THE SEARCH FOR SELF - IDENTITY: EXPLORING THE SELF THROUGH THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

This dissertation focuses on the hypothesis that a valid aspect of art education is to bring students to a heightened awareness of the intrinsic elements of themselves ; through the creative experience.

The characteristics of the developmental phase of adolescence are focused on in Chapters One and Two. The concerns of young people, such as the search for self - identity, role confusion and the formulation of the persona, are examined.

Chapter Three investigates the possibility that the creative experience, as a means of self - exploration can transcend the defence mechanisms of the persona (the prototype 'false self '), and enable the young person to accept their innate characteristics and emotions. The meaning and value of creativity in the classroom is discussed and recognised, and the role of the art teacher, as promoter of sensitivity and self - expression among adolescents is established.

Chapter Four is devoted to the documentation of empirical research the application of the hypothesis to a sequence of lessons on self - portraiture, with particular reference to the reactions and responses of the students involved.

This study concludes with a summary of its investigative procedure, and an ascertainment of the validity of the creative experience in art and design as a tool for the acquisition of an acceptable sense of self.

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THE SEARCH FOR SELF - IDENTITY: EXPLORING THE SELF THROUGH THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

by

LOUISE BURKE

DATE

APRIL 1996

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my tutor, Maria Farrell for all the help and encouragement she gave me while I was working on this dissertation.

I also wish to thank Professor Iseult McCarthy, head of the Faculty of the Education, for all her help and guidance.

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Many thanks to the staff and students of Alexandra College, Milltown, for their co-operation and interest.



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CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF:

Adolescence and the Persona

The concept of adolescence favoured by most people is that of a developmental phase occurring between the ages of twelve and eighteen which culminates in the achievement of maturity. Adolescence means 'growing up'.

Growth and development takes place at all stages of life and are essential to the healthy individual. However, it is invariably in adolescence that people experience strong physical and emotional changes which mark the transition from the fluid, inconstant personality of childhood to the more coherent one of the adult.

For many, early adolescence is an exciting experimental time with opportunities to test out strategies and procedures for dealing with the challenges and possibilities of coming adulthood. Others, however, find that the passing from childhood to adolescence is fraught with difficulties and insecurities.



One fundamental aspect of early adolescence is the search for self - identity. In the protected phase of childhood the individual is primarily concerned with other peoples' responses to how he/she looks, feels and acts. (7). The adolescent becomes more involved with introspection - beginning to reflect on the innate distinctive characteristics which contribute to his/her personality - as well as other peoples' perceptions of him/her. (2).

In an attempt to establish a sense of self, adolescents claim the right to make independent decisions about the clothes they wear, their social behaviour, values and opinions. Social roles and activities of the adult generation may be initiated or opposed. Young adolescents often select role models, either from family, school or popular culture and attempt to emulate their lifestyles and habits, having judged these to be acceptable and desirable.

These behaviour patterns are part of a process where the ultimate goal is an autonomous, adult self. In some cases, adults may regard the activities and judgements of young people in this formative stage as irritating or tiresome. It must be remembered, however, that despite their apparent confidence, certain adolescents are in a state of extreme vulnerability and insecurity. They have no idea whether the identity which they are so painstakingly formulating will be successful, and suitable for adult life. The poise and independence they adopt may work against them, leaving them such the set of the second second of the control of the second of the second set of

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It is the responsibility of parents and teachers, in cases such as these to provide tolerance and sympathy and to make themselves available and approachable to young people experiencing difficulties. Apparently detached independent young individuals still seem to need approval and interest from the adult generation which they ostensibly disregard. If adults express appreciation for the achievements and goals of the adolescent, the latter are assured that they are valued and approved of and this is an incentive for communication. The role of the teachers in providing guidelines within which the young person can work towards a valid sense of self - identity is an invaluable one .

One problematic feature of adolescent self development which may be encountered by teachers is that of 'feigned individuality' the identification of the self with the persona. (3). The term 'persona' is a Jungian one, and is identified as :

the 'mask' the defensive structure of the ego complex. The persona protects the coherence of individual being, through denial, or identification with a role. The persona is a defence, especially against threats from others caused by lowered self esteem or other threats (emotional or physical). (4). with a feeling of reclation from adults, and unable to courrentiests, or even verballse their fears.

It is the responsibility of parents and teachers in case, such as these to perivide follerance and ignituatly and to mate throughes available and approachable to young teople expensioning difficulties. Approachable dopoordant young individuals still seems to need approval and interest. from the court generation which they actousibly disregard. If adults express approaction which they actousibly disregard. If adults approved or and this is an insurtive for communication. The quarties of the test was an insurtive for communication. The role of the teachers in providing guidelines which which the points of the teachers in providing guidelines which which the sound or real case work towards a valid tomate of cells is an invaluable one.

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The persona could be described as the best possible face which the adolescent adopts to serve as an identity. This comes about (as previously described) by the adoption of role models, values and ideas without really being aware of the motives for appreciating these things. This is acceptable so long as it exists merely as an experimental stage in the process for discovering the self. However, many adolescents do not go beyond this stage and instead concentrate on developing the persona - which is, in fact, not the true self at all, but only an aspect of the personality to be perceived by others. So, while the young person imagines that they are establishing a sense of self identity ; they are merely presenting a ' face ' to the out side world without really understanding the intrinsic aspects of their psychological individuality. The reason that the persona emerges so forcefully in adolescence is partially because of the need for a defence mechanism.

Young people often feel very threatened by others' expectations of them - expectations which may be apparent in their families, peers - and teachers. Adolescents are governed by the need to appear mature and 'together'. This state of assured maturity can often seem elusive to them, when, in moments of self - doubt or genuine self - reflection - they become aware of the discrepancy between their ideal selves and what they believe themselves to be. The persona could be described as the rest possable.

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The frightening element of the constructed persona is that very aspect which characterises it - falsehood. While the persona allows the young person to successfully knit in to their society it is still essentially detrimental because it is a false self. It doesn't accommodate aspects of the identity which may have been rejected in childhood by families or peers. From infancy onwards, traits such as aggression, boastfulness and selfishness meet with disapproval. *(6)*. This should not be condemned, however, since we'd have an anarchistic society if these traits were indulged.

The danger here is that adolescents may completely disclaim these aspects of themselves, in order to achieve their ideal identity. This is the way in which the persona is shaped and developed - by identification with and only with - the positive aspects of the self.

There are those who may feel that this is the right way to conduct oneself. However, if a young person completely Then to contract a personal score of naroequicy drives there then to contract a person - a determination or seven at on of a loss self - to report their ideel of a unique distribution. This departments a result for flaws are avained as to do to be bar you to depart effecpersons fulfile the demand to be a collective individual, with a cole land celtural narration (2010) for the collective sector of the coll and celtural narration of the land for the depart of the coll and celtural narration of collective by the dividual sector.

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disassociates themselves from negative ideas and images of their personality, these traits become repressed. And if integral parts of the self are split from persons' conscious identity, they can erupt with frightening force in later life, leading to a variety of neuroses and the widely discussed 'mid-life crisis'.

It is crucial, therefore that the adolescent breaks away from the 'feigned individuality' of the persona, and empathises with and takes responsibility for the negative aspects of the personality. The young person can only become capable of insight into their true self by differentiating between what they WANT to be and what they fundamentally ARE.

Many people reach adulthood without taking this developmental stage - few even contemplate it. (7). The result is an over developed persona which may be potentially damaging to the individual.

This is why the importance of reaching a valid sense of self - identity in adolescence must not be underestimated. Good teaching strategies and a positive, communicative teacher pupil relationship can be instrumental in the young person's acceptance of the variety of qualities and characteristics which contribute to their wholeness as an individual. In the following chapters, the role and relevance of art in the classroom as an approach to self - exploration will be introduced. There will be a focus on the hypothesis that the creative experience can be a tool for discovering the self, and communicating one's inner de a servicios d'have obtens from negecirá ideas mel trajáct at their personactic, there teste esconsecrepresado Ani d'anectro parts at tracta a seguit (com nectors conscious bientito), their concoup, nice regimentar reconst conscious bientito), their concoup, nice regimentar setuica first facilitis, to an ety of a succentricad the andaty demandratic multiple extent.

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experiences, responses and conflicts to others by visual means. To quote a valid remark made by a tutor in the National College of Art; " A drawing is like a page in an intimate diary".

This in itself outlines the relevance of art and design for a young person's personal growth. The desire for perfection in oneself is understandable but that state is unattainable. It is hoped that through creative self - exploration, adolescents will come to realise that both positive and negative aspects of character are vital components in that which is the fascinating and beautiful, healthy human being. easpaniences, responsas and conflicts to eithers by visual neares. To quete a viliti remain music by a teremin the National College of Arts. "A drawing is file a care mode informate damy".

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FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER 1

- J.A. Hadfield, <u>Childhood and Adolescence</u>. (Middlesex, England, Penguin Books Ltd., 1962) page 180.
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CHAPTER 2

ROLE CONFUSION

In this chapter, I propose to examine the hypothesis that the development of and adherence to a false self can be transgressed, with the aid of art and design (the creative process) as a medium for self exploration. It is important to embark upon this process of establishing self - identity at the stage when the young adolescent is struggling with a variety of role models derived from the adult generation and society in general. The young person is selecting roles from the culture which surrounds them, and emulating or disregarding them in an attempt to create a prototype identity for themselves. Their fundamental concern is that the 'self' they are formulating will appear impressive to their peers and autonomous to adults.

Erik H. Erikson refers to this behaviour as the stage of 'role confusion' one which is frequently upsetting and debilitating for adolescents. He says that :

it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs individual young people. To keep themselves together they temporarily overidentify to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the beroes of cliques and crowds. (1).

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3 (c) the devicting in wolfe on an incorpolation of the historican distribution instands of a wing people. To share the method hay then the completenting accelerating as the second of a present anomaly of the net gradies the second distribute and exceeds of the It is easy for a teacher to recognise the behaviour patterns of young people in thrall to that state of role confusion.

With the apparent absence of continuity in themselves and their surroundings, they fix doggedly onto icons of popular culture as mentors and symbols of their ideal selves, only to swing to another role model in remarkably short space of time. Most adolescents appear to have an inherent horror of seeming nondescript or overly conformist. Casually glancing around my classroom last week, I took note of a fair number of deviations from the school's idea of correct uniform. Students employed badges, elaborate hairstyles, rolled-up sleeves and (presumably illegal) nail polish to proclaim their individuality. This behaviour is echoed outside the school, where the clothing, social habits and ideas of adolescents almost make an overt and deliberately calculated statement about the individual. Fashion, make up and even tattoos are experimented with, seeming to suggest a desire to physically impress some form of permanent, tangible identity on the young person. (2). Yet, these aspects of dress and appearance will fluctuate and alter at the same rate as the role models they select.

Adolescents experiencing role confusion can also vary in their treatment of others. The young person often appoints even the most well meaning of teachers to play the role of adversary, the totalitarian enemy. (3). This stereotyping is comforting to the adolescent, as it fits in with their ideology which is that the 11 is easy for a conclusive processing instances partners of young products in threal to that state of this formulan.

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This notion exists primarily because of the conflict which occurs between the young person and adult authority figures, when, in the quest for identity, the adolescent grasps at responsibilities and autonomous decisions which they may not have the maturity to deal with properly.

An innate desire to appear (and to perceive themselves) as in control of their lifestyle and behaviour, causes the adolescent to disregard the influences and advice of many parents and teachers. To the young person, it is imperative that they alone are responsible for the choices they make - even if those choices result in isolation from parents and, possibly a sense of abandonment.

The alternative is to accept guidance from those in authority and hence to perceive themselves as 'children' incapable of achieving status and approval except by complying with the rules of the adult generation. To the adolescent, this course of action would seem to incur a state of debilitation: dependence on adults, and, ultimately, a loss of the mature, autonomous identity which they are attempting to establish for themselves.

Paradoxically, however, many adolescents have a deep fear of acting inappropriately, making the wrong decisions

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and failing to meet the expectations of their peers, or their adult advisers. (4).

The sense of failure is all the more acute and destructive because it has been brought about solely by the young person - responsibility and blame is focused entirely on themselves. This leads to self - appraisals which are unrealistically negative and over-critical since the adolescents' idealistic outlook causes them to be as intolerant of their own defects as of other people's.

The occurrence of such crises can result in many adolescents, in an act of defiance, adopting what Erik Erikson terms as a 'negative identity'. (5).

The emergence of this role is, for the adolescent, a last-ditch attempt at attaining independence, and a sense of a coherent self. It is a potentially destructive role, however, in that it entails consistent and complete rejection of the ethical, political and moral values which are upheld by the adolescent's parents and teachers. seus faiding to mean the expectedors of their pasts, or their a bit advisers, (3)

The sense of fautre is all the more acute and destinative because it has been brought about solely by the vising person eneroperibility and blane is focuad antirely on the methes. This leads to sail - oppretials which he amputed study regets e and over available which he destructions of outs over available struct in addressent. Idealistic outs is on sea chore to be as intolerant of their own

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Erikson refers to it as :

...... a combination of socially unacceptable and yet stubbornly affirmed identity elements. If the social setting fails to offer any viable alternatives, all this can lead to a sudden regression to the conflicts of the earliest experiences of the sense of 'T', almost as a desperate attempt at self rebirth. (6).

Hence, the young person who, at first glance, appears to be unprincipled, sullen and even somewhat nihilistic, must not be taken at face value. Adolescents caught up in these negative behaviour patterns are often experiencing serious self doubt about their capabilities in handling the role they have imposed upon themselves. They feel isolated and alienated from the adult world. Any sense of autonomy that they have achieved, has been brought about by conflict with, and, rejection of those adults who, in the adolescent's heart of hearts, are most valued and esteemed.

Many psychologists maintain that this experience is a necessary and significant stage in the discovery of self. (7). It enables the young person to identify the roles which they must repudiate in order to successfully adapt to and become part of the societies they live in, and in this way; having made the choice to integrate with the adult world which surrounds them, to develop a cohesive, mature self - identity. (8).

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a complexion of socially unecceptable and just whichomly approved charing charactes (F the social without take to offer any visitio ethermaticus, all this can lead to a studden regraveror to the vorplicits of the operative curvatures furth, list.

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Yet, this is the process which, as discussed in Chapter One, is essentially destructive. In rejecting the more negative and reactionary role, to embrace that which their society deems to be acceptable, the adolescent has not truly resolved the search for self - identity. They have merely assumed 'the best possible face' to present to the outside world, as a defence mechanism against the threats and hostilities they have experienced in the midst of their rebellious roles.

This defensive presentation of a false self, which masks weaknesses, insecurities and uncertainties is described by C.G. Jung as the 'mask', the constructed PERSONA.

As established in the previous chapter, the persona fulfils the demands of the society and culture surrounding the young person, yet fundamentally neglects the intrinsic aspects of the personality - the positive AND negative traits which make up the true individual.

Jung responds to the problem of the persona by encouraging the individual to attempt some insight and reflection on inner conflicts - addressing and dealing with negative thoughts and emotions, rather than suppressing them. This involves taking responsibility for and accepting all aspects of the personality, rather than denying those that may be deemed unsavoury. (9). Net the second style is the process watch, or discussed in Skepter Greative second skylication dates in rejecting and teams in pathe and reactionary note to so an intege that which their solution teams or or acceptants that a lot is contomorphic traip, and would fact and in the reaction of the activity that pathets their solution teams and in the reaction of the activity have not to be activity the fact and in the reaction of the activity that is not to activity and in the reaction of the react on the design of the solution condition fact to proceed to the order the solution that here activity the react the the react on the rescale to the reaction condition fact to proceed the react on the rescale to the reaction acceleration approximation the react on the order teached the reaction acceleration approximation the react on the reaction of the condition fact to the material theory fact the reaction activity the react of the react on the reaction of the reaction activity to the mater the react of the react factor theory fact activity to the material of the react factor to the reaction activity theory to the material theory factor to the reaction activity the react of the react of the reaction of the reaction of the activity the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the reaction activity the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the activity the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the activity to the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the activity to the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the activity to the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the reaction of the activity to the reaction of the activity to the reaction of the react of the reaction of the r

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(and consists to the problem of all march of an example much aging the individual to almorph seems insight and and action an onese scotflate - advectsing or a desire. Almention through and exactions, values that supervises on the The involves taking responsibility for and seems that way of the presention retear there donylege that are been to seems transmuch a fitter there donylege that are be consisted association. (0) This valid and significant philosophy should, one imagines, be adhered to by everyone. Yet, oddly, Jung maintains that it should only come about with the onset of middle age "...... the ability to reflect on the totality of one's being is not guaranteed; it is the product of striping in the middle and second half of life." (10).

It is my opinion that self - awareness and responsibility for oneself can come about at a much earlier stage in the life cycle. Surely, the optimum time for exploration and acceptance of the true self is at the point BEFORE the destructive persona is constructed.

It is not my business to challenge Jung. No teacher would (or should) ever claim to have greater understanding of the diverse components of human beings than one of the most distinguished psychologists of our time. However, it must be possible to promote self acceptance, inner confidence and unity with all aspects of the self, as soon as self - identity and the pursuit of this becomes an issue. How can this be done, though, with bashful, uncertain adolescents who may not wish to rely on their abilities to verbalise or even address their confused, tumultuous feelings ?

There is an approach which, though regarded by some as lateral or unorthodox, seems to me to be the most valid and workable. Art and design is accepted by everyone as an activity directed towards developing the whole person. What better medium of communication, what more powerful personal

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FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER 2

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- Sue Jennings, <u>Creative Therapy</u>, (Pitman Publishing, London, 1975), page 158.
- 3. Erik H. Erikson, <u>Childhood and Society</u>, page 235.
- 4. James Marcia, <u>Personality and Abnormal Processes and</u> <u>Development</u>, page 432.
- 5. Erik H. Erikson, <u>The Life Cycle Completed</u>, (W.W. Norton Inc., New York, 1985), page 73.
- 6. Ibid, page 74.
- Kenneth Kenniston, <u>Personality and Abnormal Processes</u> and <u>Development</u>, page 432.
- 8. Erik H. Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed, page 74.
- 9. C.G. Jung, <u>Self Psychology : A Constructivist Perspective</u>, page 29.
- 10. Ibid, page 31.

FOOTMOTES CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 3

THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE :

Its role and relevance for the adolescent

...... Even in the most extreme cases of compliance and the establishment of a false personality; bidden away somewhere, there exists a secret life that is satisfactory because of its being creative or original to that buman being. (1).

It is universally accepted among art educators and psychologists that every individual has the potential for creativity. It is this characteristic that constitutes the difference between human beings and animals. The creative impulse exists in all of us - yet many people believe that they can not create. They are almost fearful of the possibility of self - expression, particularly in the visual arts.

Despite a comparatively limited experience in art education (having only recently embarked upon teaching), I have encountered this attitude in quite a large number of students. When faced with a proposal for a new project, or when beginning a piece, certain students will hesitate and self deprecatingly maintain that they can't attempt it, they can't

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Esspite a comparatively limited experience of art anaction (having only recently embarized architeks). I have encountered into actificate in quite a large number of soudents. When faced with a proposal for a new project, or when by a mong a piece, certain students will residere and set decretatingly and their they can't stamped it, they can't draw or that they're "not artistic". It is only adolescents, however, who react in this way to the possibilities of their own creativity. Younger children have a marked tendency to regard art and design as exciting and enjoyable. This was clearly emphasised to me when I recently took a class of primary school children for one afternoon. I introduced myself and announced that we would be doing art for the remainder of the day - and their reaction was astonishing. The entire class actually cheered ! They then worked on their task with great enthusiasm, manipulating their paintbrushes and gluing their coloured tissue-paper into a collage, with what can only be described as unrestrained gusto.

The most striking difference in the responses these two groups to the prospect of creative expression is the utter lack of inhibition displayed by the seven-year olds, in direct contrast to the uncertainty and restraint of the adolescents. It must be concluded, then, that at some stage between childhood and adolescence, an awareness occurs in children of the expectations of society for them to 'perform' and to work towards an impressive end product. The young children felt free to express themselves creatively because they were focused on the actual <u>process</u> of their creativity (drawing, painting and making) - and the enjoyment they derived from it, rather than the end result of their exploration. demote that they is not writike? If is only stolenow is been as in a horest in this way to the possibilities of their own oraal ity is toongar delition have a market territory to reserve a used dong as and the complete high paths. The way there? children the ora desiting and enj paths. The way there? differentiation the ora desiting and enj paths. The way there? that we would be doug use no starts too way that an uncounced that we would be doug use no starts to mark the doubt of the finite reaction are reference. It introduced to be the doubt on that we would be doug use no starts to mark that the test of the reaction are referenced in the control has be the doubted of the appendix of the oratic test of the doubt of the reaction are referenced to be the test of the doubt of the doup use the test of the test of the doubt doubt the sector of the oratic of the test of the doubt doubt of the sector of the oratic test of the test of the doubt of the sector of the oratic test of the test of the doubt of the sector of the test of the test of the test of the test of the sector of the test of the test of the doubt of the sector of the test of the test of the test of the test of the sector of the test of the test of the test of the test of the sector of the test of the test of the test of the test of the sector of the test of the test of the test of the test of the sector of the test of test of the test of test of the test of test of the test of test of test of the test of the test of test of test of the test of te

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Viktor Lowenfield maintains that the disappearance of this unfettered confidence occurs around the time of puberty. (2). "Probably imposed upon by foreign standards, you were asked to perform rather than to create ; and in this striping for exactness, you lost the feeling that what you create is important to yourself." (3).

This loss of belief in the validity of the young person's creative power, is all the more disillusioning because the distinctive value of art and design itself is not the end result, but the process by which it came about. "The Arts are a form of knowing and communicating, whose value lies, not in any objective, quantifiable end product, but in the subjective experience of creating and expressing ideas, which are themselves intrinsically aesthetic." (4).

SOCIETY VERSUS THE CREATIVE INDIVIDUAL

The shift from emphasising the working process to emphasising the final product happens primarily because of the adolescent's innate idealism and drive for perfection as discussed in Chapter Two. It also comes about, however, as a consequence of the world we live in today. These are times of mass production, mass education and what Lowenfield describes as "*ibe drive for conformity*". (5). The shallowness and superficiality of modern life ; the pressure to assume an acceptable role (that is, the persona) can have an extraordinary desensitising effect on the young person. "Youtb after youtb, bewildered by bis assumed role, a role forced on bim by the inexorable standardisation of American

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of this waterrared confidence occurs around the error of minerty (2). "Proceedy rescard at a granges a endance, accursciance o performance then in owners, and in the ariticity of constance gear from the policy that other are reaction apprend to accursciance. (3) adolescence, runs away in one form or another or withdraws into bizarre and inaccessible moods" (6).

It is evident, from this, that the persona is damaging the individual, even as it is being formed. Young people who are suppressing their inner selves are thereby suppressing their ability for creative expression - since it is impossible to be simultaneously conformist and original. These two traits cancel each other out.

However, adolescents are characterised by their paradoxical nature : " the adolescent is a very peculiar species, a mixture of the bighest degree of individuality and conformity." (7).

Hence, adolescents attempt to express their individuality by assuming a role which is chosen for them by the society in which they live. This idea is self - contradictory, even as a statement it is contradictory ! Yet this is what adolescents endeavour to do.

The stereotyping of the self, and consequent repression of the intrinsic aspects of the personality results in an accumulation of bitterness, aggression and defeat within the young person. In the drive for conformity, other emotions such as joy and elation are also withheld. In this way, the adolescent is deprived of the opportunity "to embrace others in their joy, in their sadness, or in their excitedness". (8).

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This is extremely unhealthy, particularly in the formative years. Yet, it is widely known that most young people, in this state of isolation, will rarely attempt to verbalise or even confront their inner feelings. The lives of many adolescents do not lend themselves to contemplation and communing with oneself. Studies have shown that most adolescents today, work far harder than the average adult. School and homework takes up a considerable part of each day, and many young people have part-time jobs (which may entail working late into the evening) to obtain some sort of income for themselves. Other activities, such as sports, music and social clubs are encouraged by parents and peers. It is unsurprising that the adolescent then relentlessly fills up their remaining free time with successive partygoing, films, and (often banal) pop music in an effort to enjoy their precious leisure, in a regimented existence. There is nothing wrong with any of the aforementioned activities provided they are not used as a means of diversion from more pertinent issues - which, for the adolescent, are to embrace meaning and creativity and not to blunt their sensitivities on meaningless pastimes. This may sound rather pedantic, but it is utterly necessary for the young person to experience meaning (that is, anything that is deep and genuine), to create; and to accept the inner reality of themselves. If this doesn't happen, they become the product of a society concerned primarily with materialistic values and industrial commodities and, in my belief, the only thing which will remain intact in the young person is their insidious, constructed persona.

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THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IN ART EDUCATION

The role of the art teacher in today's society is a challenging one, as it is particularly focused on promoting the sensitivities of young people. As mentioned previously, these very sensitivities are the ones which may have become buried as the persona is adopted; and the adolescent is surrounded by utilitarian work, and insignificant leisure pursuits. In the Lowenfield Lectures on Art and Education and Therapy, Viktor Lowenfield states that - " art education bas a special mission to bring out of the individual bis own creative potentialities and combine in bim the experiences which otherwise remain separated." (9).

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter, that certain adolescents are hesitant in embarking upon creative exploration through art media. This attitude stems partly from the adolescent's inherent drive for perfection, and fear of 'failure' - due to their concern with literal representation, and the final product. There is a possibility, however that the adolescent is also subliminally aware that the creative process is a powerful nonverbal made of expression, "...... drawing and painting are supposed to provide direct access to the unconscious and preconscious processes because they tend to by-pass many of the defence mechanisms employed in controlling more cognitive processes". (10).

THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IN MOLLADUGE TRA

The role of the art tracher in foday's society is a challenging one, as it is particularly focused on promoting the sensitivities of young people. As mentioned providuely, these ery sensitivities are the ones which erest have boundy, these the persona is catopted, and the idolescent is succound at by orditerian work, and insignificant ference persuits. In the towardield tecturits on are and factorial for and Theory, Wittor towardield stores that on an actual factorial and the second as the personal in sector is an activity of the articles on the towardield tecturits on are and factorial bases of the second to bring towardield stores that - 1 or effective that a special active to the end of the multice in the second approximation of the condent to multice of the second approximate (0).

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The art teacher's role is to motivate students to draw from their experiences, express these experiences and their reactions to them and thereby enhance their sensitivities to their environment and themselves. To do this we must attempt to dispel the sense of inadequacy which may trouble the adolescent. We must promote in them the desire to express themselves, the desire to communicate nonverbally and creatively.

It is imperative to instil in the young person the value of the creative process, over that of the end product. To do this, the art teacher must be as approving and accepting of the students' work as possible, emphasising the importance of what the student has derived from the experience of creativity, rather than what has been produced. The product of the students' work means very little unless the students themselves have learnt something from it.

It must be admitted that it is rather difficult to approach art education in this way. The art teacher is always aware that; in the current educational climate, it is expected that Alter provides at the measure, the exclusion is the main mark to the extension of the provides of the device of the field of the test of the main medication require a sumediating valuate they do not the formations of the partitions not in lock along which the protocols, they formations built that they are to also ware the table product on the clear formation as they are to also ware the table product on the clear formation as they are to also ware the table product on the clear formation they are to also ware the table product on the clear formation with the to be defined and of the product on the clear formation of the to the table of the product on the table to the set.

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It wast be alreaded that that if it mutues of the prosecond was are education in the way. The are reached if offware second reaches there are aducationed offmate. It is appeted that a good education in art should result in a high standard of aesthetic products, a knowledge of the various art media and the ability to use them competently; and an awareness of the art elements and their application. Unarguably, these aspects of art education are valuable and desirable. <u>But</u> they are incidental to the real focus of art education; which is the experience of expressing and creating ideas and in this way, learning more about one's reactions, sensitivities and essential nature.

There is a constant temptation to instruct students in a step-by-step manner, ensuring that their final piece will closely resemble the accepted, standardised norm. This method of teaching, however, does not embrace creativity. The student is deprived of the opportunity for exploration and problem solving - and therefore learns very little about either the task they have completed, or their interpretation of that task. They are not documenting themselves through creativity, but simply following a set pattern. Because of this, an individual emotional response to their task will not occur - as they are dealing with it not in their own way, but in someone else's way. Hence, the experience has not been meaningful to them, and they have not discovered anything about themselves.

The self is not really to be found in what is made of products of body or mind – however valuable these constructs may be in terms of beauty, skill and impact. The finished creation never beals the underlying lack of sense of self. (11). a provable expendition of a set of rescald rescald on the block stread and ref. where we was there competendly that an eventeers of the order where we use there competendly that an eventeers of the order whereasts and there application. Thereinvisibly these adjoints of m whereasts and there application. Thereinvisibly these adjoints of m whereasts and there application desirable. Stretcap are incidented to the rest these of web advoction which keeps experience of appressing and encating ideas are the third wey to another of advoction of web advoction which keeps are incidented to advoct and there a substration which keeps are incidented to advoct and the state of the state of the the stretches of advoct and the state of the state of the the the stretches of advoct and the state of the state of the the stretches of advoct and the state of the stretches and the stretches and the state of the stretches of the stretches of the stretches of the state of the stretches of the stretches of the stretches of the state of the stretches of the str

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(a) subjects was used, so he found to cond to conde or neckness of heady or mind - bounces understander orientate may be internal of benuity. Advectively, and fait incided accord in sumer bands the uncertainty letter of sense of sub-field. The responsibility of the art teacher is to allow students the opportunity to have what Viktor Lowenfield terms as, a "basic experience".

A basic experience is any experience in which the whole individual participates. That means his thinking, in which be discovers something; his feelings, in which he feels what be has discovered; and his perceiving, in which he has become sensitively aware through his senses so that what he has discovered has meaning to him. (12).

The value of a basic experience in creativity is that it prompts the student to open themselves up for enquiry into their thinking, feeling and sensory reactions to an idea - and, in this way, to learn more about their intrinsic selves.

OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF NONVERBAL EXPRESSION

As previously alluded to, in this chapter, the adolescent may have a fear of expressing him/herself creatively and thus disclosing or encountering aspects of him/herself which have been buried by the persona. It is imperative that this hesitancy must be overcome, since it is in creative expression that the adolescent may come to encounter, accept and identify with his/her innate characteristics - a process which is essential to the healthy individual.

The crux of the young person's uneasiness may be his/her awareness of the possibility that his/her creative work (4) base expension is some eventance in thirty is a finite interview of a noticely at managedres. The mapped the finite factors in this is discourse experiments for footbyte in a of 1 for factors.
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ीम सुराण अंग्रेणा करावा अंग्रिका सुमान कुमनक तुम्मिति कि प्रायत्व आणे. जे करत हली कि अन्त त्वमी सेने केलाव एमीमीकेल्पन कोई कि स्टब्स् मार्ट्स्स करावा त्वन could have a childishness or naivety which reminds him/her too much of the qualities of his/her childhood drawings - and he/she cannot accept the primitive, intimate quality of these any longer. Because of this, it is necessary to provide him/her with a technical process - such as printmaking, paint-techniques or construction - which will remove the intimate feeling from his/her art work, and *"transfigure it into a finisbed piece"*. (13).

Hence, the adolescent's concern with the final product is catered for, without depriving him/her of the basic creative experience advocated by Lowenfield. Though the adolescent has dealt with the subject matter by means of a technical process; he/she has still dealt with it, defined it and expressed it in their own way. Therefore he/she have explored his/her individuality while still satisfying the need for a finished product.

The attitude and evaluative methods of the art teacher are also instrumental in encouraging the adolescent to discover him/herself through creativity.

Our end is to promote the young person's sensitivities to the outer world which surrounds him/her and his/her inner world whereby he/she can gain a deeper understanding of him/herself. A teacher's job, however, is most emphatically not to be confused with that of an art therapist's. It is not up to the art teacher to make deductions about the our have a definition of mainers definitely which remainds him from two soluted has a section of highling with and from the solution which as the section of highling to definite solutions and here to the solution of the solution of the solution

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Our and is to promote the young person in sensitivities to the outer excite tell the class encource birdhor and bracker france readed where day in rate as a graph deeter ander transform of the second of the tell of the tell another transform to be confised with the tell of an arc therapists. If it not we to the confised with the televice solutions to both the young person's inner life on the basis of his/her creative work or to "engage in any diagnosis of childrens' drawings which is drawn from inferences." (14).

There is undisputedly a place for art therapy in our society and it is possible that a situation such as this can - within certain limits - extend into the classroom. The art teacher should have the ability to make sensitive, informed appraisals of students' work, and to discuss - with discrimination, and on a one-to-one basis - elements which may have evolved in students' work. However, teachers should not attempt to emulate a therapist's role, or draw conclusions about young people from symbol inferences in their artwork. Such behaviour on the teacher's part could easily result in the adolescent becoming wary of the creative experience and as an attempt at self protection, becoming a reticent in their creativity. This end is diametrically opposed to that which a good art education could achieve - that is, freedom of creative expression, the opportunity to participate in the 'basic experience' and thereby bringing about the autonomous discovery of the true inner self. "Whatever we discover for ourselves is the thing that is most meaningful to us". (15).

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There is undisputedly a place to and therapy in our society and it is possible that a struction such as this can within evenuin liants - extend into the classroom. The act tauther should have the ability to make sensitive, informed approximit of calcents' work, and to discurs - with distrimination, and on a material work, and to discurs - with distrimination, and on a one-thome basis - demons which may have so invadin students' work. However, teachers should not attempt to emulate a probabilistic role, or unar condustors about young pools from teacher's part could assily result in the addition of the many of the create e experiment addits of the addition of the statements based to their action to the addition of the many of the create e experiment and as an attempt at selfdiametrically exposed to that which a good and a humating achieve - that is, freedom of creating approximity or may be achieve - that is, freedom of creating approximity and b achieve - that is, freedom of creating approximity or the role actieve - that is, freedom of creating and the role interview. This and is achieve - that is, freedom of creating approximity or the role about the option of a fact which a good and a humating to protecting. Also many or the true interview.

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CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY :

Introduction to the creative exploration of the self

It was decided that this study should be conducted on the basis of a sequence of lessons focused on self portraiture. Since the very process of creation involves incorporating the self into the activity, it was surmised that this approach afforded " *the best opportunity for personal identification*." (1).

The investigation was carried out in a secondary school in Dublin 6, with a catchment area comprised of comparatively affluent communities. The school is a fee-paying one, catering for boarders and day pupils all of whom are girls. Art and design has a very high profile within the school. There are three art rooms and three art teachers, two of whom are full-time. The facilities available here include a darkroom, printing equipment, and a kiln for firing clay pieces - as well as all the standard materials, such as paint, pastels and supplies of paper.

The sequence of lessons was undertaken with a first year group of nineteen students. These girls displayed various

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METHODOLOGY:

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the sequence of lessons was widerbally a risk year group of metoce the lense. These gifts databance various
levels of ability - yet all of them had a very positive and exploratory attitude to the creative process. They appeared to be quite responsive to the idea of self - portraiture as a means of self - exploration once it had been established that their work would not be evaluated by the teacher in a diagnostic way.

REASONS FOR THE SELECTION OF SELF -PORTRAITURE AS AN INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH TO SELF - IDENTITY

The search for self - identity, as discussed in previous chapters, is a major concern of the adolescent, and if they are struggling with role confusion and the development of a persona; the opportunity to become directly involved in creatively exploring the characteristics of the self through portraiture may be a pertinent one. At this point, the adolescent may have a confused picture of him/herself primarily learnt from the reactions of others to his/her roleplaying and moods. If this picture is essentially a negative one, there is a distinct possibility that the young person is entering the stage of constructing a 'false self' to meet the needs of the society in which they live. The young person may be aware that the persona does not embrace every aspect of their essential selves, nor is it " an expression of Ibal elusive awareness of experience which underpins 'my' life......" (2).

REASONS FOR THE SELECTION OF SELF PORTRAINGRE AS AN INVESTIGATIVE APEROACH TO SELF - IDENTIFY

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METHODS OF SELF EXPRESSION

Within the scheme of lessons, the students were first introduced to the concept of self - portraiture by studying the work of artists such as Van Gogh and Edvard Munch. From this, the students discovered that the organisation of colour, forms and texture - rather than the literal representation - in each piece is a powerful indicator of the uniqueness of the individual. (*Figs. 1 and 2*).

Facial expressions, textural qualities and colour were discussed with reference to their significance in self - expression. Some students pointed out that both of the aforementioned artists portrayed a strong sense of dissatisfaction with themselves, through their work. The idea was then introduced that creative self - expression need not always feed from the positive aspects of oneself or one's experiences. Munch's 'The Scream', (*Fig. 3*) was referred to as a great work of art which was generated by suffering. Classific the Chic and Escent Harvy 5 h addred "122

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Fig. 1 : Self - Portrait by Vincent Van Gogh

Fig. 1 : Self · Fortrait by Vincent Van Gogin



Fig. 2 : Self - Portrait by Edvard Munch



Fig. 3 : 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch



In this way, students were made aware of the possibility of addressing negative emotions and fears through creative activity and thereby, perhaps confronting repressed individuality and breaking free of the persona. "Self - expression seems to me to be the reaction of any individual to any situation that excites bis sensibilities." (4).

'Colour to express mood' was the next theme introduced to students and, rather than giving students a didactic, formal account of colour symbolism and the accepted associations with colour, they were shown prepared colour charts and asked to express their reactions to these. The first two charts (Figs. 4 and 5) were contrasting displays of sombre, depressing colours and vivid, cheerful colours. These were followed by charts of cool and warm, harmonious colours (Figs. 6 and 7). The reactions to these charts varied with each individual - which was in keeping with the objective of the lesson. With this simple exercise, students gained an insight into themselves which was followed through in their use of colour in the self - portraits. " Emotional reactions to colour are bigbly personal, and the nonoisually minded child may use colour in contradiction to nature. Colour can be bigbly subjective." (5).

The tasks which followed on from this were a series of abstract exploration into the expressive use of colour incorporating application techniques with wet and dry media, such as sponging, working with resists and building up 'layers' of In this way, students ware state of the possibility of addressing segables emotions and fame through creative activity and thereing, perinare confirmating represend individuatity and breaking there of the pressent. "Caj - consistio prove to mercers theree the of any indicales to any checker that easter his specialitie." (T

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Fig. 4 : Colour Chart; evoking a sober, gloomy mood.





Fig. 5 : Colour Chart; evoking a cheerful mood.





Fig. 6 : Warm Colour Chart





Fig. 7 : Cool Colour Chart



colour. These experiences were empowering for the students, as they allowed for spontaneous expression while simultaneously acquiring the knowledge of technical processes. (Figs. 8 and 9). The technical processes, as discussed in Chapter Three dispensed with the adolescents' fear of their work appearing too 'childish' or primitive, while still lending themselves o exploration and creativity.

The next stage in the sequence involved students examining aspects of their inner lives and environment which had a significance for them, and subsequently gathering objects which were meaningful to them, or representational of their concerns. A handout was distributed to them to prompt an exploratory, reflective attitude about themselves. The task generated by this preparation was an abstraction of these significant objects into the features of the self - portraits, so that the finished pieces would appear to be " a oisual inventory of (ibe young person's) life." (6).

The portraiture of Robert Ballagh was employed as a reference point for this exercise. (Figs. 11 and 12). Ballagh's approach to portraiture allowed his subjects "reveal themselves through the surface detail of their lives." (7). This end was achieved by surrounding the subject with representational aspects of themselves - whereas the approach which was taken for this sequence was to actually incorporate the representational objects into the features of the face - resulting in a powerful, immediate message about the self.

oplour. These experiences were empower up for the soutents of they allowed for spontaneous expression white simultaneously acquiring the knowledge of technical processes. (The Scado) The technical processes, as discussed in Chapter Three dispensed with the adolescents' fear of their work appearing too 'childish' or prattrive, white still lending themselves a exploration and

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Fig. 8 : Oil pastel techniques.



Fig. 9 : Resist and layering techniques.





Fig. 10 : Wax resist techniques.





Portrait of Bernadette Greevy. A continuous loop tape of Greevy singing Brahms is triggered by the viewer's presence. Oil on canvas, 48 x 48.

Fig. 11 : Portrait of Bernadette Greevy





Portrait of Michael Scott. Documentation of the architect's career pinned to a drawing board. Oil on canvas, 36 x 36.

Fig. 12 : Portrait of Michael Scott



The final pieces of work were an amalgamation of the exploratory tasks which were undertaken throughout the series of lessons. Colour was used expressedly to reflect emotion, within the face itself, and in the background of the piece. The intense, emotive portraiture of the Fauves (Figs. 13 and 14) was used as a support study to enhance students' comprehension of this exercise. The students applied the technical processes they had become familiar with throughout the sequence to their use of media - using textural marks, resists and sponging in a very tactile way, so that the end result seemed to be reflective of their inner experiences.

ACHIEVEMENT OF AIMS - EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

This study of self - exploration was carried out by means of a series of lessons where students were introduced to all the nuances of self - portraiture. While the students were given guidance, in order to fulfil the objective of lesson - their actual <u>interpretation</u> of the task : the use of colour to express mood, and the abstraction of meaningful objects into the features of the face, for example was entirely autonomous.

For many of the students, it was their first attempt at self - exploration through creativity and, for the most part, they became fascinated by the shades of meaning they discovered in themselves as they created their self - portraits. The first models of 3 or 5 were an algument of 6

The subjection factor much were renderfield through na the and all floatenes Colour was used aspressedby to the test or which were checked to the Land to the factage and to the procent free intense, emotive postations of the france field of and of your used as a support study to entrance the color or sector of the star as a post study to entrance the color activities processes they had become familiar with the up color of postation of the base to find the the test of the color activities processes they had become familiar with the up the activities in the trace of modia - us my taxiant more the and of active in the familiar test of the test of the test of the stratege of the post of the test of the test of the second of the base test of the stratege of the test of and of active in the test test as a stratege for the test of the test of the second stratege for the test of the test of the second of the test test of the test of test of the test of the test of the test of test of the test of the test of test

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Fig. 13 : The Fauves



Fig. 14 : The Fauves


Some students. however, appeared hesitant at the prospect of confronting themselves creatively in the visual arts. They repeatedly asked for reassurance about whether their use of colour was 'right' - and on hearing that their personal preferences for certain colours would not be controlled, or evaluated, they became even more uncertain. One girl, Zoe, began her portrait and destroyed it three times before finally completing the piece. Each attempt she made was encouraged by me - yet it seemed that the absence of restrictions unsettled her. Zoe's behaviour seemed to indicate that she was experiencing some degree of role confusion, and consequently was unable to immediately create an image of herself which was genuine. However, Zoe appeared to be very happy with her finished work which suggests that the experience may have been quite therapeutic for her.

The reactions of the students also varied when it was suggested to them that representational objects which had meaning for them could be abstracted into the features in their self - portrait. The students were evidently worried that the result of their endeavours in this matter would look 'childish'. I responded to this assertion by showing them visual aids and support studies which illustrated the potential of the exercise and its very achievable aims. Most of the students were reassured by the visual aids, and continued working, without anxiety. Some students has two appeared beather at the transact of configurating thread live constants and plant the stand and stands equal take the constants are about weather that size of a cours was hight, and on seeing that their persons is deered for certain colours would act to controllable we hadled they haven a castroped II from the without all or to fee on trait and astroped II from the without all or to fee on trait and astroped II from the without all or to be period that the absence of exart the without or the period that the absence of exart the we will be used a great of role constants that the west approximation and during the absence of the art the west approximated as a standard the absence of exart the second speed of the second they the absence of exart the west approximate a standard process and the absence of the start the west approximate a standard process and the absence of the art the west approximate a standard process and the absence of the start the two the start the start to approximate the to be start the transition to be a start to appear and to be very trappy with the fee the two is the regress that the appearance may have been easily a start to appear the appearance may have been easily and the the there.

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THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ART TEACHER : SELF - EVALUATION

The aforementioned problems and reactions on the part of the students were addressed by means of employing technical processes to dispel the sense of immediacy and naivety which students feared would be apparent in their work. I communicated with the students in a non-didactic way throughout the project - aiming to create an atmosphere which would lend itself to self - exploration and sensitivity. I learnt a great deal, empirically, from the project, about motivating students through demonstration and discussion - but what I consider to be most valuable - was my realisation that creativity will flourish under teachers who make sensitive, encouraging suggestions, rather than intrusive criticisms.

On completion of the sequence, the finished pieces were mounted and displayed on the classroom walls. Students from other groups enquired about the work and admired it. The adphase Ab where a strong by the outputs from of a present a track of as outputs in the book of the set of a strategies of an in the set of a strong of as outputs and related from a book of a strong book of a strong of the set of relations of the set of a strong of the set of a strong of the set of the set of a strong of strong to the set of a strong blog to set of the set of a strong of the set of a strong book of a strong blog to set of the set of the set of the set of a strong blog to set of the set of the set of the set of a strong blog to set of the set

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On constitution of the sequence that the hold press succent the data here sequence that the here of the fille of the from extransmuttenets and the court the needs of the the till. The general feeling among the girls who had undertaken the project seemed to be one of satisfaction at their achievements. It is to be hoped, however, that the predominant outcome of the sequence was one of a heightened awareness among the adolescents of the validity of their intrinsic selves. general recurry convey the girls who had undertained the project search to be and of substantion of their achievements. It is to be hoped, have on that the prodominant outcome of the equipment was price of a heightenned associates entong the adolescents of the validity of their interaction of entor.

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Lisa (Fig. 15) : " I worry about whether people like me or not. That is why I divided my face into two colours. The yellow part is my bright, happy face that everyone sees, and the dark part is the inside of me that no-one sees."

Indeed, Lisa's portrait is full of contrasts - her background, done in wax resists, is composed of soft, curving whorls; which is strikingly different to the rigid vertical stripes of her outfit.

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Susanna (Fig. 16) : " I drew myself with cat's ears, whiskers and a cat collar because my cat means a lot to me I didn't realise I was doing it at the time, but when I did my hair and the border around my face, I made it look kind of like a lion's mane. Maybe I was a cat in another life ! "



Tara (Fig. 17) : " I don't like my drawing it makes me look too angry. I look like a punk or an Indian going to war. However, when Tara was asked if she would do her self - portrait differently, given another opportunity, she was most emphatic in her reply : " No way; the colours I made are definitely right. They show that when you're angry and you can't say it, you get boiling hot inside."

Ease (Fig. 17) : - 2 down tike envidea ong ... et malies me hoch too mog y - foold tike a puter en unt tadies genter to ea. Prove val, tenas "tara enterstwed in the leval do nor cerd - perforate definition by given another procetoricly she was most emphatic to her roby - " No way the colour di made are definitely induce to "They show their what you're origin- and you can't sey at you get bold by the track what you're origin- and you can't sey at you get

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER 4

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CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken to investigate the hypothesis that a valid sense of self - identity can be discovered through the creative experience in the classroom,

In Chapter One, the fundamental aspects of early adolescence are outlined. Young peoples' search for self identity, the difficulties encountered in this pursuit and the formulation of what C.G. Jung terms as the 'persona' (the false self) were discussed. It was concluded that the acquisition of a persona is essentially an act which is detrimental to the intrinsic self - and that the young person, at this stage, is very vulnerable and in need of sensitive guidance from the adult generation which they ostensibly disregard.

Chapter Two dealt primarily with the problem of role confusion, whereby the adolescent selects roles from the culture which surrounds them, and attempts to emulate these roles in order to create a prototype identity for him/herself. The inconstancy of this behaviour can often result in the adolescent experiencing feelings of irresolution and debilitation. The young person fears acting inappropriately, and as an act of defiance, often adopts a 'negative identity' - rejecting all the ethical and moral values which are upheld by society.

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CONCLUSION

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Chapter Four described the application of the hypothesis to a sequence of lessons on self - portraiture, with a first year group. The methodology was documented and the reactions and responses of the students were evaluated and discussed.

The general outcome of the completed sequence was a sense, among the students, that they had documented the innate aspects of themselves in a creative, enjoyable and genuine way. Hence, the hypothesis that the creative experience in art and design is advantageous for personal growth and the acquisition of a valid sense of self - identity was investigated and found to be acceptable. Alterian Times focused on the posibility that the could strate the could stratege units of the called to a method in a method stratege with called to a method stratege of the could stratege with the rest of the definition of the stratege and lead the young person to a heighter of awareness of hit plates if the role of art education was discusted, with televation of sensitivity and self-confidence in statege to be confidence in the defense of non-confidence in the detector of an and self-confidence in the factor of the confidence in the detector of an and self-confidence in the potential to bypase the defenses of non-contract with the total is, is potential to bypase the defenses of the constructed self-confidence of the defenses of the second self-confidence of the second

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