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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This attempt to include a psychoanalytic understanding of art and media is developed in my *Anamorphic Eye/I: Autobiographical Cross-Dressing and Re-Dressing* (1996) which marks and documents this theoretical shift.

# MULTICULTURAL ART EDUCATION'S ILLUSION OF EQUITY

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## Exploring The Pedagogy of African Images and Social Reproduction

Exclusionary practices along with inaccurate and incomplete information have historically been used in the classroom by the dominant White culture as a means to disempower minority youth and widen the chasm between opposite ends of the power structure. Although reproducing the existing power structure may not be a conscious motive of art teachers in the 21st century, many of their actions replicate conditions necessary for domination by the Euro-White culture. Admirably, art educators have a history of being on the cutting edge of innovative ideas and inclusionary practices. The movement to include art from many cultures in art curriculums is an exemplary curricular milestone benefiting minority students. However, it is within the realm of multiculturalism that theory and practice slowly drift apart, often resulting in art teachers teaching students whose cultural heritages are very unlike their own. This can present an awkward position for art teachers who possess good intentions to include minority art but are deficient in the understanding, training or direction which would most benefit their students.

The lack of art educators' research into the problems inherent in multicultural inclusion and the necessary development of programs to address those problems, has resulted in the capitalist exploitation of multicultural art education as a business. Although the need for multicultural resources is undeniable, the development of sound pedagogical practices aimed at assisting African American students in their struggle to deconstruct their historical past and construct a more actualized self has wavered. Consequently, art teachers are able to acquire a multitude of pictures of African masks and boxes of skin tone crayons but little or no information about *how* to teach minority students about the students' own cultural/historical art is readily available.

This paper will focus on issues related to the teaching of African art to African American students. The premise is that art teachers who are inadequately prepared are teaching multicultural art curriculums which perpetuate the reproduction of a misdirected and unequal social structure. By consistently presenting images of Africa and African art which African American students perceive in a negative way, without the necessary knowledge base to recognize and assist in resolving problems, dominant Euro-White status and position is reproduced. To find solutions to these issues, art education scholars must redirect the path of multicultural art education and once again place themselves on the cutting edge of innovation. Art teachers must be trained to look beyond the crayon box and the array of multicultural exemplars toward a pedagogy of liberation. Simply stated, multicultural inclusion, in its current form, contributes to, instead of interrupting, the cycle of social reproduction.

### Defining Social Reproduction

Pierre Bourdieu defines the theory of social reproduction as, "...the reproduction of the structure of the relations of force between the classes..." (1998, p.11). In essence, the premise of social reproduction is that an ideology of domination results from a process of interacting concepts which reproduce, through symbolic violence, cultural arbitraries which express and indirectly legitimate dominant class ideas. Cultural arbitraries are those ideas the dominant culture consider important and necessary to be passed to succeeding generations. According to Bourdieu, the educational system is the, "process through which a cultural arbitrary is historically reproduced through the medium of the production of the *habitus* productive of practices conforming with that cultural arbitrary..." (1998, p. 32). *Habitus* is defined by Bourdieu as the, "site of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality," (1998, p. 205). These reciprocal characteristics of the external and internal produce structures that determine the way we understand, recognize and interpret life's experiences. The traditional presentation of European art as high classic as a cultural arbitrary, and the internalization of a perception of "primitive" associated with African ancestral art forms, can therefore hinder the development of a positive self concept within African American students and reproduce feelings of inferiority.

### African American Negativity Toward African Art

On a psychological level, teachers may make assumptions that African American students *feel*, or at least *should* feel pride about their African heritage. Instead of pride, however, many African American students may feel shame or embarrassment or display signs of being uncomfortable during lessons about Africa (Alden, 1996; Lowenfeld, 1945; Spruill-Fleming, 1990). Instruction on African art many times result in African American youth taunting *each other* with, "You're African, I'm not," "You're an African Boogie Scratcher," "You're a black

roast from Africa," or "Go back to Africa where you belong" (Alden, 1996). Without ever connecting the behavior to the pedagogical activity, misbehavior by African American students during the presentation of African art are often misinterpreted by the art teacher as merely disruptive behaviors by unruly students. Teachers who recognize the connection often choose to discontinue teaching African art rather than deal with the ensuing problems. Still others claim a lack of knowledge and too little time for research leaves them no alternative but to exclude African art from their curriculum (Alden, 1996) thus, continuing the hegemonic cycle of power over knowledge.

J. Eugene Grigsby, Jr. warns that as student populations in the United States grow more diverse, "teachers are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with these youth who bring cultural attitudes different from those of the teachers" (Grigsby, 1977, p. ix). Many of these students bring cultural and behavioral challenges to the art classroom that require greater attention than the provision of a few multicultural art supplies. The problems encompass the development of African American students' social and psychological well being. Teachers are in a critical position of making judgements and taking action regarding these attitudes and behaviors. If teachers do not recognize the negativity of African American students toward Africa art to be the result of a system of power and domination the outward behaviors may be addressed, but the core of the problem remains.

Viktor Lowenfeld, a longtime major contributor to the field of art education, reported on two observed facts about his African American students at Hampton Institute which he considered psychologically and socially important. During his first five years at Hampton Institute in the early 1940's, Lowenfeld observed that, "...I have not found one student who showed the desire to study African art. However, almost as a rule I found the students rather ashamed or uneasy when

confronted with the 'primitivity' of African art (1945, p. 28). Lowenfeld concluded that his African American students did not feel far enough removed from their African ancestors and the symbolic expressions of African art to permit them to develop objective viewpoints about African art. Apparently, reproduction of attitudes that elevate the significance of "high" Western art, while de-emphasizing the value of African art remain strong over fifty-five years later and African art remains relegated to the margins of acceptance.

Lowenfeld's second observation at Hampton was that African American "Boogie Woogie" music was closely related to innate African rhythms. However, he concluded that, "since society has not only approved it but has made plenty of use of it and finds it seemingly quite attractive, the American Negro is not at all ashamed to use syncopic rhythms and characteristic motions which are as remote from Western cultures and civilization as its African art" (Lowenfeld, 1945, p. 28). Contrary to African art, African/American music has been somewhat surreptitiously incorporated and gradually accepted into the music making of the dominate culture. Approval and acceptance of African/American music by some Whites during the Harlem Renaissance, according to Nathan Huggins (1973), was often to fulfill a need in the great "White hunter" of New York City to find the excitement of an "exotic," "savage," and "primitive" jungle entertainment (Huggins, 1973, p. 90). African Americans left the service of Whites as slaves and began a service as entertainers.

These two observed facts, according to Lowenfeld, clearly demonstrates that, " whenever his heritage is consciously expressed, the Negro is emotionally dependent on the society in which he lives" (1945, p. 28). Lowenfeld placed the responsibility for resistance toward African art on the character of his African American students by determining that the time span was too short between them and their

"primitive" past to not be ashamed of African art. The viability of African/American music, however, although it was as far removed from *western culture and civilization* as the art was less shameful to African Americans because Whites were more likely to accept it. Lowenfeld did not analyze the reactions to both the music and the African images as constructions of domination and oppression. Through the lens of social reproduction it is obvious that African Americans are not tied emotionally to the dominant society so much as they are to a social structure of domination.

Carter G. Woodson explains in his epic book, *Mis-Education of the Negro*, originally published in 1933, that Whites keep an image of African American people before the public that help justify their oppression. In response to this negative image, Woodson writes, "One cannot blame the Negro for not desiring to be reminded of being the sort of creature that the oppressor has represented the Negro to be..." (Woodson, 1998, p. 194). Why has nothing been done to correct the situation and who is at fault? African American adults nod in understanding and affirmation that, yes, they are quite aware of their children having these attitudes. Although there is disagreement about the reasons why Lowenfeld thought these negative attitudes toward African art were happening, the fact remains that even today many African American students display the same resistance to studying African art. The major problem in the art room appears to be the denial by White art teachers that these attitudes exist, or if they do recognize them, as with Lowenfeld, they assign the fault somewhere within the children's character.

Denial and misdirected blame are obvious in an incident related by a Junior High art teacher. An African American student had become consistently unruly during lessons on African art. The young man became volatile and carried his "attitude" with him into other classes

for several days. The situation became so explosive that the parents filed a law suit against the art teacher and the school district. Although the teacher recognized that the behaviors were the result of her teaching African art, she insisted that the student was just a "troublemaker" looking for a reason to cause trouble. The student was described by this teacher as being a "model" student up to that point (Alden, 1996). Minority issues are perpetually relegated to "whitewashed" solutions which, in this instance, was the elimination of African art lessons from the curriculum. Unable or unwilling to see the connection between all the elements involved in these negative attitudes and actions, African American students' feelings are rendered invalid and the power structure remains fixed.

### Euphemisms, Color, and the Possibility of Change

Jacqueline Chanda (1992) believes that to avoid some of the negative connotations associated with art from the so-called 'primitive cultures,' a new terminology should be developed to negate prejudicial attitudes. If establishing new terminology did in fact serve to eliminate deep prejudicial attitudes, the achievement of equality would simply require teachers to learn a few new terms. New words, however, seem to adopt the negative connotations of their predecessors and rather than alter thought, simply wrap old prejudices in new shrouds. To an African American student whose *habitus* is formed with a negative attitude toward the arts of Africa, changing the name from "primitive" to "traditional" does not change the internalized concept of the art. Through acts of symbolic violence, invisible white "truths" are established by the pedagogical authority which appear legitimate and necessary to improve "equality," but in actuality provide students with little more than a few new vocabulary words or color choices.

George Bernard Shaw postulated that just as we use a mirror to see our face, we use the arts to see our soul. Due to the visual nature of

the discipline, art teachers often hold the mirror in which students see their own image. If this artistic mirror is not of high quality and designed to meet the needs of the viewer, the reflected image can be convoluted and demeaning. Art teachers have often used this "reflection of image" as another avenue to equity through the addition of an array of skin colored art materials. However, long after the infamous Clark studies during the first half of the Twentieth century which explored color preferences amongst African American children, many African American children continue to choose peach and pink crayons for their skin tones and yellow for their hair color when producing self portraits (Russell et al., 1992). If color was the issue, African American children's pride and self concept would have increased immensely with the plethora of brown hues available to students. African American students' needs for self actualization, however, include more than the desire to see a brown reflection. Children need to be given a sense of pride in their heritage, but above all, they need to be given the knowledge, skills and freedom necessary to draw their own conclusions and make their own decisions about who they are and who they want to be (Heath et al., 1993; Delpit, 1995).

African American students who have been denied access to and knowledge about their ancestral arts and history can be aided in filling these gaps through pedagogical methods designed to maximize learning and enhance self concept. According to Patricia Brieschke (1998):

If skin color is the primary characteristic that a teacher sees when looking at a child, then that child's story already has been scripted and interpreted by the teacher. Children with diverse cultural identities are represented as equals in public schools only to the extent that the modes of behavior or narratives that teachers

ascribe to the diverse groups are perceived as equally valuable and worthy of respect (p. 55).

Brieschke goes on to say that although multicultural crayons provide students an alternative way of thinking, "the challenge is to reflect on and articulate through others how we integrate, reject, and modify aspects of the cultural heritage that we draw from the crayon box to make our own" (1998, p. 60). African American students need affirmation that their value lies deeper than the skin by creating a positive image of African Americans that is not simply a superficial visual image, but an image of group, cultural and social pride. Teachers need to recognize underlying tensions and understand that equality represents more than skin color, it must also involve the inclusion and celebration of alternate cultural histories and identities. Art can help children create a "sense of story, (an) intense holistic involvement across a range of activities, and a connecting quasi-spiritual bridge to both a past and a future..." (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993, p. 71). Unfortunately, art supply companies that label skin colored paint, paper and crayons as "multicultural" give art teachers a false sense of practicing "multiculturalism" when in fact, color has little or nothing to do with culture.

### Universities and the Invisibility of Whiteness

African American educators who teach African American children may not have color barriers or the language of color and "race" to transgress in order to maximize pedagogical activity, but they are not free from problems associated with teaching African art. The Assistant Principal (from Ghana) at a French Magnet School in a large Mid-Western city adamantly asserts that his African American students are negative about everything African, not just its art (Alden, 1997). Christine Sleeter (1993) also reports that African American students often do not want to study about Africa or claim an African ancestry. Unlike the positive reactions African American students exhibit toward

*African American art*, and irrespective of whether African art is taught by African American teachers, the same negativity toward African art often results (Alden, 1997). This is not hard to understand, however, because African American art teachers have also been subjected to the same system of inculcation that leads to social reproduction.

A basic foundation in the theory of social reproduction is that the legitimacy of the cultural arbitraries of the dominant culture are imposed upon all citizens by the pedagogical authority. As the legitimating authority in training pre-service art teachers, Universities impose the recognition of Euro-Western art as the legitimate cultural arbitrary on members of the dominated groups or classes and, "...*tends at the same time to impose on them, by inculcation or exclusion, recognition of the illegitimacy of their own cultural arbitrary*" (Bourdieu, p. 41, original emphasis). Therefore, African American art teachers are likely to project the Eurocentric ideas of what constitutes "good" art.

Teachers from the dominant culture emerge from the University wrapped in the invisibility of Whiteness and White power and tend to overlook African American history and psychology and simply see the "Otherness" of African American students that is visible. Through the lens of visibility, equality is sought by superficial means such as the provision of "multicultural" paint and construction paper, euphemistic terms, inclusive "politically correct" images and holiday multiculturalism. In addition, equality which is based upon visibility often results in exclusion when minority students are not in the classroom, such as a White art teacher who declared, "I don't teach African art because I don't have any Black students" (Alden, 1996).

Mechanisms of social reproduction are intrinsic in both of these situations. In the first case, the idea is reinforced that the African American "equality problem" is extrinsic in nature and that the existing

power structure has the solution. In the second case, the legitimacy of a dominant cultural arbitrary is secured and the existing power structure is reproduced through the exercise of a pedagogical action (deliberate exclusion of African art) by the pedagogical authority (the White art teacher). In this instance, Whiteness is masked by the invisibility of Blackness, therefore, African art is not being excluded because of Whiteness, but because of Blackness, or the absence thereof. The oppressed are, in a convoluted manner, made responsible for their own oppression. In the words of Sherene H. Razack (1998) "...an important epistemological cornerstone of imperialism [is]: the colonized possess a series of knowable characteristics and can be studied, known, and managed accordingly by the colonizers whose own complicity remains masked" (p.10).

Peter McLaren admonishes that we must abolish Whiteness but, "because whiteness is so pervasive, it remains difficult to identify, to challenge, and to separate from our daily lives" (1997, p. 238). As recognition grows about *how* and *why* African American students may perceive African art negatively, art teachers need to be challenged to confront White hegemony and explore how power and knowledge are allocated in the art classroom. Art teachers need to recognize that stereotypes, popular culture and history do not always allow African American students to develop a positive self identity or to enthusiastically embrace their African heritage.

### **White Constructed Ideals of Beauty**

According to George Lipsitz (1997), "Members of embattled communities have to 'theorize' about identity everyday; they have to calculate how they are viewed by others and how they want to view themselves." Children are highly impressionable when confronted with images that they interpret as negative and even more so when they understand that they, too are being classified in accordance with those

images. Because children are not equipped with a full repertoire of critical thinking skills (Thornburg, 1984; Frisby & Tucker, 1993) with which to deconstruct negative images and stereotypes, they are more likely than adults to internalize them (hooks, 1992). During presentations of African art, African American students are confronted with their African past in a room full of people, including themselves, who have absorbed through various means of inculcation, a "Tarzan" mentality about Africa. Not only must these children struggle over questions about whether they fit in the African diaspora, they must also contend with how "Other" students see them fitting into an often misconceived concept of Africa. In addition, African American students face the possibility of "Others" trying to force them into an association with an ancestry to which they may feel little or no connection.

Pierre Bourdieu (1989) states in that:

The struggle over classifications is a fundamental dimension of class struggle. The power to impose and to inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, is political power par excellence. It is the power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society. As with constellations, the performative power of designation, of naming, bring into existence in an instituted, constituted form...what existed up until then only as *collectio personarum plurium*, a collection of varied persons, purely additive series of merely juxtaposed individuals (p. 23).

Rather than having an aggregate of human entities, we develop through a variety of methods, groups and hierarchies based upon power and politics. Imposing a dominant group identity upon disempowered "Others" exposes those thus classified to stereotyping and discrimination without consideration of individual merit. The hierarchy

is maintained because there are groups which are always situated on the margins, never able to fit within the dominant ideal. Socially constructed ideals of beauty create racialized boundaries that delineate who society accords greater value to, and who society de-values based upon superficial attributes. Although stratification of beauty and color is also prevalent within the African American community, (Russell, Wilson & Hall, 1992) the historical relationship between the dominant Euro-White populations in the United States and the subordinate Black population was one built upon the idea that the subordinate group was critically "defective" or "substandard." Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997) explains that this results in the subordinate group internalizing these ideas and finding it difficult to believe in themselves or to recognize their developing self-hatred.

The visual and mental image of Africa and Africans in the United States has a history which is deeply imbedded in white hegemony. As chattel slavery became a growing institution in Southern economics, the images of those in power (Whites) and those subjected to them (Blacks) became ingrained in art, language and ideas. Because the White power structure controlled the images projected of African Americans and of themselves, they were very influential in how African Americans came to view themselves. Out of the quagmire of inequality and alleged "racial" inferiority grew an image of Africa and Africans from which many African Americans felt it necessary to distance themselves. The historical image of Africans in the minds of the oppressors as primitive, savage, uncivilized, unintelligent, and unevolved have been tremendous obstacles to overcome in the struggle for liberation (Pieterse, 1997).

David Aronson states that, "Children cannot freely express their emotions or feel secure with others unless they feel secure with themselves. And they can't feel good about themselves without having

some understanding of who they are" (1995, p. 26). If African American students continuously feel the need to fit within the dominant culture's standards of "correctness," including, but not limited to, beauty, history and actions, their differences will never be validated. Tatum's psychological explanations of black identity development illustrates how if, "...the targeted group internalizes the images that the dominant group reflects back to them, they may find it difficult to believe in their own ability" (Tatum, 1997, p. 23). African American students who have mentally accepted cues of inferiority about Africa from the dominant culture are surely reluctant to celebrate a culture which those in power denigrate. If art teachers are not educated about African and African American history and how African American students often perceive Africa in a negative way, their pedagogical practices could continue to adversely affect impressionable youth. K. Sue Jewell (1993) points out that:

Certainly, not all members of any cultural group accept images and definitions that are constructed by individuals who possess power and wealth; yet there is evidence that many of these definitions and images are internalized by members of various cultural groups even when the definitions are negative and adversely affect their status and social and economic well-being (p. 24).

The inculcation of cultural arbitraries, including those which establish and maintain social distancing begin early in a child's life. In the past, cultural arbitraries, such as images of "Zip Coon," or "Mammy," or drawings comparing African American anatomical features to those of baboons were open and blatantly prejudicial. Movies such as, *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1989) starring Richard Harris and Bo Derrick depict Africans as cannibalistic, tribal primitives. Dark skinned African Americans are often portrayed as criminals in movies and on television.

Images of Africans are not usually seen on the news in the United States except as people starving under squalid conditions or sometimes as the topic for anthropological documentaries. Unfortunately, capitalist enterprises provide the most pervasive images many African American children are exposed to about their African heritage.

### Dispelling the Myth of Image Equity

Today's stereotypical images of Africans and African Americans are sometimes more subtle and obtrusive, but just as real and demeaning. Mass advertising has exploited the images of minority people in the name of social justice to increase sales (Giroux, 1994; hooks, 1992). The images of African American women are seen today in places they once were not allowed, but they are often the ones chosen to model exotic or seductive African animal print clothing, typically against a jungle backdrop. The intent of these images are essentially the same as those published in the past of seductive African American women, including Josephine Baker, a famous African American exotic dancer in the 1920's. Baker was not allowed by her employers to lighten her skin because part of her allure was the forbidden fantasies associated with her dark color and 'wildness' (Pieterse, 1992). Just as in the case of "politically correct" advertisements, the politicizing of minority images in "multicultural" exemplars and supplies available to art teachers or books which now portray multiple race images, has resulted in the *illusion* that an increase in equality has occurred when in fact the most prevailing difference is simply that more "racial" groups are represented.

Reminders of inequality, whether subtle or blatant maintain a distance between the dominants and those designated subordinate. Labels and stereotypes are legitimized through inadequately developed multicultural programs which either confirm in the minds of all involved the inferiority of the "Others," or work to consistently

dehumanize the subordinate group (Sleeter, 1993, p. 158). Legitimized inequality, even when it is not recognized as such, can become a part of the cultural fabric to the point that it is not questioned and becomes nearly impossible to overcome. It is vital that art teachers at all levels question multicultural programs that do not have a sound understanding of the historical, psychological and cultural background of minority peoples. Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1997) explains that:

While the common denominator is power—power that arises from a hierarchical situation and the power required to maintain that situation—it is also a matter of the anxiety that comes with power and privilege. Existing differences and inequalities are magnified for fear they will diminish. Stereotypes are reconstructed and reasserted precisely when existing hierarchies are being challenged and inequalities are or may be lessening. Accordingly, stereotyping tends to be not merely a matter of domination, but above all, of humiliation. Different and subordinate groups are not merely described, they are debased, degraded. Perceptions are manipulated in order to enhance and to magnify social distance (p. 223).

Pieterse explains that we are all participants in the process he describes above, either as “receivers” or “senders.” Due to the fact that we all participate in society, we consciously or unconsciously contribute to “status-ranking.” As human beings we all develop stereotypical ideas about other people. Through the process of forming our self identity, as we interact with others, we make decisions about such things as right and wrong, good and bad, and make choices about who we like or do not like. Some ideas, however, are formed about others with whom we have had no personal contact or knowledge. Those ideas are the result of second-hand information, often passed down from one generation to the next which is sometimes obvious, other times implied

and often incorrect. This information does not have to be about people different than oneself, but can be about ones own ancestry.

Bourdieu includes within his concept of education the family, religion and any other situation in which prolonged action of inculcation produces the *habitus*. Every situation of pedagogic action recapitulates the conditions under which the reproducers (parents, teachers, etc.) were produced and strives to reproduce itself with as little change as possible. Schools, as the major institutional system for reproducing cultural arbitraries, are designed to be the legitimate and legitimating authority and teachers to be the conveyors of truths. It is a powerful position to be in control of the representations of “Otherness,” to establish and defend the hierarchy of dominance, identity and value, and do it all as legitimate pedagogy.

### Refocusing the Future of Multicultural Art Education

The images of African American people continue to be utilized as a method for maintaining inequality and as a means of commodification. Few cultural nuances are left unexploited by the dominant culture because, “Everything has been turned into a commodity, including curricula, courses, instructional materials, lifestyles, and belief systems” (McLaren 1997, p. 238). The addition of a few new shades of brown crayons in the crayon box and the availability of “multicultural” art reproductions are likely to do more for the companies who produce them than for the children they are supposed to help empower. The commodification of diversity relegates African American liberatory struggles to externality while reinforcing and reproducing white power and privilege.

Speaking to the heart of the matter, bell hooks (1992) claims that African American identity is directly connected to white hegemony. A true African American identity, hooks claims has been subdued because

within the African diaspora, art and the creative process is inextricably bound to a synthesizing of the soul and body. Thinking about art and creating art, hooks declares, must become part of the transformation toward African American identity, ideas about beauty, and a collective experience of art. African American children who are denied the experience of tapping into that cultural "soul" of African art are deprived of a potential avenue to greater understanding of themselves due to the influence of teachers who can see only through the colonizer's eyes. This state of affairs can result only in the reproduction of the existing social order.

There are no quick and easy solutions to de-institutionalizing the reproduction of the existing power structure, for as long as there is something to gain it is too valuable to allow it to easily change. A beginning would be for those in power to recognize their power and devise methods to deconstruct their ownership over the image of "Others." To do this, art education scholars should refocus multicultural art from models of inclusion which merely create the illusion of equity and the superficiality of color to devising methods to increase multicultural student learning. Research in art education must incorporate the knowledge of other disciplines such as history, sociology and psychology so African American students can be provided with the information and psychological support which permits them to construct their own self images. In addition to the sources included in this paper's bibliography, currently practicing and pre-service art teachers would be well advised to read: Sonia Nieto (1999); Hollins et al. (1994); King & Hayman (1994); Christine Sleeter (1991) and Howard (1999).

Universities should be made responsible for adequately preparing future art teachers about the art of Africa, potential problems associated with teaching African art, and in pedagogical strategies regarding *how*

to teach African American students. In addition, art teachers need to be made aware that White students need exposure to the art of diverse cultures, irrespective of whether "Other" students are present. Just as important, teachers need to be taught to listen to their students and question negative behaviors they observe in the classroom instead of making assumptions that these behaviors are from personal deficiencies. Scholarly research must begin exploring and defining practices of power and domination to enable teachers and students to see, in real life situations, how hegemony operates.

Sleeter (1993) gives us little hope that most white teachers will easily relinquish their power and self-appointed superiority. She believes that one way to facilitate equity is by changing the teaching force to reflect the diversity of its student body. The lack of minority teachers, however, requires the exploration of alternative means to achieve equity because children cannot wait until the color of the face behind the desk matches their own. Change must come from within and it cannot occur unless a series of events transpire: hegemonic situations must be recognized, the desire for change must be present and action must take place. As Bourdieu says, "to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced" (1989, p. 23). The discipline of art education can begin to change that world vision through the development of pedagogical methods which address the unique situations which can arise when teaching groups of individuals about the art of their own cultural heritage.

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## On Oysters and Other Life Lessons: Art Teacher's Perceptions of Social Class and Schooling

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**Kimberly Cosier**

I had to be taught that the world was not my oyster. As a child I was quite sure that I was destined for a wondrous life of adventure and distinction. I was the first born in my family, the first child, the first grandchild, the first niece; everyone was crazy about me. My mother swears that on the day I was born my father floated across the room, so filled with joy and pride that his feet literally glided above the floor as he held me in his arms for the first time. I realize now that this is implausible, of course, but when I was young it was part of our family mythology. I had caused my dad to fly. My family adored me; they made me feel as if I was significant.

In the early years I believed them. Being a tomboy secured my position as the favorite of my doting father who convinced me that I was invincible. In my neighborhood I reigned supreme, leading the other kids on all manner of wild and dangerous adventures. We raced motorcycles at tear-jerking speeds through the woods behind our houses. We constructed labyrinthine underground forts so well camouflaged as to be invisible to the eyes of adults. We crept through