18)

And in an essay entitled "The act of drawing" Ayrton claims that,

> Unlike painting and sculpture it [drawing] is the process by which the artist makes clear to himself, and not to the spectator, what he is doing. It is a soliloquy before it becomes a communication. (1967, p. 64)

To suggest that drawing is a soliloquy, "talking without, or regardless of the presence, of hearers"[28] is to suggest that drawing is making marks without, or regardless of the presence of viewers. It is often in this spirit that artists draw in sketchbooks. "The notebooks of people like Picasso, Rembrandt, Degas are wonderfully personal insights into their ways of seeing and feeling, of inventing and conceiving.... The intention may not have been to make great art, but they are now great art" (Caisserman-Roth, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 71).

While the metaphor of soliloquy appropriately describes the traditional painter's or sculptor's activity of making preparatory drawings and compositional studies, is "soliloquy" an apt description of other experiences of drawing? What about experiences of drawing from observation in which we are absorbed in the study of our subject matter? Franck, like Ayrton,

employs a metaphor of conversation: he describes this manner of drawing as "a very private dialogue between the artist within and some facet of the world around him or her" (1993, p. 116), "the utterly private conversation in which you stand eye to eye with the daffodil, the man, the woman, the elephant you draw" (1989, pp. 27, 28).[29] Cohen recalls how, one day her model perceived such a dialogue in her drawings,

> She came over quietly and looked at my work, which was pinned on the walls. She said, "Your work is so different from most of the work I see. I don't know how to describe it. Maybe I could say it's psychological. It's almost as if you are talking to me. Maybe we're talking to each other!" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 101)

Here, the dialogue that occurs while drawing is, even in a shared studio, essentially a private one, an intimate and silent exchange between artist and model.

The metaphors of soliloquy and private dialogue both suggest conversations which are deeply personal, conversations which require appropriately private situations in which to occur. Although we may prefer to draw in solitude, without potential viewers around, privacy may not be literally a matter of enclosed space, but a space that permits the conversation to go on. For Cohen this is a shared studio; but it may also be a crowded train, or an empty landscape. Just as we can experience a noisy café as an appropriate situation for a private conversation, we can sometimes experience unconventional and public drawing situations as private: even if we are in the presence of people who may see our work, we draw without regard to the presence of others—without looking to them, and without feeling bothered by their looking at us.

To speak of drawing as soliloquy and private dialogue points to a certain intimacy inherent in the activity of drawing which accounts for the usual characterization of drawings as "private" works, and drawing as a private act. While buildings, sculptures, and paintings are intended for public view, drawings are more personal. Kept in sketchbooks, or taped on walls, drawings are usually made for ourselves: they show us what we have seen; like hand-written notes, they are a way to work out ideas, or play with images. "A drawing" writes Berger, "is essentially a private work, related only to the artist's own needs; a 'finished' statue or canvas is essentially a public, *presented* work—related far more directly to the demands of communication" (1979, p. 24). That we usually think of drawing as intimate becomes apparent when we consider some of its traditional purposes and characteristics.

First, the traditional purposes of drawing are twofold: preparation for other works and a means of practice or study; indeed, old master drawings are sometimes called "studies." Since the

Renaissance, drawing has been considered primarily as a preparatory process for painting and sculpture (Rose, 1976, p. 9). When artists draw as practice or as part of preparing for a sculpture or painting, they draw for themselves. Such drawing is purposeful, it is a means to an end: a painting or sculpture, a better drawing ability, an improved understanding of a subject. At the same time, this mode of drawing is an end in itself, something we do for its own sake; a drawing done as practice, as a study or preparation is, as Franck puts it "never a show-off piece; neither is it ever intended to be a public document, and even less a salable 'product,' a piece of merchandise. It has as little ulterior motive as breathing" (1993. p. 118).

Second, the relatively inexpensive and accessible materials of drawing lend themselves to the private pursuits of practicing drawing from observation and working out ideas and compositions. While we can draw on many kinds of surfaces, paper is the surface most commonly used. Although the cost and quality of papers varies widely, it is usually less expensive than the traditional surfaces used for painting, and as such, permits us to take risks, to experiment and to explore more freely and more rapidly than we would on a stretched canvas or a board. At five cents a page, we can allow ourselves to go through fifty sheets of newsprint in the course of a morning. Pencils are almost as ubiquitous as paper, and even more specialized materials such as charcoal, conté, and various kinds of pens are inexpensive and easy to procure.

Third, the "intimate scale" of drawings, which was first determined by the small size of hand made paper, is "a corollary to intimate purpose; that is, drawing being created for the value of the making and an expected audience of one—namely the artist" (Dinham, 1989, p. 323). As such drawing lends itself to the portability of the personal sketchbook which can be tucked under an arm, or put into a pocket, and used for direct studies of people and places.

A fourth characteristic of drawing is personal touch. When we look at an original drawing, we look at the very paper on which the artist's hand has worked; we can see traces of the artist's gestures in lines and other marks. And if the work is exceptionally strong, the feel of the gesture—its passion, energy, sorrow, or joy is still present in the ink, graphite or other material. The "handwriting" in a drawing bears the unmistakable marks of its maker in much the same manner as the handwriting in a hand written letter or diary, or even a quickly scribbled note. Looking at a drawing, we are immediately and literally in touch with the one who made it, whether it was made yesterday or hundreds of years ago. To see a drawing is to see something very personal. I remember the first time I saw old master drawings: the appointed hour, the quiet room, the white cotton gloves we were all required to wear, the curator's seriousness, the methodical manner in which she unlocked cabinets, opened portfolios, unwrapped layers of

protective papers, and then the almost breathless hush as the drawings were placed before us. There before us, Raphael's paper, the marks made by Raphael's hand. How carefully those drawings were passed from one white gloved pair of hands to another.

Although each of the above traditional purposes and characteristics of drawing can be refuted with examples of particular drawings which have been made and exhibited as finished works in their own right, which are large, which lack personal touch, and which are made with costly materials, these larger more public works are to be distinguished from more private, less finished, "working drawings." Most drawings from observation fall into the latter category.

The need for privacy, solitude

As Nicolaïdes reminds us, "there is a vast difference between drawing and making drawings" (1941, p. 2). How do we experience this difference? Duncan reflects on the difference between drawing with a view to making finished works and drawing for himself:

> What was missing from a lot of my earlier drawing, which I did with the intention of making finished works to be shown, was a certain energy, a kind of unleashed energy, energy that I just didn't allow off the leash. And I'm hoping now it's going to be off the leash when I tackle drawing more seriously again. I've already seen it in the little sketches I do; I think they're much less inhibited. I just feel like nobody is going to ever see this sketch, so I can do whatever I want! I start by thinking, "I may never show this to any one. I'm just going to start and see what happens."

What would it mean to draw with an "unleashed energy"? How might this metaphor, created spontaneously in the midst of a conversation about drawing, illuminate our understanding of the intimate nature of drawing, and the way in which we experience the presence of others in various situations of drawing? Drawing "off the leash" conjures up an image of a dog that has rather gleefully escaped its master's hold, and is now running free, spontaneously exploring new territory without inhibitions. To draw "off the leash" is to draw playfully, to take risks. When we draw tightly it is as if we are not willing, or perhaps afraid, to let our hand get away from us. Drawing tightly, we draw as if on a leash, and the drawing itself may look as strained and tense as the leash that binds the energetic dog to the controlling pace of its master.

What or whom do we escape, when we draw with an "unleashed" energy? Our audience in general? A particular teacher, critic, relative, lover or friend? A preconceived notion of a

"good" drawing? Or are we, ourselves, the master who maintains a tight grip on the leash, having internalized our critics and brought all the potential gallery visitors into the studio or our home? If we consider how difficult it can be to draw while even the most well-meaning teacher, encouraging friend, or curious onlooker peers over our shoulder, then how much more difficult it is to draw haunted by our worst critics and a faceless unknown audience who hover around the paper, and inhibit our drawing hand. As Truitt points out, "it is such an act of courage to put pencil to paper" (1984, p. 67) that drawing often necessitates withdrawing from others.

Does drawing require not only that we let go, but that we shut a metaphorical door to others, real or imagined, closing off, preventing access to work that is not yet worked out? Is it also necessary that we quite literally shut the door? Is a private space required for drawing? There is a certain privacy—to be found in a personal sketchbook, a secluded place, a solitary time, a certain mood or atmosphere, a particular attentiveness—which makes the intimacy of drawing possible.

Some artists, art students, and hobbyists express a preference for complete solitude, and others speak of feeling alone, in their own space, while drawing in the presence of others. Does drawing, as a "soliloquy" require solitude? Does drawing, as a "private dialogue" require a private place? Can the very act of drawing set us apart, put us at a distance from others, making us feel solitary, alone, even in the midst of others?

A room of one's own: Solitude as a place

When Virginia Woolf was invited to speak about "women and fiction" rather than offering "a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontes. . . a respectful allusion to George Elliot" she spoke about how, in order for a woman to write fiction, she must not only have money but "a room of her own" (1967, pp. 5, 6). In this way, Woolf called attention to the circumstances which make the creation of works of art possible (1967, p. 38). Just as Woolf advised aspiring writers to find a room of their own, art students are also advised to seek out their own space in which to work. In the words of a university art instructor,

> You can't make art unless you have a place in which to make it. . . . If you don't have a room to yourself (in effect a studio), you must, at a very minimum, have some place that belongs to you alone. (Audette, 1993, p. 36)

Here Anna Audette addresses art students in general, rather than people who plan to take up drawing in particular. In order for *drawing* to take place, is it necessary to have one's own place

for drawing? What is it like to have a studio "of one's own"? Truitt writes, "In my studio I feel at home with myself, peaceful at heart, remote from the world, totally immersed in a process so absorbing as to be its own reward" (1984, p. 129). Peggy describes her studio and her routine,

> I work a six day work week; this is my occupation. I come here every day, whether I feel like it or not. Often my day begins with a cup of tea; I sit here, sipping my tea, staring at that wall full of ink sketches and watercolours. Before I know it, I've put down my tea, and picked up a pen or a brush. When I'm here, I just want to work. Even if I don't feel very creative, I spend the day cutting wood and stretching canvases. Here I am surrounded by my work, my paints, and brushes and pens. There's nothing else to do here. Whereas when I try to draw or paint at home, it's so easy to give up, to go and do the laundry instead.

Peggy's studio seems to contain her, to hold her in one place, her own place. In a dreamy mood, or in the midst of a difficulty, her attention is fixed on her own work, and not drawn out the door by her children, the laundry, or even by the business of being a professional artist. In a deliberate gesture, she has left all this behind for a few hours. She has walked a considerable distance from her home to her studio, and closed the door. She has withdrawn. Here the concerns of the world outside the door cannot pull her away from her work. In order to draw, she has drawn a boundary, as if to say, "inside here, I will work: drawing and painting."

Drawing, draw, drawn, withdrawn: these words have connotations of enclosed space and direction. In everyday parlance, we "draw boundaries," and know when, and where to "draw the line." When we want privacy, we draw the curtains. Our most personal garment, our underwear, is sometimes called "drawers," which we keep enclosed in a chest of drawers, in the privacy of our bedroom. Small children and family pets may not be permitted to enter a formal "drawing-room." If we were to request a "drawing-room" on a train, we would be assigned a private accommodations for a few people.[30] And if we came across a reference to a "drawing-room" in an old novel, we would understand that the writer was referring to a room to which one may retire for rest and privacy, "drawing-room" having been derived from the term "withdrawing room" a room to which ladies withdrew after dinner.[31] A drawbridge is constructed in such a way that it can be drawn up to prevent passage, or access. When we withdraw, we pull away; and when we are drawn, by someone or something, we are pulled towards them. When we want to speak privately with someone, we draw them aside. Finally, reflecting on shells as a mode of inhabiting, Bachelard points to a dialectic of withdrawal and

emergence: "a creature that hides and 'withdraws into its shell,' is preparing a 'way out'" (1958, p. 111). Withdrawing from others allows for the emergence of personally meaningful imagery. Thus, to draw out her images, Peggy finds it necessary to withdraw into the privacy of her own studio.

Peggy is a landscape painter, and the first step of her studio process is to make ink sketches from her own photographs that she has taken in the mountains. Through the act of drawing, she gets access to the feeling of rocks, of water, of trees, and finds herself "transported" back to the site: "I feel like I'm there. Drawing transports me back to a feeling I had when I was there. I'm in my studio, but I am somewhere else. I can see a scene in my mind, vividly." It is only when she feels she is really "there" that she works on her paintings: "the drawing has to inspire me as the original place inspired me, or else I'm just—not there." To paint the landscape, to paint "what it feels like," she has to be in the landscape. Paradoxically, this is only possible in her city studio. Here, she feels as she did while in the mountains: "a very peaceful feeling; when I'm there, I just feel like I'm part of the pulse of the universe, I feel I belong and I feel very calm; it's almost another state of being." If she were not alone, in her own studio, she would not be able to "transport" herself to the site of her works.

Making time to draw: Solitude as a time

If we need solitude to draw, and it is not possible to find a solitary space, a room of our own, we may find instead, a time of our own, a time to be alone with our work, a time to lose track of time. This however, requires more effort, more discipline, than finding solitude by having a room of our own where we can go almost any time. Here, in the space that we share with others, their presence may still be felt, and may pull us away from our work. Diane hopes that she will soon take over a spare bedroom in her house and transform it into a studio. Until then she finds solitude for her work by drawing when no one else is at home.

> We've moved into a new house and I don't really have a space for drawing at the moment. I work on the dining room table. I have a board with some clips to hold the paper, and I prop it up on the dining room table, and try to get away from it and look at it. But it's always close by the kitchen, and all the comings and goings of my family. But now my kids don't come home for lunch anymore so that gives me the whole day; I try to work it in when no one's home. Otherwise there's just too much, too much busy-ness.

Truitt recalls how she found time for drawing and sculpting when her children were small:

> I mostly remember carrying Mary... tucked on my hipbone while I went about my business. When she woke early in the morning, I would give her a bottle, prop her up in her baby carriage so she could look around at the world, and wheel her into my studio, at that time an annex off the kitchen. I would work quietly for an hour or two before the day actually began. (Truitt, 1984, p. 147)

What is visible in this passage is Truitt's dedication. Whether we make time to work in our own studio like Truitt, or find our own time in a shared space, like Diane, we make the effort because we need time. Our determination to work is not only driven by the necessity for practice and the development of technical facility, but also, by an internal necessity; somehow we must find the time to work.

Artists who are raising families and holding jobs learn to use their time more efficiently in order to have time for their work. The times that are available to draw are not always at the hours or for the length of time they would prefer, but they nevertheless make use of the available time. Ivan draws and paints between appointments at his hair salon. In the same way that his space for working in his old shop was squeezed in among the equipment of the salon, he "squeezed in" time to work between appointments. His choice of words conveys the effort:

> At our old shop, my space for drawing and painting was several square feet in the back crammed between the sink and the washer and dryer. But the space isn't too important to me. Obviously light needs to be good so that I can see. The other key thing for me is that I can't have to clean everything up after every time, which is probably because I'm trying to squeeze it in between other things. I have to sort of squeeze in my drawing and painting when I can find some time for it here and there. You know, I'm trying to fit it in between appointments or something. If I had to spend 10 or 15 minutes setting up every time, then I might have only 10 or 15 minutes left to draw or paint. If I can get in there for half an hour or 45 minutes then that time is spent working.

Christopher works at night, sometimes all night, in order to have time completely by himself in the studio space he shares with other artists. Sometimes, he gets up in the middle of the night, leaving his sleeping family for his studio, and then returns before they are awake. Occasionally, they do not even know he was gone. "And that's weird," he said, "you know, I could have a mistress, and no one would know." Then smiling, he added, "in fact, painting *is* my

mistress." To be alone with her, he finds a private time in the studio. And that is how we can experience it: our work as artists often competes, like a lover or a mistress, with our spouse, our family, our other commitments, for time and attention. We are in love with our work, and we are drawn to it, time and time again.

Music creates a space: Solitude as an atmosphere

If we cannot find our own place and time to draw, it is possible to create an atmosphere in which we feel alone with our work. In this sense, "privacy is ultimately a certain mood, rather than a certain space, that governs a sphere of life" (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 70). Some artists accomplish this through music. Of course, some music distracts, rather than focuses our attention; often this is music which intrudes upon us rather than music which we have chosen ourselves. Here however, I want to reflect on the ways in which music contributes to a private atmosphere and focused attention. What does listening to music do for us while we draw? Peter describes his experience of listening to music in a life drawing class.

> I like listening to music, 'cause otherwise I get distracted easily. When I am drawing around other people there's just too many things around me to make me forget what I am supposed to be doing: there's so many things in the room, there's so many feelings in the room. And then I can't draw sometimes, just can't do it. So when I draw in a class, I use my walkman. Especially at the beginning of a class, or after a break when it may take a while to get back to where I was—mentally and emotionally. I love listening to music, anything really: classical, jazz, heavy metal, even Gothic music, whatever I feel like. It's not a specific kind of music, it's just whatever corresponds with my mood at the time. It's not directly related to the work. And when I find the music I like to listen to then I work with that, and that works with me. Music makes me forget about all the other things around me, and makes me concentrate on the actual process of drawing—if it's life drawing—the actual figure that I am doing. I am—you could say—blind: I don't see other things; I see one thing, the one thing I am doing basically. So I concentrate on what I am doing, although I'm not thinking of the things I'm supposed to put in the drawing, or how the drawing is supposed to look. By listening to music, I put myself into my own world, and just work, work with myself, work with the model, or whatever I am drawing.

Music is like a companion, a presence, that we choose to block out the presence of things or people we have not chosen. Listening to music enables Peter to focus his attention on the process of drawing. Wearing a walkman is like wearing blinders: he is not distracted; he does not see too much. Nor does he hear the small sounds in the studio; in this way, music silences. By listening to music, Peter creates a silencing sphere of sound around himself and the model: he draws as if they were alone together in the room. Music creates a world in which he can work, a private place to draw.

Another way in which music may contribute to the process of drawing is by giving sound and shape to our mood, which, in turn may enable us to give it visual form. The music we listen to moves us and may help to initiate the movement of drawing. As Peggy put it, "music touches that spiritual part of yourself that you are trying to draw on."

Being focused: Solitude as attention

Sometimes we are able to draw regardless of others, without a private place or time, and even without the private atmosphere created by music. This could be called a "natural" form of privacy, which takes place "in the simple moment of withdrawing from participation with others through an act of attention and concentration" (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 60). Ivan explains how it is concentrated attention that makes the difference: in order to draw and paint in his working and living situations, he has to be especially focused,

> It doesn't really bother me if other people are watching, which has probably partly been shaped by necessity. At my very first shop, my studio area was right out in the hair salon. Not that there were normally a lot of people around, but certainly people might have come in and seen a partly finished work. It doesn't really matter, it doesn't really bother me. And I have worked at home with the roommates present, you know, that kind of thing, so it's not really an issue. I've got fairly good powers of concentration I guess. When I'm doing something, I'm doing it. Once I'm there I'm there. Once I'm working I'm usually fine.

Ivan's phrase, "Once I'm there I'm there" captures the sense in which attention is a place, a "there"; we create a place by drawing with focused attention. By attending to our drawing, we withdraw from others, as if drawing an invisible curtain around us. Thus we feel alone, even among others.

We feel this solitude through attention when the model takes her place on the stand, in the life drawing session. A moment ago, everyone was chatting, giving their attention to one another. Now, silence settles on the room as each one withdraws to his or her own sphere, focusing on the model, attending to drawing.

The privacy created through attention requires no particular place, time, or equipment; it is simply a matter of turning away, focusing, paying attention. But is it so simple? We may experience this silent withdrawal to our own sphere as more difficult, more of an effort than retreating to the privacy of our own room or time in which to be alone. In this way the physical props of the personal sketchbook, the walkman, or private studio ease our passage from the place we share with others to our own place of drawing.

Drawing with others

Drawn together, drawing together

Although we often experience drawing as a solitary activity for which we seek privacy, we may also seek out the companionship of others who draw for support, thoughtful criticism, or simply to reinforce our own commitment to drawing. And so we attend a drawing class, a workshop, a life drawing session; we arrange to spend time drawing with a friend out of doors or at home; we may even decide to share a studio.

Caisserman-Roth and Cohen shared a studio in which they met for a four hour drawing session with a model on a weekly basis. When they rented their studio, they brought with them very different professional backgrounds and artistic orientations which are nicely captured in Caisserman-Roth's words, "you've brought a kettle and your dreams. I've brought a mirror and a plant" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 19). Over a period of four years, they recorded their conversations, which they published along with reproductions of their drawings (1993). They describe the experience of sharing a studio and drawing together as "intense" and speak candidly about "moments of uncertainty, vulnerability, envy, and competitiveness" (1993, p. 111). Nevertheless, their friendship and commitment to drawing together has made the experience of sharing a studio a valuable one. Cohen remarks that, "being committed to drawing with another person keeps the momentum going. This is most important, because in our lives there are so many pulls and obligations" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 95). By drawing together they are pulling together, counteracting the pull of innumerable things which may draw them away from drawing.

Drawing together provides the opportunity for Caisserman-Roth and Cohen to critique each other's work, although they find talking about each other's work difficult, especially while they are immersed in the act of drawing, or immediately afterwards. "We are often too vulnerable," says Cohen, "and our exchange is strained and sometimes painful. . . So I guess we have to wait for the right-seeming moments" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 99). The appropriate time for talking often occurs much later, and sometimes away from the studio, in a coffee shop. When they do discuss each other's work it is with the conscious effort "to try to understand each other's vulnerabilities and tread oh so lightly, hoping that we can be honest yet kind" (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 101).

In spite of their awareness of one another's vulnerabilities and some awkward moments, Caisserman-Roth & Cohen speak glowingly of their time spent drawing and talking together (1993, pp. 105, 111). They talk of learning from the different ways in which they each approach drawing—with "intensity," or with "patience and perseverance." They speak of discovering "new ways of working" and becoming more aware of the limitations and possibilities of their materials. By drawing together, they each realized that they were not alone in their difficulties with drawing, and learned to be more "self-accepting" as well as "self-critical." Finally, their commitment to drawing together at a regular time each week prevented them from postponing or neglecting drawing.

The out of doors is another situation in which people enjoy drawing together. Nancy describes an experience of drawing in the mountains with her husband:

> This past summer we were returning from a trip to British Columbia. This is a 12 hour drive, so we make periodic stops, and we always carry our art supplies with us, my husband his watercolours, I, my sketch pad and pencils, this type of thing. So we stopped at a river crossing and took our chairs and all of our supplies down to a riverbend area not too far from where the car was parked. We each decided what scene it was that we would draw or paint, and I chose a spot about 20 feet or so behind my husband, overlooking the river, and the mountains in the distance. Once I had got past the first half hour of settling down, and up until the last half hour, when I knew we would have to go soon, there was that interlude of time in between that was utterly comfortable, quiet. It's like I was there by myself, it was like being isolated and working by myself, thoroughly relaxing and enjoying what I was doing. At the same time, it was companionable. We're in the same space, but we're actually working

> independently, and except for the occasional exchange of words it's like being alone.

Nancy's description shows how drawing with someone who is close to us can be like the experience of reading together: contained within the comfort and safety of physical closeness, we each depart to our own world, often very far away. We are close and yet distant, silent, still, and yet actively engaged.

Nevertheless, because drawing is generally a solitary activity, reading or hearing about experiences of people *choosing* to draw together, such as Nancy's and Caisserman-Roth and Cohen's, may strike us as unusual or noteworthy. There is much to be learned in such situations. In a university course about teaching drawing, Cynthia Taylor gave her art education students an unusual assignment: to work in pairs, taking turns at being an "artist" or a "witness" to the creative process of drawing (1991, p. 354). While the artist drew, the witness watched and listened, and occasionally photocopied or photographed the work in progress. Afterwards, the partners discussed, each from their point of view as artist or witness, their understanding of the process of the emerging work. Taylor notes that for both partners, the experience of witnessing and being witnessed,

> is a rare privilege, for each is enfriended. In the silence, the work is completed, nourished by the attention and interest of the witnessing partner, who learns about the mysterious process of making by simply being there, connected across the necessary aloneness. . . . This turns out to be a profoundly moving experience for all concerned. It requires a new attitude, one of listening to and for the other. (1991, p. 354)

One might say of such an experience, "I know better now what it is to hear when I look" (Aoki, 1987; see note 27). In this way, the listening look with which we attend to the things we draw, can also serve the pedagogical purpose of helping us to understand the process of drawing, and nurture an other's drawing.

The look that responds

One of the advantages of sharing a studio or attending a class is having others present to see our work, and respond to it in progress as well as when it is completed. We can also experience a responsive look from family members, friends, or even from strangers. Although these people are not necessarily fellow artists or critics, often they can "see" our drawing and offer constructive criticism. Diane recalls how her family responded to a drawing she did of her coat.

> It was last Halloween. I was working in the living room, so as well as having enough space for the still life, I could also be near the front door to do the Halloween candy. I started the drawing at about three in the afternoon, and continued well into evening. Eventually, the drawing looked—it looked like what I was looking at. It looked like the real thing. And also, my family came in and looked at it; they were you know, "wow," and "ooh." That really helps, you know, when they come through, because they are my critics. I'll say to them, "look at this" and "look at that," and I'll get them to tell me where they think it needs some help. And usually they zero in on where I know it needs some help. So they were very positive with that drawing. I had that kind of feedback, but I also knew that it looked pretty good.

In contrast to curious onlookers that she might meet while drawing out of doors, or in public places, Diane's family is genuinely interested in what she is doing: "look at Mum's drawing—wow!" It's not just anybody's drawing; it's Mum's drawing. This interest in Diane's work is the basis of her family's criticism and praise. Their criticism may be naïve and unsophisticated, but they are, nevertheless, interested and observant, and thus able to zero in on the areas which need improvement. While art critics comment on finished works, Diane's family, like teachers, comment on her work while it is still in progress; and like teachers, they are interested in the development of her drawing. Their initial comments, "wow" and "ooh" seem to be especially meaningful to Diane. Do these sounds actually say more, give more praise than specific remarks? Do they indicate that the drawing is beyond a more articulate response?

Franck writes about how his wife, Claske, "does not encroach [on his] tense attention"; instead "she sharpens it, may point mutely" at things which may interest him while he is drawing: " a hawk descending, a homeless person across the street, a little girl playing hopscotch by herself, two old men hobbling down a lower East Side street in Talmudic discourse" (1993, p. 116). The responsive look is pointed: it is sharp and attentive. By pointing silently to what is poignant Claske sharpens and focuses her husband's attention while he draws. Diane's family zero in, pointing to what needs attention in her drawing. Like the praising sounds made by Diane's family, Claske's interest in her husband's drawing is not expressed through language. By not expressing what she sees verbally, does she leave room for him to express it visually? Her mute pointing to what she sees, to what he also might see, responds to the silence, the muteness of drawing, recognizing that what the artist sees, like what the drawing shows, cannot be "translated" into language. Drawing is a kind of "mute pointing." A comment such as

"look at the girl playing hopscotch by herself" cannot be directly "translated" into lines and marks on paper. Both the act of drawing and the act of pointing "say" so much more than the fact of a "girl playing hopscotch by herself" and at the same time draw attention to the completeness of the event in itself.

We may also experience a responsive look from those we do not know. After spending a summer afternoon drawing a landscape from a bridge, Matthew was walking home with the drawing tucked under his arm,

> I was walking home—I lived a couple of doors from the firehall—and some of the fire hall boys were out front when I went by; they saw this drawing and asked about it. I said, "well, it's only a few squiggles." "Well, no, no, it's great," they said. "Wait a minute, there's someone here who would really like to see this." And they went in and got somebody who, as it turned out, also drew and had an appreciation of drawing. So he came out and looked at the drawing, and we chatted for a while, and it was just kind of interesting. It's nice. Drawing is a nice way of meeting people.

By responding to the sight of his drawing as he walked by, the firemen helped to draw Matthew's attention to the quality of his work; through their look Matthew could recognize that his drawing was indeed more than "a few squiggles." While drawing may be "a nice way of meeting people" the responsive look is a meaningful way of meeting our own work through another pair of eyes.

Drawing comparisons: The look that inhibits

There are other occasions when we feel a look which, unlike the responsive look felt by Diane, Franck and Matthew does not seem to "see" what we are doing, and which inhibits, distracts or stops us from the process of drawing. We might call this "a look that inhibits."

What is it like to feel looked at while drawing? It is not only when we draw out of doors or in public places such as here on the train, or in an airport or a restaurant that we can feel looked at, but also in the more specialized situations of the art museum, studio or classroom.

Sartre describes how an other's look can make us feel excruciatingly uncomfortable, abruptly pulling us away from the activity in which we were so absorbed, and change the way we see things. He invites us to imagine that "moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice" he is peering

through a keyhole (1992, p. 347). He is absorbed in the sight he sees through the keyhole when suddenly he hears footsteps in the hallway, and realizes that someone is looking at him (1992, p. 349). Sartre's analysis of this situation shows how we experience the existence of an other's subjectivity, how we feel shame in relation to an other, and more generally, how we feel when we are looked at.

In a museum, unlike the train, it is not others who might feel uncomfortable or self-conscious about my looking at them; rather it is I who feel unwanted eyes on me and the intrusive look over my shoulder at my unfinished drawing. Once, drawing in a museum, another visitor seemed to paralyze my hand with his look: At last I have an opportunity to draw from this painting that I have seen so often in reproductions! But soon, out of the corner of my eye, I see the man beside me steal a glance at my drawing, then look up at the painting and back at my work. Suddenly my drawing, and the painting from which I have been working, look different, as if I am now seeing them through the eyes of this man who is peering over my shoulder. What does this intruder see? Unlike drawing on the train or out of doors, it is not the fact that I am drawing here that becomes the object of an inquisitive look, but what and how well I am drawing. "To be looked at" writes Sartre, "is to apprehend oneself as the object of unknowable appraisals—in particular, of value judgments" (1992, p. 358). Suddenly I find myself wondering how my drawing measures up to the painting. But how could it? For my purpose is not to copy or to compete, but to converse with, and pay homage to this painter whom I admire. Drawing is part of the museum's ambiance; to draw here is to partake in a tradition. I feel quite sure that the onlooker, with his brightly coloured shorts, garlic breath and fist full of museum guides and maps, does not understand this. I feel my grip on my pen tightening; my own hand feels suddenly foreign to me, and the marks it makes are now hesitant and awkward. The painting, having lost its magic, is just another canvas on the wall. Just a moment ago I was there in that room in the seventeenth century, pouring milk from an earthenware jug, and now I am three hundred years and three feet away from it. If I continue, the drawing will surely be ruined! The tourist stole a glance at my drawing and his look has stolen my drawing, the painting, and even my hand. I feel I am just another curious museum object to be looked at; I can no longer seem to see, or draw: "we cannot perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us" (Sartre, 1992, p. 347). I close my sketchbook and walk into another room—with a quick angry look at the intrusive tourist.

When we draw, we select and leave things out of the scene before us; we may change the position of a window, or alter the angle of a head. In this way we organize what we see into

lines and marks on paper. When the curious museum visitor looked over my shoulder, I lost this ability to compose and organize what I saw. My drawing seemed to decompose before my eyes. An unwanted look directed towards us superimposes "a new organization" on top of our own organization of the scene in front of us (Sartre, 1992, p. 353). In this way we feel alienated from our surroundings.

Even familiar surroundings can take on a strange appearance through an other's look. Christopher describes how a psychology student doing a paper on "creativity" asked if he could film Christopher painting in his studio. Christopher consented and the student came to the studio with a video camera. But Christopher had difficulty working and no longer felt at home in his own studio.

> When I first started, I had the music playing freely, but I knew he was filming me, and even though he said he didn't want to disturb, I knew he was there. I just couldn't work the way I usually do. So then I put my headphones on to see if that would help. It didn't. So the solitude is obviously part of it. I felt like I was putting on a show. I didn't enjoy it, but I allowed it to happen.

We do not want to put on a show; while drawing or painting, we are not engaged in performance arts. Instead we want to be absorbed by what we are doing, whether our attention is, like Christopher's, on the making of abstract marks (what he calls "drawing with paint"), or the rendering of someone or something we see in the world. Immersed in the act of drawing we are like the man who looks through the keyhole, *before* hearing the footsteps in the hallway: we have lost ourselves in the world, have caused ourselves "to be drunk in by things as ink is by a blotter" (Sartre, 1992, p. 348). When someone is watching us draw, their look holds us back: it seems difficult, if not impossible to let go, to draw with an "unleashed energy," to allow ourselves to be pulled, "drunk in" by things. Even the well meaning look or comment on our work from a studio companion can pull us abruptly out of our work; Cohen confides in her friend and studio mate, "sometimes your comments are a welcome intrusion, whereas at other times, when I'm so immersed, they are difficult for me" (Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 99). Instead of losing ourselves, we feel self-conscious.

Among students in a drawing class, there is often a mutual interest in one another's work. As Nigel says, "other people are drawing, and you look at what they're doing, and you know they see what you're doing, and you sort of wonder how you're stacking up." This may lead to a

feeling of competitiveness which prompts some to do their best work, and makes others feel terribly inhibited. Isabel describes her experience of being in a drawing class.

> Oh drawing does not come easy to me! I will draw something, and it will look terrible, and I'll throw that away and try again. I put down a few lines and I seem to know that it isn't right. And it's not going to be right, even though I erase it, or try and alter it. It's very frustrating. And then I think, "I'm never going to be able to draw! What am I doing here?" And I get quite discouraged. I see some of the people in the class, they just start drawing right away, and one sheet of paper will do. This girl next to me in class—I don't think she ever erases! She seems very sure of what she puts down. And I think in class, I am intimidated. Whereas at home, I can erase, or throw out my paper and start again. At home there's nobody around me that's doing better, so I can practice.

When she draws at home, the other students with their apparently more skillful drawings, are not there to remind Isabel that she is a beginner. There is no one with whom to compare herself, and no one else's drawings with which to compare her own. At home she can practice; she is free to make one unsuccessful drawing after another, for how else will she become experienced in drawing? Sartre points out how we can feel ourselves looked at, or feel the possibility of being looked at in the traces and sounds of others (1992, p. 346). In a class, it is not only another student who may glance at her work, but that drawing on one sheet of unerased paper seems to look at Isabel and ask her how it is that her drawings begin so hesitantly. And no wonder she hesitates and feels discouraged; in a class, standing beside that girl who seems to draw so well, Isabel feels a stifling pressure to make a "good" drawing. Franck suggests that watching one another's emerging drawings sets up an inappropriately "competitive atmosphere" (1989, p. 55). However, looking at one another's drawings in a class, workshop, or studio does not, in itself, generate a "competitive atmosphere." Instead, it is the attitude with one watches another's drawing take shape that is helpful or hindering. To "witness" another's drawing with silent attention, as Taylor's students did, fosters awareness of the process of drawing (see Taylor, 1991, discussed above).

In a drawing class, we may feel pushed into an overly competitive attitude, intimidated or discouraged in our efforts by another's judgemental look; in a museum, the intrusive look over our shoulder compares our drawing with the painting on the wall. In both these situations, the other's presence and look make us draw comparisons between our own and another's work in such a way that we feel alienated from our drawing and our subject; it is difficult to continue

drawing. When someone is looking at us working in our own studio space we may feel that our surroundings are suddenly unfamiliar, and we are unable to lose ourselves sufficiently to work. In all three situations, we become critics, looking at our work as if from a distance, rather than artists, immersed in our work. Is this because the quality of the look is critical, judgmental, skeptical or simply curious?

How do we experience an inhibiting look in public places such as parks, cafés, airports, or for that matter, here on the train? Turning to draw the passengers on the other side of the aisle, I catch the glance of the man reading his carefully folded newspaper. It is a momentary look, as if responding to my eyes, suddenly turned in his direction, and my hand, poised above the clean page in my sketchbook. A look that wonders perhaps, what I am doing. He has not yet ascertained that I am drawing, or that I may be drawing him. I do not feel that his look may criticize or judge my drawing. In fact, if I can help it, he will not even know I am drawing. Just to be sure, I focus my gaze, and my pen on the woman seated next to him, who after all, has a more interesting face. Here, it is the possibility of the look that may find out what I am doing which inhibits my drawing hand. The best "models" in such places are the ones who do not know they are models. So I strive to conceal the nature of my activity. Perhaps he thinks I am writing; my sketchbook is small enough to look like a notebook. As much as possible, I try to be inconspicuous, unseen by others so I can see and draw them. But this is an effort, and I cannot quite give my attention fully to drawing.

In conversation with a landscape painter who spends her summers in a picturesque Maritime area, where there are many tourists, I asked: "Do you ever draw or paint on the spot?" And she replied,

> Sometimes. But I have to develop more tolerance for the elements and especially for other people while I'm out there. 'Cause I get really irritated with the ninth person who comes along and tells me that they can't draw a straight line, and isn't it wonderful that I can. They always want to chat and I just wish they would leave me alone!

Gazing at a row of trees on a Paris street, Giacometti remarked,

> I'd like to do some landscapes. . . . But I can't do everything. Besides, it's impossible to do landscapes in Paris, because people gather round to watch you, and I find that intolerable. Of course, I could do them at five in the morning. But I'm always too tired by that time. (in Lord, 1980, p. 58)

Although drawing may not require literal silence and solitude, it seems to require an atmosphere of silence and solitude, which permits us to give our full attention to the subject. Franck writes about his efforts to conceal his activities while drawing in public:

> I use a small pocket sized pad, try to make myself an invisible part of the woodwork. I wait until people get used to me, as part of the fixtures. Not only to prevent unpleasantness, but in order not to be disturbed by onlookers. If I attract attention the absolute concentration, the identification needed for seeing/drawing is gone at once. I either become an objectionable intruder or a public entertainment, a kind of juggler. Even five year olds gaping at what I am doing interfere with my becoming what I draw: oldster, child, glamorous woman. I always wonder at those painters gathering a crowd on street corners, and obviously enjoying being watched. For me it is a nightmare. (Franck, 1989, p. 122)

Franck's comparison of himself with a juggler is revealing. Is there not a certain magic in watching marks appear on paper which correspond to the scene before us? There is an element of skill and coordination involved in drawing from observation which, like the skill and coordination required to juggle, is regarded by many people as mysterious and unattainable—"a vaguely magical ability" (Edwards, 1979, p. 2). Also, drawing, like juggling, can be a playful act. And how often do we see an adult seriously engaged in play for its own sake? No wonder people want to look over our shoulder when we draw in public!

CHAPTER 7: THE LIVED BODY OF DRAWING

The drawing body

Closing my sketchbook, and stretching a little, I look out the train window. The colour has almost completely faded out of the fields and sky; afternoon has quietly slipped into evening. Our train hurtles through the otherwise still and silent landscape. It will not be long now until we reach the end of our journey. After two hours of travelling the interior of the train seems familiar. The lights now cast a lemon glow over everyone, separating our domain from the darkening evening outside. Some passengers chat together, as if they were old friends. Others, after an arduous day, have sunk into their seats, reading, dozing or daydreaming.

Across from me, my sister Eleanor is in another world, bordered by the edge of the book she holds in her hands. Like the other passengers, she has settled into her seat. The angles of her shoulders, arms and head, that I observed while drawing her, have all inclined slightly. Her posture is that of one who has left her body behind to enter a book.

Looking at her I become aware of my own body. How long have I been sitting like this I wonder, as I uncross a leg which prickles and tingles as I rouse it into wakefulness. My aching neck and shoulders make me realize that I must have held my head in the same position for a long time while drawing my sister. For most of this journey, my body seems to have been reduced to a pair of eyes and a pair of hands. My eyes have been in constant motion while my drawing hand has been attentive to nuances of contour and texture in my sister's face.

And yet, my body is not always reduced to eyes and hands when I draw. When I stand at an easel and work on a bigger scale, I draw with my whole arm and shoulder making large gestures. Sometimes my whole body seems to be engaged in drawing, moving back and forth, almost as if I am dancing with my paper, or with my subject. But of course, I cannot do this on the train.

The body forgotten

This evening when I was drawing my sister, I seem to have forgotten my body: my neglected leg fell asleep and my neck grew sore from lack of movement. At the beginning of our journey, when I took out my sketchbook to draw, I deliberately found a comfortable position in which to sit, a position in which my body would not draw my attention while I was drawing this other body in

front of me. It is to be able to forget my body that I make sure that I am comfortable when I begin to draw.

What do we do to forget our body? Nancy told me how she prepared to draw outside in the mountains:

> It was a clear, beautiful, sunny day. And very few bugs! This is usually a major problem when I'm out in the wilds. Bugs drive me crazy when I am drawing. This day they didn't seem to be bothering that much. So I chose a spot where I was protected from any breeze. That day I had my feet parked on a stump. I pulled my chair up so that I could put my feet up on the stump and I placed the drawing pad against my knees. I was sitting in a folding lawn chair in which I could lean back a bit. It was a very comfortable position to be in. I don't think I got up even once in what was just about two hours. Sat right there!

In describing how she began her drawing of a bouquet of sunflowers, Gail too, gave special consideration to the position of her body and her drawing paper:

> I just left the flowers in the vase where they were, and got myself organized with pencil and paper and easel. I took a piece of plywood and laid it on a chair in front of me, a kind of impromptu easel—so it was at a good angle and just the right height when I was sitting on a chair.

While drawing however, Gail forgot her body so completely, that when she got up, after an hour and a half of drawing, she was "so stiff" that she "could hardly stand up." Another person, who knows how easily this can happen, makes an effort to remember his body from time to time: "I need to be comfortable," he says, "so I usually take snacks and breaks and all those kinds of things."

An uncomfortable position prevents us from forgetting our body. I once attended an workshop which left me with an aching back, as well as a pad full of drawings. When I arrived in the morning, one of the instructors explained to me in a hushed tone that I should begin by choosing a chair. So I took a seat opposite the windows overlooking the lawn and water beyond. Although the setting was idyllic, and the workshop inspiring, I didn't like the seating arrangement. Holding a large pad of paper on one's lap while sitting in a chair is surely one of the least comfortable postures for drawing. In an effort to alleviate this situation, I remembered a device from a life drawing class: putting something under my feet—in this case

my bag—in an attempt to get the pad horizontal, if not sloping towards me. That helped. Nevertheless, by the end of the day my back was aching.

The body extended

As I drew my sister's face, moving over an eyebrow, across a cheek, I had an uncanny feeling that I was touching her. Would the cool metal tip and liquid ink of my drawing pen moving gently over her face distract her from her reading? For it was not so much with my hand or fingers that I touched her face, but it was with my pen that I could feel the contours of Eleanor's face and simultaneously the texture of the paper. Lord writes about this phenomenon from the point of view of the model. While posing for Giacometti, the left side of his face began to "itch violently" (1980, p. 37). Because Giacometti preferred his models to be completely still, Lord tried to relieve the itch by twitching his cheek and nose instead of raising his hand to scratch. When Giacometti saw this odd movement, he asked, "what's the matter with you?" (in Lord, 1980, p. 38). When Lord replied that his face itched, Giacometti asked why, and Lord responded, "because of all the little strokes of your brush on my cheek" (1980, p. 38).

When I am drawing, the pen becomes part of me extending my reach—here to my paper, over there to my sister. How does my pen function as an extension of my body? It extends my hand in a pointing gesture: with it I search and point to the line. Exactly there! That's the line which characterizes Eleanor's cheekbone. As I search, my pen quivers slightly above the surface of the paper, but once my pen lands on the paper that's it! All hesitancy, all doubt, will show. Knowing this, my pen inspires a bold gesture. It marks a precise line, dividing one surface from another, interior from exterior. My drawing pen offers no possibility of retreat: the moment it touches the paper is a point of no return. Every mark is irreversible, and therefore, must be precisely placed.

Each tool with which we draw extends our reach and determines the quality of our touch in a particular way. If I were drawing my sister with a pencil, I might explore those little lines around her eyes, or play with the strands of hair around her forehead. With a pencil there is always the possibility of withdrawing whatever I draw. I can erase. Only I will know what might have been on this page. In contrast to the pen, which demands openness and exposes every gesture, the pencil permits a certain secrecy. With a pencil and an eraser, I can hide myself and my actions.[32] Although one would think that the possibility of erasure would make the hand more confident, it often makes the hand (especially the beginner's hand) move with timid, hesitating gestures, little scratching strokes. Sometimes however, this tentativeness is

just what I want. Unerasable materials are unforgiving and demand commitment, whereas pencils are more permissive, allowing us to explore without committing ourselves. Cohen describes a drawing in which she had "lost the intensity" and "felt less involved" with her work and the model. To renew her connection to both drawing and model, she returned to the drawing with a pencil in hand. She said it "permitted" her "to work more tentatively, to search out more of the creases and cracks, to get in touch with both the outside (the model) and the inside (me)" (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen 1993, p. 29).

Softer, blunt tipped materials can be more sensuous ways of extending our reach. For instance, charcoal, conté or pastel would permit me to make a caressing gesture, using my whole hand, gently stroking my sister's face as I draw her. In contrast to the pointing gesture of the pen and pencil (which are also used for writing) drawing with softer materials feels more like grasping, pulling and pushing. Even the temperature and texture of these soft materials differs from pens and pencils: While a pen, a pencil, or a stick of graphite remain cool and smooth in our hand, charcoal, conté and pastel absorb the warmth of our body. The colour and smudges they leave on our hands are evidence of our intimate grasp of our subject.

A brush full of ink also has its own gestures, which are more akin to soft materials than to the pen or pencil. "The brush," writes Barthes, "can slide, twist, lift off, the stroke being made, so to speak, in the volume of the air; it has the carnal, lubrified flexibility of the hand" (1982, p. 86). The felt-tipped pen, as Barthes notes, is of Japanese origin; as such it is a descendent of the oriental brush rather than the pen.

Not only does each drawing material have its own character and manner of determining the gestures of our hand, but each material permits us to draw at a certain distance from the paper; this depends on the size of the material and how we hold it. When we hold a stick of charcoal our hand is almost touching the paper. Drawing becomes tactile, close and messy. But if we attach the same piece of charcoal to a long stick held at arm's length, it becomes a different material. Like a blind person's stick, we are "transplanted" into it, we feel with the tip of the charcoal, "its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 143). Hanna describes what it is like to draw from the model with charcoal attached to a stick that was four feet long:

> I wanted to draw bigger, so with each new drawing, I moved back a little, so the distance between me and the paper kept getting longer as I straightened my arm out more and more. Drawing with a stick was a huge jump because I couldn't

> touch the page with my fingers. I couldn't draw and then touch the page and then draw. It forced me to stay away from it, to stop fussing around with the charcoal on the paper. There was a lack of control that was really nice. The charcoal at the end of that big unwieldy stick was so much more difficult to control than a small piece of charcoal in my hand that I found myself concentrating more on looking. I would really look and draw my line at the same time. I would have to think harder, think more about what I was doing, instead of just doing it the way I had always done it. I would draw a line and say, "oh, no, that was wrong," and go back and draw it again. For instance, her hip: you can see that I drew it one, two, three four, five times.

Merleau-Ponty shows how many habits are embodied (1962, pp. 143-144). Habits of drawing are no exception. Over months and years, we develop habitual ways of moving our hands and manipulating materials, as well as habitual postures and a usual distance between our body and the paper. Changing a physical aspect of drawing—the material, the distance from the paper—promotes new habits of seeing and drawing. Drawing with charcoal attached to the end of a stick helped Hanna to change her habit of "fussing around with the charcoal on the paper" by extending the distance, and thus, changing the relationship between her body and the paper. This new relation with the materials required a physical effort which helped her to "think more" and "really look" at the model.

Hanna discovered a new manner of drawing by using a familiar media in a novel way. There is a certain pleasure in choosing new materials for drawing, whether these are found in a corner of the studio, tucked away in the basement, or brand new in the art store. A trip to the art store makes Cohen feel like "a child let loose in a candy shop" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 27). Just as a display of candy gleams with the promise of sweet pleasures in every imaginable colour and flavour, in the art store, entire rainbows of pastels, crayons and coloured pencils, along with the more subtle shades of graphite, charcoal and conté hold the allure of soft smudges of velvety charcoal and brilliant strokes of colour on white paper. While we begin to envisage the possibilities that might reside in the new materials, our hands cannot restrain themselves, and begin to grope for something on which to draw. Most art stores, having discovered that customers will draw on any available surface, leave small pieces of paper (always too small) strategically placed on the shelves where drawing materials are displayed. It is not just that we want to try out new drawing tools before we buy them, to discover what they are like in our hands, but that an enticing array of drawing materials

actually seems to pull at our hands. These new materials draw us to draw with them. "Instead of willfully choosing our media," says Peter London, "we may so place ourselves in relation to them that the media choose us or, more precisely, that they call us to be chosen" (1989, p. 181).

Where do we find new ideas, new possibilities for drawing? It is sometimes in the sensuous qualities of materials with which we work. When Cohen returned to her studio with new charcoals, conté pencils and sticks from the art store, she found that she was able to "make a connection" with the model.

> I looked for curves and rounded forms, different from what I was able to do with linear ink drawings. I just discovered compressed charcoal, and I find it intriguing to work with. When I mix it with water, it almost looks like some form of printmaking. I find I am sculpting shapes with this wonderful black, slushy charcoal. Again, the material really influenced the way I drew. The materials I use feel like an extension of my hand and guide me to draw in different ways. (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 27)

In conversation with Cohen, Caisserman-Roth adds that:

> Sometimes, at home, I go into the basement and look around for surprises: a dirty rag, an old sponge, some sandpaper, a roller, a feather, an oil pastel, a single-edged blade. I especially like finding paper I've forgotten about. Sometimes I roam around hardware stores, just to see if I get any new ideas about materials. (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 27)

When we go to an art store, or to our own basement for drawing tools, we are searching for different modes of extending our reach and grasping our subject. When we select new media, we are choosing new ways to draw out different aspects of ourselves and our subjects. As London points out, we can think of various media for drawing "not as mere inanimate things that have to be manipulated in order to create an expressive image, but as potential sources of power with which we may ally ourselves" (1989, p. 176).

That feeling of drawing

When I began to draw my sister—my pen gliding around her face, leaving, as if by magic, a trail of black ink on the paper—I was suddenly aware of the sheer pleasure of drawing. We may be especially aware of this when we begin to draw after not having drawn for a long time. For the gestures of drawing are different from those of writing and all the other activities we do with our hands. When Hanna said, "you know, there's that feeling of drawing," I knew exactly what she meant. This is how she describes it.

> Especially the first time you draw after not drawing for a long time, you just—ah—you just want to draw so bad! And you don't really care what it looks like. You just want to *draw*! You just want to draw and draw, and after you just want to scribble. You just want to feel what drawing is like again.

This "feeling of drawing" that we experience as adults seems to be much like the pleasure we took in drawing when we were small children. Edward Hill writes,

> The scribblings of any three-year-old child clearly indicate how thoroughly immersed he is in the sensation of his moving hand and crayon aimlessly over a surface, depositing a line in his path. There must be some quantity of magic in this alone. (1966, pp. 1, 2)

This magic of being "immersed" in the act of drawing does not disappear as we grow up; traces of it are even visible in some adults' work. While visiting Peggy's studio, she pointed out a mark in one of her recent works which is visible in many of her landscape paintings. It is an energetic curving stroke, reflecting a rapid gesture of the hand. It was her brother in law who first noticed this unique mark which, he told her, seems to say: "Oh I'm enjoying myself so much!" And she is. Is it, in part, the sensuous pleasure and the "magic" of drawing which brings the experienced artist back, again and again to her work, and which encourages the beginner to continue? After only a few weeks of drawing, Gail described the delight she felt in drawing her sunflowers:

> I drew from the bottom to the top. The vase gave me the proportion and the right spacing and then the rest followed. And there's some joy in that. It's almost like it was coming out of the ground. You know, something growing. But what really interested me was how suddenly, I just began to *draw*, and that it actually looked like what it was that I was drawing.

There seem to be two aspects of the pleasure of drawing. First there is the sensation of our hand moving over a surface, together with the sensuous qualities of the materials: the gliding motion of graphite, the velvet intensity of compressed charcoal, the dry scratchy quality of conté, the feel of various papers, the ways in which they hold, or resist, the marks of different materials. The second aspect of the pleasure of drawing is watching marks appear from the gestures of our hand: the "magic" of transforming a sight into a form, witnessing the correspondence between what we see in the world and what we see emerging in graphite, ink, or charcoal on the paper.

The thinking hand

In the midst of drawing my sister, I pause for a moment to compare the emerging drawing with her face. And suddenly, as if I had never seen it before, I notice my own hand, hovering over the page of my drawing book. "The hand," writes Heidegger, "is a peculiar thing" (1968, p. 16). He goes on to point out that although we usually think of the hand as a bodily organ of grasping, the "essence" of the hand is the human capacity to think. Only human beings have hands; only human beings think. Heidegger writes,

> Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands. The hand is infinitely different from all grasping organs—paws, claws, or fangs—different by an abyss of essence. Only a being who can speak, that is, think, can have hands and can be handy in achieving works of handicraft. (1968, p. 16)

Looking again at my own hand, I notice its fine bones and angular shapes, which are just a smaller version of my sister's hand, I think, glancing at her hand, now forgotten and still, supporting her book. And yet, my hand, which is so much like hers, does something which hers does not: it draws. What does the drawing hand do?

In making a case for drawing as a matter of seeing, Edwards dismisses the significance of the hand, stating that all that is required for drawing is "average eye-hand coordination—with sufficient ability, for example, to thread a needle or catch a baseball. . . . If your handwriting is readable, or if you can print legibly, you have ample dexterity to draw well" (1979, p. 3). She concludes, "We need say no more about hands, but about eyes we cannot say enough" (1979, p. 3). Although it is true that skill in drawing owes more to seeing than to manual dexterity, from a phenomenological point of view, there *is* in fact, much to be said about hands.

The way in which we talk about drawing suggests that the hand and its capacity for movement, feeling, and grip has a significant role to play in the experience of drawing. Artists and art scholars, for example, speak of an artist's "handwriting" as the uniquely personal touch visible in a drawing (Rose, 1976, p. 10). Art critics comment on the quality of gesture in drawings or paintings. Art historians study artists' "handwriting" in order to attribute drawings to one artist or another. Those who teach "freehand" drawing assign exercises in "gesture" drawing.

Writing about drawing frequently employs language of the hand. In an essay, written at the height of Picasso's fame, Ayrton, himself an artist as well as a critic, remarks that, "it is not simply that he [Picasso] is a wealthy and famous man whose creations are enormously

valuable, it is not only that he has arrived beyond criticism but also that currency is worth less in Picasso's hands than a sheet of blank paper" (1957, p. 98). An intriguing comment: according to Ayrton, it is Picasso's *hands* which had the capacity to transform a sheet of blank paper into a work of art. And, as if to reinforce his point that the artist's hands are of special significance, Ayrton includes in the essay a photograph of Picasso's hands.

In another essay, on drawing, Ayrton writes about Rembrandt as "a man planting with gentle, stubby fingers, the green fingers of the spirit, an endless diversity of plants and seedlings with the blunt and spatulate movements of an immortal gardener" (1957, p. 68). In the same essay, Ayrton (1957, p. 67) speaks of "the long smooth caress with which"

Ingres "establishes the contour of a thigh" in his drawings of women, and "Cézanne's urgent groping for form," his "grip" on his subject matter, and the way in which his drawings are "laboriously built touch on touch by the mind engaged fully in every movement of the hand" (1957, pp. 66, 67).

As artists, we too, often call attention to our hands. We are constantly apologizing for the state of our hands, greeting visitors to the studio with, "excuse me for a minute, I have to go and wash my hands." Or, "really I did wash my hands! I've tried everything and it just won't come off." When I met Henri in his studio, I could not help but notice that the intense black of compressed charcoal from the morning's life drawing session had embedded itself in his hands; his shirt sleeves, trousers, and coffee cup were similarly smudged. He did not apologize. And I was suddenly conscious that my own clean hands betrayed the fact that I had not been drawing recently.

And so our hands can reveal the nature of our activities. Very often the hands of those who draw visibly show that this is an activity which involves the hands. Interestingly, when we talk about drawing, we often describe our experiences in terms of feeling, gesture, touch and grip. And yet the drawing hand does more than simply manipulate. Heidegger writes,

> the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine. The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes—and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. The hand is all this, and this is the true handicraft. (1968, p. 16)

In what follows, I will try to show how the drawing hand searches, composes, understands, holds, lets go, and holds back. When we draw, we think through our hands; this is not verbal, conceptual thinking, but a non-verbal "know-how." Thus, Elderfield states that "drawing, within the visual arts, seems to me to hold the position of being closest to pure thought" (in Edwards, 1986, p. 50). Just as speaking and thinking are uniquely human, so is drawing. Only human beings have hands; only human beings think; only human beings draw.

The hand gropes, searches for form

When I began to draw my sister this evening on the train, I first traced the shape of her head in the air, without leaving any mark on the paper. My hand, holding the pen, did not touch the paper; instead it began to draw by circling above the paper. Round and round it went, finding the shape of Eleanor's head, searching for the right spot on the paper. Strange, no one taught me to begin like that; it just happened automatically. Sometimes, without using a pen or a pencil, I move my hand around the paper, placing my subject on the page before I begin. "There," I thought, "on the left side of the paper: that's where her head will be, then there will be room for her shoulder and book on the right."

Franck has written about this preliminary movement of the hand around the page, calling this gesture the "dry-run." This is a practice shared by many who draw, whether we call it "drawing in the air," " drawing without making marks," "drawing with the hand," or "painting an image with energy." However we may name this practice, it is a searching gesture of the hand. Franck describes what the "dry-run" feels like and how it serves to compose the drawing.

> The hand begins to dance its exploratory dry-run, cavorts over blank expanse, places the figure first a bit too high up on the paper, tries it again a bit lower, a little more to the right, to the left. Aware of the baffling multitude of possibilities, it finds at long last the one that feels right. The die is cast. It has only taken a few seconds after all. . . .
>
> The dry-run apart from imprinting the model's image on my consciousness, at the same time "places" the image in the proper relationship to the paper's edges. It is no longer placed there by accident. . . .
>
> this gesturing may become abbreviated to a split-second motioning of the fingertip over the paper, it will never become superfluous. It establishes the as yet invisible pattern of the drawing-to-be. . . .
>
> Far from claiming [to have invented] that dry-run, which—indispensable as it is—I have never seen described in any book on drawing, I am absolutely sure it must have at least thirty thousand years of history. (1989, pp. 91, 74)

We may find ourselves enacting the "dry-run" even when we are not drawing: without pencil or paper, our hand continues to make drawing gestures, exploring and outlining the shapes of what we see.[33] This gesturing seems to permit us to see more than we would if we only looked with our eyes.

In our day to day activities, our hands have the capacity to grope, to gather, to explore—searching out the nature of shapes and textures. As the hand searches for the form of what we are drawing, the groping gesture gives us access to things in a way in which sight alone cannot (Buytendijk, 1970, pp. 106-108). David Bomberg repeatedly told the students who attended his life drawing classes that "the eye is a stupid organ," the impressions received through the eye need to be "reinforced" by the other senses, particularly touch (Hughes, 1990, p. 31). Thus, we understand what we draw through our hands, and our sense of touch, as well as through our eyes. What Merleau-Ponty writes about knowing how to type could also be said of the know-how involved in drawing: "It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort" (1962, p. 144). Drawing can be experienced as a "bodily effort" to understand: a groping, a searching for form. Henri describes making a series of about twenty drawings:

> I had just read a story about an elephant, and I was trying to think of what an elephant is shaped like by drawing one elephant after another. I didn't have a picture in front of me. I don't really know elephants that well at all; I've only seen them once, and they were very far away. I was just curious about what shape an elephant is; I was also curious to see what a drawing is like when you don't really know what it is you are drawing.

Through making this series of drawings, Henri discovered the shape of an elephant, suggesting that this would not have been possible by only visualizing, without making the bodily effort to draw.

The hand holds, lets go, holds back

We sometimes speak of drawings and the process of making them as either "tight" or "loose." These terms are used to describe a manner of working.[34] When Gail drew her sunflowers, not only did she feel that for the first time she was *drawing*, but she found herself drawing in a looser manner:

> I soon realized that I was drawing differently than I had during the past four weeks that I had been attending an introductory drawing course. I wasn't drawing straight lines anymore. I mean, I wasn't getting a firm line, or clear lines even. This drawing was much more fluid. I was no longer sketching with timid little lines, but as the drawing progressed, I began to use my whole arm to draw, holding my pencil rather loosely at the end, moving my arm freely. And to my surprise—and delight, I could even get the proportion.

Those who have considerable experience in drawing and confidence in their skills of representation speak of "loosening up" as desirable; it is associated with "interesting" drawings, drawings which go beyond representation or illustration. Henri, who has been drawing for a number of years, described a series of drawings he made: it was just a whim, the notion of making enormous drawings, about four by six feet. The large scale seemed to invite large gestures, and Henri soon found himself drawing very fast: "Working big and working fast—I just let myself go and totally loosened up." Henri's comment suggests that "letting go" is necessary for "loosening up." Is this, as he suggests, letting go of a certain grip on oneself, letting go of a certain control over the drawing? Does "letting go" also imply quite literally letting go of one's grip on the drawing implement?

In the midst of discussing her difficulties in learning to draw, a beginning art student described how she holds the pencil, "I find that often when I draw, I hold the pencil really tightly; I'm really clenching it! My thumb gets so sore and my arm tenses up so much that I have to take a break for a while." After a momentary pause, she added, "Perhaps I feel I have more control that way... I think I need to relax!"

Art instructors sometimes assign drawing exercises specifically designed to help students "loosen up." As well as exercises which call for changes in scale, speed and materials, drawing students are given exercises which alter their grip on the drawing implement. Iris was given an assignment to make a series of large drawings of a corn plant with a big unwieldy stick, dipped into black ink. The stick was about the width of a broom handle, and two or three feet long. Iris had to hold it differently than she was accustomed to holding a pencil: clenching it tightly would have restricted her arm movements, so she found herself holding it quite loosely. This is how she described it:

> At first I thought, "oh, gee, I can't do that!" I like to have control when I am drawing something. I'm not used to just letting things happen. Using a stick was

> very different from using a skinny little pencil; the stick felt so clumsy in my hand. I tried to control it, but I couldn't really, except to guide the lines. So I just let the stick do what it would, and I let the ink drip and run. I was very surprised—and pleased—with the results: I could actually sense in the drawing the movement of the leaves as they grew out of the stem and drooped downwards.

A drawing exercise such as this one, not only helps students to loosen their grip on the drawing implement, and thus lose some degreee of manual control, but it also helps to loosen a controlloing mind, so that bodily know-how can take over. When Iris realized that she could not control the unweildy stick and the dripping ink, she relinquished her usual sense of being in control, and began to draw freely.

There are times when drawing necessitates holding back, or we risk overworking, being heavy-handed or touching up. Henri calls this "overtouching." Pointing to his own drawing on the studio wall he said,

> I was working with compressed charcoal and water, which is very messy to begin with. I was using both hands, drawing with a piece of charcoal with one, and with my fingers with the other. I wasn't satisfied with what I was doing so I kept touching the drawing with my left hand, smearing, rubbing, darkening the drawing more and more and more, until finally, I almost destroyed it! . . . It's way over touched!

Henri's willingness to make a mess and risk "overtouching" is an effort to make genuine contact with his materials and his subject. In this way, he shows that he has more experience in drawing than a beginner who draws with timid, halting little lines. The truly experienced and skillful hand however, knows precisely when to hold back and when to stop drawing. Barthes realized the necessity for "restraint" while drawing from a painting by Twombly.

> Oh, that one smear of pink... ! I could never make it so light, rarefy the space around it; I couldn't *stop* filling in, continuing, in other words, spoiling; and from this, from my very mistakes, I realize how much wisdom there is in the artist's action: he prevents himself from *trying too hard*. (1991, pp. 192, 193)

The drawing hand must learn to hold back, as well as to be held, to grasp, and to let go. Writing about drawing directly from observation, Franck suggests that "letting go" may also mean letting go of the subject matter, as well as grasping it, understanding it deeply. "I take hold of

the thing, until it fills my total capacity for experience," says Franck, "once I have thus taken possession of a hill, a body, a face, I let go, let it go free again, as if I were releasing a butterfly. Yet it remains mine forever" (1973, p. 125). Drawing in this manner, the hand has a dual function of grasping and letting go: we draw our subject matter towards us, take some aspect of it, and give it back—intact.

And yet, are there not some drawings in which the subject changes in our grasp? Our fingers find contours, find aspects of its being never felt or seen before. For the sake of the drawing, we alter a line here, a shape there. The subject is transformed by our hand. We may give it back, but we give it back changed: we can never quite see it as we saw it before drawing it. Will I ever look at my sister's face again without seeing the lines and contours formed by my hand this evening on the train?

To copy is to walk in the hand's footsteps

Earlier today, wandering through a museum, I was struck by a small Picasso drawing of three woman cavorting along a beach. The lines were as graceful and energetic as the three bathers depicted in the drawing. Each mark seemed to have been made with such certainty. What is it like to draw like *that*? In an attempt to find out, I took out my pen and drawing book. Again and again I moved my hand along those lines, discovering their movement, their directions, their startings and stoppings. To retrace Picasso's lines was to have a more intimate experience of his work than if I had just looked at it. It was as if in the gesture of taking out my pen and drawing book, I had respectfully offered Picasso my hand, and asked him to show me how he drew. We work from master drawings and paintings not merely to "copy" but to learn from them. To put it differently, we imitate in order to learn. "I've been fifty thousand times to the Louvre" said Giacometti, "I have copied everything in drawing, trying to understand" (in Audette, 1993, p. 29). Although perhaps Giacometti exaggerates, his point is clear: master drawings and paintings are rich resources to which we may return again and again to learn. Auerbach maintained a practice of drawing from paintings in the National Gallery, London at least weekly during the 50's, 60's, and 70's (Hughes, 1990, p. 7). Auerbach comments on the reciprocal relation between his own work and others':

> Rembrandt in the National Gallery—I went every day, for a long time. I drew from paintings then drew from them as if I'd drawn them myself... I looked at them again and drew over them. . . . My most complimentary and my most typical reaction to a good painting is to want to rush home and do some more work.... Towards the end of a painting I actually go and draw from pictures more, to remind myself of what quality is and what's actually demanded of

> paintings. Without these touchstones we'd be floundering. (in Hughes, 1990, p. 7)

Auerbach's use of the word "touchstone" is revealing as it suggests not only standards of quality, but a tactile relation to master works. By drawing from master paintings and drawings, we *feel* what quality is. Above, I quoted Barthes writing about how he realized the need for restraint through drawing from a painting by Twombly. In the following passage, Barthes writes about another experience with Twombly's drawings which further illuminates how we learn from copying.

> This morning, a fruitful—in any case, an agreeable—occupation: I very slowly look through a book of TW's [Twombly's] reproductions, and I frequently stop in order to attempt, quite quickly, on slips of paper, to make certain scribbles; I am not directly imitating TW (what would be the use of that?), I am imitating his gesture, which I, if not unconsciously, at least dreamily, infer from my reading; I am not copying the product, but the producing, I am putting myself, so to speak, *in the hand's footsteps*. (Barthes, 1991, p. 171)

Writing six hundred years before Barthes, Cennini advised aspiring artists to "take pains and pleasure in constantly copying the best things you can find done by the hand of great masters" (in Hill, 1966, p.108). Barthes alludes to why working from old master drawings—a traditional means of learning to draw—is so instructive: we are retracing "the hand's footsteps" as if taken by the hand of a more experienced artist to feel for ourselves the movement, direction, speed and weight of his or her gestures. And, because, as Heidegger suggests, the gestures of the hand are so intimately connected with thinking, when we thoughtfully retrace "the hand's footsteps" we discover, wordlessly, intuitively, perhaps "dreamily," something of the artist's thinking.

The body as drawn

> "The body is the visible, touchable aspect of the soul." (Blake, in Franck, 1989, p. 39)

Several days ago, I met Eleanor after a long absence. How long had it been? A year? Or more? We had agreed to meet in a restaurant. As I walked in, I scanned the large crowded room for a glimpse of my sister. I did not see her at first glance and so began, methodically, to search for her particular hair colour, and the colours she usually wears: olive green, gold, beige. But it was no use. I couldn't see her. Then suddenly, there she was, walking across the room towards me, smiling and waving. My search for a tall, elegant woman in certain colours, of a certain age evaporated. There was just—Eleanor. In a moment I had dissolved into her embrace, her

perfume, the softness of the scarf around her neck. Soon, we were engrossed in a long conversation; there was much to catch up on. Funny, we were there together for hours, but now that I think back to that evening, I cannot recall many details of her appearance, how she sat, what she was wearing or how her hair was done.

We meet one another through our bodies, our gestures, our manner of carrying ourselves, the colours, textures and scents we wear. Yet, once engaged in a conversation, a shared interest or activity, we quickly overlook the body we initially looked for and looked at. How do we meet the body through drawing? And how do we attend to the body we draw—whether this is the body of a person, a hill or a pear?

Suddenly the person slips through the lines

When I am not drawing, I often overlook the body in relating to the person, as I did during my conversation with Eleanor in the restaurant that evening. But while drawing my sister this evening on the train, I became not less but more keenly aware of her-as-a-body. I noticed aspects of her physical presence that I have never seen before: the way she holds herself, the angle at which she inclines her head, details of her face and skin. For while drawing her, I see how Eleanor *is* this body I am drawing: her sweetness is this curve in her cheek; her concerns are these lines around her eyes. How is it that we can suddenly and sometimes so poignantly become aware of the body we draw as a person?

In the academic tradition of "life drawing" we hire a "model" to pose, naked, for us to study and draw "the body," "the figure," "the human form." Although the model may dress and join us for coffee at our break, or walk about the studio clad in a bathrobe chatting candidly with us about our drawings, she or he usually remains a stranger, a model of a body—male or female, old or young, black, white, or brown. During an informal chat with a model who was taking a break in a life drawing session, she said, "you know, I think of myself as a walking bowl of fruit." But do we really "see" the model as we would see an arrangement of pears or apples? Do we see the model in this manner only while we are drawing? Lisa describes how her studio mates temporarily became objects to draw:

> When I was working on figurative paintings in a studio shared with several others, I would often need to see a particular aspect of a pose, such as how a person's legs look when they are crossed. So I would ask one of my studio mates to come and sit with their legs crossed and I would draw them. Once, I drew a

> studio mate's back when I wanted someone in a painting in a backless dress in a very particular position. On those occasions my studio mates become like still life objects for me.

Cohen expresses a taken-for-granted attitude towards the model when she says,

> When I come to draw, the relationship with the model is not of primary importance to me. I use her for inspiration. I use her to stimulate something in me, my fantasy world. (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 23)

We "use" the model. We draw "from the model." Or so it seems. However, in spite of the apparent formality and impersonal atmosphere of a life drawing studio, we may suddenly become aware of the model, this body before us, as a person. Consider, for example, the following.

A life drawing by Thomas Eakins shows a naked woman with a black scarf wrapped around her head to conceal her face, a practice which according to Kaupelis (1983, p. 73) was common in nineteenth century America when "it was not considered proper to model nude and the models often wore masks to hide their identity." Eakins' inclusion of the mask in his drawing however, is ironic, as it only serves to draw our attention to the fact that this naked body does indeed have a personal identity.

While we may wonder about the face hidden beneath the scarf in Eakins' drawing, someone once asked Franck if, after decades of life drawing, he was aware of the bodies beneath the clothing of people he draws on the street. He replied:

> Oh yes, I am! I am so aware of what is concealed by those clothes that I often seem to look through them and find myself drawing a ballet of these mortal bodies in their urban decor. It is far from an erotic thrill. It is terrifying, it makes you cry. (Franck, 1989, p. 120)

It is the awareness that this body is not just a body, but a person, which overwhelms us with wonder, sadness, pity, or even fatigue. Caisserman-Roth speaks to her studio mate about arranging for a model:

> Usually I call the model, and it's like making a date! As I start to choose the model from the lists I have, I begin to remember certain characteristics: not only how they look or move, but also the atmosphere that was created by their presence. At the same time as the devastated career of one model bothered you, another model's yawning exhausted me. (Caisserman-Roth, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 49)

We may not be aware of the extent to which we feel the personal presence of a model until we examine our drawing. A woman attending a life drawing class was surprised at her violent reaction to one of the models; his presence "hit" her the wrong way, and in her drawing she "stabbed" him with her graphite stick! This is how she described her experience:

> After several sessions, we had a model that I didn't like. The model shouldn't make any difference to me; he should be like an apple sitting there. But this particular male model just hit me the wrong way and I thought, "oh, I don't like you!" I didn't like his demeanor. I didn't like his posture. I didn't like his body language. The funny thing is that my feelings came out in my drawings. Usually, my drawings are quite, you know—gentle. On the day that model posed, the assignment was to draw with straight, rather than curving lines using a graphite stick, changing direction of the lines at the joints. And in my drawings of him, the model looked as if he had been stabbed! When the instructor came by, all he said was, "Oh my!" Until then I didn't realize how I was drawing. I was just drawing. I was quite aware that I didn't like this guy but I was surprised to see it in my drawing. I didn't expect my feelings to show. I was surprised that I reacted so strongly to the person, the individual.

When Cohen was drawing from a model one day she felt the model's sadness:

> I remember the last time I drew... I had seen the film about Camille Claudel, Rodin's mistress, the previous weekend. The model was very depressed. She lay almost motionless. I associated her with Camille Claudel, and the drawing was sad and somewhat fragmented. I called it "Femme abandonnée." When the model and I talked as we looked at my drawings, she spoke about her feelings, which, indeed, I had perceived and transposed into my drawing. (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 49)

It is as if the person slips through the lines of the body we are drawing for "we do not really draw 'models'" Franck reminds us, "but human beings" (1989, p. 42). Suddenly, in the midst of noticing the angle of a head or studying the surprising proportions in a foreshortened pose, the person, and his or her particular way of being human becomes visible, here in our drawing, there in the centre of the room. This is no longer just a nude or a model, but a person: naked, vulnerable, exposed.

Our hand grasps the feeling

While drawing, Cohen became aware of the model's "feelings" of sadness, and the woman in the life drawing class was shocked to see graphic evidence of her "feelings" towards the model in her drawing. "Feeling," which suggests tactile, as well as emotional sensibility and sensation, plays a significant role in the awareness of the body we draw as a unique and personal presence. In this way, both a subtle sense of touch and a capacity to be touched are necessary for sensitive drawing of the body. When we feel "in touch" with the body we are drawing, the feeling we experience through our drawing hand is simultaneously tactile and emotional. We might say, as Franck does (1973, 1989, 1993), that we draw with our hands and heart as well as with our eyes.

By engaging our own body in the act of drawing, we "incorporate" (to borrow Rodin's phrase, in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971, p. 85) a feeling understanding of the physical and emotional presence of the body we draw. For instance, once, drawing from a model, edging my pencil along her back, I could feel, not only the contour of her back, but the feeling that informed that line. I was aware of how it felt to sit like that: how the back was strained, where the shoulders were tight. I felt her pose in my own body and I drew the strains and tensions, the sheer endurance of this woman's pose, as if drawing from inside her body. In the midst of drawing we may suddenly feel that we have grasped the "feeling" of the person we are drawing.

Several years later, I found myself in another life drawing studio. The model had taken a seated pose, with his knees drawn up to his chest, his young head resting on his hands: self-enclosed, contained, thoughtful. These were my thoughts as he took the pose, as I stood for a moment, and looked, pencil poised above paper. As soon as I began to draw however, I did not dwell on the mood of the pose, but attended with my pencil to contours, edges: the curving of his back, the line made by his forearm, the angle of his hand. And then, with rich black compressed charcoal, I worked back into the drawing paying particular attention to the felt quality of surfaces and shapes. As I drew his back with a piece of charcoal that had worn down to almost nothing, I felt as if I was soothing away the mood that made him sit this way. It was then that I realized that somewhere in this process I had grasped, caught hold of the "just barely visible" (Truitt, 1984, p. 99) *edge* of a feeling: in this instance, despair.

In this way, our hand grasps the feeling of a person, and through him or her we may simultaneously come in touch with a human feeling which transcends the mood or quality of

this particular person. For example, while drawing from models, Cohen felt abandonment, and I felt endurance through one, despair through another. It is as if the body becomes transparent, a window into a recognizable human feeling or way of being. Franck writes about seeing "human dignity" when he drew an elderly friend who posed unselfconsciously "in her old wrinkled flesh" (1989, pp. 110, 111).

Our sense of touch, or rather imagined touch, not only helps us to understand the quality or mood of the subject of our drawing, but can reawaken our enjoyment of drawing. For Jeannine it was her sense of touch, her grasp of the model which, after years of life drawing helped her to draw in a manner which she deemed "more interesting" as well as more pleasurable and playful. This is how she described her experience:

> One day, after years and years of drawing, I was drawing from the model and suddenly, I couldn't draw! I couldn't get the proportions right; I couldn't get anything. It was as if this was my first time drawing. I was having particular difficulty with the shoulder, arm, and leg on one side of the figure. At first it was very frustrating. Then all of a sudden it dawned on me: this is a gift; now I can start something different, something new. After all, by that point, I could already render a rather lovely figure, an accurate likeness. And I was bored with trying to draft a perfect replica of what I saw; I might as well have just taken the person and xeroxed them! I was so hung up on getting a likeness that I was really not enjoying the experience of drawing any more, and not learning any more.
>
> So I just relaxed with it, and kept drawing those portions of the figure I had been having difficulty with. I started to pay attention to how it would feel to run my hand, my finger, along that line, imagining how it would feel to actually touch the person, and then trying to translate that feeling into my other hand with the pencil. I was saying to myself, "there's a line that comes down here, and it goes down that far, and oh, there's a little bump there" and I was tracing that line—drawing how it would feel to run my finger along that line. I was considering how the line of the model's body felt, how the line of my pencil felt, how the paper felt. I was *imagining* myself touching the figure because, of course, I wasn't actually touching the model; we're not allowed to do that! Sometimes I was even moving my left hand in the air tracing the line of the model's body, and at the same time, drawing with my right hand. I kept

> working on the line along the shoulder, arm and leg—drawing it again and again on the same piece of paper in an attempt to capture the feeling of the figure. While I was drawing, my eyes were mostly on the model. From time to time, I looked over and saw my paper and found that I was making lines that were almost parallel to one another. I realized that I had relaxed; suddenly it was OK not to be able to draw.
>
> What mattered was the feel of the figure, the feel of the pose, where the weight was, what the figure was doing, the marks I was making. This drawing was about what I felt more than about what I saw. Once in a while, I stood back and looked at it, and I thought, "This is a really horrible drawing, but you know, I like it!" By the time I finished, it was a funny mass of scribbles and lines, a page of lines that were rather interesting. This was not a technically good drawing. But it was definitely an interesting drawing.

Achieving a visual likeness was not enough for Jeannine. Instead, she gauged the success of her drawing in terms of truth to the "feeling" of the model, and the "feeling" of the pose. Her concern for understanding the feeling of the figure echoes Rodin's purpose in drawing from the model, as well as his manner of working in his late drawings. He drew without allowing his eyes to leave the model, and without looking at the paper. This is how Rodin explained his process of drawing in a letter to a friend:

> Don't you see that, for my work of modeling, I have not only to possess a complete *knowledge* of the human form, but also a deep *feeling* for every aspect of it? I have, as it were, to *incorporate* the lines of the human body, and they must become part of myself, deeply seated in my instincts. I must feel them at the end of my fingers. All this must flow naturally from my eye to my hand. Only then can I be certain that I understand. Now look! What is this drawing? Not once in describing the shape of that mass did I shift my eyes from the model. Why? Because I wanted to be sure that nothing evaded my grasp of it. Not a thought about the technical problem of representing it on paper could be allowed to arrest the flow of my feelings about it, from my eye to my hand. The moment I drop my eyes that flow stops. That is why my drawings are only my way of testing myself. They are my way of proving to myself how far this incorporation of the subtle secrets of the human form has taken place within me. I try to see the figure as a mass, as volume. . . . Occasionally I get effects that are quite interesting, positions that are suggestive and stimulating; but that is by the way. (in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971, p. 85)

It is through his fingers that Rodin grasped "the subtle secrets of the human form"; through his hands he possessed a "feeling" for the human body, an intimate understanding which he

distinguished from knowledge about the human body. As a skilled draftsman, Rodin had "know-how," understanding acquired through practice and experience (Herbert and Stuart Dreyfus, 1988, pp. 16-19).

The above descriptions of drawing from the model allude to a special relation between hand and eye. Here, seeing and drawing are simultaneous: hand and eye move together in accord, in undivided attention to what is seen—and felt; what Franck would describe as "meditation-in-action, by eye and hand in unison" (1993, p.113).

Rodin concludes his description of drawing from the model by saying, "My object is to test to what extent my hands already feel what my eyes see" (in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971, p. 85). Is Rodin suggesting that what the hand feels may precede what the eye sees; that seeing alone is not enough, that in order to draw, our hands must *already* be able to feel what we are drawing, that our hands, as well as our eyes, must be open and receptive? Auerbach emphasizes the importance of touch when he says, "we elucidate the sight from the memory of touch, and out of our understanding of that architecture we then make an image out of lines and other marks" (in Hughes, 1990, p. 32). "True drawing," writes Franck (1993, p. 118), "demands craftsmanship of the hand, as it does visual intelligence of the eye." Recalling that "the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine" (Heidegger, 1968, p. 16), we could say that drawing demands a feeling intelligence of the hand.

This capacity for feeling intelligence of the hand is no less essential for abstract drawing as it is for drawing from observation. Barthes tells about how looking at (abstract) paintings by Twombly impels him to "do the same thing: to go to another table. . . to choose colours and to paint, to draw." Soon however, he despairs at his "impotence" to re-produce the canvas:

> Even before I have tried to draw anything at all, I realize that this background... is something I could never produce: I don't even know how it is done.... I could never handle the pencil, i.e., sometimes so heavily, sometimes so lightly.... And what is inaccessible on the level of stroke is still more so on the level of the surface.... I would not know how to get that irregularity of graphic distribution; for if I deliberately strove for disorder, I would produce only a stupid disorder.... to make an intelligent stroke is ultimately what makes the painter different (from me). (1991, pp. 192-193)

With undivided attention we inhabit the body we draw

Jeannine's and Rodin's descriptions suggest that to understand and render the subject of our drawing, it is necessary to let go of our preoccupation with making a "good" drawing, as well as

our preconception of what constitutes a "good" drawing. Because drawing demands our undivided attention, it is important that we do not divide our attention between making a "good" drawing, a finished thing, and the act of drawing itself.

Attending to another's body with undivided attention, we draw as if from the inside out, feeling the tensions of the pose and the mood of the person we are drawing. We may even sense the model's thoughts. Stella West, who posed for Auerbach regularly over more than two decades, says that once, while modeling, "I was sitting and thinking about my childhood, which wasn't easy. Suddenly Frank said to me, *Stop thinking that! Stop bloody thinking that!*" We may identify with what or whom we draw so strongly that we feel we have become what we draw, inhabiting the other's body, feeling it's age, and state. "I have been pregnant," writes Franck, (1989, p. 117) "I nursed a baby, have been muscular and young, a paunchy middle-aged executive and an almost ninety-year old woman."

Of course this does not only happen with human subjects; we may also find that in drawing attentively, we have become "the field and the sparrows, a withered leaf, a zinnia in a bottle" (Franck, 1989, p. 21). This happens quite spontaneously, as when Franck felt the direction, movement, and growth of an old apple tree, we could say the "body" of the apple tree which, writes Franck,

> is not the first one I draw, perhaps the thousandth. As my pen follows the trunk, I feel the sap rise through it from roots to spreading branches. I feel in my toes how roots grip earth. In the muscles of my torso I feel the tree's upward groping, its twisting, struggling, its reaching against all resistances, towards the sun. In my arms I sense how the branches must wrest themselves away from the parent trunk, to find their own way, fight against the elements. (1973, p. 31)

Alternatively, we may deliberately use our own body to understand a pose or a gesture. How does it feel to stand with one's weight almost entirely on one leg? To throw one's head back? To stretch out one's arm? Cohen writes about using her own body to help her "identify with the movement" of a model's pose: "In the quick gesture poses I'm almost moving my body in tune with the model" (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 41). Thus, our own body becomes the instrument which enables us to draw, sensitively attuned to the movement and mood of the body we draw.

Vulnerable nakedness: Sensuous and sacred

One day in a life drawing session, there was an exceptionally beautiful model. It was not just that she was young, and nicely proportioned, but she carried herself with extraordinary grace. There was something about the way in which a band-aid was neatly wrapped around a perfectly clean toe which suggested a body that was well cared for and respected. For her last pose, she perched on a stool, half draped in a cloth, reminiscent of one of Ingres' bathers.

After a few minutes, an atmosphere akin to worship pervaded the studio as pencils, charcoal, and conté moved silently, slowly, sensuously, on twenty pieces of paper. "There is nothing 'objective' about this caressing of the contour" says Franck, "All the senses are alert in this sensuous, intimate, yet far from carnal contact" (1989, p. 93). How is it that drawing the body is at once so sensuous and so reverent? It is the quality of attention to the body which makes this an act of worship: "sometimes I talked to my pen to coax it: '... see, here it recedes, and there it curves around the bone, and there the skin is getting a little wrinkled... '" (Franck, 1973, p. 90).

We were all in awe of this model, and drew her with a care and tenderness which echoed the way in which she seemed to regard her own body. All, except for one man who stood immediately to my right. He shifted his weight noisily, awkwardly, from one leg to the other, drawing for a few moments, then standing to one side of his easel, holding his pencil at arm's length to measure one body part in relation to another. He held his pencil as though it were a weapon to defend himself from being overwhelmed by such beauty. His pencil measured and analyzed every inch of her, but felt nothing. "She might as well be a still life—or a corpse" I thought, as I glanced at his objectively accurate, but unfeeling drawing. When we draw without feeling, without allowing ourselves to be in touch with what we draw, are we really drawing? Or only illustrating?

When, on the other hand, we permit ourselves to be touched by what we draw, the model before us is no longer just a "nude" but this naked person, shivering, and straining to hold a pose in the centre of the room. Then we see with compassion, suffering with the shivering model. We realize that she or he is not an apple, a earthen jug or a violin, but a woman or a man. Drawing from life is "far from sexless," Franck reminds us,

> to that extent the philistines and asexual puritans are justified in frowning upon it. . . . One never draws an It. One is always confronted with, totally absorbed by either a male or a female who is neither a disembodied spirit or

> sexless. Neither am I. The act of seeing/drawing is utterly sensuous—which does not imply that it is in the least bit sensual. (Franck, 1989, p. 114)

Franck goes on to quote from a letter he received from a Catholic nun who had attended an intensive three day life drawing workshop with him. Her letter shows how we too, can feel naked, exposed, when we draw from life, and exemplifies the way in which drawing the body is both physical and spiritual.

> Physically, emotionally, spiritually I found myself compassionate with all this vulnerable nakedness, I recognized my own. As I sat there watching and drawing I felt the model scrutinizing me in turn as if catching my essence. . . . The nursing mother stirred me to the depths, called me into deep prayer, into my own sexuality. . . . I don't hesitate to say this, I found the combination totally natural. (in Franck, 1989, p. 117)

To be called simultaneously into prayer and into our own sexuality while drawing from life is "totally natural" because a living body is just that: living *and* body, spirit *and* matter, miraculously intertwined. "I became addicted to my drawing pen as the catalyst, the aphrodisiac of the eye that still makes one fall in love, over and over again with life" says Franck, "for to be in love with life is not to be infatuated with something in the abstract. It is the ecstasy of seeing Life become flesh, in a tree, a tuft of grass, a human face" (Franck, 1989, p. 9).

<u>The drawing as a body</u>

Eleanor's posture has changed so much that I might as well start another drawing of her. I open my sketchbook and turn to a fresh page. I remove the top from my pen, shake it a little, and a blob of ink falls on the page. In a moment it becomes that crevice between Eleanor's head and shoulder. In another moment, my pen probes the edge of her face, and a line appears on the paper. Little marks become her eyes. Isn't it marvelous? With these few marks, my seeing of my sister begins to take shape on the paper. If I continue, perhaps this drawing will show how I see Eleanor this evening on the train: her quiet absorption in her book in contrast to the rumble of the train, her fatigue after a long day. "It is a splendid thing," Van Gogh once wrote to his brother, "to look at something and to admire it; to think about it and then to say: I am going to draw it, and work at it until I have fixed it on paper" (1973, p. 111).

Drawing "fixes" in marks on paper, the fleetingness of what we see and feel. Years from now, the way I see my sister this evening on the train will still be here, in this paper. Cézanne said that "the man of letters expresses himself in abstractions whereas the painter, by means of

drawing and colour, gives concrete form to his sensations and perceptions" (in Goldfarb, 1992, p. 183). To draw is to create something concrete, something that can be held and seen. And yet, are not these marks on my page "abstractions" of what I see? This paper holds, in a tangible form, abstractions of what I have seen and felt this evening on the train. The paper on which I draw becomes a repository for the event of seeing. Thus my drawing body produces a drawing that has itself become a body; the verb "drawing" has become a noun. But what is this body, this entity that we call "a drawing"?

Drawing creates a living body

When we draw, we are not just making a thing, an inert object, but something which is living. The way in which we talk about drawing is revealing. For instance, we may say of a particular drawing that at a certain point, it "took on a life of its own"; at a certain point in its development, it underwent a "transformation" from marks on a paper into a drawing. Caisserman-Roth points out that although this does not happen every time, "we recognize that moment when it happens: when we forget that we're looking at a piece of paper and instead see a new reality of space, line, entanglement" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 25).

While drawing my sister, I realized the drawing had taken on a life of its own when I found myself drawing in response to the drawing, as well as to Eleanor sitting opposite me. It was no longer I who drew, but the drawing itself drew my attention to what it needed. I heeded its demands and followed its cues. When this happens, it is as though I have created a living body, a new body. It now looks back at me and engages me in a dialogue as I continue to work.

Lord relates an incident while posing for Giacometti which shows how a drawing (in this case a drawing in paint) acquires its own life, and how an artist begins to identify the emerging portrait with the sitter.

> One day his foot accidentally struck the catch that holds the easel shelf at the proper level, causing the canvas to fall abruptly a foot or two. "Oh, excuse me!" he said. I laughed and observed that he'd excused himself as though he'd cause me to fall instead of the painting. "That's exactly what I did feel," he answered. (1980, p. 37)

Gail describes the process of her drawing becoming "a drawing" as a moment of creative delivery.

> It was like birth itself. And it has to do with me as much as the picture. There's a part of me that had birthed. But there was something about me in it

> that hadn't appeared before. Like I can look at that now and say, "like I drew that, and I know darn well nobody else did." I suppose that's the pleasure of it, the creative part. I would call that a creation.
>
> Later in the evening, I came back and looked at it. Actually it looked alive. That was what I liked about it; it was just alive. And it did look like those flowers. I mean you would recognize it, but it wasn't that it was a snapshot. It wasn't a literal, how can I say it? It wasn't—wasn't like a botanical illustration. It was not like a photograph. And yet I was looking at it and appreciating it for the actuality of it.

Aliveness is not just the quality that we may sense when we look at our drawing. It is also a criteria with which to evaluate the aesthetic quality of a drawing. In fact, the word "aesthetic" has its etymological roots in the Greek word *aesthitikos* meaning "feeling" and "aliveness." And according to Langer, "every artist finds 'life,' 'vitality,' or 'livingness' in a good work of art. . . . for a work to 'contain feeling,' . . . is precisely to be alive, to have artistic vitality, to exhibit 'living form'" (1957, pp. 44, 45). As Henri was drawing elephants from memory and imagination, he found that,

> The line reflects something about how I am thinking about what I am drawing [and as he pointed to the lines on the backs of two different elephants]: You see how that line *feels* different from this one? It's weird: it doesn't seem to matter whether it looks exactly like an elephant: the *feeling* of an elephant still comes across in some other way.

Unlike text book illustrations of elephants, many of Henri's elephants look as though they could walk right off the page! These elephants are alive: the lines which form them can be described as "interesting" because they have a living quality: they trace the path of the artist's hand as it searched for the form of the elephant. It is Henri's capacity for feeling, and the visible traces of his search for form, that makes these drawings aesthetically interesting. However, as the drawing series progressed, he discovered that "the line got less and less interesting as I started to figure out what an elephant looks like." A line effectively dies, appearing either limp or rigid, when we are no longer searching, no longer feeling for the shape.

Paper embodies our gestures

Paradoxically, some of our most aesthetically lively drawings are done, "by the way," to borrow Rodin's phrase, (in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971, p. 85) when we had no expectation of producing a "good" drawing or a finished work. Almost anyone who draws will have done some of their worst drawings on expensive drawing paper, and the drawings they deem to be their best—or most interesting—on newsprint, small scraps of paper, table napkins, or on the lined paper and in the margins of notebooks. For instance, there is a student who at the end of the academic year, threw away most of her lecture notes after carefully clipping her doodles and drawings out of the margins.

Hanna told me about how she felt free to take risks and use her materials in new ways when she used inexpensive paper for a large drawing. At one point, she wrinkled up the paper, unfolded it, and poured ink over it. "Would you do that with paper that cost you twenty-five dollars?" she asked. And continued,

> It would be hard! Anyway, I wrinkled it up. I could do that with this paper because I wasn't worried about it. Then I sprayed the paper so the ink would spread out. And then I poured more ink on. I waited for it to dry, and then drew back into it, and then erased into it. I couldn't continue this process for very long though. The paper I was using can only take so much before it starts to dissolve and destroy itself. But then, it wasn't a precious thing, and it's probably a better drawing. I'm not being as fidgety. My drawing has more life. If only I could draw like this on nice paper! But to do that is something. When I have good paper, I'm almost afraid to touch it! Even before I make a mark, I can feel myself tightening up.

Perhaps it is experience, as well as a larger budget for art materials, which permits one to work freely on more costly papers. Unlike Hanna, who is "almost afraid to touch" good papers, London writes about the pleasures of simply handling paper for its tactile and visual qualities.

> There are days when I rummage through my stack of paper with no particular project in mind. I take a sheet of paper and bring it over to the window, enjoying its flutter as I walk across the studio. Holding it up to the light, I like to scan the sheet for its special patina of irregularities. . . .
>
> Often I'll hold the paper obliquely to the light and seek its rhythms of impressions. . . . In some papers the indentations are deep and wide, creating

> emphatic pools of shadow and peaks of light. Charcoal rubbed across these peaks yields brilliant spots of inky black, while the valleys remain chaste. The contrast between the crisp blacks and whites immediately excites the surface and causes a stir, the echoes of which are felt all across the sheet.
>
> Other papers, as slick as ice, seem to want something to slide across their backs. Jet black ink seems to be called for from the side lines here. The ink seems forever alive and wet on these icy lakes. . . .
>
> Some papers have an open weave, with zillions of tiny fibers making a closely woven felt mat. I love touching this paper. There is so much tactile information here that I close my eyes while passing my hands over its surface. (1989, pp. 181-182)

Nevertheless, we may find inexpensive paper easier to work on, not only because it is simply available wherever we may want to draw—in a restaurant or in a classroom—but because many of our drawings are "experiments" or "events."

> These experiments, these exercises hardly pretend to immortality. I did not use expensive paper guaranteed for a century. It would have inhibited all spontaneity. They are passing events rather than things, not "art objects". I often draw on both sides of my paper. When nevertheless my drawers get too full, the piles too high, I thin them out, throw away what at the moment strikes me as second rate or worse. (Franck, 1989, p. 10)

So the papers on which we draw may hold exercises, experiments or events of seeing. We could also say that the drawings which have succeeded embody our seeing. Isn't this what transforms a paper with marks on it into an "art object"? However, when paper is too obviously an object to start with, it can get in the way. For example, "sometimes there are pieces of grass and flowers in the paper" says Caisserman-Roth, "usually I have trouble working with it. The texture is too dominant. Sometimes it already exists as an object" (in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 87). One day, her studio partner, Cohen had "gorgeous handmade paper" which she thought would be inspiring. She had thought about working with it for weeks, but found that,

> it's really difficult to work on. I'm amazed at how much paper can affect the quality of the drawing and how I was seduced by its lush quality. . . the texture was fighting with my line. I tried using oil pastel, and I felt it was frustrating too, because the paper overpowered all my materials. . . . The surface came between whatever I was feeling and the model and the drawing. It interfered! (Cohen, in Caisserman-Roth & Cohen, 1993, p. 87)

An expensive paper of which we are too conscious, or which is inappropriately textured, literally gets in the way. London points out how the word *medium* is derived from the Latin word *medius* which means "middle."

> Media are things that stand between, in the middle of other things. . . . between imagination and expression, between the mind and the act, the hand and the canvas. Media shuttle between the realm of thought and feeling and the concrete world of things and events. . . . *Art supplies* are often considered passive, inanimate things devoid of inner vitality, blocks, dumb things. *Media* speaks of movement, of position and of transition. (1989, p. 169)

The surface on which we draw needs to be something which we regard and respect as something living, which like a healthy body, we can overlook. A suitable paper for drawing does not draw our attention.

Letting go of drawings

Historically, drawing has been considered a preparatory medium for painting and sculpture and it is only relatively recently that drawings have been made and exhibited as finished works in their own right (Ayrton, 1957, pp. 68-69; Rose, 1976, pp. 9, 10). Thus, drawings are often made only to be let go. In a sculptor's studio for example, the drawings he has not thrown out, are stored—or rather wedged—into corners of the studio; they are not sprayed with fixative, and are rolled, folded, or crumpled into any available space. Henri may hold onto some of his drawings, but not with a tight grip. "If I didn't throw out two-thirds of what I draw," writes Franck, "my house would be so full of drawings that there would be no place to sleep" (1981, p. 41). There would be too many "bodies" if he did not throw out some of his drawings.

It is when drawings change hands, when they are sold, or given from one person to another that they lose their original value as working drawings, and become valued as commodities, what Auerbach calls "objects of financial value or passive beauty" (in Hughes, 1990, p. 7). They may have been made to let go of, but they can become rarefied things to hold on to. Whereas a drawing's maker may have handled it casually, even carelessly, years later, a museum curator's white gloves hold it reverently.

Saving drawings

When Barthes attempted to produce Twombly's lines and marks he concluded that "Twombly's line is inimitable." It is not only Twombly's line that is inimitable however; any individual's line is inimitable. That is why we sign cheques and other important documents with our signature—with our own hand. The forging of signatures, drawings and paintings gives the appearance of perfect imitation, but this appearance is a deception, a sleight of hand for the marks made by one hand can never—quite—be made by another. "What is ultimately

inimitable" writes Barthes, "is the body" (1991, p. 170). Drawings show the traces of our hand, the traces of our gestures—gestures which only our body can make.

This explains the unlimited value of a mark, any mark, made by the hand of a famous artist such as Picasso, for as Barthes reminds us, "in our society, the tiniest graphic feature, provided it derive from this inimitable body, from this certain body, is worth millions" (1991, p. 170). We value the graphic traces of an individual's gestures not only because they cannot be *imitated* but also, as Ayrton points out, because they cannot be *translated* into another form of expression: "What is untranslatable in Picasso's pictures is not the meaning but the gesture by which the meaning is made explicit. . . . the movement of the fingers, wrist and elbow. . . is the quality in Picasso. . . which is untranslatable into words" (1957, pp. 96-97).

We do not have to be as famous as Picasso however, or even particularly talented, to marvel at the uniqueness of marks made by our own hands. Looking at a collection of our own drawings accumulated over time gives us an opportunity to discover and to cherish something of the inimitability, the untranslatability, of our own gestures. Cathy Mullen (1987) writes about saving artworks as a form of "bio-graphy." Drawings especially trace our life in graphic form. When we draw, our hands are searching, feeling, grasping, being held, withholding, and letting go, and in traces of these various gestures, we can trace the contours, the particular configuration of our own seeing and feeling. And because "all the work of the hand is rooted in thinking" (Heidegger, 1968, p. 16), drawings, as handiworks, give us immediate, intuitive access to our non-verbal thinking, as it is embodied in the marks made by our hand. In this way, graphite, charcoal, ink, *hold* what otherwise might be lost. Thus, drawings are a way of "saving our life" (Mullen, 1987).

My reflections are brought to a close by the sudden halt of the train. "Here we are," Eleanor says cheerily. As I look up our eyes meet briefly as if to greet each other after a long absence. I notice that she has already put on her coat and put away her book, and with it, the drowsy, dreamy mood of evening reading. She has brushed aside the strands of hair that graced her forehead while I drew her. Then suddenly I catch her eyes peering with interest at my open drawing book. She looks away, and the slight smile which forms at the corners of her lips tells me she has seen my drawing of her. Perhaps she knew all along! I hurriedly put my drawing book away and pick up my coat and various bags.

"What have you been drawing?" Eleanor asks as we make our way through the crowds and baggage. I can't help but smile at her question! "I'll show you when we get home," I respond with a twinkle in my eye.

CHAPTER 8: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Several years later, I found myself in another English train station, much like the one at which I had disembarked with my sister after our journey together. It was a bright July morning, still fresh and full of anticipation. Standing on the platform in the moments before the train arrived, I realized that since writing about that train ride, I have come to associate train travel with drawing. This day would be no exception. With my husband, I was on my way to London to see an exhibition of Degas' drawings.

My brief reverie was soon interrupted by Ian's voice: "King's Cross: that's our train. Let's go!" We boarded, and quickly looked around for two seats, choosing a group of four, where a young woman was already seated by the window. Although she greeted us politely with a quiet smile, she seemed to be absorbed in her own thoughts, gazing through the window. Ian and I settled into our places, commenting to one another that we were surprised that we had made it on time for this train. It had been a long and rapid walk to the train station, and I was looking forward to dozing through the countryside for the next hour. Then, as the train pulled out of the station, my eyes met those of the young woman opposite. Our glances held tentative invitations for conversation. When travelling at close proximity like this, there is always the question of whether or not to engage in conversation. Shall I? Before I gathered my thoughts however, Ian took the plunge, inquiring where she had boarded the train that morning. She told us that she got on at Ely, but quickly added that she had only been in England for four days, having just returned from Florence. We asked her what Florence is like, and she described summer heat, crowdedness, warm colours, the scarcity of trees and green spaces. I could not help but notice that her description held many references to visual details. Gesturing to the window, she added, "England looks so different to me now. I feel as though I am seeing it for the first time." When we asked how long she had been away, she replied that she had been in Florence for most of the past year, attending an art school.

Now I really took an interest in the conversation! Immediately abandoning my wish to sleep, I replied, "Really?!" My tone must have been particularly enthusiastic, for the young woman smiled and said, "it sounds very romantic, doesn't it?—studying art in Florence. But in fact, it's hard *work*." I asked about what she had been studying. She explained that she had been attending a small art school with a very traditional program. Students are required to spend the first year of study drawing from life, before they can begin painting at some point in their second year. Her teacher believes that anyone can learn to draw, provided they have good

instruction and sufficient practice. It's really about learning to see. I nodded my head knowingly, and began to tell her a little about my own interest in drawing. Soon we were engaged in a lively discussion of papers and charcoal, drawing in art museums and other public places. I discovered that she too was on her way to the Degas exhibition, with her sketchbook tucked into her bag. "You know," she confided, "I haven't drawn for four days!" in a tone in which one might say one had not eaten for four days. Seeing my bemused expression, she pointed out that because she had been drawing from the model all day, five days a week, since September, a four day break felt like a very long time. Reflecting for a moment on how my own drawing makes noticeable improvement over several months of weekly half day life drawing sessions, I marveled at what might be possible by drawing from the model all day, almost every day, for a year. Imagine the skill and confidence one would gain from that much practice!

Yet, in spite of what seems to be a sound education in art, the young woman went on to tell me that she worries about what she will do after another two years of study at this art school. She loves drawing and painting, but is it practical? Although her parents are supportive of her interest in art, they assume that her studies are a direct route to becoming a society portrait artist. She however, is not sure she wants to spend her life churning out portraits to earn a living. That is not why she has spent the past year drawing from life each day.

Our conversation continued, in the back of a big, old taxi, through city streets, until we reached the corner on Trafalgar Square where she was to meet her friend. We did not, as we thought we might, meet in the exhibition that day. And, although I have not seen her since, our conversation has stayed with me. Reflecting on it, I realize that embedded in our conversation about drawing, and throughout the preceding chapters, there are two distinct, yet related conceptions of "practice." The following discussion of drawing practice, in terms of art, education, and life will clear the way for drawing some conclusions about the personal and pedagogical significance of drawing from observation.

Drawing in art: Reflections on practice and work

At the beginning of chapter three, I offered a two part definition of "practice" as "a repeated and disciplined engagement of mind and body in an activity" and "a *way* of doing and being which takes time to learn, and which one continues to learn over the course of a lifetime." The latter part of this definition was particularly useful in explicating phenomenological research in terms of practice. In reference to the arts however, the word "practice" usually refers to the first part of this definition, "those repeatable patterns of thought and behavior considered

essential to the development of various artistic skills" (Howard, 1982, p. 157). This conception of practice goes hand in hand with the saying "practice makes perfect." Practice conceived as *to practice* is a means to an end. The end is mastery. Accordingly, a reasonable degree of competence in drawing, if not mastery, is attainable by almost anyone[35] who is willing *to practice.*

In chapter three, I quoted London (1989, p. 16) reminding art students that the ability to draw like Degas or Rembrandt is as "simple" as practicing for ten hours a day, six days a week, for forty years. The point of course is that devoting that much time to disciplined drawing practice is not so simple! Yet, the statement is provocative, for it implies that practice, rather than talent, may be the crucial factor in determining artistic success. Audette (1993) and Edwards (1979) support this view, both pointing to the example of Van Gogh who did not start drawing until he was twenty-seven; his early drawings are laboured and awkward. In contrast to the popular belief that drawing is a mysterious ability accessible to only the talented few for whom it is relatively effortless, an emphasis on practice conceives of drawing as a teachable skill, making drawing accessible to all, if they are willing to *work* at it. This view of practice is supported by numerous art educators and artists. Hockney, for example, claims "that anybody can learn to draw quite well just as anybody can be taught to write" (in Camp, 1981, p. 6). Edwards' (1979, 1993)[36] and Nicolaïdes' (1941) approaches to teaching drawing are based on this belief, and both advocate the practice of drawing exercises which enable students to develop skills of "seeing." That drawing is experienced as a "learnable teachable skill" (Edwards, 1979, p. 3) is evident in the following remarks by a beginning student of drawing. Speaking about a drawing she had done of an old shoe and a baseball glove, she said, "I was quite pleased with it. I thought 'oh, I'll never be able to make those things look as though they're real.' And although it took a lot of hard *work*, several attempts, crumpled papers, I finally produced something I liked." "You know," she continued, "they say that anybody can draw! And I did not believe that. So now, I think, well maybe they're right: *any*body can draw!" Thus, the conception of practice as the repetition of exercises to master a skill implies an imperative to work. Indeed, as the woman on the train said, "it sounds very romantic, doesn't it? . . . But in fact, it's hard *work*."

While an understanding of practice as *to practice* serves as a necessary reminder of the work involved in learning to draw, it does not explain other, meaningful dimensions of drawing experience. There is more to drawing than practicing to master skills. Even beginners speak of

their enjoyment of developing a new way of seeing the world, their absorption in the "hard work" of learning to draw, as meaningful.

The word "practice" is also used to refer to *a practice*, a life activity, which in its fullest sense is a way of living, a *way* of doing and being which one continues to learn over the course of a lifetime. As a life activity, practice also implies work, yet in a different sense, evident in Picasso's decription of his own youthful drawing practice.

> For being a bad student I was banished to the *calaboose*—a bare cell with whitewashed walls and a bench to sit on. I liked it there, because I took along a sketch pad and drew incessantly. . . . I think I provoked situations so that professors would punish me. I was isolated and no one bothered me—drawing, drawing, drawing. I could have stayed there forever drawing without a stop. True, all my life I've been in the habit of drawing, but in that cell it was a special pleasure—difficult to explain. It's not that I wanted to excel, rather to work—that's what one must always do. (in Chan, 1995, p. 10)

Here Picasso suggests that the wish "to work" constitutes a different orientation to drawing practice than working to excel, to develop skills. What makes this account all the more interesting is that by the time he was a teenager, banished to the "calaboose" Picasso had already mastered the skills of representational drawing. Still, he took every opportunity to work at drawing, for "that's what one must always do." No matter how accomplished his youthful work appeared to be by conventional standards, he knew that his drawing would continue to develop by working at it. Picasso was among the three artists whose childhood drawings were studied by Pariser (see chapter two) who speculates that the "sureness" with which Picasso was able to draw as an adult "is in part the end result of tireless practice" (1985, p. 199).[37] Rather than working with an end in view, this attitude to drawing conceives of "work" as ongoing, open-ended, and unending. "The only way to get under way in the arts," says Colville, "is to hammer away at it every day, to keep at it. . . . You mustn't think that your drawings will always be good. Do not try to make beautiful drawings. Just draw, draw, draw."[38]

Working at drawing through the course of a life allows for the possibility of developing drawing beyond established conventions of competence, or even expertise. The mastery of the skills of representation for example, is no longer an end in itself, but becomes a means for expression and invention. Drawing conceived of as an important aspect of one's life work as an artist may thus be conceptualized as a means to an end, albeit more sophisticated. In the lives of painters and sculptors, drawing is usually understood as a means to accomplishing what is generally considered the more significant work of painting and sculpture. This constitutes another form of drawing *to practice*: in preparation for painting or sculpture, one may draw to

try things out, to rehearse, and in this way *to practice* various compositions. Yet another form of practice is practicing to maintain drawing skills. Franck writes,

> I calculated that in the past forty years, I have done at least sixty thousand drawings of the human body (I must have thrown away 55, 529 of them), but I continue drawing from life, at least one night a week. Why? Because unless I keep practicing my scales, I can't play sonatas. I need this practice if I am to draw people in city streets. (1993, p. 74)

By thinking of drawing primarily as a means *to practice*, whether it is directed towards the mastery and maintenance of skills, or towards the production of works of art in other media, theorists, teachers, and artists alike risk overlooking other, meaningful dimensions of drawing experience.

But, there is another reason why Picasso was "in the habit of drawing" throughout his life: the work of drawing is a "special pleasure—difficult to explain." Although it may be difficult to explain, the "special pleasure" of drawing conveyed through Picasso's words resonates with the pleasures and meanings of drawing from observation described in the preceding chapters. What was the pleasure that Picasso felt? We can imagine that for the teenage Picasso, the experience of drawing, alone, in the bare, white-washed room, accentuated the quiet attentiveness of drawing, the delight of watching the image take shape on the paper. Auerbach, a contemporary artist who paints—and draws—extensively from life, spoke about his work in a television interview. Hockney writes the following about Auerbach's comments on the pleasure of art work.

> He was talking about his way of painting, his struggling way of painting. And he talked about it very sincerely, and then he looked up and said, I don't want to give the wrong impression, you know. It's hard work, but it's fun in the studio and any artist who tells you he's not having fun in the studio is a bit of a liar. And I thought, oh, yes, that's true; however hard it is, however much you struggle, you do enjoy it. (1993, p. 241)

The young woman I met on the train to London also spoke of her enjoyment of drawing. It is her love of the activity of drawing which has moved her to go all the way to Italy to study art. She feels misunderstood when her parents see her studies mainly as a means to earn a livelihood by producing portraits. Although her mastery of figure drawing may well equip her to earn a living, that is not what is motivating her to spend hours each day drawing from the model.

In fact, drawing is not only a pleasure, but for some, it is experienced as a necessary activity. The woman on the train spoke of not having drawn for four days in a tone which suggested that the activity of drawing had become a vital part of her life, as if it would be difficult to get through another day without drawing. It is not only accomplished artists and aspiring art students who speak of the experience of drawing as fulfilling and necessary for its own sake. Some of the hobbyists and semi-professional artists quoted in the preceding chapters also speak of drawing in this manner. Ivan, who owns a hairdressing business at which he works full time, devotes as much time as possible to drawing and painting. This, he said, in a serious tone, is something he "needs" to do.

> I need to have that experience! Exactly what it does for me I don't know. It's the activity as much as the result. And when I do, it's not fun, it's not relaxing. It doesn't feel like a catharsis. It's not particularly a relief. Of course there's a sense of accomplishment if the drawing or painting goes well. But for me, the actual process is at least as important as the finished work. It's difficult to describe. It just has to be done.

Nigel is a retired doctor who has been drawing and painting as a "hobby" for about forty years. "I have an attitude about this whole thing," he said, "that the end results are incidental. If someone likes them, well, that's fine. But the real result is with you: you've done it. To me, the important thing is to have had the experience. And this, I suppose is the reason to do it." His words recall those of Nicolaïdes, who wrote, "The effort you make is not for one particular drawing, but for the experience you are having—and that will be true even when you are eighty years old" (1941, p. 2).

What Nicolaïdes, the retired physician, the hairdresser, and the art student share with professional artists such as Picasso, Franck, Colville, Hockney and Auerbach is an orientation to drawing which conceives of practice as a life long activity. This more inclusive conception of practice permits them to acknowledge a rich layer of lived meaning which lies below the surface of instrumental orientations to drawing (practice in the service of mastery or preparation for other works). While each of these people engages in drawing as a means to an end, such as developing their drawing skills, or planning the composition of a painting, they *think* of each act of drawing as part of a life long practice, so that, *in addition to* mastering and maintaining skills and producing works of art, each experience is meaningful in itself. Or, more accurately, in addition to their enjoyment of the experience of drawing, these artists and hobbyists develop skills and produce works of art. "But that," to quote Rodin, "is by the way"

(in Elsen & Varnedoe, 1971, p. 85). Thus drawing *as a practice* is a way of thinking about drawing which seems to be more inclusive than thinking of drawing practice primarily *to practice* skills or to do preparatory work for the production of works of art. For those who engage in drawing *as a practice*, the means and ends of drawing merge in the experience of ongoing work.

Drawing in education: Rationalizing practice

The inclusion of drawing in the education of artists, and especially in the education of children, is frequently rationalized as a means to accomplishing ends, with the unfortunate implication that the ends are of far greater significance than the means. When this attitude is carried to the extreme, drawing from observation is regarded as only being of instrumental value, and much of its significance is missed. Traditionally, in the education of artists, drawing is taught with specific ends in view. As suggested above, these are quite straightforward and suited to the needs of post-secondary art students: preparation for works in other media, and the mastery of skills, which eventually become means for the ends of artistic expression and invention.

In general education however, the issue of drawing is more complex. In chapter two, I showed that there are conflicting theories about *how* children learn to draw. *Why* children should learn to draw has also been a subject of debate. The question of drawing, writes Baker, "has never centred on the question of whether children can or will draw; rather, it centred. . . on the ends to which drawing pedagogy should be directed" (1983, p. 43). Historically, these ends have tended to be utilitarian. For example, in the eighteenth century, Jean Jacques Rousseau recommended drawing "not so much for art's sake" as for "exactness of eye and flexibility of hand" (in Baker, 1983, p. 43). In the early nineteenth century, Johann Pestalozzi developed Rousseau's ideas, believing that in addition to "skill of hand," drawing practice would develop in children "a readiness in gaining sense impressions of all things. . . of which the effect will be to make everything that comes within the sphere of their observation, gradually clear and plain" (in Steggles, 1984, pp. 54-55). In nineteenth century Canada, it was instruction in "drawing" which eventually evolved into art education by the early twentieth century; Roger Clark notes that "these early drawing courses were designed to train draughtsmen in mechanical illustration" (1994, p. 2). At the same time, drawing was also valued for its contribution to academic subjects. Egerton Ryerson's beliefs were similar to those of the European educators mentioned above. Martin describes Ryerson'd beliefs,

> Drawing contributes to good writing, and assists in the study of Geography (drawing of familiar objects—school, home, gardens, street) and Natural

> History (sketching outline drawings of the objects studied). Also, Drawing amuses children, gives skill to the hand, strengthens the memory, and improves invention. . . . the educational significance of Drawing is that it quickens the faculty of observation and teaches the eye to judge dimensions correctly. (1993, p. 48)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cizek believed that rudimentary skill in drawing is a necessary graphic counterpart to the acquisition of basic skills of linguistic communication and expression. Accordingly, drawing should be included in the curriculum because, "every human being should be able to draw and 'represent' as well as to read and write" (in Viola, 1936, pp. 29-30). "But," Cizek added, "the ability to show a carpenter with a few lines, 'I want this chair made so and so,' has nothing to do with art" (in Viola, 1936, p. 30). While suggesting that representational skills are completely unrelated to art is questionable, Cizek's belief that drawing should primarily serve broad educational goals seems to echo a widespread way of thinking. Clark emphasizes that well into the twentieth century, art experiences in schools "were fundamentally valued for their ability to be *instrumental* in the achievement of *generic educational goals*, rather than for their ability to develop art skills per se" (1994, p. 7).

Although more recent rationales for drawing acknowledge personal, expressive and creative reasons for drawing, some still include reasons which are directed towards utilitarian ends (Martin, 1995). "However compelling the personal reasons for drawing" write Hurwitz and the Wilsons (1987, p. 10), they "are not sufficiently compelling to justify a place for drawing in the schools." Although the ends for which artists draw—such as expression and invention, study and composition—are well understood by art educators, these purposes for drawing are not generally regarded as important enough to serve as rationales for including drawing in the curriculum. Consequently, a great deal of research and writing on drawing has been directed towards justifying its place in schools by associating drawing with "generic educational goals." For example (as noted in chapter two), Salome conducted research to establish that drawing "improved visual perception" among elementary school children (1965, p. 32). Echoing Pestalozzi, McFee and Degge state that students should draw "in order to learn about things" (1977, p. 19). Drawing, they argue, also serves "to symbolize and record experience so that it can be shared with others" (McFee and Degge, 1977, p. 21). Golding and Hurwitz claim that "the study of drawing develops children's perceptual skills, teaches them to synthesize and encourages powers of discrimination" (1985, p. 14). Older students, they argue, "will learn that the act of drawing often helps them clarify their ideas" in a wide range of subject areas (1985, p. 14). Martin points out that in contemporary schools, drawing is often understood as "a tool to gather and sort information into systems. . . an aid to visual memory" (1995, p. 11).

While the effort to argue for the inclusion of drawing in general education is commendable, rationalizing drawing in terms of utilitarian ends or even "generic educational goals" is questionable. Certainly drawing can—and does—contribute to keen visual perception and an agile hand. It is equally true that drawing is a way of learning about the world and clarifying thought. And yet, these rationalizations seem to miss the essence of drawing experience, "that which makes some-'thing' what it is—and without which it could not be what it is" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The lived meanings of drawing, described throughout chapters four to seven, suggest that what is essential to the experience of drawing from observation does not especially serve practical ends. Moreover, there are other activities which may accomplish the utilitarian ends cited by educators just as well, or better, than drawing does. Even creative and expressive ends (when stated abstractly, divorced from art-making) may be just as well served by other subjects (Hurwitz, Wilson and Wilson, 1987, p. 10). By rationalizing the place of drawing in education in terms of its instrumental value, educators risk turning drawing into something else, and depriving students of the very experiences which, although they are difficult to justify or explain in terms of utilitarian ends, make drawing a meaningful practice.

Drawing in life: A non-rationalized practice

Herbert and Stuart Dreyfus have coined the term "marginal and non-rationalized practices" to describe human activities which, although they cannot be rationalized as contributing to the ends of "human efficiency, productivity, health and welfare" (in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 98) are nevertheless vitally important human practices. Using the example of friendship, they argue that "as soon as you have friends for your health or for your career you've got some new kind of friendship which is of a technological-rational kind" (in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 98). Similarly, when drawing from observation is taught for better visual perception, etc. is it still drawing? Some art educators would be likely to answer "no." For example, Mullen has distinguished between "school art" and "home art" (see Brooks, 1982), and the Wilsons differentiate "school art" from the "spontaneous" art that children practice on their own (Hurwitz, Wilson and Wilson, 1987, p. 15).

In life, the various rationales for including drawing in the education of children often seem to fall short of the lived meanings of drawing. Conversely, many of the drawing experiences described in the preceding chapters would be difficult, if not impossible to account for as means towards technological-rational ends of efficiency and productivity. The difficulties inherent in justifying the inclusion of drawing in the curriculum are akin to the difficulties of justifying the arts in education. Louis Lankford presents an argument for the arts which differs from those

mentioned above. He writes: "I believe that the arts are fundamental to human existence, that there is something essential to our being that compels us to sing and dance and draw" (1991, p. 57). This is an argument for the arts in education (and by implication, for drawing in education) which is not directed towards technological-rational ends, but rather towards our humanity. Similarly, the "marginal and non-rationalized practices" described by Herbert and Stuart Dreyfus (in Flyvbjerg, 1991) are aspects of being human, things which people do spontaneously, rather than on principle. These include: going for walks, playing with children, mentoring young people, caring for the sick, for plants and for animals. Some of these practices have become professional activities, such as teaching or nursing. In virtue of being professionalized, some non-rationalized practices seem to be rationalized: one can take courses, earn degrees, and belong to professional societies. Nevertheless, what is at the heart of the professions of teaching or nursing is a non-rationalized impulse to mentor young people or to care for the sick. Similarly, while drawing is "rationalized" in courses, societies, and the curricula of general and post-secondary education, the impulse to draw resists rationalization, and cannot be controlled, managed, or technologized. Thus, drawing from observation is another practice which could be described as a "marginal and non-rationalized practice."

To say that drawing from observation is a "marginal" practice is not to say that it is "trivial and insignificant" (H. Dreyfus, in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 98), but that its significance lies in a different domain from activities directed towards productivity and efficiency. In contrast to the rationalizing sort of arguments for art in education, Lankford celebrates the marginality of art when he writes, "I'm *proud* to teach a frill," and goes on to describe art as "an extravagance" something people do spontaneously, "rather than because they must" (1991, p. 57). One could argue for the "extravagance" of art experience as a human need along the same lines that Ellen Dissanayake (1992) argues for art-making in terms of "making special" as biologically necessary for human survival. However upon reflection, it seems not entirely appropriate to describe the activity of drawing from observation as "extravagant." Unlike more elaborate art forms such as printmaking, ballet or opera, there is nothing that is excessive or complex about drawing: the materials—a tool and a surface to work upon—are simple and not costly, the procedure is direct and the results are immediate.[39] And, as noted above, drawing often plays a subservient role to painting and sculpture. Drawing is humble, modest, marginal. Consider some of the examples mentioned at the beginning of chapter one: drawing with one's finger on a steamy bathroom mirror, people who do not know each other's language conducting a lively conversation by drawing, or making rapid sketches of a landscape to explore possible compositions for a painting.

"Marginal practices," says Dreyfus, "always risk being taken over by technological rational understanding" (in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 98). One would think that drawing, as a marginal and modest practice, would be especially at risk of being "taken over" not only by "technological rational understanding" which, as suggested above, already threatens to dominate the way in which drawing is justified in education, but by increasingly sophisticated technologies for making visual images. Surprisingly, this is not the case. For example, Fuller notes that the inventor of the hologram, Dennis Gabor, did not intend to make "traditional aesthetic pursuits obsolete" but instead speaks out for the retrieval of the "joy" to be found in the work of one's own "skillful hands" (in Fuller, 1983, p. 34). In the lives of many artists, hobbyists and students, drawing from observation with conventional materials continues to be a vitally important activity. In his essay on technology (1977), Heidegger points out that technology itself is not the problem. Rather, what gives cause for concern is the "essence of modern technology" which in fact is "nothing technological" but "enframing," a way of regarding everything instrumentally, as being ever-available, convertible and controllable raw materials for efficient and productive use. The danger, as Heidegger sees it, is that this increasingly pervasive attitude may consume us and obscure other modes of "revealing" the truth of things. He suggests that what will save us from being taken over by "enframing" is to be found in the "realm of art" which is akin to, but different from modern technology. The kinship between technology and art lies in their common ancestry in the Greek word *techne*. In ancient Greece, *techne* referred to both art and craft; art bore "the modest name of *techne*." For the ancient Greeks, *techne* was associated with an understanding of truth as revelation, rather than a notion of truth as "correctness of representation" (Heidegger, 1977, pp. 294, 295). As a way of revealing truth by bringing forth and making present, *techne* belonged in the realm of *poiesis*, poetic revealing (Heidegger, 1977, pp. 294, 316).

Heidegger writes that it is "here and now and in the little things" that we might nurture the "saving power," the retrieval of the origins of technology in *techne*. Drawing is a practice which is especially attentive to the "here and now," and "the little things." I don't think that Heidegger is claiming that the arts are a "saving power" in the sense of *rescuing* us from "enframing." Nor would I make such a claim for drawing. Rather, as a "non-rationalized practice," drawing from observation is one of the "little things" people do which actively resists the dominance of technological-rational attitudes. "Could seeing/drawing be a small victory of sorts," asks Franck (1993, p. 163), "that of the human eye over the horrific 'normalcy' caused by our conditioned nonseeing?" However, forms of drawing which demand only minimal skill, attention and effort, and thus do not have a strong element of *techne*, do not have as much

capacity as more disciplined forms of drawing to actively resist the dominance of technological-rational thinking.

Drawing from observation as a focal practice

In addition to the Dreyfuses conception of marginal and non-rationalized practices, there is another, related way of theorizing about life practices which will be helpful in illuminating the lived meanings of drawing which lie below the surface of the usual conceptualizations about drawing in the service of art or in the service of utilitarian ends. Borgmann has created the term "focal practices" to identify activites which, in Herbert Dreyfus' words, require "effort" and "focus" (in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 99). The requirement for effort, focused attention and skill make focal practices a narrower category of practices than those described by the Dreyfuses; focal practices could be thought of as belonging to the larger family of marginal and non-rationalized practices.[40] For example, while life drawing could be called a focal practice, doodling and scribbling are marginal and non-rationalized practices. In this way, marginal and non-rationalized practices are primordial human activities, and focal practices are the skilled, cultured forms of some of these activities.

Borgmann has developed the notion of focal practices from two sources: the etymology, meanings, and connotations of the word *focus*, and Heidegger's essay on the significance of "the thing" (1971). The word *focus* can be traced back to Latin where it means "hearth" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 196). Borgmann shows how the connotations of "hearth" contribute to our contemporary understanding of focus. Especially before the invention of modern heating and cooking devices, the hearth was "a place that gathered the work and leisure of a family and gave the house a center" (1984, pp. 41-42). Thus, as a "thing" in Heidegger's sense, the hearth gathered the elements and its users into a physical and social engagement with it, in its particiular context, and rewarded them spiritually and physically. A modern fireplace also has the gathering capacity of a "thing."[41] Ablaze with crackling logs, it easily becomes the focal point of a room, inviting contemplation and a slower pace of conversation; in the pauses, we gather our thoughts and focus attention as we stare into the flames. In current usage, the word hearth is often metaphorical, referring to the centre of the home and family life, while we use the word focus (as a noun) to mean a centre of activity or attention, or (as a verb) to settle on one thing, to concentrate.[42] In addition to these meanings, focus has a modern optical meaning as the point at which rays converge and from which they diverge in a regular manner.[43] This combines with the older meanings of focus to suggest that *a focus* is something which gathers and centres people and activities, while illuminating its surroundings (Borgmann, 1984, p. 197; 1992, p. 96).

To focus on something is to give it concentrated attention, "to make it central, clear, and articulate" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 197).

Even in the midst of contemporary technological culture, there are many focal things to be found. In addition to Heidegger's "inconspicuously compliant" things such as a wine jug, a footbridge, a bench (1971, p. 182), Borgmann lists the wilderness, the table, and by implication, the garden (1984, p. 197).[44] I would add an easel, and a well used sketchbook. These focal things however, require focal practices to sustain them: drawing, hiking, gardening, and the making of family and festive meals.

Such practices allow for the experience of "focal reality," a way of naming "the encounters each of us has with things that of themselves have engaged mind and body and have centred our lives" (Borgmann, 1992, p. 119). These kinds of human experiences are threatened by the way in which technology gives people easy, quick results—a ready-made meal, recorded music, a low-maintenance garden with an automated sprinkler system—without making an effort, without focusing attention. As Heidegger (1977) points out, what is really worrying is not the technology itself, but the way in which we are increasingly and unthinkingly predisposed to assume that what is faster, more productive, more expedient, more cost efficient is necessarily better. If we allow ourselves to be unthinkingly hurried along by a technological rationality, we risk missing the kinds of experiences which mark our humanity. And yet, it is against the background of contemporary technological culture that the significance of focal practices stands out. For example, the focal significance of long distance running out of doors is highlighted by its contrast to the experience of keeping fit on machines in a sweaty, windowless gym. Similarly, the focal significance of patiently drawing landscapes and cityscapes while travelling is readily apparent when it is contrasted with the fast and inattentive snapping of a disposable camera. In the first chapter, I remarked on my surprise that people would want to take up drawing from observation when so many other efficient and effortless ways exist to produce images. At the time, I worried that more traditional practices of drawing were threatened by new technologies. From the point of view of focal practices however, teaching drawing in close proximity to a gallery which presented images made by photographic and technological devices, actually served to highlight the "hidden splendor" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 196) of drawing.

It is important however, not to see the significance of focal practices as "transporting a person into a certain mental or emotional state" (1984, p. 202). This, Borgmann warns, would invite the technologizing of focal practices, making a subjective psychological state into a desirable end to

be sought by increasingly effective techniques, and thus an end which can be severed from means. Instead, one of the most important characteristics of focal practices—and of drawing as a life practice—is the unity of means and ends in the experience of ongoing activity. In drawing, as in other focal practices, the inseparability of means and ends give rise to meaningful engagement in pleasurable work.

Living with drawing: The pleasures of work

People who live with drawing from observation as a life long practice speak about drawing as an activity they "need" to do, a practice, which quite apart from the results, is variously described as "enjoyable," "fun," "a special pleasure." These same people (quoted above) also describe their practice of drawing as "work" and "struggle." This seems contradictory, and yet, when Picasso says, "it was a special pleasure—difficult to explain. It's not that I wanted to excel, rather to work" (in Chan, 1995, p. 10), his words strike a chord. To describe drawing as work *and* pleasure, almost in the same breath, is to describe a particular quality of attention which is characteristic of "focal practices" in which "effort and joy are one; the split between means and ends, labor and leisure is healed" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 202). This quality of attention dwells at the very heart of drawing from observation. And yet, since there are many other practices in which we may experience this, we must ask: what is unique about the experience of focused attention and effort in drawing from observation? And how does this attentiveness contribute to our lives?

What follows is a response to these questions in four parts. Although all four address both the personal and pedagogical significance of drawing, the first two parts, below, speak more to the personal significance of drawing, while the next two parts speak more directly to the pedagogical significance of drawing. The ways in which we experience focused attention and effort in drawing are described in the chapters on the lived relation and lived body of drawing. Thus, the following reflections on the "pleasures of work" are developed mostly from these two chapters, and to a lesser extent from the chapter about the lived time of drawing.

Drawing composes and orders

There are four ways in which drawing composes and orders. The first is composing a picture by arranging marks within the dimensions of the paper or other surface. In doing this, one creates an underlying order for the drawing or painting. In a drawing, the composition may be accomplished in a few strokes or in a few gestures of the hand over the paper, the "dry-run" discussed in chapter seven.

The second way in which drawing composes is related to the first. Drawing from observation focuses on the "other"—on things and persons other than oneself.[45] The attention given to these others in drawing them is careful, slow, and above all, silent. This outwardly focused attention reveals an unexpected order in the scene before one's eyes. Here practice in the more "technical" dimensions of drawing enables one to observe closely, to assess shapes, angles, distances, slowly, carefully. In this way, *techne* "reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 295). The act of drawing discovers structure and coherence in what otherwise appears random and haphazard. Suddenly, everything has its own place.

In the act of composing, focusing now on the scene, now on the paper, we compose ourselves. In chapter six, I noted how the act of drawing from observation unclutters and quiets. Hockney describes how he draws when he feels "restless" and "not quite knowing what to do."

> Usually when I get into that state I have to do something, so I just sit and draw in some way or other. . . what should I do?: I'll make some drawings of my friends; I'll make them slowly, accurately, have them sit down and pose for hours, and so on. I tend to do that at times when I feel a little lost, searching around. (1993, p. 8)

Hockney shows, I think, how by drawing "slowly, accurately" in silent attentiveness to an other, one gathers attention, collects and composes oneself. As in the experience of other focal practices, "the normal clutter and distraction fall away" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 200). To draw when one feels "a little lost, searching around" or out of place is to provide a *focus* for the search by looking for forms and their interrelation. The searching look and gesture of drawing engage both eye and hand, mind and body, and one soon finds the place of things—on the paper, and in the world. In doing so, one finds one's bearings and feels present. In this way, the experience of drawing recalls its etymological roots. The word "draw" can be traced back to the Latin word *trahere*, meaning to pull or draw; later this developed into the Old English form of the word, *dragen* which is related to the German word *tragen* meaning to bear or carry. [46] Thus, to "draw" has connotations of pulling, bearing and carrying. As a focal practice, drawing centres and orients by drawing attention to the "here and now," "the little things." This is a third way in which drawing composes.

This composing of oneself, the drawing, and the world may be experienced as calming, but not necessarily so. The order that one creates on the paper or reveals in the world may be disturbing, may reveal aspects of oneself or one's feelings one had tried to hide. It is the *focused attention* in the act of drawing which composes, and not the content of the drawing.

The fourth way in which the practice of drawing composes takes place when one reflects on one's own drawings. In chapter six, I noted that the careful attention with which we observe what is "other" yields drawings which, surprisingly, reveal our self. Unlike painting, drawing from observation is not closely tied to the vicissitudes of style and culture, and unlike drawing from memory and imagination, it generally does not focus on the self. For these reasons, drawings done from observation have the capacity to reveal the maker's self with an honesty that is not masked by stylization, self-image, or self-consciousness. Moreover, because we do not think that we are making drawings about our self, their power to reveal our self catches us by surprise. This experience is not unlike suddenly seeing oneself reflected in a store window while walking along the street. In this way, individual drawings show yet unseen facets of one's self. Numerous drawings generated by years of practice have the capacity to offer a view of one's self as it evolves, forms, and changes over time. In discussing "the drawing as a body" I described how drawings embody seeing, feeling and thinking in marks that are uniquely one's own, and how a collection of accumulated drawings constitutes a form of "bio-graphy" (Mullen, 1987). Reflecting on a group of drawings saved over time can reveal patterns of identity evident in our choice of subject matter, materials, and manner of working. In this way accumulated drawings have the capacity to show us how we are composing our self over a given period of our life.

Drawing engages mind and body in a material practice

Ingres advised aspiring artists that "one must always draw, draw with your eyes if you cannot draw with a pencil" (in Chan, 1995, p. 10). Although this advice helps art students by encouraging them to look at things *as if* they were drawing, one cannot really *draw* with only one's eyes. To draw is to leave a visible trace, however briefly, of one's searching look. In observation drawing, one's attention to the subject is mediated through materials. Chapter seven showed how drawing engages the body as well as the mind, gesture as well as sight. In an effort to emphasize the importance of seeing, artists and teachers may risk overlooking the physical and material nature of the act of drawing. Truitt shows how exerting physical energy to work with materials is an unavoidable aspect of both art-making and living.

> Matter is stubborn. Only dogged effort brings a concept into the arena in which it can demand the serious attention we give. . . to our own physical selves. It is here that "conceptual" art tends to be. . . "lame." The concept, remaining merely conceptual, falls short of the bite of physical presence. Just one step away is the debilitating idea that a concept is as forceful in its conception as in its realization. . . .

> But something puritanical and tough in me won't take that fence. The poem has to be written, the painting painted, the sculpture wrought. The beds have to be made, the food cooked, the dishes done, the clothes washed and ironed. Life just seems to me irremediably about coping with the physical. (1984, pp. 142-143)

One might add: the drawing has to be drawn; drawing is irremediably about coping with the physical. The "dogged effort" of working with materials is essential to the *pleasure* of drawing. Drawing leaves traces not only of one's seeing, but of the *effort* of one's seeing. As suggested in chapter six, what distinguishes a serious engagement with drawing from a less committed one is a willingness to undergo effort and discomfort. Because the effort and enjoyment of drawing go hand in hand, those who are willing to undergo the struggle necessary to materialize their way of seeing are likely to experience the pleasures of drawing more keenly.

Writing about the finished product of drawing from observation, Franck states, "The 'picture' does not matter, but neither is it secondary. It acquires a different function: It becomes a witness to the truth of one's seeing" (1993, p. 111). It is also a witness to our gestures, the physical event of "bringing forth." In drawing, matter matters. Conventional drawing tools and surfaces, unlike computer "drawing," register the weight and intensity of drawing gestures, and however large the paper is, one is conscious of its edges, its limits.[47] The paper shows its limits and stubbornly resists the pushing of one's hand. The marks show the quality of one's gestures. Thus, while drawing, one feels in relationship with the drawing as a material presence, an other, a body, which like one's own, has physical limits and reflects one's interactions with it.

Learning to draw takes a lifetime

In chapter five, I discussed several aspects of the lived experience of time in drawing from observation. An aspect of time which I have not yet addressed however, is the experience of drawing as a practice over a long period of time. What does it mean to engage in drawing over the course of a lifetime?

There is a curious assertion put forward by the authors of many how-to-draw books, namely, that once one has achieved a basic proficiency in the skills of representational drawing, one *has learned* how to draw. The implication is that there is nothing more to be learned. Edwards (1979, 1993), for example, compares learning to draw with learning to ride a bicycle, drive a car, or read: "once you know how. . . you know for life" (1993, p. xii), a statement which gives the *impression* that there is an end to learning, that one can achieve a point in learning to draw

beyond which there is nothing left to be learned. Superficially, this is plausible: in a sense, one either knows or doesn't know how to draw. And yet, elsewhere in her books Edwards is more cautious, saying, "additional basic skills are required of course, for imaginative, expressive drawing leading to 'Art with a capital A'" (1993, p. xii), and "learning to draw never ends" (1979, p. 192). These statements do not nesessarily contradict the statement that once you know how to draw, "you know for life." Perhaps, as Nicolaïdes suggests, what one learns "for life" is "how to learn to draw" (1941, p. xiii).

People who have a great deal of experience in drawing feel that they are still learning. When Giacometti was in his sixties, and his work was internationally acclaimed, he felt that he was only just beginning to know how to draw, paint and sculpt, just on the verge of discovering how to begin (Lord, 1980). In pessimistic moods, however, Giacometti despaired that after all these decades he did not know how to draw. For example, about Lord's portrait, he said, "It's hopeless. . . How can I make a nose really perpendicular in relation to the body? The simple fact is that I don't know how to do anything. People think I'm affected when I say that, but it's simply the truth." (Giacometti, in Lord, 1980, p. 61). Another example is found in a conversation between Lord and Giacometti. Sitting in a café together, Giacometti has been drawing the scene before him. Lord asks Giacometti about the relation between his vision, how things appear to him and the technique he uses to translate his vision into something others can see. Giacometti replies,

> That's the whole drama. . . I don't have such a technique. . . . When I was a young man, I thought I could do anything. And that feeling lasted until I was about seventeen or eighteen. Then I suddenly realized that I could do nothing, and I wondered why. That is what's kept me working ever since, moreover, that desire to find out why I can't simply reproduce what I see. . . . I had to start all over again from scratch, searching. (in Lord, 1980, pp. 76-77)

These expressions of not knowing how-to-draw, of not having a technique, question the notions of mastery and expertise as they are discussed in relation to drawing. Instead of practicing to master skills and techniques, which will then be applied and repeated, people who are engaged in drawing as a life long practice feel they are always in the process of learning to draw. Perhaps expertise in drawing is not a fixed state, but an ongoing process in which each act of drawing is a response to the question of how to draw. Instead of practicing towards a fixed and predetermined end point, one practices to open up a new beginning. Giacometti's words "scratch" and "searching" express the process of drawing: both its gestures and the feeling that one is constantly starting "from scratch" and "searching" for a way to show what one sees. To practice drawing as a life activity is to be a "a perennial beginner" (Franck, 1993, p. 25).

To draw as "a perennial beginner" is to keep one's attention in the present, on the experience of drawing. Now. With attention focused in the present, the repetition of drawing exercises is not "mindless drill" (Howard, 1982, p. 157) but a fresh experience each time. Paradoxically, to the extent that one is attentive to the drawing experience at hand, ambitions which are directed towards the future—such as the improvement of skill and technique or the completion of a particular work—happen inevitably, almost in spite of oneself.

While people who live with a practice of drawing keep their attention focused in the present while drawing, they look forward to the future which is always just opening up. This is especially evident in Hokusai's anticipation of drawing in very old age. Describing himself as an "old man mad about drawing" he wrote,

> From the age of six, I had a mania for drawing the form of things. By the time I was fifty, I had published an infinity of designs, but all that I have produced before the age of seventy is not worth taking into account. At seventy-three I have learned a little about the real structure of nature, of animals, plants, birds, fishes, and insects. In consequence, when I am eighty, I shall have more progress; at ninety, I shall penetrate the mystery of things; at a hundred, I shall have reached a marvelous stage; and when I am a hundred and ten, everything I do, be it but a dot or a line, will be alive. (in Edwards, 1979, p. 193)

To live with a practice that one feels is always fresh, and continues to develop throughout one's life, is to be youthful while enjoying one's age. In his sixties, Giacometti claimed,

> my youth is now. . . . I should say that now is my childhood, because I'm just learning how to do what I want to do. . . . I'm very young, whereas all my contemporaries in Stampa are old men, because they've accepted old age. Their lives are already in the past. But mine is still in the future. It's only now that I can envisage the possibility of trying to start on my life's work. (in Lord, 1980, pp. 86, 106)

The Wilsons point out that it is in their spontaneous drawing that children act most like artists (1987, p. 15). Perhaps the reverse is true as well: grown-up artists who are seriously engaged in the practice of drawing act like children. Not that they are immature, but that drawing teaches them to approach the world with what Matisse called the "eyes of a child" with an attitude of wonder; the world seen through these eyes holds out promise; it is always yet to be discovered. This, perhaps, is the sense in which drawing from observation is pedagogical: it places the practitioner in an attitude of learning and wonder.

Drawing renews wonder and points to wonders

People who are just beginning to draw often feel, as the student I quoted in the first chapter felt, that they are seeing the world "with new eyes." Edwards notes that,

> This experience is often moving and deeply affecting. My students' most frequent comments after learning to draw are "Life seems so much richer now" and "I didn't realize how much there is to see and how beautiful things are." This new way of seeing may alone be reason enough to learn to draw. (Edwards, 1993, p. xiv)

Seeing the world anew *is* "reason enough to learn to draw"! It is not only the beginners however, but the "perennial" beginners with many years of experience in drawing who find themselves seeing with a new "vividness" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 203) and are suddenly surprised by the unfamiliarity of familiar things and persons. This was how I felt when I drew my sister on the train. Lord recounts an experience in which Giacometti saw empty space for the first time. In the midst of working on Lord's portrait, Giacometti's brother and studio assistant, Diego, brought in a cast of a sculpture for Giacometti to look at. Giacometti looked at it and made a suggestion; Diego removed the sculpture and Giacometti immediately began to paint again. A few minutes later, he turned, as if to look at the cast again, and then, surprised, exclaimed, "Oh, it's gone! I thought it was still there, but it's gone! . . . I looked, and suddenly I saw the emptiness. I *saw* the emptiness. It's the first time in my life that that's happened to me" (in Lord, 1980, pp. 106, 107).

When we see empty space, or familiar things and people as though we are seeing them for the first time, we are seeing with wonder. Many of the experiences described in chapters five and six—seeing the familiar as if for the first time, "forgetting" the name of what one sees, the transformation of ordinary sights, and feeling as though things in the world are looking back at us—are facets of the experience of wonder. To see with wonder is to be simultaneously struck by the very existence of what we see and by its particular and unique existence (Ewens, 1990, pp. 8, 9). Drawing a face, an apple, one's own rather ordinary house, we marvel that it exists at all, and that it exists in this particular form, in this place, at this time. To draw it, we must attend to the details of its particularity. This requires withdrawing from our usual relation with it, and, at the same time letting ourselves be drawn into an intimate proximity. In this way, drawing fosters a relation of respectful intimacy and restores things to their otherness. The apple core that sits on the edge of my desk becomes, as I draw it, not just something to be thrown away but a rather wonder-full object in its own right. In drawing, we give attention to what is

"here and now and in the little things" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 315), and thus resist a rationality which sees things only for their usefulness.

Edwards suggests that drawing from observation allows for a "more direct kind of seeing" in which we do not just see what we are looking for, and "see more fully" (1993, p. xiv). The focus of attention while drawing (and even while not drawing) may be experienced as opening up. As one settles down to draw, one begins to see all kinds of visual detail, to see what is in one's peripheral vision, what does not serve immediate, productive ends. One's vision becomes "unframed": one does not try to see the subject one draws as if through a camera's lens, cut off from its surroundings, nor is one's seeing driven towards productive ends. Seeing "more fully" the world becomes enlarged: one sees more vividly and there is more to see.

Writing on the topic of seeing, Annie Dillard tells the following anecdote about her childhood.

> When I was six or seven years old, growing up in Pittsburgh, I used to take a precious penny of my own and hide it for someone else to find. It was a curious compulsion; sadly, I've never been seized by it since. For some reason I always "hid" the penny along the same stretch of sidewalk up the street. I would cradle it at the roots of a sycamore, say, or in a hole left by a chipped-off piece of sidewalk. Then I would take a piece of chalk, and, starting at either end of the block, draw huge arrows leading up to the penny from both directions. After I learned to write I labeled the arrows: SURPRISE AHEAD or MONEY THIS WAY. I was greatly excited, during all this arrow-drawing, at the thought of the first lucky passer-by who would receive in this way, regardless of merit, a free gift from the universe. But I never lurked about. I would go straight home and not give the matter another thought, until, some months later, I would be gripped again by the impulse to hide another penny. (1974, pp. 14-15)

Dillard interprets the significance of her childhood habit metaphorically, saying, "there are lots of things to see, unwrapped gifts and free surprises. The world is fairly studded and strewn with pennies cast broadside from a generous hand" (1974, p. 15). In chapter six, I suggested that drawing is a kind of mute pointing to what is fleeting, touching, overlooked. Drawings which succeed in pointing in this way are like the arrows Dillard drew on the sidewalk. The wealth of small wonders to which drawings draw attention are like hidden pennies, waiting to enrich our lives. Drawings may enrich our lives in many ways: not least by disturbing our complacency and making us see, as well as by showing the unexpected beauty there is in age, in ruin, in the overlooked and the ordinary. There is an important difference however: drawings point, but have more than a pointing function; they are small wonders in themselves. In this way, drawings doubly enrich the lives of those who take the time to see them.

An enduring practice

The practice of drawing from observation has an extraordinary resiliency. In spite of changing trends in the art world, and in spite of new technologies for image making, people continue to take up and engage in the practice of drawing from observation, and many artists return to it. Like a living thing, the practice of drawing is both vulnerable and surprisingly vital. The preceding reflections on its significance in our lives are a call to celebrate its vitality and to protect its "hidden splendor" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 196). In the public domain of education, protecting the practice of drawing from observation is, in part, a matter of protecting the circumstances in which it takes place. This implies giving serious consideration to how the contingencies of time, place, body and relations affect practitioners' experience of drawing. In the lives of individuals, protecting the practice of drawing from observation is a simple—and yet difficult—matter of making and protecting time and space for drawing in one's life. Doing so is a discipline in itself, requiring what Borgmann (1984, p. 210) calls "resoluteness." The personal and pedagogical significance of such a discipline dwells in the attentiveness which is experienced both as work and as "a special pleasure." Above, I have outlined four aspects of the "pleasures of work" which are most meaningfully felt through engaging in drawing as a life long practice. As such, drawing from observation finds its significance not only in the realms of art and art education, but in the broader arena of life practices which gather and illuminate our lives through focused attention, effort and skill (Borgmann, 1984, 1992).

Drawing, in its many modes—from memory and imagination as well as from observation—has a much longer history than the practice of drawing from life. In Lascaux and Altamira, drawings are evidence of early human life. The practice of drawing marks our humanity. That it will continue to do so, in spite of a seemingly pervasive technological rationality, is one of the hopeful themes of a recent novel by Rohinton Mistry. One of the characters in Mistry's *Such a long journey* (1993) is an itinerant pavement artist who holds degrees in fine art and comparative religion. He is recruited by the novel's main character, a banker named Gustad Noble, to work on a wall which had degenerated into a roadside latrine. The artist transforms the wall into a multi-faith roadside shrine, which is much loved by people in the Bombay neighbourhood, becoming the focus of their daily devotional practices. In the process, he begins to earn a comfortable living for himself, and makes his chalk drawings into more permanent oil paintings. At the end of the novel, the wall, along with all his work, is destroyed in a riot between the local people and the city authorities who have been ordered to tear down the wall to widen the road. After his initial disappointment, the destructive event serves to restore the

artist's "philosophical buoyancy" (1993, p. 412). He calmly prepares to leave, packing his few belongings into a satchel. He says good-bye to Gustad, and then,

> Gustad noticed the large box of oil paints and brushes leaning against a pillar. 'Wait, you are forgetting your things.'
>
> The pavement artist about-faced. He smiled and shook his head, walking backwards for a moment. 'I have taken everything I need for my journey.' He patted his satchel. 'My box of crayons is in here.' . . . The artist disappeared from sight. (1993, p. 412)

In this passage, Mistry speaks to some of the issues I have been considering here: the centrality of drawing to art, the endurance of the practice of drawing and the significance of art-making in a society increasingly dominated by a technological rationality.

The pavement artist has taken what is essential to his practice: his drawing materials. After months of successful painting, he will return to drawing. Other opportunities to paint will present themselves, will come and go. But the practice of drawing continues. All it requires is a box of crayons and a surface to work upon.

Although the wall is destroyed, the artist's practice of drawing survives. Usually, we think of drawings and paintings as more permanent than the acts that made them. Here, we have the reverse: the practice of drawing is more permanent than the product of drawing. It seems significant that Mistry chose a pavement artist, one whose work is characterized by impermanence. In doing so, the novel reveals the primacy of practice, and another realm in which the artist works: the traces of the pavement artist's presence do in fact remain, not on the wall, but in the lives of those among whom he has lived while drawing.

The team of workers who have come to dismantle the wall is led by Malcolm, an old college friend of Gustad's who, unable to earn a living playing or teaching music, now works for "the municipality." In response to the angry crowd, he says,

> 'Really, I don't want to,' . . . and the people cheered. 'But,' he continued, as the cheers died, 'my men and I don't make the decisions. We just follow the orders of the bosses at the municipality.' (1993, p. 398)

In spite of Malcolm's reluctance, it appears that the forces of technological rationality win in succeeding to follow orders to destroy the wall: the wall is ruined, people are hurt and killed in the riot, the neighbourhood is irrevocably changed. Up to this point, many of the characters in the story have been hurtling along, destined towards the acquisition of commodities, money and

prestige, their lives seeming to be ordered by invisible and often corrupt bureaucratic forces. The destruction of the wall however is a transformative event. As the wall is demolished, Gustad becomes aware of the destructive and dehumanizing character of what Heidegger calls "enframing." Suddenly he is able to embrace his son whom he had disowned because he refused to go to the prestigious technical university, for which the family had struggled and sacrificed for so many years to prepare him. Then, at the very end of the novel, after bidding farewell to the artist, Gustad begins to peel away the protective black-out paper that has covered the windows of his family's flat since a war many years ago; in doing so, he reveals the daylight that had been obscured, and opens up new possibilities for himself and his family.

Perhaps in their brief conversation, the pavement artist demonstrated a faith in a more humane way of life which survives in spite of a seemingly pervasive technological rationality. Apparently marginal, and homeless, the pavement artist is centred, and at home in an increasingly fragmented and unpredictable world. Here, the artist's way of life is portrayed as a journey in which the practice of drawing provides a home. Drawing can serve as a focus of one's life, to which, like a hearth in the home, one returns, to compose and orient oneself, to attend with careful work, and to continue to open up new ways of seeing the world and one's place in it.

NOTES

[1] This is my summary of Lord's description of Giacometti drawing in the Paris airport (1980, p113).

[2] This is my summary of Berger's experience which he describes in an essay on drawing (1987, pp. 57-58).

[3] Or the mouth or the foot, as substitutes for the hand, when it has been injured or amputated.

[4] Webster's New World College Dictionary, third edition, 1996, p. 414.

[5] This understanding of "pedagogy" is to be distinguished from its recent North American usage, in which it is "increasingly equated, arbitrarily and vaguely, with teaching, instruction, or curriculum" (van Manen, 1991, p. 28).

[6] As the research progressed, my inquiry became focused on drawing from observation. See the sections entitled "The line of questioning: A transformation" and "Drawing from observation: A working definition" in chapter 3.

[7] This is not intended to be an exhaustive review of literature; rather, it is meant to provide a background and a context for this study.

[8] "Blind contour drawing" is generally attributed to Nicolaïdes. However, this is not to say that this manner of drawing has not been practiced by artists long before Nicolaïdes named it "blind contour drawing." See, for example, Rodin's description of drawing, in chapter 7.

[9] While the injunctions against copying in the 8th edition (1987) of *Creative and mental growth* are firm, they are certainly much toned down from those thirty years earlier, in the 3rd edition (1957) cited by the Wilsons (1977, p. 5): "don't impose your own images on a child!" "Never let a child copy anything!"

[10] Discussed later in this chapter.

[11] See the discussion of the Wilsons' (1977) research later in chapter 2.

[12] The number of drawings that Pariser examined for each artist varied. He studied approximately 2,500 drawings by Lautrec, 750 by Picasso, and 200 by Klee. This variation was due to the number of drawings extant in the collections, which in turn, was determined not only by each artist's youthful production, but, to a large extent, by the "ambitions and concerns" of each family (1995, p. 194). Another important difference among the collections is that while for Klee and Lautrec, there are drawings which go back to the age of four or five, for Picasso, there are no existing drawings done before his ninth year (Pariser, 1985, p. 194). Pariser does not state whether any of the drawings he examined were originals, or whether they were available to him only through reproduction.

[13] See note 8, above.

[14] By this Moody means a program of studies; this is not to be confused with the Wilsons' (1977) "drawing program" meaning a sign.

[15] Described in chapter 1; see note 2, above.

[16] My thinking about research as a practice has been inspired by a request to contribute an essay to *Action research as a living practice*, edited by Terrance Carson and Dennis Sumara (1997). Thus a version of chapter 3 of this thesis has been accepted for publication as: Montgomery-Whicher, R. (in press). Drawing analogies: Art and research as living practices. In Terrance R. Carson and Dennis Sumara (editors), *Action research as a living practice*. New York: Peter Lang. Another version of chapter 3 of this thesis has been accepted for publication as: Montgomery-Whicher, R. (in press). Drawing from life: The practices of art and research. *NSCAD Papers: Beyond Form*. Halifax, Canada: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Both publications are expected to come out in 1997.

[17] In addition to those mentioned here, see for example, Flannery, (1980); Johnson, (1993); Williams, (1993); Victoria, J. & Sacca, E. (1978) and Zurmuehlen, M. (1980).

[18] Williams concludes this essay (1993, p. 173) by writing, "Merleau-Ponty's particular interest, as France's leading phenomenological philosopher, in the development of Cézanne's art. . . as well as his repeated consideration of Cézanne in his phenomenological writings, seems best explained by considering the deep theoretical affinity that links their respective

phenomenological and artistic projects."

[19] A term coined by F. J. J. Buytendijk, cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 27.

[20] Interestingly, among the professional artists I interviewed, men outnumbered women, and among the hobbyists, women outnumbered men. The numbers of women and men were about equal among the students and semi-professional artists. However, these numbers should in no way be understood as being representative of either hobbyists or professional artists; these were simply the people I happened to meet.

[21] The following account is summarized from an exhibition label for three pencil drawings done in 1963, in the exhibition, "Alberto Giacometti: 1901-1966" Royal Academy of Arts, London, October 1996-January 1997.

[22] In this paragraph, I have refrained—in the interest of life like description—from my usual practice of including artists' first names when I first mention them in the text. The full names of artists mentioned here for the first time are: Pierre Auguste Renoir, Peter Paul Rubens, Sandro Botticelli, Gustav Klimpt and Georges Seurat.

[23] Although it is customary in the APA style to express times in numerals, I have chosen to express times in words to make the text read more smoothly.

[24] My thanks to Robert Burch, who first drew my attention to this experiential understanding of time. See also: Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 333.

[25] Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, 1986, pp. 1122, 2625; Klein, 1971, p. 364.

[26] Levin points out that perception, usually thought of as an act of receiving, also involves giving: "the act of receiving is always also the act of giving: a mode of giving attention to. . . . Perception gives as well as receives" (1988, p. 63).

[27] The possibility of a "listening look" was brought to my attention in a story told by Aoki (1987), in which a monk, renowned for his garden of morning glories, teaches the lord of a castle to listen when he looks. On the morning appointed for the lord's visit, the monk plucks all the flowers but one. Upon the lord's arrival, and much to his surprise, the monk leads him to the

one remaining flower, inviting him to permit the morning glory to "speak" and reveal its essence. A little while later, the lord thanked the monk with a bow, saying, " I know better now what it is to hear when I look." My thanks to Terry Carson for telling me about this story.

[28] Concise Oxford English Dictionary, sixth edition, 1976, p. 1091.

[29] Beittel also describes drawing as a "private dialogue" (1972, pp. 50, 130); for Beittel however, this is a dialogue between the artist and the developing drawing.

[30] Webster's New World College Dictionary, third edition, 1996, p. 414; Concise Oxford English Dictionary, sixth edition, 1976, p. 314.

[31] Webster's New World College Dictionary, third edition, 1996, p. 414; Concise Oxford English Dictionary, sixth edition, 1976, p. 314.

[32] Is the invention of the eraser only possible in a culture which posits interiority, an individual self? As Barthes implies in his essay about a Japanese stationary store (1982, p. 86).

[33] My thanks to Cynthia Taylor for telling me about her experience of this phenomenon.

[34] In chapter 6, in the section entitled "The need for privacy, solitude" I discussed how drawing tightly is drawing in a controlled manner, which is sometimes inhibited, hesitant, and self-critical.

[35] Edwards (1979, p. 3), for example, claims that "drawing is a skill that can be learned by every normal person with average eyesight and average eye-hand coordination—with sufficient ability, for example, to thread a needle or catch a baseball."

[36] Edwards understands drawing as a "global skill" (1993, p. xi) which is made up of five component skills: "the perception of edges; the perception of spaces; the perception of relationships; the perception of lights and shadows; the perception of the whole, or *gestalt*" (1993, p. xii).

[37] Pariser also remarks on Picasso's apparent enjoyment of the "grind of the academy" in his youth; Pariser notes that while he could not find direct evidence to support this, Picasso's biographer, O'Brian "detects a virtuoso's delight in the charcoal and crayon studies Picasso

executed: 'What for most people is a hopelessly arid exercise was a delight to Picasso, and his art school studies glow with pleasure, controlled, disciplined and almost anonymous, but certainly pleasure'" (Pariser, 1985, p. 199).

[38] From my notes taken in a public lecture by Colville, at the University of Alberta, March 4, 1995.

[39] While in their rudimentary forms, dancing and singing require nothing more than one's own body or voice, the cultural forms of ballet and opera are sophisticated and costly. Artists' drawings however, are generally just as simple and direct in their procedures and materials as the drawings of children, students and hobbyists.

[40] Herbert Dreyfus describes focal practices as a "sub-class of marginal practices" (in Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 99).

[41] Heidegger suggests that what makes a thing a thing is "gathering": "Our language denotes what a gathering *is* by an ancient word. That word is: thing. . . . the Old High German word thing means a gathering, and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter" (1971, p. 174).

[42] Webster's New World College Dictionary, third edition, 1996, pp. 522, 622.

[43] Borgmann, 1984, p. 197; Webster's New World College Dictionary, 1996, third edition, p. 522.

[44] A "thing" in the sense in which Borgmann uses the term, from Heidegger (1971) is a "focus"; thus "to speak of focal things is to emphasize the central point twice" (Borgmann, 1984, p. 199).

[45] With the exception of the self-portrait, although even in drawing one's own face, there is a sense in which one *sees* it as other.

[46] Webster's New World College Dictionary, third edition, 1996, p. 414; Skeat, 1958, p. 182.

[47] My thanks to Desmond Rochfort and Liz Ingram for pointing out the importance of these aspects of drawing to me.

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