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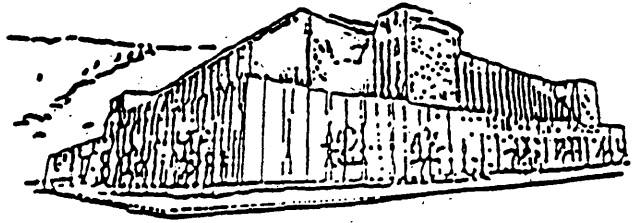
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ANALYSIS OF CREATIVE PROJECT

ADVENTURES IN PARADOX

By Tana Cushman

B.A. University of Montana, 1972

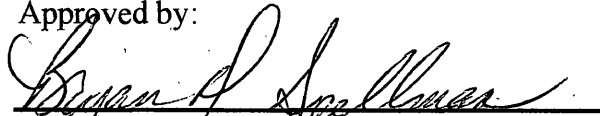
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Fine Arts
With an option in Integrated Arts in Education

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

2000

Approved by:



Chairperson



Dean, Graduate School

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Cushman, Tana, Master of Arts in Fine Arts
with an option in Integrated Arts in Education
August 30, 2000

“Adventures in Paradox”

Chair: Dr. Bryan Spellman 

The author chose paradox as the central theme for her final project for the Creative Pulse. “Adventures in Paradox” is an exploration of situations within our lives and culture that contain elements that appear to be in opposition to the customary view or to one another. It was presented in a gallery setting with visual arts, music, descriptive mathematics, interactive demonstrations, and poetry. It was designed to allow the viewer to actively participate in making and analyzing meaning within an assortment of paradoxes. Her exhibit included examples of paradox in the creative arts, mathematics, education, music, history, social sciences, and the culinary arts.

Paradox is the apparent discrepancy between different aspects of the same situation. To investigate paradox is to think critically. The author believes paradox is the backbone of investigation. As a math and science teacher she is aware of the importance of teaching this to students.

She demonstrates that paradox is an indication that there is something more to consider. It is an invitation to grow and develop. Both sides of paradox need to be dealt with without denying the reality or relevance of either.

The author has undergone a transformation in appreciating and handling paradox in her personal life. It has become a welcome challenge rather than a point of pain.

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PROJECT INTENT

Paradox can be defined as an opinion that is contrary to the one generally held. This means that culture and the most conventionally accepted beliefs of the time have a strong impact on an idea's meaning. Because insight and understanding evolve over time, paradox can occur for an individual when that evolution overtakes the framework of understanding constructed by an individual.

Paradox can also be defined as a statement that at first seems absurd or irrational but which proves on reflection to be true or highly credible. Once again an individual's background, experience, and understanding will be the overriding influence as to whether that statement is a paradox or entirely rational. Often new discoveries, explanations, and frames of reference can clarify what seemed contradictory under previous understanding.

The last accepted definition of a paradox is that of a person, situation, or the like, seemingly full of inconsistencies and contradictions. In looking at this definition we can see how the complexity of a situation or person as well as our evolving understanding of our world can bring us

face to face with paradox. The label of paradox may be one that heralds a deficiency from the outside of our understanding or quite possibly from the very core of our experience and insights.

With this in mind I decided to explore paradox within my life. I wanted my final creative project to involve some kind of presentation that would introduce paradox, and invite individual analysis and handling of the idea of paradox.

The project intent of “Adventures in Paradox” was to set up a situated learning experience in the form of a gallery setting to allow the participant to see and experience paradoxical situations in multiple areas of life. Expressions of meaning were presented in multiple mediums including the visual arts, readings, sound, taste, and descriptive mathematics. The purpose was to select artifacts and activities from different areas of our perceptions and weave them into a display that would encourage the participant to analyze how they view paradox.

I found three ways that I had handled paradox in the past. First I had denied that it existed, finding comfort in accepting only one side of binary opposites, denying the other existed. Second I acknowledged the two ideas in opposition and tried to balance them within my life. The third way was the synthesis of seeming contradictions induced by new

understanding and insights. I found this way most important. It was the “a-ha” moment that would change my perception forever.

As a math and science teacher I spent lots of time and energy leading students toward expected results by use of the conventional teaching methods. I wanted the presentation to honor my understanding as well as the learning styles and insights of the participants. I did not want to impose my perception, but let them discover their own. With that in mind I carefully constructed the introduction to the display. It read as follows:

“Welcome to *Adventures in Paradox!* In our search for meaning, we are repeatedly faced with ideas that seem to be in opposition with the customary view and/or one another. These paradoxes are an indication that we have something more to consider. They are an invitation to grow in our understanding. We must somehow deal with both ideas, without denying the reality or relevance of either.

As you view the exhibits, be aware of the aspects or ideas that might be considered to be in opposition to one another. How do you deal with them? Do you deny one, or the other? Do you balance them? Or do you synthesize? Enjoy and please sign the Guest Book and share your reflections with me. Thank-you!”

SETTING THE SCENE

My committee suggested I write a paper about creativity in math and science. This seemed to be a perfect project because it incorporated five things that I have a deep passion for: mathematics, science, creativity, communication, and education. From the inside it felt terribly out of sync.

I had spent my life choosing one or two passions to serve, trying to balance the rest of the pieces. That involved twelve years of working within the public school system. I was totally burned-out. I could no longer be satisfied with mere balancing, I wanted incorporation of all my strengths in a conscious and integrated way.

I opened a women's clothing and gift shop in Missoula, Montana, featuring imports from India. I delighted in being surrounded by beautiful flowing garments that spoke to a feminine energy I possessed but didn't always defend well in my life. I hungered for it. Working with people individually or in small groups was a tonic. I had previously dealt with twenty-five or thirty students who were starved for attention and in dire need of assistance; now I provided voluntary help rather than imposed instruction. My customers could ask for assistance or simply enjoy themselves while shopping. What a joyous environment!

As I set up shop in Missoula another hunger seemed to emerge: I could not hear enough western music. People entering the shop often remarked that the music playing on the radio did not match the

merchandise presented. A paradox, perhaps? I would look for some other types of music letting my people pleasing mode of operation dominate. But eventually I just needed a dose of good old “down home” tunes amongst the swirling fabric.

Music allows input to gently flow into my being; it’s food for my soul. In the song “*I Don’t Know Why*” written and sung by Shawn Colvin, the line “and if it weren’t for music, I would not get through,” has repeatedly proven true in my life. Music is my touchstone, it keeps me grounded and focused. I knew it was important for me, so I honored both my cravings.

To me the eastern fabric and western sounds were entirely congruent. They both helped me heal and develop. After all, my two favorite forms of dress were either my jeans with a corduroy shirt or a lovely embroidered outfit from India. Two of my favorite pastimes are dancing and horseback riding. I found I was not alone. Some lovely ladies would shop and find the music and clothing totally refreshing. In looking at these ladies I found that they were usually my age, fifty years old, with an extra sparkle in their eye, a lilt in their step, and a less than conventional understanding of their place on this planet.

I could accept that scenario; I had survived all the conventional crises of life. I married my fiancé earlier than intended, as we were going

to have a baby. He finished optometry school, while I made everything nice and compatible with little or no money. I was happy and hopeful, fulfilling my life-long dream of being a wife and mother. I finished my degree, taking correspondence courses, going to Portland State for two quarters, and doing my student teaching at Hellgate High School in Missoula during the summer.

Teaching jobs were scarce. The schools in the Portland area often bragged that they could fill each job three times over. So after getting my degree I worked as a typesetter in the evenings and as an aid for an alternative high school during the days. This allowed my husband to concentrate on his studies during his final year at Pacific University.

We had another daughter and began making plans for private practice. I became the perfect helpmate, being the “do-fer” and “go-fer” for everyone in the family. When we moved to Soda Springs, Idaho, that escalated. I got my first classroom job teaching chemistry and physical science in the local high school. My oldest daughter was entering kindergarten, and I found a good day care for her and my younger daughter. There had been a large renovation in the school district that year. It was in dire need of improvement. One of the things that I found deplorable was that they had not offered physics for sixteen years. Even kindergarten did not have sand or water tables, as they were “too messy.” It appeared that expediency and frugality could override true education at

every turn. The attempt to pull the school district into a more modern involvement in education was short-lived as the school district found itself \$430,000 in debt by the end of the school year. Being the last teacher hired and not being a political player, I found myself without a paying job the next year.

It worked out well, though, as we bought our dream home and were expecting another child. Our optometric practice had done well; we felt secure enough to manage on that income alone.

When our youngest daughter was a third grader, I started working at the optometry office on a part-time basis. My husband had always been a workaholic and I enabled that, knowing he was doing it for the benefit of the family. When my work hours extended into sixteen to eighteen hours with my homemaking job still waiting, I began to feel discontented.

The math teacher at the high school took a job elsewhere. It was the perfect opportunity for me to do something that I loved. The big plus was that my two oldest daughters were in high school, and I was close when they needed me. And living only two blocks from school, I was accessible to my youngest as well. I had volunteered for years tutoring math, physics, and chemistry. I helped to organize parent groups, and actively worked for the improvement of our schools. I was not surprised I got the job.

I gained respect from my colleagues and developed very dear friendships among them. I hadn't realized how starved for adult interaction I had become. My husband demanded less from me concerning our business, and things seemed to be going quite nicely. Then something occurred that I still struggle to understand today. As I became happier and more fulfilled, my husband became restless and unhappy. It ended in an ugly divorce after twenty-two years of marriage.

How could something so promising turn into something so ugly and putrid? And how could I be so unaware of what was happening? Why didn't the paradigms that I grew up with, that made up the fabric of my existence, support my beliefs and me? This may not have been the first paradox in my life, but it was certainly the one that hurt like running headlong into a brick wall.

As the years went on I poured myself into what I thought was a worthwhile profession. I began to recognize a similar pattern. I was giving my all, and getting used up. My reward was larger classes with more "special" students because I was "so good with them." The students needed me to spend more hours with them as the drama advisor. I heard "you're so creative and understanding, oh yes, and thank you for staying after school so that the other math teachers--the coaches--can spend more time with their athletes." They could go to their extra-curricular jobs, for which they got additional pay, with a clear conscience, knowing their

students were taken care of. “Dedicated professional” started to have the same bitter aftertaste as “good woman,” the only compliment my husband ever bestowed on me.

I became active in the local teachers’ union and switched teaching assignments from the high school math/science program to the science program at the new middle school. I became a member of the negotiating committee one year and president the next. Whoa! I started to see a pattern of use and abuse of teachers. But more than that I started to dislike the prevailing attitude of the teachers. The majority of them would whine and complain they weren’t being treated well. They did nothing about it but “bitch and moan” in private.

I thought back to my first year of teaching, when the other faculty members complained about a particular student’s effort. I felt a great deal of respect for this young man. I came to his defense, reminding them that he did most of the construction on the family’s new home while taking the more challenging classes at school. When I entered his grades for chemistry, I was devastated to see I was entering the lowest grade he had on his report card. What do grades reflect, if not quality of work? Paradox or honesty, which was the case?

My love of my profession was turning into a love-hate relationship, just like my marriage. I moved to a new area and a new job.

At the first parent-teacher conference, I had a parent of considerable social prominence in front of me screaming at the top of his lungs “you can’t teach.” I recognized the same pattern as that of my raging husband. I considered telling this man his son participated in a two-part harmony rendition of some ditty as I was explaining an example from the assignment that very day. His son was a good student, high-spirited, and very likable. I know people who can’t control their anger are even less likely to do it with family members, so I quietly stated and restated that he was welcome to observe me teach any time. If he still felt I “couldn’t teach,” I would gladly give his evaluation some credence at that time. I vowed I would extricate myself from this repeating pattern within my life. I decided to quit teaching. I deserved the same protection that I was giving my students. If no one else would provide it for me I would provide it for myself.

That is how I ended up in a dress shop listening to my heart, my head, and country music and contemplating my final creative project. My business venture proved to be another example of misplaced resources and trust, yet I was enjoying the moment.

I had survived “empty-nest” syndrome. I had to make adjustments even there, for my little fledgling was not flying with much stability. She was moody, distant, and delightful at the same time. She is a paradox incarnate, for she embodies the best parts of her dad and myself

at the same time. Those parts seem incompatible within a marriage, and yet this strong little soul took it upon her to synthesize them into one being. My admiration and absolute sense of helplessness toward my baby is ever real and ever present within my soul. A paradox? I think so. Yet it is one that I will gladly work with. It is one of my greatest blessings to be involved with my daughter and her life in the most real and honest way I know. It is an adventure.

Paradox, outside of science and mathematics, has always been a point of pain for me, but it no longer is. That is the change. It started to herald a new understanding, a new paradigm for being in this world, but not of it.

Thinking back to issues that brought so much pain and insight during the first summer in the Creative Pulse, I realized that there were at least two paradoxes present. After living and working with them for five intense weeks, I had used synthesis to deal with them. My first personal performance was an easy one to decide upon, as I had developed a need for the reading and rereading of a certain poem by James Kavanaugh entitled "With Cain." As a matter of fact I had bought no less than seven books in which it appeared. I pondered what inflection and timing I would use if I were to give it as an example of a solo to my drama students. This should have been very simple. Yet when I began my recitation, I broke

down in tears and could not finish. There was something in this poem I needed to deal with. (See Appendix C: page 48)

As I worked with this to figure out the importance in my life and how I wished to deal with it, I realized that I had undergone a transformation in my character. In “killing” the Abel part of me and giving birth to my Cain, I had ceased being the nice accommodating enabler and became a stronger person who was willing to fight for her domain and family. I needed to deal with this. Instead of seeing myself as the kind and understanding woman in the poem, as I had previously envisioned, I saw myself as both the murder victim and the passionate killer. I decided both personas were relevant and I needed to become whole. This poem became that synthesis:

I Am Abel

I am able to maintain
 I am able to endure
 I am able to structure
 I am able to sustain
 I am able to contribute
 I am able to accommodate
 I am able to be close
 I am able to live with
 I am able to acknowledge
 I am able to be supportive
 I am able to be dependable
 I am able to be responsible
 I am able to entertain
 I am able to say yes

I CAIN

I CAN GROW
 I CAN LIVE
 I CAN BUILD
 I CAN NURTURE
 I CAN ENVISION
 I CAN CREATE
 I CAN CARE
 I CAN APPRECIATE
 I CAN KNOW
 I CAN DO
 I CAN DISAGREE
 I CAN ACT
 I CAN TOUCH
 I CAN SCREAM NO!

In my marriage, Cain's attributes allowed me to defer to Abel's mode of operation in order to maintain tenable living conditions for my children and myself. My core was more like Cain's, but in order to fit into my living situation I developed Abel's attributes. It was time for me to nurture my core. I made a conscious decision to allow those accommodating "Abel" features to be mere tools helping me live with integrity from my core of strength.

The other paradox I discovered that summer was how my Native American heritage had an overriding effect on my way of dealing with situations I encountered. This dominant set of values and actions were passed down unconsciously in my family by my maternal grandfather. He was a strong, well-respected man of few words and lots of action. The few words he spoke were honest, forthright, and laden with integrity. He was half-German, a quarter Irish and a quarter Lemhi Indian. This was only acknowledged within the last generation. He spoke to my mother of his Indian background only after much prodding; she was eighteen years old at the time. Social situations had evidently taught this family to withdraw from confrontation and live with basic values with a quiet strength and resolve.

My second year field project of studying myself in the mirror led me to deal with the paradox of real images and virtual images. I interpreted that as dealing with packaging and content. Both were viable

ways of formulating an opinion but neither a complete picture by itself. The big question is whether these two aspects of a situation reinforce what is reality or whether they conceal some inconsistency? Our world is filled with complexity, half-truths, and, sometimes, outright lies in the “selling” of material things and ideas. It becomes imperative to recognize paradox and deal with the conflicting information. Yes, paradox was a concept worth delving into.

THE SCENE / MY PRESENTATION

Paradox is the apparent discrepancy between different aspects of the same situation. I planned a one-woman show to present these ideas incorporating sets, music, and commentary. My advisors suggested an exhibition. That seemed possible to me, as each segment or scene could become a display.

I would present selected paradoxes and let the participants construct their own meaning. They could see where there might have been a paradox in the past. The process of evolution had led to the old paradox being synthesized into a new understanding. They might not see any paradox, past or present, which would indicate they were looking at the situation too simplistically to have embraced all of its facets. The paradox might start them mulling over the situation, lending itself to contemplation and discussion. This would lead me to believe that this person was in very fertile soil for a new, more fully developed picture of reality. I liked it.

I needed to limit my number of exhibits due to the physical constraints. I needed a way to exhibit my displays so there would be flow and that each exhibit was recognizable as part of a whole presentation.

I investigated the places I could use for my presentation and decided on the lobby of the PARTV building. It had lots of room, flow of

people could be established, and it was easily accessible to my intended audience, the Creative Pulse students.

I used sheets of insulation that were affordable yet provided an adequate definition between exhibits. I determined from previous set-building experience that the Styrofoam boards 1 ½ inch thick would suffice, but because of availability used ones that were 4 feet by 8 feet by 2 inches. The uniformity of size would provide continuity. I liked the idea of using different clear bright colors for the backdrops. I wanted each exhibit to stand on its own yet be identifiable as part of the whole. I chose the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet to help delineate the separate exhibits and differentiate them from the room's surroundings. The panels needed to be fastened together in a manner that was simple, not distracting to the message of the exhibit, and stable. I chose dowels inserted at an angle that would allow the panels to support each other when upright.

The introduction was important. It should be inviting, intriguing, and aesthetically pleasing. While visiting the museum at Cody, Wyoming many years ago a time line intrigued me. It had at least four different components. The first showed different periods of art chronicling the lives of visual artists and musicians and their major works. The second showed the development of inventions with their creator's lives being placed on the line as well. The third showed political and social changes. The

fourth showed William Cody's life and accomplishments. What was intriguing was the observation that changes and development in art preceded the material inventions that preceded the social and political changes almost without exception. That convinced me the fine art forms would be the best introduction.

Music was the easiest to choose. Lyle Lovett's song "If I Had a Boat," was perfect because it brought to mind all the things that make a human spirit feel free. He sings about "riding his pony on his boat." This presents a situation fraught with contradiction; it contains cultural representations by referring to The Lone Ranger, Tonto, and Roy Rogers. It reframes some of their actions, giving them more congruence with their freedom-loving personas. I can think of no core value more important than freedom.

In searching for an introductory picture I found a myriad of appropriate works. Most of Picasso's or Dali's work would have been appropriate. I found posters entitled "Photosynthesis" that displayed several images synthesized to create a new reality. An example of this pictured steps of a government building becoming a waterfall, a politician at the top is stepping forward with a smile on his face. The piece I chose was purchased from an artist on the Madison Street Bridge in Missoula. He was asking for twenty dollars; I paid him fifty dollars. My friends tell me I am generous to a fault. How paradoxical of me... It

was perfect, a dolphin materializing from fluid in space, below what appeared to be the water's surface. I liked the fact that it was an original and would be an introduction in more ways than one. (See Appendix A: page 39)

My first exhibit came from the world of mathematics, one of my areas of natural delight. It was difficult to pick which paradox to present within this field. Pattern and paradox are the backbone of investigation within the discipline of mathematics.

As a child I remember going into deep thought when I studied a toy blackboard easel. It pictured a child drawing on an easel, just like the one I was drawing on. Then there was a tinier one on the next one and another one on the one before it. It was a picture within a picture within a picture. I contemplated the fact that there must be no end to the number of pictures of children drawing on easels. This was my first physical representation of infinity and I thought about the concept for what seemed like hours. How can you take a finite number of things and get infinity from them?

I also considered the classic paradox that led to the development of one of calculus' greatest tools, the limit. In the classroom I teach this by first asking for a volunteer who would like to leave class early. Then I ask the volunteer to answer the following question, "If you cover half the distance between where you are and the door with each move, how many

moves will it take you to get out the door? “ As this paradox is explored we find the idea of a limit developing, the idea of getting very close to something but not reaching it. Then I ask them to try to get out of the door by carefully following the directions. It becomes quite evident as the students make their moves that they can get very close to the door, but not out the door.

Yet another paradox involves an infinite number of points that have neither length nor size. When put together they form a line that has length and can be measured. This led me to present a paradox questioning “Is there more?” I chose the mathematical paradox for my first exhibit that was a concrete example of how our environment or frame of reference can actually limit our perception of what we see as reality. The text for this three-part exhibit is described in Appendix A on page 40. I correlate the fact that human beings often feel there is more substance to their being than seems evident by using their five senses. By taking an imaginary journey into the realm of first one-dimension, then two, and finally three-dimensions, people will understand that their perceptions are limited by the dimensions they inhabit.

The second display (See Appendix A: page 40) came from my family and personal background. It encompassed the paradox of my interest in eastern imports and my Western heritage. In talking to many people in the shop who had visited India, I found they were intrigued by

the totality of their experience. Every smell imaginable was present and strong. Every economic condition was visible. The best and the worst that life have to offer were observable in India. I thought back to the sights and smells of the barnyard and thought I could sense the same completeness. I was inspired by a poem I wrote one night comparing my business partner's son to my favorite dance partner. The difference between the men was incredible. They were both men, each with an entirely different character and way of making sense of their world. In analyzing their differences I could better define my values. I could make a wise choice as to what to maximize in my life, as well as what to minimize. My poem:

Roy Raja and My Perfect Cowboy

You ask me why women are "crazy" for cowboys.

I look at you and think, "Why try?"

Women like cowboys because they stand for things you will never understand

They like them because they are NOT you.

You with your love of money and "costly" things. You, the master of usury, trickery, and deceit. You have no reverence for anything living.

It has taken me over fifty years to stop trying so hard. But I give up. I don't even like you.

I can't believe that you have the audacity to ask me about cowboys. Such a sacrilege. And in front of your pretty wife, too. As if you are doing research.

You sit there in your silk shirt, expensive pleated trousers, and alligator boots. Is that why you bought them? To be irresistible to women? You smell of old perspiration.

Give me the fresh scent of a man who can sweat honestly.

You could call him a cowboy.

Cowboys love life and all it brings whether it is a new calf in the midst of afterbirth, cowshit, and fresh straw. Or the final good-bye to their best friend, an old cowdog

They take it all and give homage to the earth that is part of it all.

Cowboys don't need to ask foolish questions. They only have to be true to what they value.

A good-hearted woman. A straightforward song in the company of a good dance partner. To lead most of the time. To spend time with a grampa grown as wise as he is warm.

You know, a man who only knows how to be a gentleman

I could grow ageless in the presence of such company.

In your presence, the only thing that grows is disgust.

The music for this one seemed to be a given. The main song would be Shelly Wright's "It Was." In this song the singer knew it was love because of a series of paradoxical situations. For example "It was real, it was magic. It was calm, it was savage. It was cool as a breeze, it was warm to the touch. It was always too much, it was never enough. It

did all the things love does. And that's how I knew it was." Another natural song to include for this exhibit was a song by Mary Chapin Carpenter entitled "It Don't Bring You" speaking to the different things each person expects from a relationship.

The paradox of a Goddess who embodies the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone in one became significant to me as I reach my "Croning Years." In my poem "*Roy Raja and My Perfect Cowboy*," life, decay, birth, and death are all part of this earth's realities. I watch people groom the dead blooms and cut the grass from their lawns in an attempt to deny death's encroachment upon their property. I see others that collect those things to compost them more efficiently. I remembered how much energy and resources it took to stay in denial and look continually young and beautiful. I could see an ageless beauty delving into clay pots or planting flowers while dressed in an exquisite flowing dress. That was a possible paradox.

The third paradox presented (See Appendix A: page 41) shows the investment we have in upcoming generations. From the moment my oldest daughter, Shae, entered this world she confirmed beauty, joy, and growth as the gifts children bring with them. It is our privilege to give gifts in return. We try to give our future generations "roots and wings." Literally these two gifts seem to be impossible, yet every parent and

teacher has evolved in their understanding to value these gifts. The rootedness reminds me of the vocabulary and techniques we pass on to our children to help them be grounded in their world and the discipline being studied. The wings are the freedom to develop creativity. This can be accomplished by providing a safe nurturing environment. The highest accomplishment is when students use their knowledge and understanding to create something more. This provides personal passion and involvement for every “human becoming.” Nurturing children and education are a major part of my life. It was imperative I incorporate at least one or two exhibits showing the influence paradox has on children’s development. We are helping our young people live fulfilling lives. They must understand the old as well as the new. It’s not merely a question of choosing one or the other. Life is a paradox. They must take what is relevant from the old, apply it to the new, and form a new understanding. The only thing that is inevitable is change. When change is occurring people will be confronted by what appears as paradox.

I wanted an actual learning situation in my next exhibit. (See Appendix A: page 42, Fourth Exhibit) I did not want a stereotypical classroom setting. I pondered the historical importance of quilting circles in the growth of communities and individuals. They provided a forum for discussion of everyday life; shared bits and pieces of information became the fabric of living. Advice, warmth, and a sense of belonging were

important elements. The art of quilting has changed. Originally leftover scraps and old blankets were used to make quilts, nowadays it involves a variety of new fabrics, cutting them apart and sewing them back together again. What began as a practical means of saving money and materials has become a commercial enterprise. Even with all these changes some things remain the same. Groups of women, young and old, come together for a purpose and come away with much more than a quilt. This was rich with meaning on many levels. Layers of past, present, and future were perfect for incorporation into the exhibit.

I wanted to present some type of drumming as well since there is a deep resonance with human development and percussion. (See Appendix A: page 43, Fifth Exhibit) I had met all kinds of drummers in the store. One was teaching Turkish drumming, others played African drums, then there were my Native American friends. I wanted to have as many as possible, enjoying their art, their music, and each other. We find the cadence set by the rhythmic sounds of the drum forming part of our soundscape in both primitive times and different cultures. One way each primitive culture defines itself is through drumming. Yet the need to express rhythm is universal, our present and past collective consciousness includes that universal heartbeat. I opted for drums as the only music for my presentation. In such a small area as the lobby of the PARTV building, too many different kinds of music would have been distracting.

Another paradox in my life is my delight in portraying a sad clown, with quivering chin and imploring eyes. How can clumsiness, incompetence, and sorrow gladden us? In the same manner, how can we be entertained by sad music. I have an affinity for the Blues. In the exhibit, "Why Do the Blues Make Me Happy?"(See Appendix A: page 43, Sixth Exhibit) I could picture it all with a sad clown. Emmett Kelly came to mind, however I remembered a beautiful picture painted by Meagan Moore. It is a perfect blend of fantasy and reality, sweetness and sorrow. The music selections for this are easy. My personal favorites include Bonnie Raitt's Blues music.

I encouraged my students to witness the paradox in the documentary, Apollo 13, featuring Jim Lovell and his crew and the Ron Howard film of the same name. Certainly no contrived script could encompass more drama and intrigue than the reality of that situation. I remembered my eighth graders had difficulty discerning the real situation from the reenactment. The seemingly impossible situation the astronauts were put in and their deliverance home seemed to be a benchmark where people saw the world as one little, fragile spaceship that was both ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. We can see where both awful and awe-filled could have the same root. The presentation of this paradox was considered.

It is a paradox that an atom is a mass mainly made up of space. If the nucleus were the size of a penny we would have to walk the distance of about two football fields before we could hope to find its first electron. And then we would find something that acted like something wave-like and particle-like at the same time. Can we comprehend this? Is it a paradox? It is highly probable that we don't have the complete picture or the most accurate model, because this paradox does exist. Is it there as a bookmark to tell us we don't have a complete picture? Does it keep us searching in humility? I hope so.

I found the picture that sealed my interest in paradox in a publication by The Southern Poverty Law Center entitled **Ten Ways to Fight Hate**. The picture appeared on the back cover of this organization's Teaching Tolerance project. It was of a two-year old boy named Josh dressed in Ku Klux Klan gear playing with the shield of a State Patrol trooper positioned for crowd protection and control. The expression of the older trooper with a slight smile on his face contrasts with that of the younger officer's. The paradox is innocence garbed in clothing that represents hate and intolerance. It speaks volumes with no caption or explanation. I wanted this included in my final creative project. It became my seventh exhibit. (See Appendix A: page 44 and page 52)

Norman Rockwell and the ironies of his work and life became a point of capture for me. I bumped into paradox once more in reading about his search for acknowledgment as an important artist while labeled as a mere illustrator. I personally felt that illustrator was probably the best title anyone could possess, since illustrator was tantamount to being a storyteller with artistic expertise. Furthermore, Rockwell is probably the best illustrator in our history. Why he did not place value on that is a paradox to me. He wanted to be acknowledged as a significant artist. It is quite possible that his genius was ahead of its time for as time has progressed recognition has been granted. That appears to be a common occurrence for gifted individuals.

In studying Norman Rockwell and his work I began to contemplate our American history in the light of current events. I came to reframe these creations as a type of affirmation for a direction that the artist wanted for the future. With fewer of these images and messages available we might well wonder about the direction our nation is heading. It prompted me to write the following editorial that dealt with the disparity between reality and a creation's promise.

Images help to project what we expect life to give us. They can be affirmations or denials. We can look at advertisements today and see what is promoted, youth and sex, and what is denied, the value of an older woman, or fat people, or people who don't conform to the norm, and so forth. In our thought processes we can only accept what we are prepared to accept. I think back to the days of seeing Red Skelton on television. I remember looking at

Norman Rockwell's paintings on the cover of magazines with joy. Our youth would chide us for being nostalgic and "cheesy," as if the reality of the real world portrayed nightly on the news is all that great. I think about the computer-generated images that are used to glitz up action films. They beef up the pace of entertainment, but is adrenaline production all we want to induce in our youth? Or is it just another drug to keep us going at a frantic pace? Does everything have to be sensationalized to the point that the reading of still pictures has to be taught in the classroom? I wonder if being "cheesy" is all that bad, especially when it is genuine?

Norman Rockwell's life was not quite as idyllic as the pictures he painted, but he still knew what he aspired to and admired. Common situations that bespoke of humor, pathos, genuine emotions adorned his illustrations and became a form of storytelling. It is a form that promotes recognition and appreciation.

How often do people create ideals beyond what they possess? One of Jefferson's dinner guests noted in his diary the resemblance between the host and the slave serving their meal. This was simply noted, as that would not have been that rare in that place and time. But it would seem very strange indeed today to see the author of the words "all men are created equal" incapable of acknowledging his own son because his mother was part black. Was this man unable or unwilling to be free or brave enough to acknowledge his own son because of the constraints of his time and place in history?

I find it ironic that our national anthem starts with a question and ends with a question. These questions are necessary, if we are ever to be the land of the free and the home of the brave. The beginning question asks if we can see the emblem of our country. I think we can interpret this as asking if we are still striving for the ideals described by our predecessors. Even if they could not fully realize them, their pursuit is no less valuable. The ending question is the most important of all. If "being the land of the free and the home of the brave" becomes a cliché, something we gloss over without giving meaning or significance, will we stop aspiring to fulfill our promise? That would indeed be a tragedy. But great civilizations that begin to take their unfulfilled promises as accomplishments have collapsed in the past when arrogance replaced humility. They died as complacency and comfort replaced character and effort.

My American Affirmation exhibit was a direct result of this editorial. (See Appendix A: page 45) It was my final exhibit. In contemplating it I was able to come to terms with my background, my frames of reference, and relevance that I hoped younger people would consider. Although I can't claim the song for this paradox is country music, it does belong to our country. Our national anthem would be performed in a slow deliberate blues style.

The final offering was the salad bar including a tossed vegetable salad, mixed fresh fruit salad, and a candy salad made of jellybeans in assorted flavors and chocolate. Ice water was served. I put a picture created by my daughter, Polly Grasham, (See Appendix A: page 46) by the guest book. In her picture she used two copies of a photograph of herself, one large and one small. With the larger photo she constructed shards of the image pointing to the smaller central image of her at the core. I placed this beside a mirror framed like a window and invited reflections from my audience. (Appendix B; page 47)

UNEXPECTED AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Sharpening my problem solving skills on an affordable yet temporary set up of portable booths to frame the experience was very satisfying. Other rewarding results were the questions and dialogue among the viewers. At one point Lisa Glenn, a CPA from Durango, Colorado, Dr. John Winthrop, a research physicist from Stevensville, Montana, and Carleen Popham, a kindergarten teacher from Corvallis, Montana, discussed the paradox they saw in "*An American Affirmation*." Such diverse backgrounds, interests, and thinking! Each contemplated this exhibit individually, yet as a group they developed even more and varied answers. This confirmed my belief that interaction with other people is very important to development as well as emotional well being.

When Dr. Randy Bolton told me he didn't "get the point" and told me he was still wondering about the quilting, I responded "That is the point! --To keep questioning and pondering." I would encourage him to analyze his reactions and where they came from. Was there a pattern? I think you become more aware of your learning style if you objectively observe how you react when confronted with paradox. I was surprised that some people, such as Randy, became frustrated at not "getting the point." I tried to construct a gallery setting so that expectations were not declared and acceptance was modeled. It pointed out to me the fact that even when

we try to control outcomes, we do not have all the information needed to predict outcomes. It seemed from this case that it would be worth investigating whether the satisfaction level was greater of groups or individuals.

Another possible difference in reaction to my presentation could have been gender. Were the women more patient in their musings than the men? Maybe their affinity for socializing, their ability to be vulnerable and question facilitated their enjoyment.

I was delighted when people reported paradoxes that I had not perceived myself. When the quilters told stories about how a quilt made for a baby cycled through a lifetime: from childhood to marriage, to burial, all the joy and sorrow wrapped within, I was deeply moved. I suspect our technology is making us more and more isolated. This example of community building confirmed my belief that humans are social animals and need a sense of belonging. Quilting and similar apprenticeship learning situations provide that.

I had chosen paradoxes that were fresh to me so I could learn from the experience with the participants. As a student of life it is important to model life-long learning.

I tend to live in my head, and reflecting on things is my strength. Probably the hardest thing for me to do was stop thinking up exhibits. I started seeing paradox everywhere. I found it mentioned frequently in

literature and continued to investigate its meaning in the context given and in my life. People's greatest strengths are also their greatest weaknesses. That is the epitome of a paradox. In reviewing my project, I realized how important freedom, diversity, and ethics are to me. I see them reflected in many of my exhibits and trace their history and will continue to promote them vigorously.

Balance in life is important to me. The second exhibit had the most personal significance for me. The creation of the poem brought many insights I was able to expand upon. I realize opposites clarify boundaries. By defining the difference between opposites we get a clearer definition of both. Our boundaries are clarified. This is essential in establishing healthy boundaries. Recognizing healthy boundaries has been a problem in my life. Writing this poem made me realize the similarities between my partners' son's behavior and that of my ex-husband. It also became obvious to me that there were similarities between my family of origin and "my perfect cowboy's" family.

Boundaries in my personal life are clearer and I use them with wisdom. I honor and defend the values given to me by my family. Within my professional life I need to establish healthy boundaries. This will be a challenge as I resume my teaching profession. I see this has been one of the points of "burn-out" in my previous work experience.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MY PROJECT

When we see paradox, we are at a point where a change of understanding can take place. It is like the break in the soil where a seed can be planted. If we take this viewpoint and see how we react to paradox we can define many things about our understanding, our world, and ourselves. New insights encourage creative thinking. There is no recipe for this skill, only an environment that can encourage the development of each person's special gift.

Life is the biggest paradox of all. This was demonstrated in the invitations to the exhibition by the statement "...and the Buddha began to cry from one eye and look for joy with the other." Joseph Campbell puts it another way when he advises us to

"Go forth joyfully, and participate in the sorrows of life."¹

A paradox represents the cutting edge where a change in perception must take place in order to gain a more complete, integrated view of a situation. If no paradox exists or ever has existed, we may be assured that we are missing at least one important aspect of a more accurate representation of our thoughts or beliefs about the subject.

Handling paradox becomes essential to an evolving thought process. As society becomes more complex and chaotic, being able to identify and

¹ Campbell, Joseph. 1972. Transitions of Myth Through Time. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

deal with paradox is necessary for people to discern between the relevant aspects of reality.

People not only bring their culture, but their background, and current place in understanding with them when they are introduced to ideas that are new to them. It is highly improbable that any two people have identical perceptions, much as our students. I wanted to present an exhibit about paradox that was meaningful, thought provoking, and fulfilling to me. Then I wanted it to stand on its own, and let the viewer/participant get and take from it what to them was significant. I wanted them to construct their own understanding and take ownership of it. I wanted to provoke questions and dialogue.

Acceptance and non-judgment have been two qualities that I have sought for several years now. I found that this project was not only congruent with those goals but furthered their development in my own personality.

The line from the poem "...take it all and give homage to the earth that is part of it all" ushers into my understanding a more developed paradigm than the one I have previously accepted. I can accept the existence of both sides of a paradox. If I react strongly against one, I need not totally reject it, merely minimize it, once I discern that the reaction was not there because a lack of understanding on my part

My daughter, Jenny, once insisted that everyone should have a bumper sticker that identified her in some way. I chose a “WAGE PEACE” one having identified my archetype as one of a warrior. Next to freedom the quality of peace would be worth a fight. Ah, another paradox. After pondering paradox one day I approached the rear of my car and began to laugh. I realize you are more effective “BEING PEACE” than in fighting for it. How typical of my style this was. It seems that I have to struggle for everything. Not any more. I can accept what is and live what I believe.

I now believe that when we react against a viewpoint or action strongly, and in the opposite direction, we are giving energy to the very thing we want to minimize. We are in a way giving it definition. We are actually feeding the dissension we want to negate. When we live an integrated and honest life incorporating the viewpoint we wish to nourish within our lives we are more likely to get the desired result. At least we are acting as an agent for its incorporation into the world. I believe that this is an evolutionary paradigm shift for me in the world. It is one that speaks more to acceptance and non-judgment.

LESSONS FOR THE ARTIST/TEACHER

Understanding constructed by the learner is the most valuable. The learner takes ownership by using his own background and resources. It is like the oyster that makes a beautiful pearl from a grain of sand. The pearl is what is valuable, but it began with a grain of sand. This is a paradox in itself.

I find, as a teacher, I give my students pearls in various stages of development. It is the nature of teaching in a secondary school setting that each student brings a different level of understanding to the classroom. As long as the learner is engaged in development the teacher can be satisfied with handing him a grain of sand, and getting out of his way. Teaching becomes an art when it leads to the formation of pearls. We call this wisdom.

There is the question that entails a paradox within education. Do we want to give our children knowledge or wisdom. Certainly you can have lots of facts at your disposal, but if you are not wise will it be of benefit? This is an important question in our computer age.

I recently watched my daughter, Polly, while she shepherded my boisterous two-year old granddaughter, Hope. Polly was always near enough to circumvent any danger or come to Hope's rescue. But she was allowing her daughter the freedom to explore on her own. Hope would

run across the field and into a brook knowing she was in control of her own actions. She felt liberated. At the same time she felt secure enough to be free. For as the distance between the mother and child narrowed as Hope entered the stream she wasn't the least surprised to find her mother right behind her.

This exemplified our job as teachers and parents of our future generations. It is always a challenge and a paradox as to when to help and when not to. How much to intrude? How much to motivate? How much to expect? How long should you let a young person struggle? When do you step in? When do you withdraw? The bottom line is that development is the responsibility of the young person. The paradox within teaching is that teachers have control, and yet they do not. It would be neurotic for teachers to take all the responsibility of a person's learning.

A point of frustration in my teaching has been my belief that it is much more difficult to say no to a child you love than to say yes because they will interpret that as love. I still believe this and find the situation paradoxical. My challenge will be to convince parents and administrators of this belief. I find far too many parents do not have healthy parenting skills and have confused the granting of things, including grades, with the giving of love. It saddens me to see parents treat their children as glorified pets. I am not alone in having boundary issues.

There is a Western song that tells the story of a dad who has set the boundary of not abusing alcohol within his home. As the son slams the door saying to his father, "I hate you," his dad is telling him that he can't lose his father's love because it is unconditional. What a wonderful way to give a concrete example of having healthy boundaries with love.

Storytelling is the best way to impart values without judgment. I find country music to be a very good example of storytelling. Maybe that is why it has become a necessity to me..

I have come to the conclusion that my art form is thought provocation, and that the medium I work with is ideas. As a math/science teacher, I must lead my students in a controlled manner to expected outcomes. My strength lies in the fact that I produce students who are lifetime learners, appreciators and questioners within and outside the discipline of their studies. They see where concepts come from. They enjoy the development from interesting anomalies to tools that can be used in the analysis and construction of subsequent ideas.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY PANEL

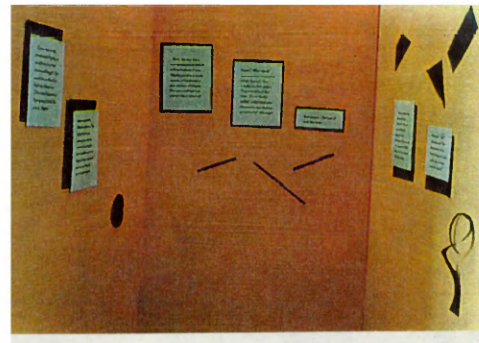
The introductory panel was an original drawing by Lawrence Brown Hayd. At the top of the picture is a surface below which a dolphin materializes. It has disturbed the fluids and created a turbulent flow defining its form. It appears to be underwater and in space at the same time for there are points of light recognizable as stars. There is a feather that points to one such star. This was displayed upon a soft violet panel. Below that the following invitation framed the experience.

“Welcome to *Adventures in Paradox!* In our search for meaning, we are repeatedly faced with ideas that seem to be in opposition with the customary view and/or one another. These paradoxes are an indication that we have something more to consider. They are an invitation to grow in our understanding. We must somehow deal with both ideas, without denying the reality or relevance of either.

As you view the exhibits, be aware of the aspects or ideas that might be considered to be in opposition to one another. How do you deal with them? Do you deny one, or the other? Do you balance them? Or do you synthesize? Enjoy and please sign the Guest Book and share your reflections with me. Thank-you!”



Introductory Exhibit



First Exhibit

FIRST EXHIBIT

Panel 1: “If you were a one-dimensional figure, you would be a line that possessed length. You would be confined by that one dimension. Other one-dimensional figures would look like points... Maybe beginning points... Maybe endpoints. You might feel unique, sensing your special content, your length, but unable to see it or that of others, because you are confined by your one-dimension.” A large dot, or point in black is displayed over the sherbet-orange backdrop on this panel.

Panel 2: “Now say you are a two-dimensional object with a shape and area. Maybe you are a circle, square, a trapezoid of any number of shapes. You are confined in a plane (like a sheet of paper). What would you see if you looked at the other figures? You would see their edges. They would look like lines. Do we finally better understand one-dimension, now that we are out of it? We might feel unique... but we all look like lines.” This panel, also in the orange color, has several shapes in black displayed on it, such as a triangle, trapezoid, and a rectangle.

Panel 3: “Now rise above the plane into three dimensions. We can easily distinguish among the two-dimensional figures now that we are out of the plane. But now we are confined in three dimensions. Could there be more? How do we rise out of our three dimensions to get a fuller view of what it is and who we are?” This panel has as an illustration a “question mark” that was formed in three dimensions by making its loop from a spiral, rather than the conventional semi-circle.

SECOND EXHIBIT

This poem “Roy Raja and My Perfect Cowboy” was displayed on a red panel that had a wrought iron screen made in India to the left. Under the poem was a small stool with a tapestry cover and a carved wooden wastebasket from India containing some shoes with points and tassels and a painted statue of an Indian Raja. On the red panel facing this one were three prints from my Don Greytak collection.



Greytak's Pictures from the Second Exhibit



Second Exhibit



Third Exhibit

THIRD EXHIBIT

The display panels were painted in parakeet green and opened outward. Displayed on the first panel was the silhouette of a pine tree including its root system and an eagle overhead. The text stated “Trees can’t leave the ground. Birds can’t become rooted... But the gifts converge and take on meaning when given to a child...”

As the corner is turned two prints are displayed, one above the other.

The first is a poster from a print by Arlene Case entitled “*Song for Rio*” showing six black children making and enjoying music. The one below was a poster of a painting done by Dianne Flynn entitled “*At the Beach*” showing three Caucasian girls and a yellow dog playing in a tide pool.

FOURTH EXHIBIT

The fourth exhibit was an interactive one with two quilters, Riga Winthrop, and Linda Northrup demonstrating, teaching, and talking about the art of quilting. The young pupil, Betsy Cass, looking very much like today’s youth, was engrossed in the activity. Various quilts were displayed. They involved not only participants of different ages, but new materials put together with old techniques, and an opportunity for stories and community building to abound. This was included to show that learning can take many forms, and perform many functions. Since I am a

teacher and many in my audience have the same profession and interest I wanted to include a teaching-learning interaction but not in the stereotypical form.

FIFTH EXHIBIT

The fifth exhibit was one that again involved real people doing what gives them and others much pleasure as their work. Tanya “Taco” Servant and Michael Thompson, dressed in non-conventional clothing, played their musical instruments with sensitivity and joy. The sounds of the drums and cowbell filled the lobby and provided another sensory experience.



Fifth Exhibit



Sixth Exhibit

SIXTH EXHIBIT

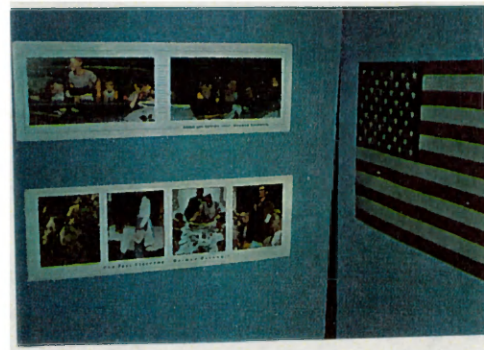
The sixth exhibit involved the question “Why do the Blues make me happy?” I have had the opportunity to be a sad clown in a troupe, and singly on a couple of occasions. On each occasion I have felt very much at ease and happy while bringing delight and laughter to my audience. I also have a distinct affinity for the form of music referred to as Blues. It helps me to become grounded in stressful times, as I’m sure it does many other individuals. The backdrop for this exhibit was painted bright yellow, with the question in blue letters on the first panel. The next panel displayed an original oil painting by Meagan Moore. Below the painting was a wood and black wired rack on which my clown shoes, nose, whistle, pop-gun, Uncle Keaton’s top hat smashed flat with its purple drooping daisy, and my clown’s necktie.

SEVENTH EXHIBIT

The seventh display was that of a photograph taken by Todd Robertson of the *Gainesville Times*. The photograph shows “Josh” playing with the shield of a State Patrol trooper during a Klan march in Gainesville, Georgia. It was displayed on a bright blue background with no words included, as this image spoke volumes to me and I wanted to give the same opportunity to the on-looker.



Seventh Exhibit



Eighth Exhibit

EIGHTH EXHIBIT

The eighth display was entitled “**An American Affirmation**”. It was displayed on a violet background and showed two posters of Norman Rockwell’s work on the first panel. The first set entitled “*Going and Coming*” painted for **The Saturday Evening Post** in 1947 included the following quote from the artist.

“Commonplaces never become tiresome. It is we who become tired when we cease to be curious and appreciative. We find that it is not a new scene which is needed, but a new viewpoint.”

I felt that this quote reinforced the experience I had hoped to provide for the viewer/participant of the exhibit.

The second poster by Norman Rockwell included *The Four Freedoms: Freedom to Worship. Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want, Freedom of Speech*. It was painted for **The Saturday Evening Post** in 1943. I felt that this display was a good counterpoint to the

previous photo. The exhibit ends with a poster of our flag, and a copy of the Constitution of the United States of America.

REFRESHMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

The final offering was the salad bar including a tossed vegetable salad, mixed fresh fruit salad, and a candy salad made of jelly beans in assorted flavors and chocolate. Served, as a beverage, was fresh ice water. Off to the side of this counter was a picture of my daughter, which she made. In it, Polly Grasham had used two copies of a photograph of herself, one large and one small. With the larger photo she constructed shards of the image pointing to the smaller central image of her at the core. A mirror partitioned off in four quadrants, like a window frame was placed next to the guest book to invite reflections from the viewer/participants of the exhibition.



Picture by the guest book

APPENDIX B

The following are the comments entered in the Exhibition guest book where reflection was invited.

- (1) Great Job! -Marci Baertsch, Dustin Baertsch, Gerry T. Baertsch
- (2) I love the cowboy piece. It brought tears to my eyes. You are so beautiful and have experienced such ugliness in your life – such a paradox. –Love, Linda
- (3) –Hope Seyler Cushman Mommer
- (4) strong images, vibrant colors, thought provoking juxtapositions – Thank-you, Tana! LOVE- Mb Rothwell
- (5) Posed and Juxta, too! Great –Bolton Rothwell
- (6) Interesting paradoxes. Missed having you in our group. Good luck at St. Ignatius!
- (7) Very interesting collection of images, Tana. Thank-you- Debbie Solander
- (8) Thank you for good geometry. The inner and outer connected.-Rich Landini

APPENDIX C

With Cain

*Come with Cain and me
East of Eden towards the sea,
In desert lands called Nod
Where murderers live and lovers
Grown weary of Abel and his God!*

*The mark upon our face is sadness
And horror is the color of our eyes.
We have seen sights too dark for sunlight,
Known pain unweepable by all the waters of the skies.
We are weary men, too mad for mothers to bear,
Too angry to suck soft breasts of flesh
Lest we bite them to be bathed in blood
And drink the redness, sweet and fresh
For thirst unquenchable in Adam's wells!
We murdered for a father's love—
A trifling price for such a prize.
Now, cast from the garden's dullness,
The honest wastes of Nod are Paradise
For men who took a brother's life to save their own.
He had no life to give, only dullness
And duty with loins as empty as his face
And grinning lips that ate at a father's table,
Where appetite grows too stale to taste
Ought but meat and wine of emptiness
And uttered words that lied like the eyes
That laughed and only seemed to listen,
Too stolid to hear another's cries
Or even weeping!*

*Come with Cain and me
East of Eden towards the sea,
In desert lands called Nod
Where murderers live and lovers
Grown weary of Abel and his God!*

*Abel, too weak to kill ought
 But the helpless animals in sacrifice,
 His body too numb to know ought
 But the emptiness of a husbandman's life,
 His passion planted like corn and wheat,
 His love as lustless as a bleating lamb.
 What life had he, this fair and docile man
 Of no surprises? Too sweet to damn
 A soul to hell, too listless to hate
 The silent father whom he served with joy
 And comfort and combed his greying hair,
 Content to work and whistle like a boy,
 Unaware that his blood boiled and spirit burned,
 That his heart pulsed with pain
 To make love possible.
 I am glad the pale wretch is slain,
 That once before he died he saw the blood
 That dripped from my aching hands
 And washed the ground that he tilled
 And fed the corn of fertile lands
 Where hunger is only nourished and
 Bodies are only fed to fall in numbness
 Like animals made fat to die in dumbness!*

*Come with Cain and me
 East of Eden towards the sea,
 In desert lands called Nod
 Where murderers live and lovers
 Grown weary of Abel and his God!*

*The lonely are here, they are kind,
 Wandering men but they are men
 Strong enough to lift the weak and love them,
 Silent enough to listen once again
 When the lights of paradise beckon
 The broken hearts that only wanted a father
 To whisper his love if but for a moment,
 To look at a child and reverently to gather
 Him in arms that all the ages ached for.
 The desert days are torrid but the waters are sweet,
 And there are palm trees to challenge the sun's cruelty
 Till shadows come at night to thrill the poet
 And rest the wanderer in the quiet coolness*

*Of peace and passion linked in a woman's arms
Strong enough to hold a man's heart,
Wise enough to let him go apart
Gentle enough to touch the sadness on his face,
To dream and wander.*

*There is silence in the land of Nod
And peace for lovers brave enough to kill
Come beyond the garden of Abel and his God
Where men not made for time, lie still!*

-James Kavanaugh

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