ABOUT THE PROSPECT ARCHIVE AND REFERENCE EDITION

Board Retreat Opening Remarks

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Most of what I'm going to say is taken either from Pat's accounts of the Archive and Reference Edition (variously for Harvard or the North Dakota Study Group) or from the "Introduction to the Reference Edition," which is part of the publication and microfilmed/distributed with it.

THE SCHOOL

Let me start with an important fact: The Prospect Archive consists of work produced by children who attended the Prospect School, with a few additional collections. To understand the Archive, we need to recall the school, even though we are familiar with it.

The school was founded in 1965. By 1984, when the Reference Edition introduction was written, the school had a population of about 60 students ages 4-1/2 to 14. They were distributed in three mixed-age groups, the ages within each group overlapping with other groups. There were 3 full-time teachers and a principal who also was director of the Prospect Center. The school had a low tuition and offered substantial scholarship aid in order to maintain as diverse a school population as possible and the students did come from the range of the general population.

The school was housed in two old buildings and each class group occupied a series of rooms; there was a yard and a large all purpose room. The buildings also housed staff offices, the adult library, the archive, the teacher education program and, for two years, the Archive Scholars and Fellows program. At one time these had been housed off-site, at the Red Mill.

The school's guiding principle has long been represented by a quotation from Friedrich Froebel, which bears repeating:

> The purpose of teaching and instruction is to bring ever more out of man rather than to put more into him; for that which can get into man, we already know and possess as the property of mankind; what human nature is yet to develop, that we do not yet know. --The Education of Man, NY: D. Appleton & Co., 1899

Classroom space and organization allowed free movement and conversation, individual and small-group work, whole-group meetings. Time was scheduled in big blocks for work and there were meeting and quiet work times. The curriculum emerged from children's interests as stated in their work. Materials were open-ended, ones which children could shape. The materials were continually available and the children were free to use them as they wished. Instruction in technique occurred only when it seemed called for. The materials were used for their own sake and in conjunction with other studies. Some of the activities they supported were:

-building and construction: blocks, wood, woodworking tools, legos, erector sets, straws, tongue depressors, etc.

-music, singing, rhythm activities
-art in a huge range of mediums--painting, drawing, printing, clay, collage, plaster and wax molding. Mediums available included charcoal, craypas, pens, watercolor, acrylics, plaster, clay, wax, stones, shells, screens, etc.
-dramatics, using blocks, dress up clothing, sand, water, "small worlds," doll houses, house corners, miniatures
-science and nature study were supported by "interest tables" magnifying glasses, microscopes, prisms, reference books, small animals, "change jars," magnets, batteries and bulbs, plants and gardens, sand and water table, rocks, crystals, nests, shells, etc.
-cooking, preserving; gardening; dyeing, sewing, weaving. There was a kitchen and kitchen equipment and supplies, fabrics, yearns, thread, sewing equipment, looms, etc.
-reading and writing: book corners, library, reference books, bookbinding supplies, dramatic enactment of reading and writing, displays and circulation of children's writing, children's journals and self-made books, etc.
-mathematics: there were scales and balances, rulers, timing devices, compasses, cubes and other manipulable counting units, blocks, games, calendars, etc.
-history; time, change, cycles; geography: astronomy models and equipment, picture and reference books, maps, biographical accounts, time lines, calendars, dress-up clothing and dramatics, local and oral history resources, the school buildings, trips, etc.
-movement, sports: dance, soccer, kickball, skiing, sledding, camping, swimming, mats and bar, etc.
-photography and film-making: cameras, dark room, parent and community volunteers

This array of choices made the school a center for learning. Teachers chose materials and activities based on what they knew of children's interests and needs. In turn, the children's choices and projects clued teachers as to where and how to expand the materials and activities. Prospect staff believed that the children's choices, especially the recurrent ones, reflected their strengths, interests, and points of entry into learning. Adult responses in light of the children's choices were believed to further their growth.

Teachers kept weekly records and wrote twice-yearly reports to parents. These records helped Prospect teachers become more attuned to the children's interests and needs. They were the basis for the descriptive review of the child, which was originally called the "staff review" and which was a weekly part of the school's routine. Others of the descriptive processes, growing out of this first one, were developed in collaboration with teachers at summer institutes and other locations as well as within the Prospect staff itself.

The Archive and the descriptive processes are the tangible inheritance from the school. Pat's work on observation and description, on the visibility of the child, and on value, were forged and tested in the school. The school allowed children to be seen and being able to see was crucial:

-- Being able to see children grow through their own choices and activities, being able to see those choices sustained and transformed over time;
-- Being able to see the natural course of growth-- continuous but irregular, punctuated by reversals

and detours as well as by forward movement; continuous but uneven in areas of strength and weakness and at different ages;
-- Being able to see how children used their strengths as well as their interests to fire their own growth;
-- Being able to see how different groups of children developed a group culture, shaped by the group but also by the historical culture of previous groups of children.

Being able to see was crucial.

All these seeings in the school shaped Prospect's position on children and their work, on learning, on evaluation. They inform the conviction and depth of Prospect's work.

THE ARCHIVE

It was tragic that we were unable to sustain the school. We are fortunate to have the Archive, which incorporates the seeings and the work that grew out of them.

The core of the Archive is the work of the approximately 350 children who attended the school between 1965 and 1992, work which Pat began saving when the school started because she found it wonderful even though, by her own account, she didn't know exactly what to do with it then. In the early 1980s, we estimated that the children's work alone constituted about 250-300,000 pieces; doubtless it grew afterwards but we haven't changed our figures and we don't really know how many pieces there are.

The children's work contains visual work, writing, number work, and a few academic assignments. It contains 3-dimensional pieces, collaborative and group work (including murals), slides of block-building and other 3-dimensional work, videotapes of dramatic productions, films by children, class newspapers, and miscellaneous pieces of children's work. Some of the files span the full ten years taught in the school, ages 4-14. [Emma's] for example is 9 years long, ages 5-13 . More typically, the files span 5-8 years. A file of five years and more can include 1-2000 pieces. [Emma's] has almost 500 visual pieces and 1100 written ones. Once the Archive was created, parents and children sometimes volunteered work done at home either before the child started school or after he or she left, or work that had been taken home was returned. So the child files are sometimes longer and fuller than they were originally.

The work in the Archive is not the result of systematic collecting -- it was just what children left behind in school and it was everything they left -- there was no selection of "better" or "representative" or "finished" pieces. The children were free to take home as much of their work as they wanted but they also knew it would go to the Archive if they left it. We have little of [Emma's] sewing, though the records say she did alot, or of her math work, despite her enthusiasm for it. It's hard to know how to interpret such proportions. For conventional research purposes, the fact that the collection is not systematic and also that the records do not include, for example, socio-economic information, is a limitation.

There are also lots of paper files in the Archive--teachers' records, observations of

individuals and groups, the curriculum records, the staff reviews -- all of the work pertaining to the school and the children. In addition are countless reports, articles and written talks by Prospect staff and others, and files pertaining to grant-funded projects and the adult education programs. We often overlook this part of the Archive resources.

The Archive is currently housed in a large caged area in a converted factory building in North Bennington, in more or less dilapidated file cabinets and roughly constructed racks holding homemade cardboard portfolios for each child's oversized work. The space is not climate controlled or dust-free, but it is secure. It is adjacent to Prospect's office, where the Reference Edition is kept. As part of the process of creating the Reference Edition, the work of the 36 children in it was placed in acid-free folders and sometimes interleaved with acid-free tissue. Some pieces were individually encapsulated in mylar and minor repairs to work were made. These original files are kept with the Archive in separate filing cabinets.

Development of archive

At the time I came to Prospect in 1974, what I remember was children's work affixed in big teacher-made books on themes, type of work or class group. I don't remember how else the work was stored. I do know that it was being used in summer institutes and teacher seminars but again I don't remember exactly how.

The first recollection I have of looking closely at a piece of the work is of a winter institute around 1975 held at the Red Mill as part of the RBF teacher center network project. Pat said it was a new process and we were experimenting with it. A little later, still in the 1970s, we took the important step of juxtaposing reviews of visual and written work by a child with a descriptive review of him. In the culminating session, we seemed to be approaching the child revealed in his dimensions as a human being -- what we called then the child as a thinker -- and it felt like a revelation, a privilege to be so intimate, to be offered so much.

[Note: At the retreat, it was observed that the New York State Study over five years in the early 1980s, contributed to the evolution of the processes for looking at work and for building a picture of the child through reviews of the child, the child's collected work, and observations of and longitudinal records on the child, in intense sessions of several days' duration.]

Not coincidentally, around the same time we began to think a little more systematically about the sheer physical accumulation of children's work. Again with funding (RBF?), Pat and I did an inventory of the work, which was scattered around the building, and developed a plan for organizing it. There was also, blessedly, the CETA program, which enabled us to have the services of Allison Cogan, who, beginning in 1979, physically consolidated and reorganized all the work, put it in folders and file cabinets, made portfolios and got the racks for them made. Unbelievably, that was 20 years ago. It was also the year that the current Board and institutional structure were established.

I want to flag this interdependency of the evolution of the descriptive study processes and the archive as a collection. I believe it is still crucial and needs to feature in our planning for the archive and the book.

Development of the Reference Edition

At this point, around 1980, came the question of the wider use of the archive. It was obvious that the Archive supported the ideas about children and learning that underlay the various programs and projects Prospect undertook -- but the actual work was fragile and deteriorating, had the children's real names on it and sometimes information that wasn't really appropriate for non-school staff to know. It was one thing to use it in Prospect's on-site programs. But in order to make it accessible to a broader audience, we had to find ways to ensure preservation and confidentiality.

Vito Perrone, then at the University of North Dakota, got Prospect a Bush Foundation grant for reproducing the work and the Noyes Foundation gave us a grant that created the Archive Scholars and Fellows program from 1983-85. The Noyes grant enabled us to bring people from a variety of fields together to prepare the files for reproduction and -- this was the enticing part -- to talk about the work.

The Reference Edition is a selected edition of 36 child files from the Archive, published in two copies--one of them at UND. It eliminates excess handling of originals and it preserves confidentiality because in the process of preparing for reproduction, pseudonyms were substituted for real names and family information was deleted.

The Reference Edition reproduces the complete Archive file for each of the children, with a few exceptions for reasons of confidentiality or technical obstacles. It consists of:
the Introduction, a set of microfiche for each of the 36 children (a total of 44,000 images), a set of slides for each child (a total of 10,000 images); and typescripts of narrative teacher records. Each set of microfiche begins with a copy of the Introduction and the summary catalogue; yearly catalogues are interspersed. Each fiche holds 50 images (small work), with the child's pseudonym and the inclusive item numbers at the top. The slides reproduce in color about 200 pieces of art and writing by each child, selected from works also reproduced in microfiche. The typescripts are edited versions of teacher records; the editing, which was laborious, was done by Pat because it required familiarity with the school. For working purposes we also have bound transcriptions of selections of some of the children's writings.

Our criteria for selecting files was that there be an equal number of boys and girls, that each file be a minimum of five years long, that the children represent a range and diversity of interests and styles, and that they represent the school's population.

Preparation of the work for reproduction was painstaking as you will see by a glance at the manual "Procedures for Preparation of the Reference Edition of the Prospect Archive" (1984). We had to decide on a numbering system, a system for ordering the work within the chronology and for dealing with oversized work. We developed guidelines for selecting works for slide reproduction and for masking work for filming. A catalogue format was created so that people would be able to get an idea what the child's file offered without going through every single file; instructions for creating the catalogue are included in the manual, as are criteria and procedures for withholding a work from reproduction. A description of the microfilming and slide filming process up to and including labeling the slides was written. Criteria for editing written records were established.

The Archive Scholars and Fellows Program: Bringing Different Perspectives to Bear

Doing all this was part of the work of the Archive Scholars and Fellows. To support that work and give it scope, the program also involved participants in weekly seminars that opened up some exciting directions for Prospect thinking that we couldn't pursue beyond the two years and that we might want to reopen now.

There were about 13 people involved over the two years. A number of us are here: Pat, of course, me, Peg, Cecelia, Alice, Corinne. Other Prospect people joined the seminars--Sheela Harden, David Carroll, Steel Stillman, among them. A description of the program of the second year exists--it consisted of a Practicum, to work on the file, a weekly Seminar, and an Independent Research project.

People in the program came to it with different professional perspectives--visual art, photography, history, anthropology, literature as well as education. Some of us knew the collection already, others didn't. A number of us, myself included had little experience with children or education but were intrigued by the work.

At the time I had gone back to my graduate studies of art history and that was the background and perspective I brought to the program. I recognized the assumptions and procedures of art history in Prospect's collections and approach, though I've actually learned more about them at Prospect than I ever did in my art history classes.

One thing I came with was a method for looking at art. It was called "visual analysis." In my undergraduate studies, an invariable assignment, no matter what period of art the class was about, was to write a visual analysis of an individual work. I did my first on Paul Klee's painting, "The Twittering Machine," in the Museum of Modern Art, and I remember vividly the circumstances and the struggle I had to write it -- sitting at my desk grappling with what it meant to do a visual analysis. No one told us. What I struggled with was what it was that needed to be analyzed. I slowly discovered that "analysis" referred to breaking the work down into its elements and describing them--composition, line, color, medium, figure style, motifs and subjects, etc. It was a memory-making thrill to discover that as the describing went on element by element it became apparent that the various elements worked together and that by describing where and how they intersected I was able to arrive at, and articulate, a meaning that emerged from the work, that was grounded in it, and that my description had substantiated. You can see why Prospect's approach felt familiar.

In addition to describing individual pieces, in my art history classes we also looked at the single piece of work in relationship to other pieces of work by the same artist and, ultimately, we looked for patterns of continuity, recurrence, change and transformation across the body of an artist's work. We were shown the work in chronological order and we saw how the dark expressionism of Cezanne's early work lightened and became more suffused in the work over time but remained in the intensity of his color and stroke and the muscular rhythms of selected works throughout his life. Every study of an individual adult artist's work -- and such studies are among the bricks of art history -- is based on looking at the works in chronological order and on finding patterns.

In art history classes and books, it was also standard, a given, that we would look at the work of one artist in relationship to works by fellow-artists. Influence is one such relationship. But it is also basic to look at patterns of continuity and change among groups, as between the flickering atmosphere of the Impressionists and the more structured observations of the Post-Impressionists, and at transformation and difference such as between the severe early Cubism of Braque and Picasso, and the work of the artists from many countries and varied temperament whom Cubism inspired.

We were also taught to look at work in relationship to various aspects of the context in which it was produced, including the artist's personal and social circumstances but also the images, ideas, values and events which surrounded and compelled the artist.

More rarely, we also knew that descriptions of artistic process, which are more common for recent art, could also add layers to the meaning of the work. Famously, for example, there are a film and photographs of Jackson Pollock at work and these have aided characterizations of his style and meaning.

These ways of description and contextualization carried certain assumptions about the nature of works that I also recognized, and came to understand more fully, in Prospect's work.

(1) The first assumption is that the work has meaning. The meaning inheres first in the fact that the work is a work, a thing made by a person and then in all the circumstances --time, place, etc. -- of its making. The fact that it's a work makes it worth our respectful attention -- and the more respectful we are towards the work as a carrier of meaning, the more we attend to it, the more it will be possible to find meaning in it. By the same token, a work that seems not to make sense is a work we need to look at more. We can't dismiss it on the presumption that is has no sense or that the artist has made a mess of it (though of course artists do make mistakes and that's always interesting, usually to them too). That's not to say we don't make choices in what we look at or find some works more meaningful than others.

Then there are other levels of meaning that accrue from some of the other assumptions:
(2) The work of art coheres. Coherence is the structure of its meaning. There are relationships among its various features and these embody the artist's choices, spontaneous perhaps in the production of this work at that moment but also abiding. This means that even if the work has startling inconsistencies, for example between subject and form, these inconsistencies contribute to the meaning of the work.

(3) Another assumption is that the work has something of both the artist and the world in it. This is a relationships of interpenetration that is most precisely described by metaphor. We might say that the artist and world both participate in the making of the work, they dialogue as it were, and that this is visible in its finished form. Or, invoking the narrative unities, we might say that the work is a "<u>moment</u> made visible" of a continuing relationship between the artist and world. Or a <u>space</u> where artist and world commingle--a "shared territory." Certainly, it is a "both/and," to quote

Margaret again.

Part of the incorporation of the world comes from the fact that the artist employs paint, canvas, techniques, subjects and forms that--even in abstract work--come from the world around and have a history attached to them. That history is rich with the possibilities others have found in the same materials, techniques, etc.

Part of the incorporation of the artist comes from the fact that the artist makes choices among the materials and techniques available to use, and decides on subjects and forms, and brings them together in a way that is more or less personal but always individual. Also, the artist has a personal history with the available and chosen materials, techniques, subjects and forms of the work and that adds another layer of relationship to the work.

The net result is that in the work the artist states herself and also states the world -- regardless of whether the work is representational or abstract, formal or expressionist, worldly or autobiographical. The result is that we can see the world and the artist in the work, if we assume they are there. Especially, we can see the world the way the artist sees it, we can see what meaning the artist gives to the world, how he or she thinks about it. We can discern -- although we can never fully know -- the artist as a thinking, expressive human being.

(4) Another understanding is that once created, the work stands independently of the artist. It exists in the world. It develops its own history as other people look at it, think and write about it, as other artists absorb its lessons and remake it, as it enters a wider world and other lives besides the artist's. It becomes part of a larger history, a reference point, a layer in an accumulation of meanings. We can talk about medieval art and the medieval mind without necessarily referring back to the individual artists. The work itself contributes to this picture.

These processes and ideas about adult art are fairly basic, standard. They've produced a rich history of western and increasingly of non-western art. They've given us access to ideas and perceptions across centuries and cultures. They've opened up realms of thought and emotional and spiritual feeling. They're hardly new or exotic or obscure. Yet they are rarely applied to children's work. It's astonishing that we have to introduce and explain and argue their usefulness for looking at children's work, but that is what Prospect does and what the Archive enables it to do.

The Archive Scholars and Fellows Program: Opening Up Possibilities

The Archive gives us a collection with which to open up the understanding of children's work, and to make visible the reality that each child does contribute a new layer of meaning to the world, harkening back to the Froebel quote and also to one by Merleau-Ponty that Pat often cites. I liken the archive to the collections that I'm responsible for at the Children's Museum: 6000 rocks and minerals, 2000 dolls, 500 works from Africa, some vintage Valentines, 50 children's costumes from various parts of the world, and so on. There's significance attached to having a mass of work. The collection adds weight to the individual object (literally in the case of the minerals): how much more that one rock means surrounded by its fellows of every stripe and color, of every texture and weight, from every part of the world, representing many geological events from era upon era.

A collection creates opportunities for making connections between objects, for finding similarities and differences among them, for identifying tendencies and rare occurrences, and so forth. Almost everyone collects something, so again, this seems like an obvious point. But there aren't many collections of children's work -- none like Prospect's that we know of.

Part of the Archive's importance lies in tantalizing us with these perspectives and the possibilities that ensue from them. The Scholars and Fellows program was an occasion when we could realize some of those possibilities. Speaking as a participant, it was an exhilarating and moving experience that I'd like to find ways to follow up on and to share with others.

Earlier, I suggested that there was an interdependency between the creation of the archives as a systematic collection and the development of the process for looking at a child's work. The creation of the Reference Edition was a similar occasion--the Scholars and Fellows sessions were something new.

The seminar was a collaborative investigation of the work of the six individual children whose files we were organizing and cataloguing. In the first year, each of us, for one session, selected works from our child's file to show the group and talked about what patterns we'd seen across the work; what aspects of motif, style and content stood out for us; what sense we had gotten of the work overall. As a group we did close description of an individual piece or pieces of each child's work.

After we were thoroughly immersed not only in our own file but in all of the files, we still didn't feel we had gone far enough. There were ways in which the children's work overlapped or seemed superficially similar. [Leo] and [Oscar] drew action scenes and had superheroes; [Emma] and [Holly] used lots of color; [Emma] and [Sean] both had works in which lights shone mysteriously through. It had become clear that the children all used space, color, detail, images and themes, narrative, and that they all had a stance as an artist -- but they were all different.

We went on into what I think was really uncharted territory. We began talking about contrasts in the children's work around these common elements. We contrasted the children's work in sessions on these topics, each time bringing a few pieces from our child's file to provide visual reference for discussion. The first contrast session was on the children's use of space and spatial relationship. To give you a flavor of these discussions, here's one quote from that session (fortunately, there are terrific notes for these sessions, mostly taken by Pat):

> Jean pointed out that (Rita) uses space symmetrically. She added that the way (Rita) blocks out the space is almost mathematical. She notes (Rita)'s attention to pattern and order in space and described her as "architecturally observant." Steel commented that for (Oscar) and Leo the space is a field of action. Indicating (Rita)'s drawing of a spiral form, he noted that her drawing, in this instance, also describes a field of action. Robin said that (Holly) fills the space. She suggested that (Holly) focuses on what 'grabs her' and it fills her visual field. The space is formed by her filling it. Robin indicated a painting in which rectangular forms are 'nested,' to illustrate how (Holly) starts from the center and then fills the space. Steel added that the drawings are containers of connotation; they are a symbolism, not a

communication. Jean noted that in the illustrative painting, (Holly) made it from the 'outside in'--the painting draws the viewer in. Pat remarked that to her (Holly)'s paintings/drawing suggest the space is her insides--her own inner dimension. Robin brought out (Holly)'s sensitivity to materials and her willingness to let them 'go.' Beth commented that some of these artists are focused on the surface of the page. She pointed out that instead for Leo and (Oscar) the surface is transparent; the viewer is asked to look through it. (Sean)'s drawings tend to go beyond the page: he uses the back, takes advantages of 'bleed throughs,' repeats images... Peg reminded us of (Sean)'s drawing of the rabbit in the woods in which the similar depiction of tree trunks and the space between them suggests realms hidden behind the surface of the page. Steel suggested a similar use of the connotive in (Sean)'s and (Emma)s' work. Robin pointed out (Emma)'s ... 'submerged' fish in which the pink of the fish shines through the blue water. Beth listed a number of similarities in (Sean)'s and (Emma)'s work that suggest their mutual interest in experimentation and 'the other side' or hidden dimension. Steel noted that (Emma) does a lot more with color than (Sean). He added that it is as if (Emma) is intuiting, sensing, while (Sean) is thinking.

The next session was on the children's use of color, as demonstrated in works that were "typical" and "atypical" of the child's color use. This was followed by a session on the dominant or consistent themes or imagery in the work, and consistencies and divergences between the visual and written work. Then for two sessions we brought in one piece of writing by each child, looking for patterns in its content and style, then relating it to other written and visual work; again we noted contrasts among the six children.

At this point the sessions began to get really dense. We were deeply into the work and the children. The farther we went, the more we had questions that led us simultaneously back into the files and out into realms beyond children's work--into adult work. In the next session, Peg did a synopsis of each child's engagement with imagery, content or theme. Then David summarized contrasts among them in their treatment of content. According to Pat's notes:

A discussion ensued of the distinctions that can be drawn among content, imagery, and theme; it extended discussion of other categories of experience: such as self-evidence; the influence of medium; worth; intention; self-reflection; self-awareness. The children's work and our discussions of Whitehead were entwined in this discussion.

In the next session, we looked at each child's stance or perspective. The file organizer described the child's stance and then there was discussion. Following that, David synthesized and presented a synopsis of each child's engagement with space and time, based on our discussions up til then. Then the group went further and, according to the notes -- "discussed in some depth the implications of 'space' and 'time' as categories of experience" -- for example:

We concluded by starting a discussion of the meaning of childhood (is it a 'place' from which you exit or a continuing experience?) and the broad flow of each child's span of work. We sense, for example, a wonderful flowering in (Sean)'s later work and a constriction in (Oscar)'s later work. There is an instinctiveness and density in the earlier work of all the children and an increased self-consciousness in the later works. Returning to ((Oscar), we

speculated that the thinner quality of some later pieces may be the immediate (but not lasting) result of an expanded world and landscape--i.e., of a larger purview and, therefore, even more options to be kept open and in play.

[Note how different this is from the usual statement that children's work diminishes in quality as they gets older.]

In the final session, each of us brought a few pieces from our child's file that seemed to offer another aspect than we had seen before. We started by stating why we had chosen the pieces. This session added fresh ideas about things like space that we were still grappling with and started us on new aspects of the individual children like contrasts in style of humor. There was no sense that we had exhausted the work of these six children.

In the fall of the second year, much the same course of study was followed initially: each participant immersed him or herself in a file, there were descriptions of individual pieces of visual and written work by each child along with reflections on words, and "contrast" discussions on aspects like space and time. Among the questions raised was "what it meant that space, time and motion came up as categories and dimensions present in the works of all the children." The group turned to Edith Cobb, Whitehead and Aiken to nurture its consideration of what time, space and motion allow children to do and to express. I'm relying here on a report (probably for the Noyes Foundation) that Pat wrote as well as on her Harvard talk.

In order to bring the discussions back to the classroom and to education, the group did a further contrast of how (Mia) and (Iris) "set boundaries, establish order and envision space. In Cobb's terms, we proposed to view them as 'world makers.'" From these examinations, the children's particular formulations of questions around space became more visible. (Mia)'s questions, for example, emerged as "How does space work? Where are we in the cosmic order of things? Where do we fit in?" It was possible to envision the realms of knowledge and an expanded repertoire of educational experiences that would extend her possibilities for exploring these questions.

Towards the end of her report, Pat offers other results:

-the group increasingly felt each child's presence in his or her work
-the child's process of creating a self-history and an identity was increasingly visible in the span of work
-the things the child cared for and valued were increasingly evident
-the child's sense of purpose and the contribution he or she can make were increasingly palpable.

In the spring of the second year, using a new set of files, the group went on to look at other notions such as change, continuity, development and transformation -- at how the children conceive these and how adults have also done so. The phenomena of change helped throw into greater relief the qualities that are core and constitute the coherence and personal identity in a child's work.

There was a lot more in those two years and a lot came out of them -- including, I think, some of the subsequent emphasis on work and works in Prospect's thinking. As I said, it was an exhilarating experience.

As to next steps, I have questions: Are there ways in which Prospect's work since then has absorbed the format of contrasting children and is this something we could fruitfully take up again? Would some version of such discussions be useful to teachers or students in ways different from the focus of the descriptive review of a single work? What would be the minimal conditions for such conversations? What is the nature of collections in other places that could support such work? What would such collections need to be minimally?

Two important elements in the richness of the Scholars and Fellows discussions were (1) the archive collections themselves and (2) some logistical advantages:

--the collections were and are rich in work spontaneously undertaken by children who had access to a wide variety of materials and the time to use them and to practice using them; the collections were and are rich longitudinally and in visual, written, and other work, all in a variety of forms and mediums;

--the logistical advantages were that we had access to the full body of work and to the originals; we were able to bring originals to the meetings and lay them out for everyone; we had time to immerse ourselves, time to alternate our focus on children with readings of adult work; time to prepare for sessions and to keep copious notes.

How do we approximate these conditions? Or find other ways?

Besides such contrastive work, there may be other educational and research things to do with the Archives. When we first created the Reference Edition, I hoped that people outside Prospect would find it a rich resource for their work. Now I think that the Archive simply defeats outsiders who might be interested because its assumptions are so radically different from those that underlie the developmental, therapeutic or normative, measurable-outcome kinds of research. And even in art history, where the assumptions are more akin, when I presented the paper "The Child's Stance as Artist" to the annual conference of art historians in 1986, it was in a session on "art without history" (a title meant to be provocative) where children's art was juxtaposed with the art of prehistoric cultures, the so-called insane, and the anonymous craftsperson. And of the speakers on these populations, I was the only one who suggested that perhaps, indeed, there would be a history of children's art if we paid the proper attention. Even though I think Prospect approaches children's work with much the same assumptions that underlie the humanities--art historians as an instance--even if sympathetic to the art, have so far only been able to accept it around the edges of adult art--as an influence, for example. This is evidence of how little we really believe that children have something new to contribute and of the reduced conviction, the hollowness, of academic disciplines as currently practiced.

Prospect's approach has approximately the same relation to understanding children's work as did the singing that Mrs. Matt insisted that her basket-making students learn -- the story quoted by Pat in her paper "A Work...A Thing Made to Last...." Mrs. Matt put learning and singing songs

before the techniques of basket-making. Respecting the work as meaningful, understanding it as representing in some way the world and the artist, seeing it as having a capacity for accruing meaning apart from the artist -- these are among the songs we need to learn, to possess self-consciously and with conviction --before we can approach a truly rich apprehension of a work, before we can recognize the role that making such works has in the child's learning and thinking. The first thing is to see the child as human and a maker of meaning, and then as Pat says towards the end of her Harvard talk, to make an active effort to cultivate this "habit of mind" by continued study of the many different aspects of our humanness. She says, "It is the access the Archive offers to a fuller and more imaginative understanding of our humanness, that gives it such value."

The Archive's potential is going to be realized through Prospect processes and efforts -- and I'm suggesting that the processes can perhaps also be extended and renewed by working with the Archive.