



CHARACTER, VIRTUE AND THE ART OF TEACHING ART

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I

In considering what roles character and virtue might have in professional practice one is likely to think of fields in which honesty and integrity are particularly important, for example in business and finance, or where fairness and justice are called for as in law and policing, or in which courage and discipline are necessary as in the military, or of areas where care and compassion are required such as health and social services.

In each of these examples the character traits mentioned, though highly relevant to the particular areas of practice, are not profession-specific and any of them might be called for in any of the other fields, and in further areas of professional work. This is hardly surprising since these various virtues are general dispositions of attitude, feeling and action directed towards familiar aspects of the human good. In thinking about the education and training of professionals, then, it is appropriate not to focus only on the most obviously relevant virtues but to bear in mind others both as likely to be called upon at times, in part because of the multi-aspect character of the situations with which professionals deal, but also because of the inter-relations between the virtues themselves. A special example of this is Aristotle's claim that no ethical or character virtue can be exercised appropriately without the intellectual virtue of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and analogously Augustine's claim that ethical virtue cannot be practiced without *caritas* (charity – specifically love of God).¹ These relate both to the issue of the proper orientation of the other virtues and to the due exercise of them: with how they bear upon the human good and with how, where, and when they should be applied.

¹ See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1144b14–17, and Augustine *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 15.

One area of professional practice not thus far listed is education: both as a distinct field, but also as an element in the formation of practitioners in all professions. Allowing the previous point that most of the familiar virtues may be relevant to some degree in any area, it is appropriate to ask which are of special relevance to teaching? From 2012-2020 the University of Birmingham Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues ran a research project on ‘Virtues in the Professions’ focused on the question ‘Can the professions be virtuous?’. This involved more than 3,500 participants across the fields of business, health care, law and education, from professionals with five or more years practice, to graduates, to first-year undergraduate students. In connection with this research it published a number of reports both general: principally *Statement on Character, Virtue and Practical Wisdom in Professional Practice* [CVPP, 2016], and *Repurposing the Professions: The Role of Professional Character* [RTP, 2019]; and specific: in relation to business and finance, law, medicine, nursing, the military, the police, and teaching.

Here I single out four texts regarding the last of these: *The Good Teacher: Understanding Virtues in Practice* [TGT, 2015]; *Statement on Teacher and Character Education* [STCE, 2015]; *Bringing Character to Life: Virtues in Teaching* [BCL, 2020], and *Religious Education Teachers and Character: Personal Beliefs and Professional Approaches* [RETC, 2019]. All four touch upon the importance of inculcating virtues in pupils and students as part of their ethical personal and social development; but the main concern is the practice and formation (initial and ongoing) of teachers themselves on the premise that “The single most powerful tool you have to impact a student’s character is your own character” [BCL, p.1].

Here it is enough to highlight recurring themes. First, the qualities relevant to practice which teachers themselves rank as highest are 1) *fairness* (78%), 2) *creativity* (68%), 3) *love of learning* (61%), and 4) *humour* (53%); and then, in generic ‘ideal’ mode, 5) *perseverance* (45%) and 6) *leadership* (40%), and, in personal ‘self-referential’ mode, 5) *honesty* (50%) and

6) *kindness* (49%) [TGT, p. 5]. Second, the main challenges posed to teachers derive from features of the education systems, such as measurable quantitative outcomes, performance management, standardization, and workload pressures [BCL]. Third, being a good teacher involves more than having and imparting knowledge and extends to engaged formation: “Teaching that is grounded primarily in subject knowledge and teaching expertise, skill or ‘competence’ does not capture the essential meaning of the occupation. [TCE, p. 1]. Fourth, and relatedly, the goal of educating students is not just to fit them for work and membership of society: “... the purpose of a teacher should not just be to transfer knowledge to others for the reasons of employability or citizenship but to nurture the personal development and wisdom of themselves and students” [RTP, p. 6]. Finally, there is a further point which though introduced in relation to teaching religious education has, I believe, broader application: “... not only do RE teachers’ personal worldview have a role in the formation of their approach to the subject but their experiences of teaching have a role in the formation of their worldviews” [RETC, p. 21].

II

There are two features of these reports and statements, and of other comparable literature on the character, motives, aims and efficacy of teachers, that should be noted. First, they concern schooling; second, they tend to focus on an extended present, or to be somewhat ahistorical, writing of “the teacher” in ways that presuppose a more or less common profile across subjects and recent times. To say this is not to criticize this literature since the concern with schooling and the focus on the contemporary is their purpose. It does, however, limit what might be learned about the character of good and bad teaching, about the particularities of certain fields, and about the ways teachers conceive themselves in relation to their subjects, their students

and society at large. Here, therefore, I will consider the teaching of art, by artists to art students, setting this within a long view of the institutions of art and art training.

There is, however, a direct connection with the issue of school teaching, since many of those students will go on to be art teachers in schools. The point generalizes across other areas of subject teaching and across the professions. Those who practice will have been taught by subject specialists and more senior practitioners, both in acquiring knowledge of the field and in training to practice in it. The training of art teachers for schools is done by academics who have experience of art teaching but who may themselves also be artists; and one step back the study of art and design was traditionally under the direction of practising artists and designers. Likewise, teachers of history have been taught by former history teachers and both have been taught by professional academic historians. There is, then, a mediated relationship between teachers of a subject or practice and professional practitioners of it; and teachers will be influenced by currently or recently prevailing conceptions of their subject and the purposes, role, values and virtues appropriate to it. In many cases that influence will also be partly direct and ongoing as teachers 'keep up' with developments in their subjects, both in respect of knowledge, methodology and self-understanding including ideas of cultural and societal relevance.

In some fields, conceptions of the subject and its aims will be relatively stable, e.g. in mathematics and physics; in others they will have changed with advances and developments, e.g., in aspects of health care; and in yet others the transformations may be quite radical. Art is one such as anyone with even a passing knowledge of its course since the middle of the 20th century will be aware. This rate and extent of change gives a further reason for investigating the training of artists and of art teachers but it, and the foregoing considerations more generally, suggest a broad methodological point. If you want to study the attitudes and practices of active professionals you should also investigate the attitudes and practices of those who taught them

and of those who formed those teachers. Such investigations need to be more than cursory and have to attend to the history, cultural and economic and social context as well as to the forms and substance of specific fields of practice.

III

While setting out a broader European narrative describing the emergence of the artist, of art education and of the qualities that the latter and the practice of art itself were supposed to inculcate, my specific interest is in a particular part of British educational history, focused largely on London as this has been the centre of British art and art education since at least the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the founding in 1768 of the Royal Academy of which he was the first President. To understand the nature, self-conception and purposes of the Academy and other institutions established subsequent to it over the next century, however, and to draw contrasts between the practices of art and design education earlier, then and since, and the virtues assumed by them, I begin with an overview of prior history beginning in the period before the development of the ideas of art and artists in the modern sense.

In the middle-ages ‘art’ (*ars*) referred to an acquired, disciplined practice: either intellectual as in the liberal arts (*artes liberales*), or practical as in the case of mechanical arts (*artes mechanicae*) or of manual craft more broadly. Within the latter category a distinction emerged between artisans and craftsmen. From the beginning of the 11th century there developed craft guilds which provided training in specific skills: book-binding, carpentry and coopering, glass-making, leather-working, masonry, metal-smithing, weaving, wood carving, and wool dyeing, and by stages, and ancillary to these, drawing, engraving and painting. The pattern of training began with a youth, sometimes as young as twelve entering a master’s workshop as an unpaid *apprentice* (*discipulus*); then after five or more years progressing to be a *journeyman* (*opifex*) who would aim to move between one workshop and another hiring out

his skill on a daily basis; and then some years later ascending to be a *master* of the craft (*magister*). In broad terms, the consequent difference between a craftsman and an artisan was that while the former made things according to a regular pattern, reproducing established designs and forms principally relating to functional purposes, the latter aimed at variety and particularity, directed towards pleasing the eye. On that account it was more in connection with the second that decorated ceramics, glassware and mosaics, and drawing, engraving and painting developed – initially for ornamentation.

By the 13th century, however, these supplements had begun to acquire a status of their own, and because of the imagination, creativity and skill involved in their production they came to be seen as calling for specialized training apart from the traditional crafts. This followed the old pattern of progress from apprentice to master but the context was increasingly one of the specialist studio rather than the craftsman workshop. There also began to appear texts describing the range of arts and art techniques, of which the ‘List of Different Arts’ (*Schedula diversarum artium* c. 1120) by the pseudonymous ‘Theophilus Presbyter’ was an early example. The *Schedula* covered a range of arts, from manuscript painting and frescoes, to stained glass and gold- and silver-smithing, but thereafter painting and sculpture began to be separated off as special. A marking point of that singling out was Cennino Cennini’s *Il Libro dell’Arte* (c. 1400) possibly written for a guild of painters.²

Thereafter, the famous renaissance texts appear, principally Battista Alberti’s trilogy: *De pictura* (*On Painting*, 1435), closely followed by *De statua* (*On Sculpture* 1436) and *De re aedificatoria* (*On Architecture* 1452).³ Alberti combines the practical, the theoretical and the

² See D.V. Thompson Jr trans. *The Craftsman Handbook: Il Libro dell’Arte* (New York: Dover, 1954).

³ For English translations see R. Sinisgali trans. Leon Battista Alberti *On Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); C. Grayson trans. *Alberti, De Pictura and De Statua* (London: Phaidon, 1972), and for a more idiomatic translation intended to allow the work to serve as a manual by present-day sculptors see Jason Arkles trans. Leon Battista Alberti *On Sculpture* (Raleigh, NC.: Lulu Press, 2013), and J. Rykwert, N. Leach, and R. Tavernor trans. Leon Battista Alberti *On the Art of Building* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1988).

historical: describing media and techniques, principles of composition involving perspective and optics, and encouraging emulation of classical precedents. Half-a-century after *De pictura*, Leonardo drew on Cennini and Alberti to compose his own account of the ‘science of painting’ (*scienza della pittura*). These journals were not printed until the 1630s, and then in Paris, but their appearance under the title *A Treatise on Painting*⁴ further encouraged the already growing practice of publishing works on painting that dealt with both theory and method, the former drawing on philosophy as well as mathematics and geometry.

A later example was Antonio Palomino’s *Museo pictórico y Escala óptica* (1715-24). Today, it is referred to mainly as a source of information about the lives of 16th and 17th centuries Spanish painters⁵ (analogous to and modelled on Giorgio’s Vasari’s *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. 1568),⁶ but its earlier parts include tracts on theory and practice (methods and techniques) that are still in use, including in small private teaching studios and in online drawing classes. It contains discussion of three types of ‘students’ of art: the knowledgeable enthusiast, the curious and the diligent (*El aficionado, El curioso, El diligente*); while the latter classifies artists by a progression analogous to the medieval trajectory from apprentice to master: beginner: first degree of painters; copyist; hard-working; creative; accomplished practitioner; and perfect (*El principiante, primer grado de los pintores, El copiante, El aprovechado, El inventor, El práctico and El perfecto*). These two sets of classifications suggest, as well as degrees of attainment, certain virtues and vices that were also beginning to feature in other writings, including English ones. For example, *El*

⁴ See M. Kemp ed. *Leonardo on Painting: An Anthology of Writings* (London: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁵ N. Alaya Mallory trans. *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁶ Giorgio Vasari *The Lives of the Artists* trans. J. C., and P. Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

aficionado and *El Curioso* correspond to the familiar categories of the *connoisseur* and the *dilettante* (a term not then used deprecatingly to suggest lack of seriousness).

In the same year as the first volume of Palomino's *Museo*, the prominent English painter, collector and writer Jonathan Richardson published an *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, and followed this in 1719 with two discourses: *An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it Relates to Painting* and *A Discourse on the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur*.⁷ In the *Essay* Richardson introduces categories of analysis and evaluation of paintings: invention, expression, composition, drawing, colouring, handling, 'grace and greatness' (and in the 1725 edition adds sublimity). He writes:

Now the great Ends of both [sculpture and painting] is to give Pleasure, and to convey Ideas ... As the business of Painting is to raise, and Improve Nature, it answers to Poetry ... And as it serves to the Other, more Noble End this Hieroglyphic Language completes what Words, or Writing began, and Sculpture carried on, and thus perfects all that Humane Nature is capable of in the communication of Ideas 'till we arrive to a more Angelical, and Spiritual State in another World.⁸

There are echoes of Vasari and other Italian writers such as Giovanni Gilio⁹ who emphasise the relationship between artistic, moral and spiritual qualities. The notions of virtue (*virtù*) and of grace (*grazia*) are applied analogically but also with the suggestion of causality between them. Vasari uses the expression to 'live virtuously' (*vivere virtuosamente*) drawing a parallel, and closing the space between excellence in living and excellence in art-making.

⁷ See Mr Richardson, *Two Discourses. I An Essay on the whole art of criticism as it relates to Painting. II An Argument in behalf of the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Science of the Connoisseur* (London: Churchill, 1719). See also C. Gibson Wood, *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment* (London: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁸ *An Argument in behalf of the Dignity*, Section I, p. 25

⁹ See Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Dialogue on the Errors and Abuses of Painters*, trans. M. Bury and L. Byatt (Loa Angeles, CA.: Getty Center, 2018).

Also, the term he employs to refer to artists is not *artista*, and while he sometimes uses the earlier notion of *artigiano* (artisan) he most often writes of a great artist as *artifice* (L. *artifex*) making the bridge between *homo creator* and Divine artist (*Deus artifex*, sometimes more specifically *Deus Pictor*, Divine painter).¹⁰ The roots of this notion are traceable to *Genesis* and to Plato's *Timaeus*, and the same analogy, taken in the opposite direction, was offered by Aquinas writing that God may be compared to created things as the architect is to designed ones (*comparatur ad res creatas ut artifex ad artificiata*), and is a theme in Dante's *Paradiso*.¹¹ Such ideas or approximations to them would later appeal to English mystical and romantic artists such as William Blake and Constable who connected art, nature and divine creation and expected the artist to cultivate appropriate attitudes of awe and humility.¹²

IV

Although he shared the belief in the elevated status and improving effect of art, Jonathan Richardson was neither a mystic nor a romantic. His philosophical outlook was empirical deriving from John Locke, his religious disposition was that of establishment Anglicanism,¹³ and his orientation was towards organized and economically and socially rewarding professional artistic practice. His influence on English thinking about art, artists, art appreciation, collecting and education, however, was deep and wide, and he has some claim to be the originator of the world of English art, certainly in its London origins. He was a man of

¹⁰ See A. P. Russell, “‘La forza della virtù’: Vasari on Skill and Holiness in the Lives of Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi” *I Tatta Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 23 (1), 2020

¹¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Pars*, q. 27. a. 1, ad 3.

¹² Regarding the teaching of students Constable writes: “The landscape painter must walk in the field a humble mind. No arrogant man was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty. If I may be allowed to use a very solemn quotation I would say most emphatically to the student, Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth”, see R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable* (London: Phaidon, 1951) p. 327.

¹³ See C. Haynes, “‘To put the soul in motion’: Connoisseurship as a Religious Discourse in the writings of Jonathan Richardson” in B.C. McNelly ed. *Religion in the Age of Enlightenment* 5 (New York: AMS Press, 2015).

remarkable range and accomplishment: a member of a distinguished group of figures centred on Lincoln's Inn Fields that included Alexander Pope and several members of the Royal Society. He was also collector of 'old master' drawings gathering some 5,000 of them, encouraging students in the practice of copying them and of drawing from plaster casts of parts of the human head and figure to learn the excellence of draughtsmanship. Richardson was himself an outstanding draughtsman and a prolific painter of persons, elevating 'face painting' to the settled category of portraiture. He was also a print maker and ran a substantial art studio with many apprentices. He advocated for the establishment of an 'English school' of painting, a cause taken up by Hogarth and Joshua Reynolds among others, and argued that art should be recognised as a form of professional paid employment. If Vasari helped distill the renaissance concept of the artist distinct from the artisan, Richardson fathered the British notion of the artist as a middling class professional. His most consequentially immediate influence, however, was on Joshua Reynolds.

Reynolds's father was a former fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, a Master of a Grammar School, and an Anglican Clergyman, and Joshua was well educated in classical, renaissance and contemporary literate culture. He kept notebooks in which he gathered passages from Plutarch, Seneca and Ovid, Shakespeare, Milton and Pope, and Leonardo and French art theorists and educators. He followed Richardson in becoming a prominent portraitist, and was an early member of the Royal Society of Arts out of which were spun in turn the Society of Artists of Great Britain, intended to provide a counterpart to the Parisian salon culture, and the Royal Academy of Arts of which he became the first president. It was in that educational role that he penned a series of *Discourses* addressed to masters and students. Here I quote only two fragments selected with aspects of virtue in view:

It has been often observed, that the good and virtuous man alone can acquire this true or just relish even of works of art. This opinion will not appear entirely

without foundation, when we consider that the same habit of mind, which is acquired by our search after truth in the more serious duties of life, is only transferred to the pursuit of lighter amusements. The same disposition, the same desire to find something steady, substantial, and durable, on which the mind can lean as it were, and rest with safety, actuates us in both cases. The subject only is changed. We pursue the same method in our search after the idea of beauty and perfection in each; of virtue, by looking forwards beyond ourselves to society, and to the whole; of arts, by extending our views in the same manner to all ages and all times. ¹⁴

It is in art as in morals; no character would inspire us with an enthusiastic admiration of his virtue, if that virtue consisted only in an absence of vice; something more is required; a man must do more than merely his duty, to be a hero. ... Our love and affection for simplicity [in art] proceeds in a great measure from our aversion to every kind of affectation. There is likewise another reason why so much stress is laid upon this virtue; the propensity which artists have to fall into the contrary extreme; we therefore set a guard on that side which is most assailable.¹⁵

The Royal Academy was concerned with *fine art*, a term introduced from the French *beaux Arts* and used increasingly in 18th century Britain. Although that category had been abstracted and refined from the higher reaches of artisanship, the existence and needs of craft and design remained, and in view of the industrial revolution and the mechanization of production they also needed to be provided with organized training. The motivation was commercial for while Britain was the manufacturing leader in Europe it lagged behind France and Prussia in design and had no system of design education. Thus it was that in 1837, in rooms at Somerset House previously used by the Academy, the Government School of Design (later the Royal College of Art) opened with an enrollment of twelve students. To this point

¹⁴ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses* ed. P. Rogers (London: Penguin, 1992) Discourse VII, 119.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.* , Discourse VIII.

several kinds of institutions had been created: medieval workshops and guilds, master studios, and academies offering professional accreditation. Thereafter, in accommodation of the growing interest in art and design, a number of other schools and colleges were founded offering practitioner led studio training, examination and qualification, including most notably St Martin's School of Art (1854), Slade School of Fine Art (1868), Central School of Arts and Craft (1896), Chelsea School of Art (1908), Goldsmith's College of Art (1907), Byam Shaw School of Art (1910), Camberwell School of Art (1920), and Wimbledon College of Art (1930). More extensively, between 1850 and 1900 there were 400 English art schools regulated through London-based systems of inspection and qualification.¹⁶ The great majority were very small and like most London ones, they were created not to produce artists but to train designers. Meanwhile, 'fine' or 'high art' was catered for by small private academies in which masters, sometimes self-styled as 'Professors' taught drawing and painting, and, at the highest level, by the Royal Academy. As the twentieth century proceeded, however, the trend was to bring the two strands together in schools of art and design offering (from 1961) courses leading to the Diploma in Art and Design (Dip AD), which as of 1974 was elevated to a Bachelor Degree awarded by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA).

V

The recent stages of this history have only recently begun to be seriously studied. In the last few years, however, there has been a growing awareness of the interplay between art and art school education in the period of the 1960s. In 1991 there began a series of joint Wimbledon School of Art / Tate Gallery conferences (under the general title *Issues in Art and Education*) aimed at exploring the connections between the teaching and practice of art and design in

¹⁶ For an interesting exploration of the art school idea and its implementation see David Haste, *The Art Schools of Kent* (London: Werter Press, 2013).

contemporary British higher education.¹⁷ The impetus was the experience of the School in its 1990 quinquennial CNA Review. In its presentation Wimbledon described itself as an independent specialist school “committed to the education and training of professional artists and designers”, “constituting a community (staff and students) of practising artists and designers all of whose teaching staff were practitioners, half of whom were part time and whose main commitment was to their art practice, not to teaching”. “Practice and education towards practice were not sharply distinguished and the quality of the education should be judged by that of the students’ work”.¹⁸ In response the NCAA panel pressed the idea of the practitioner as teacher and its value in relation to teaching and learning objectives. So fundamental a challenge did this seem that the School decided it was not just an issue for it but for art and design education as a whole, and so was conceived the Wimbledon / Tate conferences on art and education which ran annually until 1998.

Besides attracting considerable interest they created a model and a demand for further systematic and comparative research. In 2005, Tate Modern hosted the symposium *Rethinking Arts Education for the 21st Century*, and a decade after the last of the *Issues in Art and Education* series Tate Britain returned to the theme with a five year project (2009-2014) investigating the impact of art education on art making titled *Art School Educated: Curriculum Development and Institutional Change in UK Art Schools 1960-2000*. This looked primarily at the London colleges and two major changes that had occurred in the half-century of the

¹⁷ The first concerned *The Artist as Teacher*, the second *Values in Art* 1992, and subsequent ones addressed *The Curriculum in Fine Art* 1993, *The Role of Drawing in Fine Art Education* 1994, *Fine Art Education and the Museum* 1995, *What Art School did and didn't do for me* 1996, *What Do You Think You Are Doing?: Intention in Making, Understanding and Teaching Art* 1997, and *From Varying Positions* 1998. Papers and discussion from these were published under the series title *Issues in Art and Education: Vol. 1 Artists in the 1990s: Their Education and Values* (containing material from the 1991 and 1992 conferences) ed. P. Hetherington (London: Tate Gallery, 1994); *Vol. 2 Aspects of the Fine Art Curriculum* (from those in 1993 and 1994) ed. P. Hetherington (London: Tate Gallery, 1996) and *Vol. 3 The Dynamics of Now* (from those in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998) ed. P. Hetherington, W. Furlong and P. Gould (London: Tate Gallery, 2000).

¹⁸ See C. Painter ‘A productive uncertainty’ in Hetherington ed., *Artists in the 1990s* p. 11.

study. First, the shift away from observational drawing and specifically life-drawing which had been a principal feature of English art education since the creation of the Royal Academy. Second, the reorganisation of the schools through mergers and incorporation into larger higher education institutions leading initially in 1986 to a centrally administered federation the *London Institute*, and then to its establishment by stages as a federal *University of the Arts London (UAL)* which Wimbledon only joined in 2006.

It was not surprising that these developments were generally bemoaned by artists teaching in the hitherto small and independent schools which enjoyed national and international reputations under their founding names, but also were welcomed by institutional administrators and managers, major gallery directors, and art and design grandees who were comfortable with large numbers, be they of students, staff, estate folios, or, especially, income and expenditure. The 2021 *Report and Financial Statement* for UAL shows over 20,000 students, 1,500 academic, research and technical staff, and 3,000 associate lecturers.

In Spring 2010, Tate Britain hosted the first of a series of three debates on *Contemporary Teaching and Research Practice in the Visual Arts*. These were related to an exhibition at the University of Westminster *Peter Kardia: From Floor to Sky*. Kardia (formerly Atkins) had taught a series of experimental courses from 1964-1973 at St. Martin's (Integrated studies, Advanced sculpture, and the 'Locked Room'), and then from 1973-86 at the RCA (Environmental Media Programme). The exhibition and associated productions focussed on the impact of these on the emergence and development of the British "New Art" of the 1970s.¹⁹ Untypically in this period and milieu, Kardia, who had studied sculpture at the Slade, described himself as an 'educationalist' rather than as an artist who also taught, and his distinctiveness among tutors is recorded by his former students who include such leading figures as Alison

¹⁹ R. Coyne, H. Westley, P. Kardia, and M. Le Grice, *From Floor to Sky: The Experience of the Art School Studio* (London: A&C Black, 2010)

Wilding, Bill Woodrow, Hamish Fulton, John Hilliard, Richard Deacon, and Richard Long. Reflecting in 2010 on his practice of forty years earlier Kardia wrote:

Obviously a concern with art teaching requires reflection on the context within which art is produced and reacted to. This requirement directs us to give a good deal of thought to many aspects of experience and behavioral interaction that we might otherwise take for granted. ... Fortunately our behaviour is not totally determined in this way. From time to time we find ourselves with intense experiences, sometimes from an aspect of the physical world and sometimes originating in our own psyche. The diversity and power of these experiences is such that they cannot be subjected to any form of the conceptual indexing that is usual in everyday life. ... A significant feature of the 1964 Course had been a focus on the exchange process between teacher and student and in addition regular attendance on the course was required and rigorously enforced ...²⁰

In the abstract, this combination of direct engagement and studio discipline seems to recapitulate features of the earlier types of training offered by workshops, studios and academies; but there are very marked differences which have shaped the forms that art and art higher education have taken over the last fifty years and are reflected in the training of art teachers and their school practice. Describing another of his courses Kardia writes:

[T]he student will work to a general brief concerning the arts in their most extreme capacities, not delimited by convention or norm. The ambition for such work is of course that it should function as part of a reflexive response to culture and cultural meaning, proposing itself polemically against its own history.

Five broad factors were at work in reorienting English art and art education in this period. First, the increasing awareness of the inventiveness involved in other forms of visual production, principally advertising, packaging, fabric and interior design, furniture, fashion,

²⁰ Peter Kardia "Statement" March 2010 see <http://fromfloortosky.org.uk/conferences.html>

film, and television. Second, the recognition that art and design had become part of ‘pop’ culture and of the wider cultural economy, offering the chance of fame and ‘fortune’. Third, the perforation of divisions between art forms and media: dance and drama, film, poetry, music, and visual art. Fourth, the adoption of culture and politics as themes and purposes for art. Fifth, a further extension of the modernist reflexive turn from subject matter to *medium*, then to *maker*, and finally to the notion that the art is the *idea* - the rest, if there is any, just being implementation. This last was famously proposed by the American artist Sol Lewitt in his influential *Sentences on Conceptual Art* (1968): “Ideas alone can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical”.²¹ Unsurprisingly the handwritten version of the sentences is now classified as a ‘work’ in the collection of New York’s Museum of Modern Art.

These forces were not all or always convergent but they gave rise to two dominant notions. First, that art is a form of conceptual and cultural commentary; and second, that the artist is defined not by traditional artistry, aesthetic refinement, or participation in an extended artistic tradition, but by some facility with media, perhaps quite unskilled but sufficient to produce challenging responses to whatever takes their interest. These broad notions were made more precise, and more distant from earlier understandings, by the entry of what had been small further education colleges into the higher education degree awarding sector; and by the politicization art. The former created a pressure to appear academic, not only to teach within the structure of degrees but to engage in research, and this led to the incorporation of elements of cultural studies, philosophy, political theory, and sociology, not as had already existed in a small way in the form of ‘Complementary Studies’, but as part of the conceptualisation of art

²¹ Sol Lewitt, ‘Sentences on Conceptual Art’ 0–9, no. 5 (January 1969), pp. 3–5. In this connection see J. Haldane, ‘Media, Emergence and the Analogy of Art’ in J. Lloyd & J. Katz eds. *Philosophy of Emerging Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) and ‘The Modernist Fallacy: Philosophy as Art’s Undoing’ *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 5 (2) 1988.

practice itself. Needless to say, artist-teachers were rarely equipped for the task and the results in their own work and in that of students were often absurdly pretentious, pseudo-sophisticated and usually devoid of visual interest or quality of execution. Politicization of a leftward sort was generally visceral and conformed to the prevailing fashions. Initially disposed to socialism and its attack on class inequalities, it followed the trend of progressivism into identity and diversity politics where it stands today, though sometimes mixing righteousness with institutional ambition as in the introduction to the 2021 UAL annual report:

This year we will set out a new strategy for UAL, founded on social purpose. ... We have already made three ambitious commitments. First, we are working together to make UAL an anti-racist university. ... Second we are accelerating our response to the climate emergency. ... Third, we anticipate huge demand for tertiary education as economies across the world are rebuilt. ... We are starting with a set of 14 online and low-residency courses. By 2022-23 we expect a fifth of our Masters offer to be delivered online.²²

VI

My theme has been the relation between the self-conception of artists and of art, and the relation of this to the training of artists, as a background to understanding art teaching in schools. The principal bridge to the latter is via subject-based teacher training, so it is pertinent to look at how the two main London suppliers of this currently present their courses to prospective students. First, Goldsmiths, itself a long-term provider of art education as well as of art teacher training (my *italics*):

PGCE Art & Design. We'll give you the tools you'll need to become a confident and committed A&D teacher. You'll learn how to make your classroom *an*

²² UAL Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 32 July 2021, p. 6. Available at <https://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/public-information/financial-statements>

inclusive space where you can support young people in developing their own forms of artistic expression and knowledge of art, craft and design. You'll get to grips with *current theoretical, ethical and political issues* affecting A&D education and engage critically with them.

Second, University College London, Institute of Education:

PGCE Art & Design: You will be required to reflect critically on your experience as a learner, *critique orthodox approaches* to secondary Art & Design and develop strategies to acknowledge contemporary practices *in the field of cultural production*. ... This module aims to *promote a critical approach to the Art and Design curriculum* and encourages you to *reflect on issues, attitudes and values* in order that you can make reasoned and informed judgements about your teaching based on *an understanding of pupil diversity* and how this affects learning.

The cultural and political language and imperatives of these are akin to those of the UAL annual report, here emphasizing current approaches and suggesting criticism of traditional ones. Also evident is the influence of the art school trends represented by Peter Kardia, but also widely favoured and communicated by others through the 1980s and beyond. Considering these descriptions of the abilities and purposes expected of teachers, and comparing them with earlier times, three partial models of the art educator and their associated qualities can be identified.

- 1) The *Exemplar* possessed of practical skills and habituated understanding and judgement
- 2) The *Master* having erudition and discrimination who aims to transmit these qualities
- 3) The *Advocate Facilitator* socially engaged and committed to justice and empowerment.

While more could be said about these representations, much of it extractable from earlier discussion, the brief 'profiles' indicate something important for those interested in art education (and given similar trends in other subject areas also) to reflect upon. For while 1)

and 2) differ in line with the evolution described above, they remain closely and intelligibly connected to an understanding of art; but 3) represents significant discontinuity. It indicates a shift away from art itself towards a notion of art practice and teaching as instruments of cultural and political activism. In that respect it has changed the subject, undermined the intrinsic value of art and distanced students from an understanding of the great traditions and canonical art and artists of the past.

If art education is not to be a form of nostalgic reenactment it has to consider itself in relation to the present and equip students to make and understand work of meaning and aesthetic value. But there is no serious reason why aspects of 1) and 2) may not be conjoined even if they have to be adapted to the scale and circumstances of contemporary schooling. The qualities of character required for this work, beyond the general ones identified in the Jubilee reports, are versions of those touched upon by Vasari, Palomino, Richardson, Reynolds and many others not here discussed: most obviously aesthetic ones but as those writers understood some aesthetic and moral virtues are in part analogically, and in part causally related.²³ I leave the development of that theme as an exercise for the reader.

²³ See J. Haldane ‘Ethics, Aesthetics and Everyday Philosophy’ *Monist* 101, 2018, and ‘Educating Character in Philosophical Perspective’ in L. D’Olimpio, P. Paris & A. Thompson eds. *Educating Character through the Arts* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2022).