

Embodied pedagogy: Examples of moral practice from art education

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ABSTRACT

Educators operate today in a climate that favours instrumental means to achieve economically rational ends. This emphasis conflicts with the moral purpose of education, which is concerned ostensibly with widening participation and increasing personal liberty. Framed by this potential conflict is an investigation into the activity of historical figures in New Zealand art education to reveal how their deliberate activities negotiated the dominant discourses of their times, and how they shifted cultural production and understandings towards divergent social ends. These historical cases provide insight into possibilities for contemporary educators.

Teaching and learning occur both within and outside of educational institutions, policies and sectors. Whilst this premise may not appear particularly innovative or surprising, taken seriously it has the potential to destabilise existing orders of educational practice. It indicates that the creation of knowledge as it is experienced does not necessarily conform to generalised policies nor does it occur within the formal institutions and educational sectors that we have constructed for its legitimation and continuance. However, this premise conflicts with basic assumptions operating currently within the discipline of education, where educational knowledge is positioned in relation to specific and discrete epistemological constructions.

This article is developed from a fundamentally phenomenological position, whereby social discourses are constructed through embodied interaction and dialogue, resulting in social practices such as pedagogy, which are ritualised and re-enacted throughout our institutions. The discussion claims that pedagogies have moral implications in that they expand or inhibit social participation and personal liberty, and therefore they encourage educators, when determining a course of action, to deliberate on how their practices intersect with educational structures. Education today is operating within a discursive field dominated by a neoliberal politic, resulting in a set of moral problems for educators that many argue are characterised by significant constraint on educational possibilities (Apple, 2006; Peters & Marshall, 1996). However, the main site of investigation in this research is the mid-twentieth century, a significant period of expansion and development for education across multiple sectors. Although the political intentions and outcomes of these two settings are considerably different, the undertaking of an historical analysis enables close scrutiny of how pedagogical practices interrelate with dominant social discourses.

The examination of educational practices as they have been constructed within a dominant discourse of social democracy, which is itself a discourse of liberation and participation, should also highlight the agency of individual educators and their participation in the construction of their

discipline. With this intention, the paper draws on examples of the practices of three individuals who were significant to the development of New Zealand art education, Clarence Edward Beeby, Doreen Blumhardt and Gordon Tovey, and others with whom they interacted. The four decades of the mid-twentieth century were particularly expansive in terms of art education and its development in the western world, as its aims intersected with the predominant discourses of liberal humanism and social democracy in education and the wider practices of society.

Whilst primarily concerned with representing the embodied nature of teaching and learning through an historical analysis, the ideas expressed here are framed by the current socio-political context where institutionalised categories, and their policies, structure educational knowledge. Such categories in New Zealand include education sectors as defined through government agencies like the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education. Viewing education solely from the top end, that is in terms of how it is represented through political and functional structures, tends to limit possibilities for wider understanding of the nature of learning, and thus reinforces cultural myths of teaching and learning that arise through the repetition of institutional practices (Nuthall, 2001). For educational practitioners aware of the limitations of the current political economy of education, there are also difficulties of negotiating the problematic between educative and political purposes and the kind of politics that should frame pedagogical practices (see Gitlin, 2005; Peters & Marshall, 1996). While the answer to this moral question was underpinned in the mid-twentieth century by the values of liberal humanism, the relationship between emancipatory discourses and educational practice should not be romanticised. Examination of this particular historical setting would be flawed without consideration of the critiques of universalistic and totalitarian categories from feminist, critical and post-modern theory that occurred from the 1960s onwards. It is important to examine carefully the interactions between the representation of knowledge through educational structures, its actual production, and the exercise of power of its agents through pedagogical activity. This illustrates how educators might begin to construct a liberatory practice. History is a source of exemplars in which the political field has been defined and its future options have been played out, providing opportunities for an insightful analysis instead of mere speculation.

Giving form and destabilising structures

Cultural phenomena are constructed through engagement in social practices. For example, as an academic I am aware there are rules for writing scholarly articles. Some of these rules are clearly articulated in the submission guidelines of serials; others are the implicit rules of the professional community associated with a particular journal. For readers and writers, understandings of these rules or conventions develop through engagement in the construction and analysis of academic texts. As readers we develop expectations about acceptable and socially “normal” forms of writing. For example, as readers of academic writing, we expect to find references in the text to other academics working in the field. As writers we comply with this convention, that is, by providing the references. These conventions locate us within scholarly communities, where we engage in co-construction of knowledge and are bound by the ethics that underpins our scholarly work. Thus, as scholarly readers and writers, we are bound by social conventions, and our activities are structured by the general social and moral practices of academics, as well as the more specific demands of particular interest and practitioner groups.

Taking this stance presents the possibility that investigation of social practices reveals something about social structure, what constitutes social appropriateness and how social structures construct individual psychologies and behaviours. However, practices are not entirely constrained by convention. In his discussion on the nature of practice, Bourdieu (1990) suggests that while our practices are structured, within the limitations of these structures is an infinite range of possibilities for human agency. For example, while there are conventions to follow in the writing of scholarly papers, when working within these conventions there is an infinite range of possibilities for their

content and configuration. There are infinite possibilities for agency and action, or what we may actually do. In Bourdieu's analysis it is the duality of constraint and possibility that is at work within any social practice. I want to emphasise that within the practices of education this duality has significance for furthering understandings of learning. If we work from the premise that learning is a practice, something we do, we can understand both the social conventions of learning and the creative possibilities for learning by examining these practices *in situ*. To undertake close investigations of individuals, the activity systems of which they are a part and the contexts in which they operate provide a means for developing general understandings about the embodied nature of learning, that is the phenomenological construction of knowledge. This discussion suggests it is the specificity of learning within particular individuals and their capacity to act that is of particular significance to policy-makers and practitioners concerned with improving learning contexts. Analysis of the practices of individuals and how they negotiate time and space reveals how learning processes and learning contexts can be developed differently. Looking at these practices as embedded within an historical context also reveals how practices have moral implications, which is critical for professionals engaged in ethical decision-making.

While there is a tradition of analysing practice in educational theory and research, predominantly this has involved instrumentalism, rather than critical and philosophical consideration of how social practices are constructed from embodied activities and discourses (see Phillips, 2005). Educational structures are organised within classification systems and delineated as categories of increasing specificity. Consider some of the categories that educational theorists have developed to classify education, in order to demonstrate relationships and make differentiations: for example, between adult and school-based education, and between adult and child learners. These differentiations may appear straightforward, yet become complicated when considering their application to adult learners in the schooling sector, or differences in age between tertiary students. In adult education, there are relationships between professional and work-based learning, differentiated from community education. However, it is the complexity of these classification systems, and how categories notoriously slip away from us, that has raised the critique and challenge of categorisation as a comprehensive means of educational analysis. Recent analytical frameworks trouble the unitary nature of categories. Some critical theories, such as post-structuralism and feminism, go even further than Bourdieu does by suggesting that it is not only the spaces between structures that offer potential for agency, but that the categories themselves are unstable and, therefore, may be rewritten. The liberatory potential of post-structuralism is that once questions are raised about the stability of educational categories, there is the possibility for the creation of new forms built on new structures.

New forms of education can be constructed through different kinds of discourse, enabled by and enabling different types of participation. For example, consider the instability of the construction of schooling as distinct from other kinds of education. When is a school teacher an adult educator, or a community educator? Raising this question opens possibilities to attempt new forms of education, such as community schools comprised of both traditional adult and child learners. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss how they have fared. However, it is important to note that while there is potential for the development of new forms of education, existing structures perpetuate and predominate. Most formal educational practice is founded on traditional differentiations and alliances. For those concerned with educational reform, it is the recognition of this continuity and the difficulties of sustainable change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) that make it essential to examine the micro-settings of education and relationships that occur there (Nuthall, 2001). In particular, it is imperative for reformers to consider both the successes and failures of previous reform efforts. Examination of the cases of individual reform efforts, enacted by interested and engaged pedagogues, reveals the processes by which educational categories are made and how they are used, or, of particular concern to cases of failure in reform efforts, how they are destabilised. There are lessons for contemporary educators in historical examples of individuals

who have orientated themselves to existing social structures and their conventions, or moved between categories and created new forms.

Building alliances and crossing boundaries

Prominent in contemporary discussions on the social practices of learning and the socio-cultural contexts in which they take place is the work of Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger on situated learning and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Whilst Lave and Wenger make some attempts to problematise the notion of community in their construct “communities of practice”, the tensions are often left out of educational discourse. Too often “communities of practice” are represented as groups with common interests and purposes, without considering how power is exercised within these “communities” to augment personal status or maintain hierarchical orders. Working across disciplines enables education theorists and practitioners to be more purposeful in developing critical understandings of categorical constructs, by employing analyses to illuminate particular points of argument. My thinking about communities and the practices they engage has been influenced by the work of philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour whose study of the activity of scientists demonstrates that the practice of science is the construction and contestation of scientific fact (1987). This analysis is influential in understanding how educators may orientate themselves to existing categorical structures through “building alliances”. Latour’s analysis suggests that facts are constructed on the basis of the alliances that scientists form with each other, which serve to reinforce propositions to the point where the propositions become factual, incontestable and true. Describing the collective activity of scientific communities in these terms, takes the term community well beyond a benign and nostalgic representation, and opens up possibilities for analysing the politics of professional alliances and the exercise of power embodied within them. When we encounter scientific fact and look beneath the surface of its construction, we can examine the origins of the truth about which we are talking, and identify the interests served by the exercise of power that determines the way truth is constructed and normalised.

However, a true politics is concerned with participation and its benefits, as well as exclusion and control. My thinking on the process of “boundary crossing” is supported by the work of social psychologist John Shotter (1984, 1993), who is concerned with both the embodied and the dialogic construction of knowledge. His work on joint action suggests that the process of bringing two bodies (be they people, categories or bodies of knowledge) into dialogue, or the process of enabling reciprocal participatory engagement, is a creative act that transcends the origins of the individual parts. It brings into being something that has not previously existed, thus enabling transgression of existing normative structures through participatory activity and knowledge construction.

The usefulness of these ideas for understanding educational contexts is that they provide a rationale for understanding the process or activity by which educational structures come into being. Examining the construction process of categorical structures opens possibilities for a more transformative analysis than is allowed by a process of dissection, or revelation of constituent parts. This is critical in cases where constituent parts have little apparent relationship to one another. For example, consider the disparities between the educational intentions and outcomes of an informal book group held in someone’s home and a nationally accredited computing course held in a school’s community education programme. Within the current policy context set out by the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission both of these educational practices are allied within the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector (see New Zealand Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party, 2001). By analysing them entirely in terms of their situation within this sector, and in the political context of neoliberal economic rationalism and its purposeful efficiency and accountability, it becomes impossible to develop meaningful representations of their educative purposes. The reuse and reproduction of the relationship between the activities and the ACE sector in subsequent educational writing (e.g. Findsen & Edgar, 1999; Zepke & Leach, 2004) affirms the

relationships and manufactures them into educational facts. Whereas, in actuality, many of the activities that constitute the ACE sector, like the book group, are themselves boundary crossers that challenge traditional distinctions, such as those between formal and informal learning, school and community education and even distinctions between adult and child learners. Thus, close attention to practice reveals possibilities for educational participation and outcome undreamt of by an educational thought dependent on categorisation. Whilst their educative purposes could be categorised, this would neither ascertain the extent of the educational benefits of these activities nor reveal how they intersect with other benefits to produce different kinds of outcome, such as social benefits for example. These benefits show up more clearly within the context of investigation of mid-twentieth century art education. As a site of critical reflection and cultural generation or regeneration, this historical location provides a very good case for examining how educators can purposefully engage in action to achieve emancipatory outcomes.

Embodied practices from New Zealand art education

Art education is a hybrid discipline comprising the practices of both art and education, and as such, has been constructed through a process of boundary crossing. There is also, within the discipline of art education, a very strong tradition of questioning the limitations of its structural form. For example, the academic inquiry of art educators has long considered differences in the dual identity construction of the artist/teacher (e.g. Grumet, 1993; May, 1993), and the extent to which this identity has shared commitments, or otherwise, to educative and art purposes. More recent inquiries have extended this concern to the nature of learning in art. These ideas have developed from debates on studio-based art education in the 1980s, which proposed a hybridised educational practice. Recent inquiries by art educators like Graeme Sullivan (1996, 2001) and Adele Flood (2000) examine the identities and commitments of artists in developing understandings about the distinctive features of art cognition that are critical to the implementation of a disciplinary appropriate educational practice. Sullivan (2001) talks about this process in terms of thinking within a setting made up of material and discursive products.

In order to examine the way that educational structures are reinforced as individuals associate themselves and their practices to particular constructs, and secondly, the processes by which individuals transgress these constructs and create new ones, I will reflect on the middle decades of the twentieth century. In New Zealand this was a time when there were clear relationships between the dominant social discourses of social democracy and liberal humanism and their demonstration in practice (Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993). Furthermore, these discourses were clearly discernible in the policy and practice of education, through the work and engagement of particular charismatic individuals. For example, developments in community education were fostered through the work of Gwendolen and Hugh Crawford Dixon Somerset initially through the Workers Educational Association in Oxford, and then at the Feilding Community Centre (the first enterprise of this kind in New Zealand). Interestingly, H.C.D. Somerset was also involved in the review of the secondary school curriculum known as the Thomas Report, which recommended greater differentiation to better accommodate the needs of individual students. This was in line with the pervasive, liberal, humanist educational ideas and principles at the time. There were also significant developments in art and cultural education, including the development of education programmes within museums. This initiative was initially supported in 1937 by money from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, but by 1941 it was funded by the government. These developments coincided with many other liberal educational initiatives, such as broadening curriculum and instruction methods. This move was driven by the government's principal education agency, the Department of Education, under the directorship of C.E. Beeby. It was Beeby who was responsible for appointing two of the main protagonists of my investigation, Doreen Blumhardt and Gordon Tovey, and it was through Beeby's interventions and appointments that significant developments occurred in art teaching and learning.

Blumhardt and building alliances in a social democracy

As a teachers' college student, Doreen Blumhardt attended the New Education Fellowship Conference of 1937, where schools throughout New Zealand were shut in order to enable teachers and the interested public to hear international speakers on 'new education' ideas. The following year Blumhardt entered a specialist pre-service programme at Christchurch Teachers' College that was established in 1938 to assist the development of art and craft education in schools. Here she came to the attention of Beeby, and in 1942 was directly appointed as the first National Advisor in Art and Craft by the Department of Education. She took up her role at Waterloo Primary School in the Hutt Valley, where she undertook demonstration teaching. A feature of her practice as an art educator was the development of art immersion contexts, where at first teachers, and eventually others such as school heads and inspectors, were immersed in week-long courses of art activity:

Through being involved, they began to realise the value of art. They found themselves so engrossed in the art and craft activities that they could lose some of their inhibitions and they enjoyed the experience of painting and making things with their hands. (Blumhardt, 1992: 49)

At Wellington Teachers' College from 1951, where she became head of the art department, Blumhardt extended this approach to art education through pre-service teacher education, engaging students in two-week immersions in the arts. For the first week, participants were directed by staff members in:

... writing, drawing and making sound pictures ... At the beginning of the second week, students met in small groups to select a theme, to discuss and plan activities with a view to presenting their work to the whole group at the end of the week. (Blumhardt, 1965: 7)

During these two-week courses, students were encouraged to participate in the arts in their own time too, and evenings were spent listening to music and studying art works.

In the 1960s, Blumhardt extended this work to include teacher education staff from other disciplines, enabling their participation in the arts and fostering a sense of value in arts activities that went beyond the disciplinary confines of art education. Her work also extended beyond its institutional confines, in fact beyond the school education sector. While she was a practising potter at the hub of Wellington's art and craft network, students and others were invited into her studio to assist with her ceramics production, discuss art or just absorb the atmosphere. Some of these people became significant artists or craftspeople in their own right. Her work also went beyond teacher education, but had pedagogical implications through her involvement in the production of significant texts on New Zealand ceramics and crafts made in tandem with photographer Brian Brake.

Through Blumhardt's practices as both an artist and an educator, others were invited to participate in art activity. However, one of the central criticisms lobbied at this period relative to art education is that while it extended participation in art, it did little to foster worthwhile art activity, as teachers interpreted modernist art practices of self-expression and originality into a classroom practice resulting in "...spewing pints of paints on to paper in an endless orgy of self-expression" (Thorburn, 1977). Since the mid-1970s New Zealand art educators have been very critical of the art education practices of the mid-twentieth century for their derivation from intuitive rather than taught art responses, resulting in a variable depth of teachers' understanding of expressive art and potential pedagogical interventions to foster rich art learning (Foley, Hong, & Thwaites, 1999; Thorburn, 1977, 1981). However, I suggest this criticism is not valid in the case of Blumhardt's practice as hers was a clear and consistent pedagogy that fostered very valuable art experiences. To support this claim, I refer to the alliances on which Blumhardt's work was built, and the extent to which her practices were consonant with them. These alliances are evident in the wider social values that were being promulgated through education at that time.

New Zealand educational historians suggest that from the time of World War I throughout the mid-twentieth century there was a burgeoning interest in the development of social cohesion and national identity (Cumming & Cumming, 1978). These debates were founded in political discourse on democracy, and intensified during World War II and beyond as the free allies sought to differentiate themselves from totalitarian regimes. Evident in political activity and government policy of the time was a deliberate social engineering toward achieving social goals through education. At this time, art and art education were also conceived very much as a liberal humanist endeavour (see Mansfield, 2000). Engagement in art could make you a better, more rounded and freer individual. It was clear that art as a humanist endeavour matched social demands and cultural values.

Blumhardt's practice fitted with the social democratic notions in the mid-twentieth century. Blumhardt describes an important aspect of her teacher education programme at Wellington Teachers' College:

They all came from very different backgrounds, some from very conservative schools. We would send them out to interview people in the local area or talk to wharfies or truck-drivers. These young students – many of them only 17 – went forward hesitantly. But they went. When they came back, they would write about the experience or paint something they had encountered or dramatise it. (Blumhardt talking to McLeod in McLeod, Brake & Blumhardt, 1991: 25)

Through engaging her students in politically orientated art activity that addressed issues of class, and recognised and valued the rights of others, her practice supported the political aims of social democracy. Drawing from Latour's depiction of the construction of scientific fact, her work reinforced these values as a crucial facet of New Zealand identity. Thus Blumhardt's practice as an art educator was supported by wider social discourses. This consonance also contributed to the legitimacy and ultimately the truthfulness of Blumhardt's pedagogical practice. Viewed in this way, there is little to support the notion that in those times Blumhardt's practice was profoundly anti-interventionist or that it lacked pedagogical cohesion. Through her sustained art pedagogy Blumhardt was able to build a mutually reinforcing alliance with education, thus furthering its goals as well as developing greater and more widespread acceptance of art practice. This process was accompanied by a profound understanding of art practice, built from her practice as a ceramicist and her engagement with other artists, which enabled her to support others in deriving socially valuable meanings from their own investigations in art.

Tovey crosses the boundaries of cultural production

Gordon Tovey was a lecturer in the art department at Dunedin Teachers' College from 1941 until the time of his appointment to the new position of National Supervisor of Art and Craft, which was established by Beeby to oversee the developments of art and craft education in New Zealand schools. He came to Beeby's attention through his involvement with the art curriculum revision working party of 1945, the report of which was only ever published in draft form. This appointment effectively placed Tovey as Blumhardt's superior. She had been working autonomously up until that point. However, the biographies of both Tovey and Blumhardt suggest there were some ambiguities about the differences in their respective positions, and this resulted in tensions between the pair. Positioning himself as an academic artist, schooled in the traditions of Western painting, Tovey was critical of Blumhardt's craft orientation to art, stemming from her work in ceramics. This craft focus suggested an implicit lack of intellectual rigour according to the academic lineage of Tovey. These differences also had a gendered dimension, given the marginalised and domestic status of craft and women's historical work in textiles, embroidery and handicrafts.

Despite the differences between Tovey and Blumhardt, there were similarities with respect to their practices. For instance, while both were appointed to foster and support art practices within schools, both of them contributed to developments in art beyond school settings. As National Art

Supervisor, Tovey established the network of specialist art teachers who worked as art advisors. These specialists went out into all schools, and also went beyond schools into the community. Perhaps the Māori art and crafts advisors and their role in the advance of a contemporary Māori art was the greatest contribution of this scheme to the wider New Zealand cultural landscape. Tovey's interest in Māori art led him to extend the advisory service to include a scheme specifically for the training of Māori art specialist teachers. Many of the individuals who went through this scheme are today better known for their art practice than their education practice: e.g. Cliff Whiting, Ralph Hotere, Para Machitt. These artists are recognised for taking Māori cultural production beyond its traditional forms and melding it with international notions of art. However, they remain crucial figures in raising awareness for Māori art in schools at that time.

Another significant individual who undertook the specialist training, but perhaps developed a stronger educational identity was Mere Kururangi (Henderson, 1998), who ran a series of teacher courses on Māori art and crafts throughout New Zealand. These courses were so well received that they led to requests from the New Zealand Māori Council for a series of adult courses on Māori arts and crafts. Kururangi's practice illustrates how the actions of an individual, and the impact of these actions on others, need not be constrained within static, institutionally bound locations. Whilst employed as a school advisor, Kururangi's influence extended into the wider Māori community. In fact, it went beyond Māoridom, as local pakeha also became interested in her courses and developed an interest in Māori arts and crafts.

Through fostering this kind of activity, Tovey's legacy was to trouble the apparently immobile categories of pakeha and Māori cultural production. It is also difficult to confine his education initiatives in terms of a school/community division, as they crossed boundaries between pakeha schooling and knowledge to incorporate aspects of Māori culture, knowledge and social organisation. The specialist art teacher schemes led to the development of contemporary Māori art; teacher education in Māori art and craft became integrated into general community education and cultural regeneration. Tovey's willingness to bring together different discourses and bodies into dialogue created the possibilities for others to engage in activity that troubled divides such as school and community, Māori and pakeha.

The moral purposes of pedagogy in action

Operating in the medium of mid-twentieth century public education, the educational practices of Blumhardt and Tovey changed the way art was understood and recognised by many others. Their practices have had long-lasting effects through their transgressions of existing orders that have enabled the development of new and diverse cultural understandings. Whilst they engaged in transgressive activity, paradoxically it was also supported through the social aspirations of their times, fulfilling a social need for creativity, innovation and freedom. In these respects, I would suggest that what they did was of significance and value. However, I am not suggesting that functionalism and proliferation are useful ends for their own sake. As alluded to previously, pedagogies have moral implications and effects. They can contribute to the development of a just society or perpetuate inequalities and injustices either through teachers' direct representations to good citizenship (Snook, 2003), or more generally, by the way in which we interpret the enactment of good citizenship in the study of practice (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). My examination of the practices of Blumhardt and Tovey reveals that they operated within a social context complementary to a humanist moral purpose for schooling: to achieve liberty through education. What has become apparent in the intervening time is that education is inherently political, and the contests that occur within its arena inevitably lead to uneven distribution of personal liberty regardless of intention. This politic opens the possibility for pedagogues to intervene in the structure of society, either in support or in spite of prevailing social norms. However, their effects will depend on the nature of their interactions with others.

Within the current neoliberal climate, education is dominated at a representational level by instrumental practices that, whilst claiming to further individual liberty, in reality close down possibilities for how this might be achieved (Peters & Marshall, 1996). It is beyond the scope of this article to examine in detail the extent to which this climate fundamentally alters what it means to be educated, or as others have suggested what constitutes knowledge (Peters, 2004). I do advocate that educators must choose with care and deliberation to support one structure at the expense of another, because what concerns me here is the extent to which instrumental practices introduce new constraints on the possibilities for constructing new forms, and that in many cases this instrumentality has paradoxically been supported by its critics. As understandings about liberation have been troubled or problematised through the critical theories of the late twentieth century, evident in art educators' criticisms of mid-twentieth century practice, there is a resultant incredulity at furthering liberatory ends through educational practice. What counts as liberation in one setting may be oppressive in another. I do not deny this may be true within the cases I have presented. However, one final example from the practice of Gordon Tovey demonstrates how even a troubled educational structure can continue to provide liberatory possibilities.

One of the criticisms of Tovey's work was that it was founded on a particularly primitivistic notion of Māori art, suggesting the value of Māori culture was its proximity to the naturalistic, uncivilised unconscious mind, a concept that would be considered spurious and racist by many art educators today. However, this does not diminish the fact that Tovey's initiatives enabled the development of contemporary Māori art in the mainstream and opened up issues of Māori visual representation and cultural appropriation for public debate (Mané-Wheoki, Bieringa, & Porirua Museum, 1999). But, of course, Tovey did not achieve this by himself. Tovey's practices, as well as those of Blumhardt, flourished in a context that favoured socially democratic education outcomes and it was through his appointment by Beeby that Tovey's work was able to have significant effects. The joint action between Beeby, Tovey and the many others with whom they interacted, opened a dialogic space for future voices to engage with issues of Māori cultural production and enter into negotiation and refinement of biculturalism in educational and wider social practice.

Whilst critics of liberal humanism rightly claim that neither the art nor educational practices of the mid-twentieth century were innately liberatory (Mansfield, 2000; Thorburn, 1981) the example of Beeby, Tovey and Blumhardt demonstrates the contextual nature of freedom enabled through the practices of individuals as they interact with the material and discursive products of others in ways that open new possibilities. It is difficult to argue that the wider social educational programme, as well as specific practices utilised by educators like Blumhardt and Tovey, even at their most fraught, did not have some successes in undermining oppressive and constraining orders. The activity of these educators reveals some of those successes and the practices that facilitated them. It also provides examples of how pedagogues negotiate and participate in social discourses in order to achieve liberatory outcomes, thus providing cases worthy of consideration for contemporary pedagogy.

Tovey and Blumhardt were both engaged in activities that opened up the practices of art to a wider range of people, both within groups (such as Māori) and for individuals. They mobilised and enabled increasingly diverse participation in art, achieving recognition and understanding of cultural production within and across different social groups. This activity was enhanced through the development of networks between people, thus increasing the number of opportunities for dialogue and creating contexts of communal practice. That is, as Blumhardt and Tovey went about their work, they created contexts where others could participate in complementary discourses and practices, and thereby refine their own understandings of such practices. But, in order to do this in a way that was meaningful, their activity had to be informed by significant disciplinary understandings of art, and this was what enabled them to instantiate shifts in the way art was practised and valued within New Zealand society.

In both cases, their activity troubled or crossed the boundaries of existing educational structures (e.g. school/non-school) and reinforced other structures such as the coupling of art and democracy. This achievement made them historically significant to education and its pedagogies. The activities in which these educators were involved, and those that they generated, were not just activity for the sake of activity. What was critical was the extent to which the activities they engaged either reinforced or extended liberatory discourses (in accordance with the demands of the then dominant ideology of social democracy) or expanded participation in cultural production. With a purposefulness and progressiveness, their pedagogies enriched the learning contexts they created. Herein lies the potential for furthering educational practice.

As educational practitioners we need to consider the extent to which we ally ourselves to educational structures, and which structures are useful and deserve support. We need to ask whether they fulfil educative and therefore disciplinary purpose. If they do not fulfil those purposes, then it is educators themselves, such as Tovey and Blumhardt, who are ideally placed to engage in transgressive activities to create and support new educational orders. While contemporary education is increasingly subject to economic imperatives, it is essential to remember that practices that constrain educational possibilities become stronger through the complicity of educators.

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