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## ARTICLE

**Notes on a Blue Guitar**

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*Aesthetic education is ... integral to any educational enterprise.*  
-- Maxine Greene (2001, p. 139)

For twenty years Maxine Greene delivered lectures at the Lincoln Institute for the Arts in Education. They are collected in *Variations on a Blue Guitar* (2001). Working from these, I sound notes of my own, variations on Greene's conception of aesthetic education. As indicated in the epigraph, that conception extends to education generally. Understanding art (whether as performance or object) as event and as simultaneously continuous and disjunctive with everyday experience, Greene envisions aesthetic education as engendering subjective and social reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

The "starting point," Greene (2001, p. 8) asserts, is experiencing the arts from the "inside," that is, "how they mean." As these lectures make clear, the injunction to experience the arts from the inside – not necessarily as an artist, but nonetheless as a participant within the experience of the art-as-event<sup>2</sup> – is not only a starting point. This point reasserts itself again and again throughout Greene's lectures at the Lincoln Center Institute. The Ciardian<sup>3</sup> phrase (1960) at the end of Greene's sentence quoted above reminds us that art cannot be reduced to its content (such as themes), nor to the intentions of the artist or to its social circumstances (the so-called genetic fallacy). Nor can art be conflated with its political significance or psychological meaning (reception theory). After Jackson Pollack, one must "work from within" the experience of the art-as-event, emphasizing the "subjective dimension of our knowing" (Greene 2001, p. 11). Aesthetic understanding accompanies such working with the "raw material" of art (2001, p. 10). That adjective recalls the corporeal, even somatic, nature of aesthetic experience.

Like Susan Sontag<sup>4</sup> in *Against Interpretation* (1966), Maxine Greene distrusts overly intellectualized encounters with the arts; she emphasizes the liminality of aesthetic education, underscoring its "lyrical moments" (2001, p. 12) comprising the "vivid present" (2001, p. 15). Through such intensification<sup>5</sup> of perception, not only is art apprehended on its own terms, but the person undergoing such experience can also break free of one's socially determined location, one's subject position. For me, such intensification of experience implies self-shattering<sup>6</sup> insofar as the boundaries of the self dissolve into the aesthetic experience that extricates us from submersion in the banal, the provincial, and presses us into the world. Wherever aesthetic experience leads us, however, Greene (2001) reminds that "our lives" constitute the "ground against which we experience works of art" (p. 16).

That phrase -- "our lives" -- points not only to the primacy of subjectivity in aesthetic experience, but to its reconstruction through autobiography, as "our lives" are always already narrative extrapolations of lived experience.<sup>7</sup> Aesthetic encounters enable us to discover "unexpected resemblances ... between the inner and outer" (Greene, 2001, p. 74). In my terms, aesthetic experience provides passages between subjectivity and sociality. That relational potential acknowledged, in these talks to teachers, Greene asks her listeners to concentrate on the subjective. When Greene (2001, p. 18) asks how works of art stimulate aesthetic experience, for instance, she follows it with additional questions that turn us inward, asking us to focus on how art brings "illumination" to our lives. How, she asks, does art "bring us in touch with ourselves?" While it does not remain inside, aesthetic experience seems, for Greene, to occur there, if always in relation to the art as an event in the world (see Greene, 2001, p. 22).

Because Greene is wary of the scientism of American culture, she is careful not to be painted into a corner wherein the arts can be dismissed as "mystical," beyond rationality, "beyond understanding, beyond words" (2001, p. 19). This is a key point. "[T]he more we know," Greene (2001) observes, "the more we are likely to see and hear" (p. 29). Recall that in her critique of interpretation, Sontag did not dismiss erudition; it was the evasion of visceral experience through a precious and stylized intellectualization, the superimposition upon aesthetic experience of pre-extant interpretive grids (whether psychoanalytic or Marxist, for instance) that she opposed. After all, without academic knowledge, one might not see this or hear that, and what are missed are not only the subjective dimensions of aesthetic experience, but reality itself (Pinar, 2009a). Greene is reluctant – is it her progressive training<sup>8</sup>? – to dwell on these intellectual (indeed, academic) prerequisites to liminal experience, devaluing on one occasion biographic information about Aaron Copland, allowing that it is "meaningful" but not of "overriding significance" (see 2001, p. 203). If such information is meaningful, why not

understand it as providing passage to imaginary worlds?<sup>9</sup>

Rather than viewing them as reciprocally related, however, Greene (2001) demarcates “educated understanding” from “mere information” and “pure analysis” (p. 58). “Subject matter” (2001, p. 193) is important as a device for achieving extra-academic ends (specifically “agency”) but not, she adds, for “uncovering some hidden meaning others have predefined.” Why would such archeological labor not also engage “agency”? The “ruin” (Santner, 2006, p. xv) – here a metaphor for the historicity and genealogical character of human creation – specifies the simultaneous sense of remnant and excess we experience when we encounter any work of art. Greene’s apparent assertion of the “priority of pedagogy over curriculum” (Green & Reid 2008, p. 23) facilitates an unnecessary distinction between facts and understanding, between academic knowledge and lived experience.

The inflation of teaching is, in part, a consequence of its separation from curriculum. Contextualized in the curriculum, teaching assumes its appropriate scale as informed interlocutors conducting multiply-referenced “complicated conversation” (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 548). Split off, or even in a conjunctive relationship with curriculum (as in “curriculum and pedagogy”), teaching devolves into a sometimes behavioral version of “instrumental rationality” (Greene, 2001, p. 165). Education becomes distorted when it becomes the means to non-educational ends. For many U.S. politicians, for instance, education is a means to increased Growth National Product; for many U.S. education professors, schooling is a means to the achievement of social justice. Deflecting criticism of their redistribution of national income (from the lower and middle to the upper classes) since 1968, political conservatives in the United States have shrewdly (if disingenuously) insisted that teachers are accountable for the socio-economic fortunes of their students. (While still beating that dead horse, conservatives, during the Bush Administration, decided that education professors are accountable for their students’ – e.g., teachers’ – capacity to raise scores on standardized examinations! By the same logic economists and business school professors are responsible for the financial catastrophe of 2008-9.) Among the casualties in these various versions of instructional instrumentalism are not only academic knowledge for its own sake, but, as well, any concern for its educational significance, e.g. study that engenders not only erudition but subjective and social reconstruction (Pinar, 2006, pp. 109-120; Pinar, 2004, p. 24).

Few education professors (and not only in the U.S.: Lopes, 2008) manage to escape the trap of instrumentalism, constructed, it appears from a distance, from confidence in the teaching profession. At first blush, it seems Greene has in fact avoided it. She (2001) acknowledges that there are students who may not “value” aesthetic education, that all one can do as a teacher is “find a language that may help them attend” (p. 26). “[W]e cannot predetermine what will happen,” she admits, “or package it, or test for results” (2001, p. 68). Like Ted Aoki (2005 [1990], p. 367), Greene (2001, p. 142) appreciates that teaching is comprised of “moments of improvisation.” She emphasizes: “What we are trying to bring about is neither measurable nor predictable” (2001, p. 30).

Education may be neither measurable nor predictable (will politicians ever learn!) but note: there is something Greene is still trying to bring about. It is a lovely thing she wants to bring about, but even a lovely objective is an objective nonetheless, which commits one to acting toward its realization, i.e., instrumentally. This is where things get ugly, as we must reduce the present to its function in achieving the planned future, as when she asks, “How do we invent the kinds of situations that release people for [aesthetic] moments like these?” (Greene, 2001, p. 23). Even when the objective is solitude, and the aesthetic experience solitude allows (see 2001, p. 32), the present becomes deformed as the unexpected becomes, if not an outright impediment, then an opportunity (as in the so-called *teachable moment*), but rarely the point of educational experience. To her credit, never does Greene succumb to the Tylerian (1949) catastrophe of binding evaluation to objectives: “We, as teachers . . . can [never] know what we have done,” (2001, p. 61) she acknowledges. But the slide down the slippery slope of instrumentalism begins in the formulation of objectives, however apparently progressive they sound.<sup>10</sup>

*We are interested in breakthroughs and new beginnings.*  
-- Maxine Greene (2001, p. 45)

## **Imaginations**

The imagination, Greene (2001, p. 30) asserts, is “the most focal” of our “concerns.” Imagination is perhaps the central concept in Greene’s *oeuvre*, and not only in this collection of talks to teachers. Recall that her 1995 book is entitled *Releasing the Imagination*. “Without the release of imagination,” Greene (2001, p. 65) asserts, “human beings may be trapped in literalism, in blind factuality.” This

faith in “the redemptive power of art” (Jay, 2005, p. 163) –one I share, if with trepidation<sup>11</sup>—has been affirmed by many, among them John Dewey and (to reference one of my intellectual touchstones) the great Austrian novelist Robert Musil (Pinar in press). “In Musil’s account,” McBride, (2006, p. 19) points out,

the ecstatic experience triggered by aesthetic feeling favors a reshuffling in the individual’s perception of reality and disrupts formulaic modes of experience, releasing the individual from the spell of established pictures of the world and opening up a space for the imaginative play with, and the emancipatory reaggregation of, given elements of experience.

Such *reaggregation* constitutes the labor of subjective reconstruction and its consequence; it is the final phase of the method of *currere*: synthesis (Pinar, 2004, p. 35).

For Wallace Stevens (whose poem “The Man with the Blue Guitar” (1937) provides the central image for the collection), the imagination enables us to discern the normal in the abnormal (2001, p. 83). Its redemptive potential is not restricted to perception, however; for Greene, the imagination seems to portend political possibilities, although these are left unspecified. The first “phase” of “imaginative awareness,” Greene (2001, p. 31) tells us, is the “focusing,” the “careful noticing.”<sup>12</sup> Accompanying such apprehension of art-as-event, she continues, is the “savoring” in “inner time,” the “elaboration of what has been seen or heard, the seeping down” (2001, p. 31). This inner solicitude cannot easily be conducted in public, amidst the clamor of the crowd; Greene (2001) emphasizes “taking time ... moments of stillness ... [in] coming to know” (p. 60). This acknowledgement of the significance of solitude underlines the interiority of study, including its dialogical character, and not only with others. One engages oneself in complicated conversation as well as the Other.

Such self-reflexive educational experience is structured temporally. “Because we are different at different moments of our lives,” Greene (2001) reminds her listeners, “the works that we encounter can never be precisely the same” (p. 36). This acknowledgement of the centrality of temporality in aesthetic experience gestures toward the temporality of educational experience more generally (see, too, Huebner 1999, pp. 131-142), and specifically at what I have termed the “biographic significance” of study (Pinar, 2004, p. 36). As we know, the academic significance of a particular work is its importance for the discipline it addresses. Educational significance is mindful of the academic importance of specific works, but it is not restricted to disciplinary considerations. Rather, educational significance forefronts the meaning of the artwork for the individual and for society, meaning that shifts in different moments, both subjective and historical.

Art is, then, no static (however beautiful) achievement of balance and symmetry, no “form of aesthetic totalization” (Santner, 2001, p. 136). Nor is it a “melancholic” or “romantically ironic index of the incomplete aspect of all human endeavors” (Santner, 2001, p. 36). In Eric Santner’s (2001) intriguing formulation, art is a “self-interrupting whole – one animated, as it were, by a ‘too much’ of pressure from within its midst”) p. 136). Aesthetic apprehension enables subjective tensionality, as it disallows one from disappearing into the event that is the art object or performance *or* retreating into one’s subjective experience of it. “Self-interrupted” through the “excess” of the aesthetic moment, one inhabits a third space in between art and subjectivity. The experience of arts pulls us into the world as it refracts the world through our subjectivity; the educational undertaking involves inhabiting the middle while grounded in, attentive to, and engaged with both self and society. Greene (2001, p. 179) urges us to “*recover* those moments when imagination, released through certain encounters with the arts, opened worlds for you” (emphasis added; i.e., the regressive phase in the method of *currere*: Pinar, 1994, 253ff.). Greene’s succinct statement of subjectivity as passage to the world also expresses the reciprocal relation between subjective and social reconstruction.

Note that Greene never retreats into a subjectivity severed from sociality, never withdraws from that public world in which subjectivity comes to form. Nor does she disappear into the public; indeed, Greene privileges the primacy of the reciprocal relations between the two realms. She points out, for instance, that Dewey associated the “quality of selfhood with the interests taken in certain things, the desire to relate, to grasp, to *be*” (2001, p. 149). While in that sentence Greene emphasizes the subjective, what is also at stake (and implied in that sentence) is that it very much matters with what and with whom one becomes. While Greene eschews any Hirsch-like (1999) list of canonical facts everyone must memorize, she does emphasize European literature, art and philosophy in her lectures. The imprinting of Sartrean existentialism specifically is evident throughout the collection. Time and again one hears echoes of Sartre’s emphasis upon freedom and the choice it compels: “We have only to free ourselves, to choose,” Greene (2001, p. 23) admonishes us. The educational significance of European culture references the specificity of Greene’s academic career (Greene, 1998).

While she emphasizes European culture, Greene acknowledges the educational importance of popular and non-Western culture (2001, pp. 206, 184). “Aesthetic education,” Greene (2001) asserts, is a process of “empowering diverse persons to engage reflectively and with a degree of passion<sup>13</sup> with particular works of art” (p. 179). Engagement compels us to choose because art engages our agency. Art solicits passion, and Greene appreciates its erotic and as well as emotional elements (see 2001, p. 169). Even desire is interesting to Greene for its aesthetic potential. Through desire one becomes, achieves selfhood, and acts in the world.

Perhaps because the project of subjective reconstruction is animated by passion, it is not free of suffering. There is an element of Nietzschean self-overcoming in reconstructing selfhood, detectable when Greene (2001, p. 179) asks if her listeners “cherish” the arts “because they ... bring you ... to strain upwards, beyond yourself?” Such self-overcoming is not undertaken according to any split-off set of ideals or social (especially bourgeois) expectations. While both ideals and expectations may provide provocations for self-reflection, including self-criticism, each can distract and thereby undermine critical self-engagement. While informed by reality, the singularity of one’s situation requires threading a needle only the individual himself or herself can discern, however aided by others.

Greene (2001, p. 39) provides a first-person testimony to self-overcoming when she acknowledges that she herself had to “uncouple” from the “mundane” so that she might “perceive the qualities” in various art forms. Such uncoupling occurs thanks to the engaging qualities structuring the art-as-event; those qualities become discernible, as Greene points out, due to a self-conscious (and possibly chosen) estrangement from the everyday, an existentialist idea she takes for the title of her 1973 *Teacher as Stranger*. Here writing without the existentialist language, Greene emphasizes the role of such distantiation in aesthetic experience:

It takes a kind of distancing, an uncoupling from your practical interests, your impinging concerns, to see what we sometimes describe as the qualities of things, to make out contours, shapes, angles, even to hear sound as sound. (2001, p. 53)

The role of distance – conceived as estrangement, even exile (Wang, 2004, p. 135) – is crucial in aesthetic perception, but endorsements of “distance” are not without controversy, as they challenge those experience-based assertions of authority associated with identity politics (see Anderson, 2006, p. 70), what Greene (2001) might criticize as the “crusts of mere conformity” (p. 186).

While we can “only welcome the challenges of multiculturalism,” Greene (2001, 184) asserts, it is clear she is not without ambivalence toward its tendencies toward ethnic essentialism. While welcoming the expansion of the canon (2001, pp. 105, 184, 190, 206), she challenges the subsumption of the individual into collective identity, whether that collective identity is cultural, religious, class-based, or ethnic (see 2001, p. 185). Such a collective identity threatens to totalize subjectivity, restricting its reconstruction to pre-approved forms, thereby limiting existential freedom and foreclosing the “power of incompleteness” (2001, p.154). Such power is the lure of “what is not yet” (2001, p. 202).

*“All this means breaking with confinement.”*  
--Maxine Greene (2001, p. 84)

## **Conclusion**

The primary point of the Lincoln Center Institute, Greene (2001) tells us, is to provide opportunities for teachers to “choose” themselves, to “pursue untapped possibility” (p. 146). This conception of the educational significance of the arts – breaking with the banal (2001, p. 162) – forefronts intense encounters with art-as-event, requiring us to focus simultaneously on its qualities and on our life histories. What the Institute can provide, Greene (2001) testifies, are opportunities to “recapture” a “lost spontaneity” and the experience of “wonder at the strange” (p. 150). What the arts offer us, then, is the “releasing” of our imagination, enabling us to “move into the ‘as-if’ - to move beyond the actual into invented worlds, to do so within our experience” (2001, p. 82). While working within our experience, we are not confined there, as our capacity to reconstruct ourselves is then enacted in the social world, which is then itself, however incrementally, reconstructed (see 2001, p. 50).

Like artists, Greene (2001, p. 70) argues, teachers undergo inner transformation as they recreate their “raw materials” (e.g., curriculum materials) through communicative enactments of their subjectivities with others, especially their students. Here Greene seems to me to be articulating (to reference another intellectual touchstone of mine) the creativity of “free indirect subjectivity” (Rohdie, 1995, p. 156), a phrase devised by the Italian filmmaker and public pedagogue Pier Paolo Pasolini.

“It is this primacy of style,” Pasolini (1972/2005) asserted (referencing filmmaking but relevant in this context too), “that, reanimating the speech of others, causes the material recovered in such a manner to assume an expressive function” (p. 86). Such subjectively, indeed, aesthetically structured teaching encourages students to reconstruct their own lived worlds through their reanimation of the material they study. This subjective restructuring – it is also an animation, rendering one’s intellectual passions “contagious” (2001, p. 179) – is, Greene notes, “a matter of bringing to the surface forces, stirrings, desires we often cannot name” (2001, p. 108). There we can represent them, and perhaps not only (if primarily) in language, but as well through other aesthetic forms offered us by the arts.

Key in such educational experience is the moment of encounter, the juxtaposition of art and subjectivity, a montage of “unlike things” (2001, p. 118). Should the classroom be anything but such a disjunctive juxtaposition of texts, teachers, and students? While critical pedagogues lament the failures of “resistance” to a world they themselves have concocted as ruled by reproduction (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2007; Pinar 2009b), Maxine Greene is the politically engaged public intellectual who enacts agency *within* the world. In Greene’s world the obstacles one faces are restructured as opportunities through *choices* made “as an individual and as a teacher, struggling to be true to what you know and have encountered in your life, trying at once to communicate to others” (2001, p. 181). By subjectively – passionately - engaging in the complicated conversation that is the curriculum, we can labor, as Greene (2001) asserts, to enable our students to render intelligible their “actual lived situations” and in so doing labor to “transform them” (p. 206). “That,” Greene (2001) concludes, “is what the blue guitar can do” (p. 207).

## Notes

1. While Greene does not employ these terms, her conception of aesthetic education engages teachers and students in projects of ongoing self-reflection, stimulated as it is focused on the art-as-event, a fundamentally subjective undertaking that not only refers the subject to herself or himself but also draws her or him into public world as well. In so doing, subjectivity and sociality are reconstructed, however locally and incrementally. While (in Greene’s conception) the world is not unchanged by the eventfulness of art, such change does not occur only by itself; it invites action (simultaneously subjective and social), hence the appropriateness (in my view) of the concept of “reconstruction.”
2. The eventfulness of art is evident in *a/r/tography*, a concept and practice devised by Rita L. Irwin, in which the boundaries among teaching, research, and art-making blur. As the chapters in the two collections testify (Irwin & de Cosson 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008), *a/r/tography* engages the artist-teacher-researcher into positions of disjunctive distantiation from and intense engagement with everyday existence. Such distantiation and engagement permit, indeed, invite aesthetic-intellectual reconstruction that bracket as it hyphenates naturalized understandings of knowledge, teaching and the school. While, as Greene (1978) has observed, encounters with the arts do not in themselves guarantee “wide-awakeness,” they can open spaces—“third spaces,” as Ted Aoki and several of his former students in the Irwin-de Cosson collection testify—which stimulate social engagement through self-knowledge. Like Maxine Greene’s conception of aesthetic education, *a/r/tography* brackets the everyday and the conventional as the artist-researcher-teacher enacts art from multiple lived perspectives, enabling one to emerge from submerged realities and to see oneself, and art, as if for the first time.
3. On another occasion Greene (2001, p. 157) poses the same Ciardian question: “How does it mean?” By replacing “what” art means with “how,” we emphasize the eventfulness of art. By focusing on – Greene prefers “noticing” – art-as-event, one can also articulate its thematic content, especially as that is conveyed through aesthetic means, e.g., sound, structure, rhythm, imagery.
4. In 1998, I juxtaposed Maxine Greene and Susan Sontag not only to underscore Greene’s

intellectual range and accomplishment, but to testify to her status as a (New York) public intellectual. The public or worldly character of Greene's pedagogy is rendered explicit by regular references to what we used to call current events, among them Columbine (Greene, 2001, p. 123), neoliberal school reform (2001, p. 134), and the Christian Right (Greene, 2001, p. 165). Such references remind us that the *lived* in lived experience is historical as well as subjective, and that for Greene, the private and public can never be definitively demarcated.

5. More typical than images of intensification in Greene are images of space to specify the heightening of consciousness aesthetic initiation invites. For instance, Greene suggests that through participants' encounters with the arts the "audible world expanded" (2001, p. 37). In another passage she emphasizes that the "more we know" the "more we see and hear and feel" (Greene 2001, p. 155). I confess to disliking the proximity of such images (of "more") to those of consumption in consumer capitalism, but Greene's point is well-taken: aesthetic experience enables extraordinary experience from which we do not emerge unchanged. In emphasizing art's blasphemous challenge to the banal, Greene rejects the elitism of "haughty connoisseurship" (Greene 2001, p. 19), a possible criticism of Eisner (1985, p. 223).
6. Moments of openness to alterity – including to the alterity of art – enables subjective dissolution, or regression, so that the structures of selfhood may be reconstructed. In the method of *currere*, then, the regressive phase is not only temporal but it signifies disassembling the structures of the present self, providing opportunities for reconstruction (Pinar, 2004).
7. As a life-long student of autobiography (Pinar, 1994), I have always appreciated Greene's emphasis upon subjective significance of educational experience. That significance is never insular but socially engaged, even cosmopolitan, what now I characterize as worldliness (2009a).
8. While a serious scholar of Dewey, Greene's knowledge of progressivism was not limited to his work. Craig Kridel (2006, p. 80) reports that as a graduate student in the early 1950s, Greene had enrolled in Theodore Brameld's doctoral seminars at New York University (from where she graduated with the doctorate). Later Greene attributed her career to the inspiration Brameld provided.
9. For me there is no choice to be made between academic knowledge or experience; they are reciprocally related. Julie Nesrallah, the host of the Canadian Broadcasting System's (CBC2) daily classical music program, "Tempo," demonstrates that – after Alexander Pope – aesthetic education can instruct *and* entertain. Nesrallah juxtaposes commentary on the musicality of the pieces she plays with a lively commentary, often offering biographical (and, on occasion, autobiographical) notes that engage even the distracted (e.g., driving) listener. In positing the binary, Greene is perhaps reacting to what progressives have long demeaned as "traditional" instruction, e.g., didactic pedagogy emphasizing facts over feelings. It is obvious to me that aesthetic education conveys understanding *through* facts.
10. In the late nineteenth century the conception of objectives (or goals) questioned what had become the ritual of recitation as instructional method. Recall that in the so-called classical curriculum, comprehension was considered secondary, as recitation (often of ancient Greek and Latin) was presumed to exercise the mind conceived as a muscle. Raising questions of meaning, personal relevance, and social utility – as Dewey did – challenged and, indeed, helped destroy nineteenth-century classical conceptions of education as mental discipline.

Today to insist that the specification of objectives initiates every discussion of classroom

teaching is surely a reinstantiation of the ritual the question of objectives was designed to dismantle. Objectives have become devices disguising manipulation as professional practice, demoting curriculum and instruction to means to extra-intellectual ends, however laudable (as in the case of social justice). Matching outcomes to objectives ensures that educational experience is replaced with institutional control by measurement (Macedo, 2007). The key curriculum question—what knowledge is of most worth?—becomes a calculation in social engineering’s agenda to manufacture the future after the present. Determined to get from “here” to “there,” such instrumental rationality deforms the future in terms of the present (Seigfried, 1996, 174). If the “there” is arriving where one decided to be in the past, then the destination is inevitably a version of that place where one began.

Instrumentalism removes us from the spheres of erudition and intellectuality that one would think would constitute a profession called education. Instrumentalism relocates education to the sphere of social calculation and engineering, wherein ideas are pursued not for their own sake or because one finds them interesting, or because they enable us to understand what we experience, but because they provide returns on our investment. As one cannot help but have noticed during recent months, the obsessive maximization of profit sometimes precipitates impoverishment, and not only the financial kind. Likewise, devotion to social justice can reinscribe tyranny, and not always with a different set of victims (see Pinar, 2009a, chapter 2). Obama’s proposal of “merit pay” (Zeleny, 2009)—if linked to results on standardized examinations—ensures the continuing degradation of the profession. After forty years of school reform it is clear that what we suffer is school *deform* (e.g., the replacement of schools with academic businesses, focused on “outputs,” e.g., test scores).

11. While I share with Greene – as does Kieran Egan (1990), among others – the centrality of the imagination in educational experience, I see danger where Greene sees only opportunity. Setting “our imagination free” (Greene, 2001, p. 172)—even if such a thing were possible—risks severing it from ethics and erudition. Recall, for instance, the roles played by the imagination in racism (in lynching specifically: Pinar, 2001).
12. While “noticing” would seem to privilege visuality over the other senses, Greene’s conception is not only ocular, as it also engages the auditory, as indicated by the title “blue guitar” (see Greene 2001, p. 31). Once again there is an association with Aoki to make, as the great Canadian theorist emphasized auditory metaphors in his teaching (Aoki, 1990/2005).
13. It is Greene’s passion that persuaded me to entitle the 1998 collection *The Passionate Mind of Maxine Greene*. Passion is, I suggest, prerequisite to public service, personified in the lives of Jane Addams, Laura Bragg, and Pier Paolo Pasolini (Pinar, 2009a).

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