

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Creativity is a self-experience. Creativity fills life with meaning and dynamic relations, enriching society with significant culture, and, consequently, exemplifying the core of our ideals and our humanity. Creativity's profound effect affirms what binds us together as a species. Creativity contributes immeasurably to the health of humankind; before we understand and accept our differences, we must acknowledge and feel our common bonds.

This commonality is critical to human existence. Our ancestral heritage ensures that we are social animals, born to live in relation with others. Anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake (2000) in her book *ART and Intimacy* asserts that art-making is an intrinsic human capacity that has psychobiological foundations. Through such creative endeavors people experience, express, and elaborate their common interests in finding meaning and competence in their lives. According to Dissanayake, "aesthetic experiences transcend simple short-term self-interest, making us aware of our embeddedness or participation in an expanded frame of reference that is larger than ourselves" (p. 208). Without the intertwining relations between the individual, others, and community, humankind, unable to collaborate to sustain biological life, would have perished.

This dynamic relational exchange is quite complex, energized by the felt subjective enterprise on three levels: intrasubjective—experiences of self; intersubjective—experiences of relationships; and metasubjective—experiences of culture (Hagman, 2001). These subjectivities are not felt in isolation from each other; they penetrate and seep through their elusive boundaries, creating a flow of experience that nourishes the foundations of our lives. However, this flow of experience is, of course, intrasubjective. The *individual* experiences self, others and culture, even in societies where shared membership in the group is paramount for psychological stability. Consequently, for ease in writing, when I speak of "subjectivity," I refer to this intrasubjective realm.

Additionally, no intrasubjective experience is formed and felt without the influence of external relations, even when an individual, in the moment, feels compelled only by internal psychological forces. Even a hermit's choice of isolation is in relation to others. Subjective experiences are always within a relational context, always affected by the inter- and metasubjective. Through the articulations of others, and the manifestations of culture, our subjectivity is confirmed, amplified, or affronted. Experiences of culture reflect and expand on the intra- and intersubjective to give form to our knowledge, abilities, hopes, fears, and values. Our desires, frustrations, actions, triumphs, and ideals reverberate through our experiences of the metasubjective. Subjectivity experienced within the context of individuality, relationships, and culture functions like a permeable prism, each face refracting light, receiving light, creating light for the other.

Through these realms of subjectivity, our creative expressions demonstrate a meaningful existence propelled by personal exploration and assertion, which in reciprocity with others, both affects and is affected by culture. This movement toward culture distinguishes our humanity and enables these common bonds to flourish. Today, multiculturalism teaches us the importance not only of acknowledging differences, but, additionally, of valuing and learning from them. Our need to do this is exigent because beneath the differences lies our essential sameness. Dissanayake (2000) asserts the overriding importance of this cultural mutuality:

The emphasis on cultural diversity has wisely expanded the study of art to include its manifestations in all societies, reminding us of its communal and performative aspects, its multimodal nature in which song, dance, performance, and visual spectacle all combine, its integration with the lives of its practitioners, and its multiformity. This is well and good, but as it stands, not enough.

It is, I believe, more important to learn what we have in common than to show one another what our particular culture does differently or better. If it is recognized that the arts everywhere address the same human concerns that have been part of the human condition for millennia, then we have a means of bringing people together rather than dividing them. (p. 203)

Many aspects of Western modern society do not support this creative destiny. Our lives can feel more concerned with monetary gain than a search for significant meaning. Just because our world has become more “global” does not mean that we are touched by values that bring sustaining intention into our lives, or greater empathic awareness of others. Certainly, our international world no longer carries the distance of a century ago; our technological communication systems potentially bridge gaps in information. The global economy emphasizes our interdependency; what financially affects Australia, Indonesia, Africa, and the United States affects us all. Nothing more demonstrated this interlacing dependency than the Y2K concerns. Indeed, worldwide cooperation will be necessary to deal effectively with the problem of global warming. However, where within all this dependency are our human connections? We leave behind a century marred by two World Wars. We enter a new century marred by terrorism. In the new millennium, how do we continue to relate to ourselves and to each other in vital ways that inspire humankind to actions informed by high ideals?

Creative engagement, on all levels of subjectivity, unites us to our actions and our ideals. As such, creativity is a subject that I feel must be examined again and again to glean and evolve its emotional, psychological, biological, and spiritual contributions. This book is an interdisciplinary investigation of the fortification that creativity brings to a meaningful sense of self, to sustaining relations with others, to a vigorous society and culture, and to the empowering role that education can serve towards these endeavors. To explore these issues, I bridge ideas from contemporary modern dance and psychoanalytic self psychology. Interdisciplinary pursuits can feel overwhelming to researcher and to reader as we attempt to understand the ways of thinking put forth by a field and the vocabulary used. For clarification and easy reference, I supply a glossary of terms related to dance, creativity, and psychoanalysis to assist the reader through the intermingling of these diverse fields.

The *experiences of creativity*, the core of its authentic significance, are deeply felt by the idiosyncratic individual. To allow my thoughts to unfold and evolve, I start with the individual’s experiences of creativity, which are, however, fundamentally relational. The activation of sense of self into the world, guided by one’s values and ideals, permits the individual to discover and express subjective meaning, but, additionally, ensures a vital mutuality of influence between experiences of self, others, and culture. To examine this activation of the subjective sense of self, I connect ideas from modern dance and self psychology to propose and investigate, throughout this book, the following claim: Creativity involves exploration and self-assertion, through a multileveled subjective relationship that serves significant selfobject functions through the construction of an ideal form that embodies and expands self-delineation, self-cohesion, and self-development, and that is ultimately self-transformative.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Psychological transformation is an evolution within one’s internal nature, a nature based upon our intrapsychic idiosyncratic patterns of experience, which denote our own specific intrasubjectivity. But we are not isolated human beings. Our lives are not concerned just with our own internal subjective view, no matter how narcissistically compelling, at times, this may feel. We exist within a matrix of surrounding subjectivities. Our lives are intimately connected through dynamic relationships. Consequently, when our internal subjective nature is transformed, this transformation influences not just our sense of self, but our relations and interactions, conscious and unconscious, with others. Additionally, the transformation within others affects our subjectivity and the transformative choices that we make, or don’t make. All significance in our lives is, on some level, relational.

Transformation? Is that the ideal destination, the ultimate creation, of education? Education, at its best, engages and enriches our talents, skills, and knowledge, to actively problem solve in a meaningful manner. Transformative education seeks to build these capacities to actively problem solve so that one's inner nature is significantly transformed in relation to self, others, one's surrounding world. The true gift of education is the transformation of one's sense of self into further development. Transformative education captures the core of the expressive, gratifying, and powerful relations between the individual, others, and culture.

MEANING IN LIFE

From these transformative experiences we acquire a sense of meaning. In Webster's New World Dictionary (1966) meaning is defined as "what is intended to be" (p. 911). To experience meaning in one's life is to feel that one's existence reflects what is intended to be, internally and externally. What we feel is subjective. What we feel is intended to be derives from this intrapsychic realm. But because we are always linked to the inter- and metasubjective, our sense of meaning includes the world as we perceive, experience, influence, and feel its effects upon us. Meaning becomes the propelling force in the multileveled subjective exchange.

When we feel in conjunction with others, this reciprocal relation confirms that the interactions between oneself and one's world are fueled by one's subjectivity. Interactive meaning denotes a connection between the subjective and the objective, and the mutual influence between these two arenas. Intention in life can then be experienced, manifested into the world, and actively shared with others. Consequently, a meaningful self-world relation is most fulfilling when experienced on all three levels of subjectivity: self, others, and culture. From here our lives can be experienced with feelings of aliveness, meaningful action, beneficial exchange with others, and values that steer us. In other words, our lives can be nourished by vitality, exploration, self-assertion, reciprocity, and guiding ideals.

MEANING, IDEALS, BEAUTY, AND TRANSCENDENCE

Our ideals, the subjective experience of the values that guide us, inform our perception and comprehension of meaning, of what is intended to be. If we feel disjunctures between our ideals, sense of meaning, and the events in our lives, then we may feel dissatisfied, disillusioned, empty, and without psychological sustenance. For some the resulting action may be angry rebellion or violence, for others depression or withdrawal. Either way a significant aspect of the relations between our sense of self, others, and culture is harmed, and the expression of the ideals that articulate our experiences of being, hindered.

Ellen Dissanayake (2000) and psychoanalyst, George Hagman (2000a, 2001, in press), both assert that the arts connect us to our ideals, and consequently to our subjective sense of beauty. We experience beauty because through creative activity we endow the art object with our intrapsychic ideals. This is true for artist and audience. Beauty here does not mean pretty, pleasing in appearance. Purely subjective, "beauty is in the mind of the beholder" (Hagman, in press, p. 16). We engender beauty when we elaborate our subjectivity and felt experiences of meaning, because in order to delineate what feels special and meaningful to us, what defines our sense of being in the world, we need to distinguish these experiences beyond our ordinary existence. We need to experience transcendent beauty.

Hagman (2001) claims: "The form of self-expression contained in artistic creation is best captured in the idea of being, of conveying in the work aspects of how it feels to be the living person who one is" (p. 13). Through this capacity, we experience the expression of the ideals that inform our way of being in the world. By articulating our subjective sense of beauty, elaborating artistically beyond the ordinary, we make sense of the divisions between the subjective and objective, between internal and external, between sense of self and world. We accomplish this by investing the art object with our subjective ideals; hence the artwork itself is experienced as beautiful. Hagman asserts:

Beauty is an invariant characteristic of anything that is experienced as ideal. . . . Beauty is a special element in the aesthetic experience in which the investment of reality with subjectivity creates an experience of that reality as both ideal and harmonious with our inner life. (p. 16)

Of course, the expression of beauty does not necessarily represent pleasant or peaceful affects. Great art depicting the horrors of war or the pain of isolation often bring about, in the creator and spectator, feelings of completeness. We feel understood. What is essential is for the artwork to capture significant feeling. The meaningful expression of the artist's subjective ideals engenders beauty; beauty articulates a relationship with an ideal. For some artists these ideals are found in the concepts employed. Hagman (2001) presents the example of Duchamp:

Duchamp's urinal may not be beautiful, but the evocative play of ideas and the exquisite irony captured by the urinal in its context is beautiful. For Duchamp the beauty of appearance (art's retinal aspect) was suspect and highly corruptible, in response he emphasized the aesthetics of ideas and even when he was painting it was the concepts behind the imagery which he found beautiful. (p. 17)

Duchamp's aesthetic idealization of these concepts, expressed through the artwork, creates its transcendent beauty, not its visually pleasing attributes.

The defining quality of beauty captures the subjective and meaningful experiences of life through elaboration. According to Dissanayake (2000) our need for "elaboration is an outgrowth, manifestation, and indication to others of strong feeling or care" (p. 130). In other words, our need for elaboration is relational. Hagman (in press) obviously concurs: "The sense of beauty satisfies a fundamental healthy human need to be in relation to something or someone that is felt to be ideal" (p. 17). The experience of ideal beauty, engendered through the artistic entity, connects our internal significance to the outside world. Art elaborates our ideals, endowed with our subjective sense of beauty, and binds the relations between sense of self, others, and culture.

We transcend beyond the mundane to the core of our shared humanity. The transcendent experience arises "when life interests are touched, experiential depths are sounded, greater possibilities are evoked, and the works that embody these have been constructed and composed with care and commitment" (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 216). Through our creative endeavors we experience and express our ideals, elaborating our sense of beauty, transcending us beyond the common.

Biological survival becomes meaningful when we feel, express, and elaborate our ideals through our subjective sense of beauty, and expand our intrasubjective experience into, and through, the inter- and metasubjective realms. After all, as Hagman (2001) asserts:

The creative act is intelligible only from within the culture and social milieu out of which it arises.

Culture provides the language of art. . . . This is true of even the most personal aspects of art. The artist who climbs up to the privacy of her garret finds there the tools, maps and measuring instruments of outside culture, and though she might challenge her culture, she cannot escape it. We take our artistic language from culture that becomes the horizon within which aesthetic experience is possible and intelligible. (pp. 9-10)

MEANINGFUL CREATIVITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Fundamentally, creativity transforms something into something new. Creativity, in its elemental nature, is transformative. Creative engagement utilizes our talents, skills, and knowledge to actively problem solve in a meaningful manner. Transformative education is based upon the active engagement of creative processes. Transformative education, based upon creative engagement, impels our lives into a vital exchange between sense of self and other. Indeed, the

very comprehension of the divisions between oneself and others is advanced through the creative expression of subjective experiences of self, interacting with one's surrounding world. Through creative exploration and assertion we gain knowledge of who we are, and who we are becoming, all within the multileveled subjective arena. Without this, life can feel drab, without significance, and void of any sustenance from our ideals and sense of transcendent beauty. The importance of creativity in everyday life is to experience and expand authentic meaning and competence, guided by our defining ideals.

Obviously, I do not associate creativity just with those we call "artists." Artists exemplify and magnify the creative engagement that brings nourishing reciprocity. Culturally, artists bring us sustenance that touches deep into the essence of our humanity, extending our subjectivity into the inter- and metasubjective realms. Even though individuals in their daily lives may not create on the same grand scale as artists, the creativity of everyday life is directly related to what artists do, and why they do it. The very same core elements that motivate an artist to paint, write, or dance, are the same core elements that push us to decorate our living rooms, to represent externally something of who we are inside, and in so doing to extend transformative meaning into our existence. Psychologist Seymour Sarason (1990) in his book *The Challenge of Art to Psychology*, describes the call to arms for creativity in our daily lives:

At stake is not art in any conventional sense but the ways in which people can experience satisfaction over their lifetimes from the ordered expression of their imagery, thoughts, and feelings. The satisfaction that comes from making something, and being made and formed by it, is missing in the lives of most people. (p. ix)

Consequently, if we delegate creativity solely to the role of the artist in our societies, a vast source of human potential and fulfillment is lost. Additionally, the foundations that start artists on their creative paths must not be circumvented by an education void of creative significance. The importance of transformative education, based upon creative engagement, sets into motion a way of being in one's life that uses one's talents, skills, and knowledge, to actively problem solve, to find significant and meaningful solutions expressive of our ideals. Ultimately, sustaining and fulfilling relations between the individual, society, and its cultural expressions are established.

Unfortunately, the lives of many people are void of the deep satisfaction and authentic sustenance derived from creative engagement. Sarason (1990), I feel accurately, faults educational systems that do not engage students to use their talents, skills, and knowledge to actively and creatively problem solve to explore and assert themselves in interaction with their worlds. Instead, knowledge and the world are placed upon them. Art education, inclusive of dance, music, drama, poetry, storytelling, and the visual arts has the power to support transformative engagement in our educational systems. By art education I do not mean merely the transferring of information so that students may acquire skills and knowledge. I mean educating students so that they may use their skills and knowledge to actively engage art-making processes, and consequently to discover, explore, and assert their talents. Significantly, art education not only demonstrates creative activity, but, additionally, demonstrates pedagogical practices useful in other educational domains to further and develop a creatively engaged sense of self.

Education that is not transformative has dire effects. Outside of their homes, children spend more time in school than any other place during their formative years. In some situations, children's time within the school environment exceeds their time with family. What takes place at school, how children relate to themselves, to each other, and to their external worlds, truly has lasting effects for a lifetime.

The building of this vital, creative, and transformative connection is deeply needed in our times. Only recently in human history have the day to day activities of life not required artistic choices to be made more directly. We no longer make the bowls used in our homes; we no longer make them special and personally pleasing through decoration. Somebody else creates

them. Art has been more and more removed from our daily lives, relegated to the theater and museums. Dissanayake (2000) asserts the importance of a direct hands-on aesthetic competency:

Yet human history reveals that appreciation for beauty, excellence, and skilled workmanship is inherent, like a taste for wholesome food, and needs only direction and reinforcement. In all but a few small-scale traditional societies, ritual paraphernalia, utensils, textiles, and many other items are inarguably well made and beautiful. (p. 224)

For an active and enriching creative relation to exist between oneself and one's world, transformative education must encourage individuals to interact subjectively with their environments and to be nourished through this exchange.

MODERN DANCE

Modern dance extends an excellent venue to examine ideas of transformative creative engagement fueled by the multileveled subjective experience. At the turn of the 20th century, several dancers broke away from the traditions of ballet and vaudeville to explore and express artistically the significance between their experiences of self and contemporary life. Since then modern dance has had many incarnations—classic modern dance, postmodern dance, contemporary dance, and dance-theater. I place all these artistic trends under the umbrella of “modern dance” because the philosophical base remains the same. From its inception onward modern dance has blatantly been concerned with the relation between sense of self and one's world. Consequently, to be modern dance, the manifestations of the art form must be historically situated. To be modern dance, the art form must continually change and evolve in response to the intra-, inter-, and metasubjective. What defines the art form is the striving of individual dancers, exploring and expressing through movement the relations of sense of self to self, to others, and to culture, inclusive of the traditions established in modern dance over the last 100 years.

Modern dance choreographers present a window to peer into the creative process, to understand the significance of creativity in every day life. Choreographer Dan Wagoner's investment of sense of self into his choreography is blatant when he states: “But if someone suggests I change it—well, I can no more do that than change the color of my eyes.” (Wagoner in Kreemer, 1987, p. 32). This profound connection to one's subjective sense of self is apparent throughout the history of the art form. Choreographer Connie Kreemer (1987) articulates this point:

Since the earliest barefoot steps of Isadora Duncan . . . a distinguishing characteristic of modern dance has been that it allows for a choreographer's individuality Above all, modern dance has been made by individuals following their own paths. This is what keeps the art vital and fresh. (p. 1)

However, evident within the art form is the deep understanding that these paths are historically situated. According to dance historian Sally Banes (1987), legendary modern choreographer Martha Graham “urged that American choreographers concern themselves with American . . . themes that recognized the serious issues of the day, with modern life and not faraway times or places” (p. 3).

Modern dance choreographers exemplify individuals striving to use their talents, skills, and knowledge, to actively and creatively problem solve, creating meaningful art for themselves and their culture. I use their thoughts, experiences, desires, and musings to look at the multileveled subjective experiences and manifestations of the creative process. I intensify this investigation through an in-depth analysis of choreographer Paul Taylor's (1988) subjective relations to his creative endeavors, vividly illustrated in his autobiography *Private Domain*. Fortunately, modern dance choreographers are often quite eloquent regarding their self-world relations. Consequently, an application of their creative experiences to an understanding of the creativity of everyday life and transformative education is particularly illuminating.

Additionally, my emphasis on modern dance, instead of another art form, reflects my own experience. My subjectivity as a dancer deeply touches my life. I hope my personal connections have guided my explorations and assertions towards greater accuracy. But even more personally, I wanted my creative journey writing this book to be transformative. To do this, to progress and evolve in response to myself, to the ideas of others, and to the creative act, I needed to write from a subjective center. For me, my emotional, psychological, and spiritual core is intimately connected to my body-self, which I desire to express intersubjectively through my relation to the medium of dance, and to words. Indeed, because this initial chapter is actually the last I write, I can attest that the experience has been transformative. My experiences of my body, thoughts, feelings, explorations, assertions, and guiding ideals entering into this multileveled subjective adventure has produced a far greater sense of clarity, expression, and continual investigation than I had previously experienced. To those of you who read this book and have therefore indulged my subjective exchange through you and with you, I am deeply grateful.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS METAPHOR

In this transformative endeavor, the language of psychoanalysis has been most useful. Language is a complex entity. We represent what is subjectively felt with words, but those very words objectify the experience. To write, to describe, and to stay within the experiential is a difficult feat, one I do not claim to have mastered. I only claim to try. The framework of psychoanalytic self psychology has assisted me in these processes.

Psychoanalysis is a metaphor. No x-ray will ever show the unconscious. One need only examine the many theoretical frameworks within the field to realize we are not dealing with absolutes. Using psychoanalysis does not reduce us to psychic labels, crammed into restrictive psychological boxes, without a sense of control. Through psychoanalytic understanding we extend shape and elaboration to human experience to find greater expression of its significance, and, ultimately, to live life more vigorously. Psychoanalysis, as a metaphor, helps us comprehend and give voice to intangible reality—a creative form, expressing the ideal that life is infinitely complex and meaningful.

In the 1980 book *Advances in Self Psychology*, psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut asserts the mutually beneficial and significant contribution psychoanalysis can make to understanding our humanity:

I hold that unless psychoanalysis can sooner or later apply the lessons it learns in the laboratory of the clinical setting to the broader arena of human pursuits—to art, religion, philosophy, anthropology, and, above all, to history—it will not have made the contributions that society has a right to expect from it if it is to receive society's support, and it will become a sterile, esoteric enterprise which, in its increasing isolation, will either be an ineffectual enclave in our changing culture or at worst, will altogether cease to exist. I am deeply convinced, however, that . . . psychoanalysis can live up to its potentialities and become an important aid to mankind in its struggle for survival. . . . I am convinced that psychoanalysis, in the hands of some gifted and creative members of our profession, is capable of employing its research tools in the investigations of man's activities in the cultural and social fields, and that it will make contributions of great significance which will assist man in his attempt to gain control over his social and historical destiny. (pp. 536-537)

Psychoanalysis, as a metaphor, helps us subjectively experience and construct transformative meaning, to create more authentically enriching lives for ourselves and others.

FREUD AND CREATIVITY

From the traditional Freudian perspective human beings feel compelled by biological drives, such as sex and hunger, which come into conflict with the need for a smooth-running society (Freud, 1930/1961). Individuals feel guilty and conflicted regarding these drive-wishes. Creativity is an act of sublimation; we unconsciously place these psychic conflicts and their meaning into an external form—the artwork. We find it less threatening to unconsciously integrate our guilt when experienced from a distance through the finished art form. Consequently, sublimation provides an important psychic release for both artist and spectator.

Analyst Hendrick M. Ruitenbeek (1965) describes this presumed role of art within society: “The artistic work sets feelings which rouse guilt and anxiety at such a distance from the person that they can be experienced vividly, yet with minimal pain” (p. 18). Without this important psychological discharge, society would be overrun by our desires for drive-fulfillment and civilization would crumble. Extolling his perspective, Freud (1908/1957), in his paper “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,” describes the vicarious emancipation of tension experienced by the spectators of art: “Our actual enjoyment of an imaginative work proceeds from a liberation of tensions in our minds” (p. 153). Therefore, from this standpoint, artistic behavior, viewed as sublimation, extends an important function of release that supports the continual existence of civilization by the human race, a species driven by biological needs and desires.

Where does this leave the artist, the creativity of everyday life, and the audience for art? Artists are driven to create to distance themselves from psychic conflict. The creativity of everyday life follows the same path. Gone from this view is a multileveled subjective exchange where artists and spectators attempt to experience and express meaningful significance within their subjectivities and surrounding worlds. Instead, artist and spectator are ruled by drives; art is the psychic container of conflict. However, Freud’s most significant and enduring contribution is the role of the unconscious in our lives during our creative, and not so creative, moments.

SELF PSYCHOLOGY AND CREATIVITY

Following Freud’s groundbreaking contributions, many psychoanalytic schools built upon the notion of the unconscious. Ego psychology blossomed in America with the work of Heinz Hartmann, and object relations theories emerged in Britain filled with the thoughts of Melanie Klein, Harry Guntrip, W.R.D. Fairbairn, and D.W. Winnicott. Additionally, Freud’s contemporary Carl Jung has had an enormous effect upon the field of dance therapy. Self psychology is not the only theoretical paradigm useful to explore self-development and creative transformation. I chose self psychology because its core tenets explore the relations of sense of self to self, to others, and to one’s world, and the vital effects these relations have upon the creative endeavors that confront and enrich our daily lives and our society. Additionally, self psychology, a field at one time exclusively identified with the works of Heinz Kohut, continues to grow in vibrant and exciting ways in order not to become rigidly reified.

Self psychology comprehends individuals primarily as relationship seekers. People are still understood at times to feel driven by sexual desire and hunger; however, these biological wishes only become destructive when a fundamental capacity for relationship has been psychologically damaged. According to self psychology, the most emotionally sustaining element of human interaction necessary for growth and development is “empathy,” the capacity to imagine, with some degree of accuracy, another’s subjective reality. Empathy, therefore, is an act of imagination, to imagine what another is feeling and experiencing. Empathy is not sympathy, compassion, or intuition.

Functioning psychological support systems, enhancing experiences of self-cohesion, are called selfobjects. People, places, things, activities, ideas, can all serve vital selfobject functions. Empathic and responsive caretakers respond to the selfobject needs of children, permitting

growth and development. The need for responsiveness and confirmation from functioning selfobjects persists all through life, even though the quality and nature changes with the dynamic evolution of the individual. Adults continue to need the responsiveness of an empathic milieu to reach their full creative potentials. The psychic support of selfobject experience is paramount in the creative and aesthetic domains.

Self psychology, through its understanding of self-repair, extends a view of mental health that demonstrates the importance for an individual to be creatively productive, to have a significantly fulfilling and vital existence. A healthy sense of self is subjectively experienced with feelings of wholeness and cohesiveness. From this foundation the individual enters into a dynamic multileveled subjective exchange with others, experiencing vitality, self-assertion, competency, reciprocity, guiding ideals, fulfillment, and meaning. This productive energy of the individual influences the surrounding society referred to as the group self. The interchanges between human beings become not just the individual components, but the essence of healthy experiences of self, others, and culture. Consequently, from the perspective of self psychology, the psychological health of the individual and the society is embedded in the capacities for creative engagement. Creativity, no longer viewed as the sublimation of hidden conflicts caused by compelling drives, is the means by which a person relates to, and sustains nourishment from, the surrounding world. As such, self psychology provides a very useful vocabulary to examine questions and ideas regarding creativity and transformative education.

Vocabulary assists us to see things in new ways. Einstein postulated the existence of black holes in space before they were discovered. By doing this he expedited their discovery by extending a vocabulary to explore the phenomenon. But if vocabulary itself becomes rigid, it loses its potential to enhance the creative search. I do not present the following book as the only avenue to examine these experiences, but as a perspective to help view possibilities. Heinz Kohut played with ideas that evolved over a relatively brief time span. He strongly encourages the use of vocabulary for the continual creative engagement of ideas, and not the establishment of a rigid system. In *The Restoration of the Self*, Kohut (1977) describes the role of the “playful scientist” (pp. 311-312) and warns against “a worshipful attitude toward established explanatory systems” (p. 312). Perhaps reflecting his own creative journey from a Freudian paradigm to self psychology, Kohut professes: “Ideals are guides, not gods. If they become gods, they stifle man’s playful creativeness; they impede the activities of the sector of the human spirit that points most meaningfully into the future” (p. 312).

THE DANCING SELF

The “dancing self” is a metaphor for an individual who feels vitally alive and creatively engaged in the world. The dancing self symbolizes the creative individual, supported by society and its educational enterprises, finding and expressing significant meaning. The reciprocity with culture is evident. Of course, one does not have to be a dancer to elaborate creatively. The avenues individuals use to envelop creative expressions are as varied as there are people. That is what makes creativity so exhilarating and so revealing of who we are. My hope is that by presenting examples of the dancing self, investigating how individuals, through the art of motion, experience the significant enrichment of creative engagement, that others, dancers or not, can find some insight and inspiration for themselves. Symbolically, everyone knows how to “dance”; unfortunately, not everyone knows that she/he knows how to “dance.” To live life most meaningfully for our sense of self, others, and culture, each person needs to find the dancing self within. Of the greatest importance, our educational systems must support this intrinsic human need.

The following book is an investigation of the powerful possibilities for the “dancing self” in our lives. To this end, Chapter Two—Modern Dance, Sense of Self, and One’s Surrounding World offers the reader an historical perspective on the evolution of the art form. Chapter Three—Self Psychology supplies the reader with the basic vocabulary of self psychology. Chapter Four—Creativity, Self Psychology, and the Modern Dance Choreographer is the heartbeat of the book, bringing together dance and psychology to exemplify experiences and

actions of creativity. Chapter Five—Paul Taylor: A Case Study intensifies the examination of the psychological dimensions of the creative act through the subjective involvement of one choreographer. Chapter Six—Creativity and Transformation: The Heart of Education applies the explorations and assertions of the previous chapters to understanding education geared towards creative fulfillment, enriching experiences of self, others, and culture. Through all this I hope greater possibilities for individuals to creatively engage their worlds with meaning and dynamic reciprocity are seen. My aspirations are grounded on my belief that creativity involves exploration and self-assertion, through a multileveled subjective relationship that serves significant selfobject functions through the construction of an ideal form that embodies and expands self-delineation, self-cohesion, and self-development, and that is ultimately self-transformative.