<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jan jagodzinski</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Editorial: Research, Visual Cultural Studies, Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Sanders</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(re)Making Time/(re)Examining the Social History of a Community School of Visual Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Conrad</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Unearthing Personal History: Autoethnography &amp; Artifacts Inform Research on Youth Risk Taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Berson</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Gulf War Series: 1996 Untitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Tavin, Lea Lovelace, Albert Stabler, Jason Maxam</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>From Bucktown to Niketown: Doing Visual Cultural Studies (Chicago Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin-shiow Chen</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>The Comic/Anime Fan Culture in Taiwan: With a Focus on Adolescents’ Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jan jagodzinski</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Unromancing the Stone of “Resistance:” In Defence of a Continued Radical Politics in Visual Cultural Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan Horner</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>DBAE and iiae: Playing Finite and Infinite Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Sharpe</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>Teaching Critical Practice for Future Technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary

Donalyn Heise 167  Cancelling the Queers Heightens National Awareness in Arts Education

Susan Witwicki 173  Art Education and New Technology: Are You Ready?

Cover Design
Arthur Guagliumi, University of Southern Connecticut

Contributors

Bob Bersson is an artist, writer, and professor of art and art history at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He was a founding member in 1980 of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. Created in 1995, the mixed-media works of his “Gulf War Series” are still tragically relevant today.

Jin-Shiow Chen is an associate professor of art education in the department of Fine Arts at the National Chia Yi University, Taiwan. Her research studies have been mainly on community-based, environmental, professional development and instructional issues in art education, but recently she extends her interests to cultural study and sociology of art with a focus on adolescents’ comic cultures. Jin-Shiow is also an artist who has been active in the world of Taiwan’s contemporary art. She has given two solo exhibits of installations, “The Tension of Site Energy”, in Chia Yi Railroad-Alternative Space, Chia Yi city, and in Whashang Art District, Taipei. She has been also invited to join several group exhibitions around Taiwan such as “SPIN CITY 2000: ALTERNATIVE SPACE ON LINE”, in Whashang Art District, Taipei, group exhibition of Installations, “Running Along the Borderline”, in Artists’ Colony of Chia-Yi Railroad, Chia Yi City, Taiwan, and 2002 exhibition of “CO2 TAIWAN ANVANT-GARDE DOCUMENT”, in Whashang.

Diane Conrad is a drama teacher, artist and doctoral candidate in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. Her research is in the field of Drama Education which uses Popular Theatre with youth to explore their life experiences.
Donalyn Heise is an Assistant Professor of Art Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Director for the UNO Center for Innovation in Arts Education. Current research interests include art integration, the role of the arts in a democracy, social perspectives in arts education and art and technology integration. Recent publications include articles in *Art Education, Journal of Online Learning*, and various arts agency newsletters. Recent exhibitions include 2-D work in the Spiritual III International Juried Exhibition, Period Gallery; and a social action digital sculpture in the UNO Faculty Exhibition, 2001; and the All-Media International Juried Exhibition, 2001, and the JDoe Public Sculpture project.

Stan Horner is Distinguished Professor Emeritus from the Visual Art Department, Concordia University, Montréal, Canada. He makes his home in Victoria, British Columbia where he is engaged in developing his Analogos/iiae Series. Two volumes have come out: *Orchestrating Art Events: Sources, Styles, Scenarios, Strategies* and *Sincro.Nis’tee: Reaching <I Ching>*. The essay in this volume is an extract from his third volume now in process.

Jan Jagodzinski is a Professor in the Dept. of Secondary Education, U of Alberta, Canada. Book credits include *The Anamorphic I/i* (Duval, 1996); *Postmodern Dilemmas* (Erlbaum, 1997); *Pun(k) Deconstruction* (Erlbaum, 1997); *Pedagogical Desire* (Begin & Garvery, 2002); *Youth Fantasies: The Perverse Media Landscape* (Palgrave, forthcoming), and *The Oral Eye* (Hamstead Press, forthcoming).

Lea Lovelace is a Master of Arts in Art Education candidate at The School of the Art Institute. She has worked in community art education and museum education for the last 6 years and is currently manager of School Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

Jason Maxam is a Master of Arts in Art Education candidate at The School of the Art Institute. He is currently teaching web design, computer graphics, and digital imaging at The American Academy of Art in Chicago.

Jim Sanders is superintendent of the Arts-Based Elementary (charter) School. Dr. Sanders has 26 years of experience in non-profit management, sits on the board of the Arts North Carolina, and is an independent organizational consultant. He holds a Ph.D. in Education (curriculum and instruction) from UNC-Greensboro (1999), an MFA in fine art from SIU-Carbondale (1976) and a BFA in fine arts from Arkansas State University (1974), and is a fiber artist.
Leslie Sharpe is a Faculty Fellow in the Department of Visual Arts at University of California at San Diego. Her long-term research is on bodies (real, imagined and technological imposters) in networked space. She is also doing a short term art-walk on the UCSD campus for wireless and nonwireless PDAs. Using various locations, characters and histories of UCSD, the work is a ghost story using generative walking algorithms to encourage an active engagement with real space and history and to conjure up real and imagined dialogues regarding space, time, environment, and technology. Sharpe was an artist-in-residence at PS1 in New York and at the Banff Centre, and has exhibited her work.

Albert Stabler is a Master of Arts in Art Education candidate at The School of the Art Institute. His interests include comics, zines, contemporary art, and art by children and youth.

Kevin Tavin is Assistant Professor of Art Education and director of the Master of Arts in Teaching program at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His research and teaching focuses on the relationship between critical pedagogy, visual culture, and art education.

Susan Witwicki is an artist, social activist and art teacher. She has taught high school and now finds herself challenged in developing a
This year’s journal explores a number of social issues that continue to reassert themselves on the postmodern landscape. How can social and cultural justice assert itself in *arts based education*? What is our responsibility to “at risk” children when it comes to a critical pedagogy? The first two essays use innovative approaches to arts based research by incorporating a critical autobiographical methodology. James Sanders and Diane Conrad, drawing their theoretical base from critical autoethnographic inquiry, attempt to examine themselves within the context of their investment as administrator, teacher and researcher.

This is followed by three essays, which concentrate, on a *visual cultural studies* approach to art education. Tavin and a company of graduate students (Lea Lovelace, Albert Stabler and Jason Maxam) provide exemplars of a visual cultural studies approach, followed by Jin-shiow Chen’s Taiwanese study of comic/anime fandom. I follow by questioning “romantic resistance” in popular culture. To cap off our essays we end with two curricular proposals of innovative art education for the twenty-first century. Stan Horner offers a meta-modernist approach to the teaching of art. He presents a paradigm shift as to where exploration of art education curricular could be heading. Leslie Sharpe follows by describing the challenges of teaching art and mobile technologies critically in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego. What follows is a brief commentary on each of the essays.
James Sanders essay *(re)Marking Time/(re)Examining the Social History of a Community of Visual Art*, calls for *a queer inverted look* in the way that well intentioned policy, actions and practices as manifested in school curricula and leadership programs can inadvertently mitigate what they intend to do in the name of social and cultural justice. By examining fifty-five board members oral testimonies, drawing on institutional minutes of meetings, examining promotional catalogs, news clippings teaching artists and students since the mid-1940’s of an urban non-profit southeastern art institutional community, Sanders confronts the contradictions between saying and doing. It is a retelling of history as a “polyvocal and self-critical rendering” of fifty-five years of richly sustained and varied standpoints. Sanders’ research is complicated by the autobiographical investment he has in the institution he has shaped for over twenty-three years. He recognizes that his voice is inevitably riddled with his own biases, but makes no apology for this. It is a brave and risky exploration with the recognition that as a non-profit agency, the community art institution is dependent on a select group of donors, corporations and funding agencies that assess final reports. The very idea that these reports could be critical is disavowed. Biting the hand that feeds you is always precarious. This was the point Cornell West (1990) made over a decade ago when “cultural studies,” as an ill-defined entity, was becoming the new kid on the Arts Faculty’s block. How does a cultural worker go about criticizing the institution s/he works for when “racial segregation, patriarchal policies and self-serving cultural elitism serve the long-term interest,” asks Sander? Sanders raises tough questions. The exclusion of students of non-western origin from the community’s visual art school, and the failure to hire minority artists or elect them as board leaders, are these to be seen as intentional acts, or the structural consequences of social and cultural practices? Sanders also raises tough questions concerning racial segregation in the Arts and Crafts Association in the first decade of the very institution whose policies he has helped to
shape. Disavowal persisted concerning desegregation and the “Negro membership problem.” Many African-American artists and craftsmen made extraordinary sacrifices to insure that the Black community was supported. Sanders conclusions raise more questions, but it is a call for a continued reexamination of institutional history to ask the fundamental question of facing the rhetoric of social justice: whether the institution has lived up to it or only made a symbolic gesture toward the problem that is defined.

Diane Conrad’s paper *Unearthing Personal History: Autoethnography & Artifacts Inform Research on Youth Risk Taking*, presents an exemplar of arts research which is innovative in its approach to autobiography and bridging visual art and drama. Performance art combines the body of drama with the visual. Her essay has qualities of both. Conrad interrogates personal artifacts to identify with the “at risk” students that she is working with—to raise the question of compassion as well as difference as a researcher. The artifact plays an ambiguous role in arts education, neither art nor a banal object, but a “magical” object that has been invested with libidinal attachment. Its personal historical experience is embedded in its patina, saturated with personal meaning. Conrad’s research raises the question of the desire of the researcher. What are the unconscious autobiographical experiences which draw educators from a wide range of ideological perspectives to engage in researching the “object-subjects” that they do?

Kevin Tavin, Lea Lovelace, Albert Stabler and Jason Maxam in their joint essay *From Bucktown to Niketown: Doing Visual Cultural Studies (Chicago Style)*, are also engaged with objects of desire that have passionate attachments. They turn their eye inwards to present the explorations of a graduate course at the Art Institute of Chicago entitled *Critical Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and the Making of the Cultural Worker*. Like Sanders, Tavin and the company of graduate students
Editorial

recognize the need to be introspective and thoughtful in what they are attempting to do in the name of pedagogy from a political, social and democratic mind set. Most importantly for the health of art education, they recognize the need to see our field in the broader context of visual cultural studies. This has been an emphasis that the social caucus has been trying to promote in the past—an orientation to popular cultural and media which is where our students “live.” The course presents a possible model of what critical pedagogy should be like on the media landscape of postmodernity. It raises the question as to how individuals and groups are affected by forms of discourse which both enable and deny agency. Tavin and company are engaged in a bold experiment to coalesce theoretical inquiry, dialogical exchange and social activism with the added challenge to incorporate a student’s personal narrative for social transformation—a tall order. To bring reader, author, critic, and participant together in a viable project offers the needed contemporary challenge for a visual cultural studies approach to art education. To meet the requirements of the course, students interpret a site, text, or a set of images through the lens of the critical literature examined. A class presentation or an outside field trip concludes the course where a critical engagement with classmates takes place.

A number of final projects are described that have taken place around the city of Chicago. Three projects in particular are given close scrutiny. Lea Lovelace discusses her project concerning the representation of disabilities in mass media. Choosing the film genre of comedy, Lovelace describes her attempt to sensitize the class to the way disabilities are represented in mainstream Hollywood by first reading several critical articles that specifically speak to the way people with disabilities are targeted in advertising. Concentrating on the Farrelly Brother’s films, Lovelace engaged the class in discussing several scenes in light of the critical literature read, illustrating concerns of (mis)representation and raising questions of possible re-dress.
How might an art curriculum unit be developed which engages the representation of people with disabilities in art history, juxtaposed with more contemporary representations, she asks?

Albert Stabler’s contribution as an exemplar of critical praxis is to examine the question of urban gentrification. Art and the built environment has always been marginalized in visual art education, but there are many precedents for building upon this rich area of political and social exploration. Stabler’s “quality of life” of the neighborhood is a civic and democratic issue that art students should be engaged in, if they wish to make a difference in the way urban design is perceived in the future. Stabler explored the history of a local gentrified tourist area, Bucktown on Chicago’s northwest side attempting to see aesthetic issues of gentrification as not being divorced from their social and economic implications. An example of New Urbanism, Stabler raises the pressing issue of postmodernism, the increasing loss of public space through private interests, the virtual decentering of the public/private dichotomy, class appropriation, and the rise of postmodern architectural style where a relativism persists by quoting architectural history. Stabler suggests that these difficult issues can be discussed with youth through the imaginative building of urban sites where role playing can take place to explore decision making, as well as examining the historical and economic realities that shape their own neighborhoods.

Lastly, Jason Maxam adds his voice by exploring a perennial and controversial subject—media violence. The question whether violence is sublimated by the media, whether the media is a scapegoat to avoid questioning the structural violence in everyday life, or whether the divide between virtual cyber-violence and “real” violence is a firm as some claim, are all questions that a visual cultural studies approach to art education should address. Maxam’s particular approach to this pedagogical issue was to create a twelve minute video that consisted of
Editorial

a collage of violent media images with two controversial voice-overs. This video became a catalyst to discuss media responsibility for violent imagery, questions of censorship, and to raise personal experiences of violence with youth.

Visual Cultural Studies requires that art educators take popular culture and the mediascape that surrounds us seriously. Jin-shiow Chen provides us with a fascinating look at the sub-culture of ComicWorld in Taiwan as presented through its comic conventions and media presentations. She especially concentrates on cosplay, the performative masquerade that goes on in these conventions, with their play with names and character consuming. Her essay points to the postmodern landscape of fandom as it is found in the sub-culture of Anime comics, and hints at the cultural dominance of Japanese doujinshi (anime comics) that have spread throughout Taiwan. Chen presents a series of seven strategies that fans use in developing their own fantasy life, reemphasizing the point that the distinction between producers and consumers has long past. This is another example of Barthes well-known proclamation that “the author is dead.” Fans create a myriad of meanings from the popular culture that they use and create. Chen concludes with the question as to whether this fantasy world is a “temporary mend” of the frustrations in the “real world.” She does not perceive doujinshi authors or cosplayers as attempting to challenge the views of society. She concludes that this imaginary play is indeed a utopian escape that is not harmful, but perhaps a “survival” tactic to handle stress and frustration of postmodern living. It would be interesting from narratological point of views which stories merely present technological escape utopias and which provide more critical dystopias of technology. Zines and fanfics, so called “slash stories” because they “slash” two unlikely characters together in a sexual relationship (Captain Kirk/Spock) (Buffy / Giles), have emerged in the internet to post stories of sexual fantasies that would otherwise
never be shown on public television series or appear in comic books to provide queer readings and critical explorations that are generally by the dominant culture. This is a form of creativity that is generally not recognized by the mainstream (see also Penley, 1990).

Jin-shiow Chen’s essay is followed up by my own, *Unromancing The Stone of ‘Resistance:’ In Defence of A Continued Radical Politics*, which raises this question: whether what is happening in postmodern popular culture of fandom is merely a “romantic transgression.” Examining the theories of John Fiske, who (like Jenkins) has a reputation for promoting the “free play” of fandom and creativity for democratic ends, I raise the question if this is simply an imaginary escape; the traumas and frustrations of postmodern living are not structurally tackled but merely provide escape fantasies, survival games that enable us not to critically engage in the world. Video game realities and Internet virtual cities like Neocron provide an obsessional escape where living a virtual life is much more exciting than struggling with the politics of everyday life. John Fiske has been a staunch proponent of popular cultural studies. His position offers an opportunity to question just how radical an approach to media education needs to be taken in order to make a difference in traversing the fantasies that media (stories, artifacts, films, art, television, video games) play in student lives. Where do we as visual cultural studies teachers stand in relation to the glut of images that continue to pour into our classes by the production of designer capitalism’s consumerism? We close our complement of essays with two such innovative curricular proposals.

The search for innovative courses and curricula continues. Tavin and the complement of graduate students offer us one continuous attempt to search for a critical visual media orientation. Stan Horner, now artist and art educator emeritus from Concordia University, Quebec, has been developing curricular material recognizes the
Editorial

postmodern media landscape we are living on. He has developed a visual cultural studies curriculum which is truly innovative, bold, and powerful in its implications. Horner has always been interested in performative experimentation and questioning in visual arts, stretching out visual art’s confined meaning to only a narrow view of what hangs in galleries. Thus far he has written three innovative curricular books which articulate his approach as “interactive interdisciplinary education” (iiae). In our concluding essay, Horner tries to make the careful distinction between this interdisciplinary approach and the often-mentioned DBAE, which the Social Caucus has attempted to critique in the past. Horner uses the term Meta-modern rather than postmodern to avoid the usual misunderstanding of postmodernity as a period that follows or displaces modernism. Horner’s iiae proposal attempts to set up dialectic between open and closed systems, of infinite games in dialectic with finite games. Horner is essentially updating visual art education to an ecological paradigm that recognizes Ilya Prigogine (1980) notion of “dissipative structures,” or in a different context Rupert Sheldrake (1982) “New Science” which deals with the notion of the presence of the past. Developmental theories undergo a paradigm shift with the recognition that the sub-systems impact the entire organism continually. The reader is advised that the diagrams are daunting, however they do articulate the dialectics between his open system iiae curriculum and DBAE closed or finite system’s approach.

Leslie Sharpe’s essay, Teaching Critical Practice for Future Technologies, gives us a glimpse of the challenges that face the teaching of contemporary art practice using new mobile technologies. What is the role of technology in an art curriculum? Should its direction focus on fine arts or direct itself to computer-related industries? Difficult questions. The difficulty of teaching new media is further hampered by the backgrounds of students entering colleges and universities. Many have limited knowledge of technology and lack experience, while others
come from more privileged situations. Sharpe takes the reader through her course entitled “Pace/Place/Interface” which focuses on wireless mobile technologies, a daunting task given the inexpediences of her students, and that no mobile technologies were available for them to use in the lab. Given such limitations, Sharpe describes the ways she managed to teach the course by engaging the students with the work of the Situationists and the contemporary artist Janet Cardiff. She takes us through the projects and maps out future directions. Sharpe’s essay gives us a glimpse of what all teachers of art must face in some limited sense in the upcoming future of a wireless technological world.

We have two essays in our commentary section. Donalyn Heise revisits the Social Caucus’ concern for the politics of sexual identity that appeared last year in volume twenty-two. “Canceling the Queers” (Keifer-Boyd et al.) discusses the cancellation and censoring of a planned session at a state art education conference that placed lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered issues on the table within the context of visual art education. Heise revisiting raises the difficult question of commitment when it comes to sexual identity, comparing it to the identity formation that emerged when the multicultural movement first got underway. She suggests that “all” of us are democratically poorer when voice is denied to those who have been abjected by dominant heteronormativity.

Our last commentary comes from an art teacher, Susan Witwicki who is politically committed and astute, struggling to provide a politicized way to teach technology, but finding the social environment not conducive to engaging students in becoming concerned citizens. Her essay is self-reflexive with no pretense towards erudite scholarship. Rather, Witwicki provides us with the raw realities of keeping up sprit and hope for critical practice in environments which can be very discouraging in their effects on the psyche. Written with ironic
witt, teaching Web Design and Computer Applications rather than her passion for visual art so that she might have a “foot in the door” to continue her career, Witwicki provides a fascinating wink at her struggles. Student chat lines and instant messaging (IM), the difficulties with “artsier” students exploring computer technologies, and how to teach Web design are all embedded in her critique of neo-liberalist capitalism. Witwicki ends her essay with a reflection on the loss of materiality that computers provide, as well as their overemphasis on instrumentality at the expense of thoughtfulness (“soft stuff”). Nevertheless she provides us with two photo-montaged images of her own socially critical art using PhotoShop technology. Used reflexively, there is merit to technology after all!

References


(re)Marking Time/(re)Examining the Social History of a Community School of Visual Art

James H. Sanders

Abstract

In this paper the author argues that education researchers, artists, educators and arts agencies need to reexamine their policies and practices and grapple with the difficult knowledge of their embeddedness in the problems they seek to resolve. The author identifies the narrative research methods and post positivist analyses he employs in constructing a polyvocal history of an arts education agency. Drawing on fifty-five years of agency meeting minutes, promotional catalogs and news clippings as cross-read within/against the oral testimonies of participants in a community school of visual art, the author critically reflects on the ways community-based arts institutions navigate the dynamics of social change regarding issues of race. He concludes that only as art education and social/historic researchers come to confront their roles in the construction and operations of problems they seek to resolve will they begin to conscionably work toward the ends of social justice in their programs of art study.
Introduction

Recent research regarding artists and cultural institutions’ interventions into the lives of children and communities “at risk” (Davis, 1993, 1996; Harper, 1998) assert many U.S. arts organizations are committed to issues of social and cultural justice. Arts-based education reform initiatives are repeatedly touted for their impact on the “disadvantaged” child, and “low performing” student (Dobbs, 1998; Wilson, 1997; Wilson, Corbet, Noblit & Adkins 1996; Noblit, 1997; Shookhoff, 1996), promoting the notion that arts-informed ways of teaching and art-centered learning can enliven and inspire heightened academic performance. While these initiatives may illustrate the arts’ intrinsic value and service to the work of education and social change, their aligned research largely fails to questions the often-unstated normative values of the arts/education agencies authoring these reforms and interventions or the researchers’ gaze.

Judith Butler notes, “social power produces modes of reflexivity at the same time as it limits forms of sociality” (1997, p. 21). Considering the multiple sites where art is taught and revered as one terrain on which social meaning and values are created and contested, I argue for a “pedagogy of the humanities as the arena of cultural explanations that question the explanations of culture” (Spivak, 1995, p. 391). I hold that art education institutions may fail to critically examine their own social histories and cultural practice, or confront their roles in constructing and perpetuating the very social problems that have rendered children and communities “at risk.” I propose that researchers and art education agencies’ gaze be no longer fixed on the lived circumstance or academic performance of students at-risk – repeatedly framing them as the problem — but that our gaze be inverted to confront art education’s complicity in social problems we construct.
At its core, this paper queerly questions how recent arts-centered change initiatives aimed at empowering students/communities through the arts also limit the possibility of change. Queer theory becomes queer when, as Teresa de Laurentis notes, it “conveys a double emphasis on the conceptual and speculative work involved in discourse production and on the necessary critical work of deconstructing our own discourses and their constructed silences” (Britzman, 1998, p. 82). In example, I center this discussion on a deconstruction of my own agency’s racial policy history, its discourses and social practices, towards the ends of (re)marking and mourning cycles of injustices and envisioning policies, art education programs and research practices that are consistent with the democratic social values we purport to preserve.

I have no interest in discouraging the work of scholars positioning the arts for engagement with social, cultural, educational and economic change, but offer this paper as a gesture of solidarity in the necessary but uncomfortable process of revisiting my/our past and revisioning its future. “How does one move from ambivalence and guilt to the ethical responsibility necessary to the work of mourning? How does one understand the implication that is loss? . . . How does anyone live with a knowledge that comes to late” (Britzman, 1998 p. 130)? I hold that it is not too late for art educators and researchers to unlearn the practices we have considered given, but maintain that until we confront the messy and sordid policies and practices of our past we cannot expect to cleanse the wounds that now infect our cultural body.

In the following pages I reconstruct my ways of working through the research and writing of my own institution’s social history, offering a slice of one part of the research as a means of illustrating the value of combining art education and social research. I begin by briefly summarizing the theoretical foundations and dimensions of
my arts agency social history, the multiple methods used in collecting
the data and the theoretical perspectives I employed in analyzing and
cross-reading multiple texts. I will comment on the dilemmas faced
in authoring a multi-vocal critical reflection of policies and practices
as one embedded in their implementation, arguing that art educators
and researchers must find new ways of grappling with such difficult
knowledge. I will then explore how issues of race have operated within
the programs, leadership and policies of my institution, citing the
testimony of participants engaged in our programs and formal records
of meetings and publications. Finally, I will challenge researchers
considering community arts education initiatives and education
reforms promoting the centrality of the arts in public education to
reflect on and remark these institutions’ social histories and consider
how conscionable studies and programs of change might be developed
to serve the ends of social justice and democracy.

Dimensions of Research, Methodology and
Theoretical Foundations

My research centrally considers an urban southeastern community
school of art that has been in operation since the mid-1940’s. The school’s
policies, leadership, pedagogical practices and curriculum have shifted
over the years, but the indelible social markings of race, class, gender
and heteronormativity remain as palimpsestic traces that continue to
shape and inform its current work. Drawing on institutional meeting
minutes, promotional catalogs, news clippings and the oral testimonies
of fifty–five board members, teaching artists and students involved
with the agency during and following racial integration, I (re)mark on
these times and critically recount the shifts in this institution’s policy,
programs and its participants’ social consciousness.

In this paper my discussion of race is but one of the multiple
and overlapping social regularities considered in my larger work on
the social history of a community visual art school. I argue that art
education operates within a web of social regularities that both produces and constrains the ways the visual arts are perceived, taught, created, exhibited and used by multiple communities. I draw from Catherine Marshall’s policy culture paradigm (1989) to assist me in thinking about the interrelationships between the values of arts/education agencies, their policies, programs, participants and personnel. I also employ Jim Scheruich’s policy archaeology methodology (1995) as a tool for explicating how arts policy research traditionally shores up and supports the status quo rather than considers how the arts agency’s role in community or education itself might be identified as a “problem.”

In Marshall’s policy culture studies (1989), the political culture, policy systems, power and influence structures all affect policy formation. I follow her method of combining comparative case studies with theory-based data collection and multivariate analysis to track how values become forces that influence policy. This involves identifying systems of interactions between and across communities involved in the arts institution and careful attention to the disputes and transactions between these groups as explicit expressions of their cultural values. I then consider how these values are transformed into policy action and practices within the school’s curriculum, employment, board/committee leadership and patronage.

Scheruich’s policy archaeology methodology (1995) focuses on the social construction of problems as inherently problematic. It is divided into four arenas of study which 1) examine the social construction of specific education and social problems, 2) identify the network of social regularities across educational and social problems regularities, 3) consider the social construction/range of acceptable policy solutions and 4) question the social functions of policy studies itself.

In retelling this history I seek to speak with the voices of art
students, teaching artists, staff and board members working to extend discourses and studies of visual art in their myriad sites of production. I have enjoined participants in reflecting on their role(s) within the arts institution and the interconnections between leadership, programs, participation and patronage (Mattick, 1994; McCarthy, 1994), considering this research as praxis (Lather, 1986). I have examined the patterned speech and contrasting dialects of my fifty-five informants, situating their stories within a social theory of the self (Bakhtin, 1981; Casey, 1993, 1995; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997). I have cross-read their testimonies within/against the formal records of the agency’s past and read again across a broad range of feminist, race, education, art and cultural theorists writings (Becker, 1994; Cahan & Kocur, 1996; Collins, 1990; Eagleton, 1990; Edleman, 1995; Fine, Weiss, Powell & Wong, 1997; Ferguson, Gever, Minh-ha & West, 1995; hooks, 1994, 1995; Lippard, 1990; McFee, 1998; Minh-ha, 1989, 1991, 1992; Patner, 1994; Prakash & Esteva, 1998; Williams, 1994; Warner, 1993) in order to consider how the larger social dynamics of the art school’s past and present align with contemporary social theory.

By triangulating the textual bodies of participant narratives, published accounts and records, and cultural theorists’ standpoints, the unresolved tensions and slippages contained in/between these texts came to the fore. Through the at times conflicting and contradictory evidence amassed, light is shed on the many ways the school is perceived and used by its varied participants and on how the agency’s social practices regarding sexuality, gender, race and class fit within or against the larger cultural scene in which the school is sited (hooks, 1989; Marshall, Mitchell & Wirt, 1989; Minh-ha, 1989). By working through this at times difficult knowledge, my aim is to recount its operations and consider how its revision might serve our art school.

Rather than claim a metanarrative or some presumed “truth” of
this agency’s history, I have instead attempted to construct a polyvocal and self-critical rendering of the past and one which attempts to sustain the richly varied standpoint and evolving narratives of participants involved in the school’s fifty-five years of operation. This post-positivist position (Donmoyer, 1991; Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996; Lather, 1993) asserts that in the minds and lives of my informants, their narratives make sense regardless of their (mis)fit with others’ tales.

I hold that like the work of art, participants’ reading of an art education agency will be informed by the lives they have lived, their positions within the agency and the discursive and belief communities with which they identify. While recognizing that a school’s work cannot be everything to everyone, I maintain that its practices can be opened up to allow greater numbers and varieties of citizens/communities to find a place within its programs and policy-making decision process. Finally I contend that art agencies, educators and researchers must have the courage to confront the ways such openness is now, or has been constricted in the past if new progress, programs of study, research or policies are to be enabled.

Problematics of Authoring a Multi-Vocal Critical Reflection as an Institutional Insider

Since 1987, as executive director community school of visual art studied, I have actively worked toward moving art education from the attic garret of the masters house to the margins of culture and in central positions with our region’s public school. For over 23 years I’ve been active in craft, art, and education agencies and professional organizations on a local, state, regional and national level. These associations have informed my understanding of the diverse purposes and claims of art education, a perspective shaped almost exclusively by art and education funding agencies, theorists, philosophers and
proponents of arts education. It was only during my dissertation research (1994-99), while grappling with the competing purposes of art education promoted by various camps, that I first became aware that I had never really considered the history of the very institution I directed.

In entering into this research, my theoretic premise is that teaching artists, staff and board members as well as students all contribute, transform, and adapt the programs of hands-on arts learning to fit their individual and collective-subjective community(ies)’ values. Questions of subjectivity, agency and arrangements of power and authority are called into question in the process of implementing an art school’s mission, in conducting each interview, and in analyzing and representing the stories of each informant. Considering research a dialogical exercise, I’ve sought to engage my subjects in the process of defining what questions were posed, as well as challenging each to reflect on the critical issues central to my social reading of the school’s history. Through this process subjects have noted feeling reconnected to our school, with many illustrating their renewed interest in its work and engagement with multiple communities.

I recognize that as an insider and proponent of change affiliated with school in which this study is situated, my position of authority likely shapes the stories my informants tell. Knowing that my own political and social standpoints also influence the way I hear the informants’ narrative, I have felt duty-bound to sustain a critically self-conscious awareness of the possibilities of misreading or misrepresenting these participants’ stories throughout all aspects of data collection, analysis and re-presentation. I acknowledge that in the process of analyzing and reconstructing each subject’s narrative, my voice unavoidably becomes co-joined with theirs. I make no claims to objectivity, but steadfastly forefront and trouble my embeddedness in the collective retelling of
this school’s history, knowing that the stories I retell will impact these informants future involvement with my school and in the work of social and cultural production.

Alan Peshkin suggests, that “subjectivity operates during the entire research process” (Peshkin, 1982) and that researchers should “systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of the research.” (1988, p. 17). Having maintained notes to myself throughout the research process, I have attempted to trouble how I “filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement.” (Peshkin, 1982, p. 17).

Admittedly it is dangerous business for a non-profit agency to openly examine its past and present policies and programs, given financial stability of most agencies is dependent on a relatively select group of donors, corporations and funding agencies. While all funding agencies and donors call for periodic “assessments,” final reports and self-evaluations, they assume that a funded agency would never consider their own benevolence a part of the problem. When told of this project, my local arts council president declared, “I want no part of your history. You are opening up a can of worms.” thus confirming my worst fear, that potentially my critical analyses might jeopardize the very work I seek to improve. While I have not yet concluded how I will navigate these dangerous waters, I know that in some way I must acknowledge that our very reliance on a wealthy elite is, part and parcel of the classist tensions that are sustained in arts agency policies and programs.

Some of the most problematic dynamics within the non-profit art institution revolve around the economics of programming, corporate and donor relations and community perception. Given the aging of the donor community, planned giving and major gifts are now considered a
growth market. It is thus difficult (if not impossible) for those primarily concerned with an agency’s fiscal wellbeing to consider how candid discussions of racial segregation, patriarchal policies or self-serving cultural elitism serve the long-term interest of our institution. I argue, however, that unless arts agencies grapple with this difficult knowledge, the cycles of self-perpetuating elitism, privilege and exclusion will continue unbroken. But at what costs?

Recent Program Initiatives

Since 1991 my community’s visual art school has continued its sequential curriculum of visual arts classes in-house, while developing programs which are delivered off-site within community centers, preschool care facilities and schools across the region, both during and after school hours. This arts school also provides arts-based interdisciplinary and cross-cultural curriculum development in-service programs for public school teachers, funded largely by the State Arts Council. Since 1987 the school has witnessed a dramatic growth in enrollment, from under 2,000 to over 12,000 participants in the 1998-99 fiscal year. But to the best of my knowledge, until the mid-90’s this growth largely excluded students of non-western origin, an exclusion I argue resulted not by intention, but as a result of unquestioned social and cultural practices and a critical neglect of our responsibility to serve the entire community.

In the mid-90’s the art school experienced increases in minority participation, partially a result of increased scholarship awards and the faculty’s reinvention of all course curricula to integrate cross-cultural art historic references and critical dialogue in hands-on courses of arts study. With Lila Wallace/Readers’ Digest Community Arts Education Initiative support staff was also involved in professional development activities of their choice and participated a six-part series of conferences
and symposia designed to explore how race, ethnicity and class played out in contemporary U.S. art and culture. These conferences, led by visiting artists (60% of whom were artists of color), gave great momentum to the school’s change initiatives.

Even with the momentum that gathered from symposia, staff development, scholarships and independent research, board and program staff regularly failed to meet their goals for in nominating diverse board leaders or hiring minority artists. I have been told repeatedly that “they’re just not out there” or “they’re not interested in working with us,” leading me to ask how long racism may still be embedded in our ranks. I then began to question how my institution’s silent transition from racially segregated to integrated programming may have contributed to this denial of responsibility or the sustained perceptions within the African-American community that this art school is not their space.

**What was/is the problem?**
**Dare we speak its name?**

In its first decade the Arts and Crafts Association was clearly the interest of a “white middle and upper-class community.” None of the artist-teachers were paid, and most were women with college art degrees married to middle and upper class working men, or men working in commercial art who taught others “fine art” in their non-working hours. “How did we do so much with all those babies?” poses one instructor from the late forties, “We had a ball. I had full time help then – I was paid $28 a week — it was disgraceful looking back on it.” In these remarks I consider this gracious 76 year old woman artist as acknowledging that without the low-paid labors of Black domestics, her part (and unpaid labors) in the school’s programs of art education
A second white woman artist in those early days acknowledges, “I don’t remember ever having a Black student, but I don’t recall any policies in place that segregated students.” By contrast, all of the marketing literature and class listings from 1945 through 1955 note, “classes for Negroes” will be held on Mondays. I suggest that while passage of time may cloud a subject’s recall, what is operating in this instance is avoidance of the difficult knowledge that an agency now recognized for its commitment to cultural and racial equity had indeed operated as a mechanism of segregation in the past. This same artist noted her active role in civil rights protests and social change initiatives and yet, like four of my first five subjects, she separated her discussions of art/educational practice from her interests in social justice and political change.

The first decade of operation, the art school’s programs were housed in an old high school in the heart of the old-wealth community, and later in upper floors of two businesses located near by. Collaborations with the local hospitals, libraries and the recreation department illustrated the founding mothers’ concern with service to all, especially for children in the town. That this arts agency marketed its programs to the Black community illustrated an interest in serving the larger community, even if following Jim Crow practices of racial segregation. Such policies that came as a surprise a local African-American artist and curator interviewed for this project, who commented, “I’m surprised, but impressed that there was any programming at all for Black students.” While on one hand this remark may seem a compliment, it may also be read as suggesting that white cultural agencies are not perceived as having ever shown concern for serving Black communities. I argue that this history must be told and that arts agencies must share such knowledge with their multiple constituents, especially those accounts
which illustrate the creative ways that artists and organizations worked within/against unjust social practices.

In the first month of calls to white artist-educators teaching during the days of racial segregation, I failed to find one who could recall when racial segregated classes were formally dismantled. I knew that my institution had preceded the larger community’s racial integration by several years, but somehow this major policy shift seemed to be an event all my informants wanted to forget. It was only in carefully reading the organization’s minutes that I began to note the wavering concern that the board and staff showed toward the non-white community, from board representation to staffing, scheduling of programs and sharing of equipment.

In the minutes of the Arts and Craft Association Board meeting of November 23, 1948, “Mrs. Marsh, Director, reported as follows: The attendance for the month of October was 1387. There were 361 registrations, with 94 Negroes registered.” This demographic mix of 26% African-American and 74% Caucasian students was the highest level of ethnic diversity for in-house programming in the institution’s history. I immediately wondered where we had gone awry and how such great levels of minority enrolment were accomplished. I found that firstly, there were no charges for participating in classes, secondly, programs were not centralized but offered in local parks and recreational centers, and thirdly, that the founding staff member had a deep and abiding passion not only for the arts, but for serving and teaching students of all races. It wasn’t until the eighth interview that one informant pointed out to me that there on my list of the first board of directors was the name of the city’s most prominent African-American educator (and the city’s first Black Alderman). This link between governance representation, staffing, location and economics continues to define who has access or feels a part of programs of arts.
study.

Given that at the time of this southern cultural agency’s formation most all institutions (publicly elected offices excluded) were racially segregated, the presence of even one Black board member attests to the organization’s interest in cross-racial service. There was, in these earliest years, a separate “Negro membership drive” with its own recruitment programs and recognition events. A separate “Negro workshop leader” was hired to recruit voluntary teaching artists and develop the curriculum, thus further ensuring that there was a sense of agency within the African-American community. In these multiple ways, Black students could see themselves and their community within our institution. But even with this sense of investment in the art school’s work, white leaders repeatedly framed “Negro” participation as a “problem.”

Framing the “Negro” Problem

The October 10, 1950 minutes address declining Black enrollment and the strategies considered to increase “Negro” participation.

Mrs. Bahnson announced that the annual meeting will be held Tuesday, October 23rd, combined with an Open House. The question of inviting negro membership was discussed, and it was decided to invite the negro membership to the annual meeting and have another special open house the preceding night for interested colored persons, not just members. Mr. Ball made the above motion and it was seconded by Mrs. Alexander. There was discussion about the negro program, too few negroes are taking part at this time. It was felt that after the open house especially for that group, we could tell more about it.
In these actions Arts and Crafts board begins to further disrupt segregationist practice by inviting African-American’s to their annual meeting. But in this discussion, I note it is the negroes under-involvement, not white exclusionary practices that is framed as “the problem.” Black students at that time had access to the facility only on one of the six weekdays courses were offered. While the gross numbers of white student participation was larger than that of the Black community, when one considers the facility hours available, Black participation at this time actually exceeded than that of the Caucasian community.

Curiously, at this same meeting there was a discussion regarding publicity. I note the carefully chosen words that precede the newsy update of that committee, and question how this introduction disclosed tensions between the school and its funding umbrella – an agency which, still avoids issues of race and has been repeatedly reproached in the media for its insensitivity.

Mrs. Bahnson reported that all publicity should be cleared with the Arts Council. She reported on the program given Saturday, Sept. 27th over WTOB. It was a series of interviews with colored students, made at the workshop in a regular Monday night class period. A newspaper story regarding new classes is ready for release, The scrapbook is being kept up to date, Mrs. Nissen said. Mr. Kimball commented on the success of the radio program and the possibility of a program regarding negro participation in Arts and Crafts, over WAAA.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Bahnson, and later Mrs. Alexander (note, unless unmarried, women had no first names in any of the meeting records until the mid-sixties) the board took an active role in recruiting and promoting the work of Black students. I read Mrs.
Bahnson’s remark about clearing publicity with the Arts Council as a subtle and likely unconscious note that too much visibility about negro involvement might dissuade white students from participating in the agency’s activities. A more critical reading suggests that such volumes of coverage undermined the notion that the arts are a white privilege. But wait, I must check myself at this point and remind the reader that in interpreting minutes of an agency, even across multiple sources, I am still holding the past to present standards. In interviews with leaders still living from these years, I hear their accounts and commitments to inclusive practice authentically delivered. As the next entry suggests, they worked as best the current social circumstances allowed to foster greater minority participation, often with immediate success.

In the October 21, 1952 Annual Meeting Minutes, one reads,

The president reported that the Negro work at the workshop had fallen off considerably since Mrs. Marsh left. To try to build up the program again the Association sent letters to school faculty members and other interested Negroes asking them to meet at the Workshop to form plans. About 60 people came and as a result of an open discussion, five new classes were formed and volunteers secured to help with the instruction.

These minutes reflect the board’s concern about declining “negro” participation and their strategy for sharing that “problem” with leaders within that community. As a result of this action a groundswell of support was inured and new programs were developed. This simple entry offers a second instructive lesson. As the president notes, “Negro” programming declined concurrent with the departure of Mrs. Marsh (the Workshop’s director). I read this as confirming that the attitude of staff has a major impact on minority enrollment. As an artist of the program 35 years later echoes, “it is Jim’s responsibility to go out and
bring in minority artists and students to the center.” This notion, that an organization’s professional employees must assume responsibility for socially just hiring policies and targeted marketing efforts, and pedagogical practices that engage a broad range of learners is central to my argument regarding how “at-risk” populations are served, and what steps are required to ensure full participation.

I remind the reader that during these first years of operation none of the artist-teachers were paid for their work at the school (the workshop leaders excepted). This meant that African-American artists and craftsmen, most of whom were employed in low-paying jobs, made extraordinary sacrifices to “volunteer” their talents and share them with others. In the November 19, 1952 minutes, it becomes clear that simply offering time and programs for the Black communities will not ensure their participation.

There followed a discussion on the problem of attendance on Mondays at the Workshop. Mrs. Williamson felt that there had not been enough information about the Workshop program and operation passed on to the Negroes by the Negro representative on the Board. She felt that if more Negroes were better informed about the Workshop there would be more interest. She also offered to visit churches and various organizations to solicit memberships into the Association if transportation could be provided for her. Mrs. Williamson said there was a great interest in weaving but the looms were usually full on Monday nights. Mrs. Alexander promised to see that the looms were available for use hereafter. Mrs. Williamson thought that she might be able to solicit enough funds from organizations in her community to pay for the salary of Mrs. Craige. It was suggested that the board approach the Negro YMCA with the idea of soliciting its help in advertising the Arts and Crafts program for Negroes.
(re)Marking Time

In this entry the lack of Black participation is at first blamed on the “negro representative to the board” and then on a lack of marketing efforts within the African-American community. While it is not clear whether or not Mrs. Williamson is Black within the minutes of the meeting, she notes her willingness to visit churches and organizations “if transportation could be provided for her.”¹ This entry raises an issue that faces not only this representative to the board, but all “negro students” who might seek participate in the program. While the institution is now located in the city’s major financial district (equally convenient to the still racially segregated neighborhoods and two blocks from the bus station), its location in the first years was clearly within white neighborhoods. Further, this entry into the minutes raises one of what I maintain may have been an entire complex of issues regarding access to equipment and materials for the Black participants on Mondays. Mrs. Alexander’s commitment to make looms available, and recognition that the group might need to pay a salary to the Black weaving instructor suggests that the board was willing to consider and accept some responsibility for declining minority participation.

Less than two months later the “problem” of Black enrollment is again the topic of discussion, as the January 14, 1953 minutes show,

Mrs. Alexander also reported that four or five negroes were being selected to serve on a committee to work on the Negro program. It was thought that it might be wise to change the day for the Negro classes from Monday to Wednesday. Form letters are being sent to Negro churches informing them of the program at the workshop.

Unlike earlier invitations of Black leaders from a wide range of organizations to come to the table to discuss their lack of involvement in Arts and Crafts programs, the board now “selects” those it chooses to work on the problem. I submit that this form of matriarchal control
further distanced the possibilities of success, as the white leader selects those she wishes to work on “the problem” rather than opening up the issue as a matter of discussion within that community. Further, the wisdom of the proposed change of day for Negro classes is questionable, given the traditions of Wednesday evening church services in both the Black and white religious communities at that time (it never occurred). And finally, the circulation of a “form letter” to the “Negro churches” raises questions about the level of authentic concern by the board. In prior approaches, meetings between races were held to develop strategies and recruit students, whereas here the interpersonal dialogical process is eliminated and made textual.

I hold that these depersonalized forms of contact and practices of cultural patriarchy (selecting, not recruiting leadership) may be read as either reflecting an apathy or ambivalence about the engagement of Black students in the Workshop’s programs. Alternately, this may be read as an attempt to really take hold of what was believed “the problem.” Regardless of one’s reading, seven months later the participation problem again resurfaces – this time framed as a triple-header problem involving a “lack of Negro leaders,” transportation, and equipment.

In the September 18, 1953 meeting minutes secretary Betty Yount reports,

Mrs. Alexander discussed the problem of Negro participation in the workshop. The lack of Negro leaders and the inaccessible location involving transportation expense were cited as the greatest drawbacks. It was suggested that we have a demonstration of crafts when their new Y opens and Mrs. Pleasants suggested the possibility of teaching crafts that needed little equipment at their Y on Monday nights. Further discussion was left open until we
can see what can be worked out on this problem when the new Y opens.

And in the November, 1954 “Report on the Effort to Improve The Monday Programs,” declining Negro participation is now framed as a problem of Black professional staffing.

Traditionally the Workshop has been open on Monday for Negroes. In the early years attendance was good and interest sustained. In the six month period, October 1953-April 1954, attendance had shrunk to an average of 6 for evening classes and 3 for afternoon sessions. In evaluating this situation, a committee studying the whole Arts and Crafts program concluded that:

1) The location has proven unsatisfactory.

2) The cost of material influences choice of craft.

3) The quality of instruction does not measure up to that available on other days.

The admission that “location has proven unsatisfactory” suggests an awareness that the space where programming occurs has an impact on a community’s involvement. This issue is one which our organization continues to wrestle with – now offering programs within minority communities, as well as considering ways that the social space of our current location might be reconsidered as an inclusive public space. While lack of Black leadership is recognized as a problem, the board never considers that after its only Black member’s term had expired, there was not another African-American elected to the board for almost thirty years. I hold that in part this exclusion of the Black community in governance or program design resulted in declining
minority enrollment.

Instead of looking at how the board itself might be part of the problem, they blame the Black instructor’s lack of quality for declining negro attendance. “Acting on these conclusions, Mrs. Alexander, then President, gave the Negro supervisor notice just prior to June 30, 1953. She was paid through July and concluded her service in that month.” It is particularly disturbing to note that while white faculty are always named in their removals or resignations from service, this “supervisor” is not even dignified with an identity in the formal minutes of the organization. While perhaps a simple oversight, I suggest that this anonymity reflects a larger institutional marginalization of the “negro” population and the value of its artists’ and students’ contribution to the Workshop. It is doubly curious to note that despite the June dismissal of this supervisor, there was still active enrollment by Black students in the fall. The board, in this regard, never links a lack of leadership or staffing in its separate programming with the declining Negro enrollment.

An artist-educator who was involved during the years preceding and after racial integration comments, “We had a group of people who would go to wherever art was being shown in town (an art appreciation class) and the library was one of those places. It played an important role as a safe space where everyone in the community felt they could meet.” This same artist suggests, “I’ve never really known the difference between black and white. . . I knew a few people who stuck with a rigid view of society, but Mrs. Marsh (then Director) was bright and capable for everybody, so prejudice wasn’t an issue.” While idealistic and utopian in its tone, this “color-blind” position ignores the larger social practices of racial segregation, as well as class presumptions – for how one “fit” in the programs of art study was certainly a social issue and an unspoken barrier rarely transgressed.
The “blue brochures” marketing classes during 1954-1955 continued to list “classes for Negroes on Monday nights,” but by 1956-1957 “classes for Negroes” are noted as “scheduled upon sufficient demand.” This shift from segregated programming, to no declared programming at all is but one of the signals that the “Workshop” had largely dismissed itself from any sense of responsibility to serve the Black community. Throughout the marketing history of the workshop, white artist-instructors and the courses they taught were always listed in detail, but by contrast, no Black artist or course is ever mention in the school’s publications until the late 60’s.

In an undated document “Report by the Planning Committee to the Board of the Arts And Crafts Association” the strategy and implementation approach of the organization’s move toward racial integration of all classes in the early 60’s is recorded.

The Five Year Planning Committee is turning its attention to the relationships of the Association and the community. The first consideration of the Committee has been the question of continuing our instructional program on a segregated basis. The committee met with outstanding representation of the community seeking advice and guidance. The committee felt that, in view of the direction in which the matter of desegregation is moving in this community, the Association would be best served by facing this problem before it becomes an issue in the community.

In our discussion three principles emerged which led to our recommendation. . .

1) We are a Community Service.
2) We are committed to raising the level of appreciation of the fine arts and crafts in this community.

3) We derive financial support from the community as a whole through the Arts Council.

Therefore the Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION: IN THE FUTURE STUDENTS IN THE ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSOCIATION BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, CREED, OR COLOR.

The committee would suggest the following points in implementing this recommendation:

1. The reference in our brochure to arrangements for negro classes be omitted.

2. There be no publicity given through any media to this change in policy and that a request be made of the newspapers to this effect.

3. That this change in policy be discussed with the teachers, on an individual basis by Mrs. Burke.

4. If problems arise that warrant it, the Urban League be consulted by the President in order that the Association and the League may work together toward solutions of such problems.
(re)Marking Time

J. Maxwell Little Chairman of the Committee.

While the placement of this policy memo appears preceding the September 1960 Board Agenda, it is not formally adopted until the July 12, 1961 board meeting, almost a year later.

After considerable discussion the recommendation that: in the future students in the Arts and Crafts Association be accepted without regard to race, creed or color was made. A suggestion was made that the President of the Arts and Crafts Association contact the President of the Urban League and discuss a plan for a gradual and orderly form of desegregation. Another suggestion was made that the recommendation be implemented when the above mechanics have been satisfactorily worked out. The recommendation was seconded and carried.

This effort to control every aspect of the transition to integration is a pattern later repeated in school systems across the South, as publicly elected school boards showed little concern for the African American educational institutions or their cultures of learning (Cecelski, 1994). Still unrecorded in the official records of this arts workshop are the tales instructors’ recount regarding unofficial admission of “serious art students” who were Black. This artist-initiated integration denied the larger social practices of the time and in the tone and tenor of artist-instructors leading these courses, it is clear that they felt a commitment to teach any student who illustrated a deep commitment to arts study.

There is no formal discussion of “problems” faced in racially integrating classes, or mention of the “issue” of Black participation until the June 6, 1962 meeting.
Summer Classes for Children: The question of integration in children’s classes was brought up. Dr. Little moved that Mrs. Burke should approach the teachers of these classes as to whether they would be willing to have integrated classes and convey their reaction to the executive committee. Mr. Sturmer seconded. Motion Carried.

Fall Adult Classes: The Board asked Mrs. Burke to contact teachers of other courses than those previously integrated for their reaction to accepting colored students. The Board felt some art classes might be opened. Mr. Sturmer moved that the Board should authorize the Workshop Manager to accept Negro students providing the number constituted a minority of the class. Mr. Boatwright seconded. Motion carried.

In these action I read an underlying fear that “Negro students” might overpower Caucasians in the classroom, and thus their numbers had to be formally restricted. But in subsequent reports the workshop leader never notes any real problems with racially integrating any class.

The trajectory of change at Arts and Crafts foreshadowed many patterns that took place in the public schools. While no longer banned from this white arts institution, the space African-Americans’ entered were clearly defined and controlled by white social interests. The art school’s doors might have been opened earlier than the public schools, but the spaces it offered were still largely foreign and uninviting to the Black student. I hold that over the years the lack of leadership in the board’s governance, lack of input into the curriculum, scarcity of African-American art educators with whom they could study, inadequate access to equipment, and cost of materials were indeed the causes for declining “negro” participation – but these indeed were
(re)Marking Time

the white folk’s problems. I contend racism still is a white (wo)men’s problem.

Conclusion and Challenges

Many of the earliest initiatives of arts-based education reforms were sited in “at-risk.” low wealth and minority communities, raising the question, “to what ends are these students and communities targeted for art interventions?” Levi asserts that the arts answer “basic human needs: the need to communicate with others and share experience, the need to find a place in the stream of time and be reminded of things worth remembering, and the need to be reasonable in deliberations about matters of importance” (Levi and Smith, 1991, p. xiv). But I must question whose needs are being served? Whose time is being remembered? And whose values are embedded in the arts we teach?

Who determines what is “worth remembering?” And in whose court are deliberations of “matters of importance” considered? Have those agencies of arts study, research and education reforms who design interventions into our public schools questioned their own embeddedness in the social problems facing the “at risk” students and disadvantaged communities they serve? Like the teaching artist from the 40’s who now acknowledges that the poverty wages her domestic help received were “disgraceful,” can our major cultural institutions with their board leaders whose fortunes were amassed on the backs of cheap labor begin to grapple with their own engagement in the problems their agencies now purport to address.

How do those working with the excess wealth of John Paul Getty grapple with his history of anti-Semitism? Why does an ivy league institution choose to cast its gaze on the work of community schools,
labeling their work “Safe Havens?” Do we trouble ourselves about recirculating normative middle-class values and epidemic logic as we explore the art’s impact in dangerous, poverty stricken and largely African-American communities? Are the portraits of our work in arts education really triangulated from multiple perspectives, creating three dimensional rendering of what’s going on, or are we simply repeating the official story? In my ongoing inquiry I ask, what does it mean when all the researchers in a qualitative study are white and almost none of the subjects are? Can our methods and models really assure our “objectivity?” Who really is the “problem” in our research? Dare we speak our own names?

In the preceding pages I have focused my discussion on just one of an incredibly complex and overlapping set of social issues facing art organizations and educators. By example I have challenged those within institutions to read the public records of their agency’s past and consider how reluctance to grapple with difficult knowledge of our past may limit the possibilities of our success in the future. I have argued that institutions and researchers both need to reflect on how problems are framed, and carefully attend to our position within that problem. As I have illustrated, even amidst a socially sanctioned segregationist settings strategies for success can be imagined. These successes should be celebrated, not swept to the recesses of our memory because the context of their occurrence is a matter our culture still can’t openly address.

When we look deeply beneath the sloganeering and pretense of caring about our service to all students and communities, we must ask ourselves, have we done more than symbolically gesture toward the problems we define? Are our organizations inclusive? Can our leaders truly relate to those communities their institution serves? These are questions that each reader will have to ask. I have no answers,
(re)Marking Time

but a faith that in the unending process of institutional self-reflection, adjustment, production and reassessment — with eyes wide open to the lives and stories shared by those we work with and serve — we might move closer to art education policies and cultural practices that serve our democracy.

Notes

1. In subsequent research I found a photograph of Mrs. Williamson from 1948 in the local newspaper with a caption beneath it that identifies her as a “negro weaver.” I also found from these same years, a photograph of “negro potter, Miss Amanda Craig” and upon reviewing the roster of board leaders from that same year, noted that she was serving on the board of directors of Arts and Crafts.

References


(re)Marking Time

instance. *Education Quarterly* (Vol. 27) (3) 265-296.


(re)Marking Time


I begin from the premise that research will always be affected by the subjectivity of the researcher, in the choice of research topic and in the interpretation of research findings. My study using Popular Theatre as a participatory, arts-based approach to exploring the risky experiences of youth was further informed by an autoethnographic investigation into my own experiences as a youth, an unearthing of my personal history through autobiographical writing and a (re)collection of artifacts from my youth. My arts-based methods adding a messiness to the research process and findings that reflects the complexity of the issues under investigation.

In my study, I began with an interest in better understanding the experiences of youth that may deem them “at-risk.” I had previously worked, as a teacher and Popular Theatre facilitator with so-called “at-risk” youth in various contexts. The youth, with whom I worked, whenever I mentioned “at-risk,” always took offence. They did not like being labelled “at-risk,” no doubt responding to how the label, used in the fields of education, health and criminal justice, constructs youth as deficient and deviant (Roman, 1996). As Roman suggests there is a need to reframe the concept “at-risk” to include the perceptions of youth, in order to better understand their experiences and better address their needs.
To explore youth perceptions of their “at-risk” or risky behaviour, I conducted a series of workshops with a group of drama students at a rural Alberta high school whose population consisted mostly of Aboriginal students. Tragically, Aboriginal students in Alberta are amongst those most often labelled “at-risk” of dropping out of school (Alberta Learning 2001). To engage the students in articulating and exploring their perceptions of their experiences, I invited them to participate in a Popular Theatre process.

Popular Theatre is theatre for individual and social change (Boal, 1979/74; Prentki & Selman, 2000). It involves members of a community, in identifying issues of concern, analyzing conditions and causes, and searching for solutions or alternative responses. It draws on participants’ experiences to collectively create theatre and engage in discussion of issues through theatrical means. Our Popular Theatre work focused on issues that the students identified as relevant to their lives. We entitled our project “Life in the Sticks.” Through a collective process, we created a series of scenes depicting what they initially saw as their issues, determined by their rural environment. The stories students told, the vignettes they created and our ensuing theatrical discussions became a sort of “ethnodrama” (Denzin, 1997), revealing risk-taking behaviours, including substance abuse, risky sexual activity and rule breaking, as common to the experiences of these youth. Ultimately, however, they rejected the notion of being “at-risk,” claiming that their risky behaviours were a matter of personal choice and habit. They reclaimed their agency, but left me wondering what motivated these risky choices.

One scene that students created, which we called “The Bus Trip,” was based on an incident that occurred at the school the previous year, in which many of my students were involved. It depicted a group of kids being caught for illicitly drinking alcohol on the bus ride home
from a class trip. In devising the scene, students took on the roles of characters and improvised the situation. The excerpt below is from one of a series of ethnodramatic vignettes I wrote, after the fact, as an arts-based method of representing my work with students. It shows a moment we enacted between two young men whose idea it was to buy the alcohol. In the midst or our re-enactment, I stopped the action temporarily, a common Popular Theatre technique, to delve deeper into the motivation underlying their decision:

Teacher and a group of drama students are in the midst of analyzing a scene they have collectively created about students being caught drinking on the bus during a class trip.

Teacher: Let’s do an out-scene to when they actually bought the alcohol, okay? You’re all on the bus . . . It’s going to stop at the rest stop. Everyone gets off and we’ll see the scene between Shadzz and Daryl deciding what to do. Okay?

They set up the scene and improvise. The bus stops at the rest stop and they all get off. Shadzz and Daryl meet on the sidewalk.

Shadzz: (to Daryl in character) So give me some money, man.

Daryl: What for?

Shadzz: I’m gonna get the stuff, remember?

Daryl: Na, forget it.

Shadzz: Come’ on man you said back there that you wanted to.

Daryl: . . . I don’t know . . .
Shadzz: Come’ on, it’s just around the corner. I’ll go get it and bring it back here.

Daryl: Na . . .

Shadzz: What’s the matter? Nobody’s gonna know.

Daryl: I don’t know Shadzz.

Shadzz: Come’ on, Daryl.

Daryl: Okay, what the hell . . . Here. (Daryl gives Shadzz some money.)

Teacher: Stop there – for a minute. Daryl, I want to ask your character a question . . . You hesitated to give him the money. Why did you hesitate?

Daryl: I wasn’t sure if I wanted to risk it.

Teacher: So, is there risk involved in what you’re doing here?

Daryl: Ya.

Teacher: What kind of risk?

Daryl: Well, what we’re doing is against the rules. Teacher: Whose rules?

Daryl: The school rules I guess.
Teacher: And where’s the risk in that?

Daryl: Well, we might get caught.

Shadzz: And expelled.

Teacher: You admit there may be negative consequences . . . so why do you do it?

Daryl: I don’t know?

Teacher: Shadzz, what about your character?

Shadzz thinks.

Shadzz: I don’t know, just for the rush.

Teacher: For the rush? Is that what risk-taking about? That’s why someone might drink booze on a bus trip?

Shadzz: Ya, it’s fun.

Teacher: (Addressing other students on stage and in the audience.) Have any of you experienced what Shadzz is talking about? Does doing something risky give you a rush?

Tess: Well, YA!

(Echoes of agreement around the room.)

Through the dramatic process of taking on roles, re-enacting
the incident and answering questions in character, aspects of students’ understandings of the issues were revealed. In Popular Theatre, the function of drama is as a tool for exploration. The notion of drama as an art form is secondary to the investigation of issues that the form allows. Yet, the dramatic process is integral in the way it draws out responses that are experiential and embodied. Shadzz’s suggestion that his character took the risk “for the rush,” was a response based on his experience of acting out the situation.

The Popular Theatre process, which had students act out experiences from their collective past, was an autoethnographic exploration. Their memories of the bus trip, re-told as a story and improvised in a scene are living artifacts that help them/us better understand the experiences being investigated.

Students’ responses to my questions about risk-taking piqued my interest and led me into a review of literature on youth and risk. I found compelling research on adolescent risk taking that suggested rather than focusing on what adults perceive as negative consequences of adolescent behaviour we should consider what youth perceive as the positive outcomes of risky behaviour or the negative outcomes of not participating in risky behaviour (Anderson, et al., 1993; Lopes, 1993).

Also persuasive was Lyng’s (1990) “Edgework,” a social psychological theory of voluntary risk taking, which sees risk taking as self-created opportunities for free and spontaneous action in response to overwhelming social constraints. Shadzz’s response of doing it “for the rush” echoes other research on risk taking applying Lyng’s theory of Edgework (Ferrell, 1995; Ferrell, Milovanovic & Lyng, 2001).

A psychoanalytic interpretation of self-destructive or risky behaviour gave further insight. In the unconscious struggle between
Artifacts-Personal History

the life drive and the death drive, Copjec suggests, the tendency is for
the subject to “recoil before the violence and obscenity of the superego’s
incitement to jouissance, to a boundless and aggressive enjoyment”
(1994, p. 92). Is it possible that in our postmodern consumer/producer
culture, with the loss of authority of the Law, youth are less inclined to
resist the call of the superego?

At some point during the process of this investigation, I realized,
or became willing to admit to myself, that my interest in working with
“at-risk” youth was grounded in my own risky behaviour as a youth. I
could no longer disavow or sublimate the significance of my personal
history to the research I was conducting. This began an autoethnographic
inquiry (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) into my youth. The unearthing of my
personal history involved the recovery of a collection of artifacts from
my past (Slattery, 2001) and the writing/telling of stories (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000) of my youthful risk-taking experiences that resonated
with what the students and the theory were revealing.

The unearthing of artifacts began before I became consciously
aware of where my investigation was leading me. On a trip home to
Ontario a few summers ago, I visited a friend, with whose family I
resided during my grade 12 year, working as their nanny for room and
board. In their dark, dank, farmhouse cellar, I had stored a number of
boxes of my stuff. From these boxes, that summer, I recovered a number
of items about which I had all but forgotten. Though I was not sure
why, at the time, I felt these items, yellowed and smelling of mildew,
were somehow significant to my research. I gathered them together
and brought them back to Edmonton with me.

Like the artifacts themselves, the unearthing of them, the (re)
collection of the items from their resting-place in the cellar, and the
recreation of the unearthing through my re-telling of it, are part of
my arts-based process. My story of unearthing, and the stories of my youth that the artifacts embody, are artifacts too, as are my students’ memories/story/scene of the bus trip. Stories and storytelling in various forms, improvised drama are vital artifacts to this autoethnographic process, as the ways in which I have arrived at new understanding.

The artifacts I unearthed, dated from 1977 to 1980, my last three years of high school. Along with fresh-faced photos of me and my friends, old drama festival programs, my fake I.D. used to get into bars underage and a tattered cheerleading badge, included: My grade 11 yearbook, the inside covers scrawled with my classmates’ comments; a research project I completed on parent-youth conflict for my grade 12 sociology class; a small Hallmark date book from 1979, decorated with a bouquet of orange flowers, with the words “Date Book” scratched out and re-titled “Dope Book;” and a one-act play I wrote for my grade 13 playwriting class entitled “Some Joke.”

When I re-read my classmates’ comments in my yearbook, I was
Artifacts-Personal History

struck by the way they expose the edge I was playing between being a good student and “having fun:”

“I decided I wouldn’t put something ignorant. So I’ll just say work hard in physics and get your homework done so you can lend it to me. Love Bob.”

“Remember as you go though life keep your eye on the donut not the hole. Good luck in Math (as if you need any). Darlene”


“Roll roll roll the joint. Pass it down the line. Take a toke. Inhale the smoke. And blow your little mind. Sam & Janice”

From an autoethnographic perspective, these comments disrupt taken-for-granted notions about the “good student” and the “drug user,” that may contribute to a re-
An excerpt from my sociology project, for which I received a 93%, reflects the conflict situation I experienced at home, and my attempt to understand it:

Late adolescence is a time of extreme frustration. I can verify this by the experiences of myself and my friends. The pressures upon every teen by parents, close friends as well as peers, school or the labour force and the rest of society are great . . . Often he [sic] cannot talk to his parents because they will not accept his viewpoints and he feels he has no one to encourage him, and therefore he releases his frustrations through aggressive or rebellious behaviour.

Whether my aim was to understand our motivation or find excuses for the rebellious behaviour of my friends and myself, my feelings of teenage angst are exposed.

The “Dope Book’s” cryptic scribbles in the squares allotted for each day are incriminating, recording illicit events in the lives of my friends and I including the numbers of reefers we smoked each day:

“Wednesday January 3, 1979 - Karen, Alice, Rhoda 3 reefers – 5 more with Brad and Jerry”

Friday February 23, 1979 - Ellen’s all nighter – Karen, Alice, Rhoda – Acid & lotsa reefers.”

“Saturday March 10, 1979 – Reefers at Mark’s – the gruesome 4some”
I cannot help but wonder what compelled me to keep such a record. Was it a way of assuring myself that my experiences were real; a way of bragging, if only to myself, of my friendships and edgy behaviour? Or a way of capturing that feeling of reckless abandon - the overflow of jouissance?

The play I wrote in grade 13 was based on a real incident from my life involving my boyfriend, at the time, Bobby, and his cousin, Suzy. One night during a house party, the night before Suzy was to be sent off to jail for vehicular manslaughter, intoxicated Bobby dashed out the door to take off in Suzy’s car, which Suzy had allegedly sold him. Suzy was right behind him wielding a kitchen knife. The argument that ensued ended with Suzy breaking down:

Bobby: (trying to calm Suzy down) Okay, okay, you don’t have to freak out.

Suzy: Well I am freaking out. Do you wanna know why? Because I’m a freak Bobby. I’m a killer, a maniac, I don’t even deserve to live.

Bobby: That’s bullshit Suz.
Suzy: They hate me Bobby. I can see it in their eyes. I know why her husband hates me, but what did I do to all of them?

Bobby: They just don’t understand, Suz. They’ve always hated you, and me, even before the accident. They hate us because we have long hair and do drugs and don’t live they want us to.

Aside from putting myself at risk through my association with these boys, even back then, I was trying to understand the risky, illicit experiences of my friends from their perspective.

Now, from my vantage point of researcher looking back, these artifacts reveal experiences of my youth, including my risky experiences. They also reveal my perspectives, as a youth, around the very questions of youth behaviour that I am still investigating.

In exploring these artifacts and the stories they tell, I use my personal knowledge to help me in my research, and my research to help
me make sense of my life experiences. The artifacts and stories help explain my personal connection to my research, express my subjectivity and vulnerability as a researcher (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Adding my stories to those of my students is also an ethical act through which I explore the relationship between the research participants and myself as researcher (Fine, et al., 2000). As a critical researcher, if I ask my participants to share their stories, I have a responsibility to share mine. Thus impelled, the disclosure of my “wayward” past puts me in a risky position alongside the youth experiences I am investigating. A risk perhaps, but a more equitable and empathetic position from which to seek answers about risk-taking. By taking the risk of exposing myself, I experience the anxieties associated with risk as well as the euphoria of exploring the edge of what counts as legitimate research. My disclosure undermines notions of power and authority traditionally associated with the role of the researcher.

My autoethnographic exploration is intended, not as an act of self-discovery, but as a cultural (Ang, 1994) or sub-cultural self-reading, through which the social location and sub-cultural understandings that I bring to my research become explicit – I deliberately construct a position from which to speak for political purposes. Combined, the findings from my Popular Theatre work with students, the theory on risk taking, and my personal understandings via my stories and artifacts, provide a layered exploration (Ronai, 1999) of youth behaviour adding a messiness to “at-risk” that I hope may present a more just version of the truth. My intent is not to validate or legitimate risky youth experiences, as their illegitimacy is what makes them significant. Nor do I mean to present risky youth experiences as unproblematic. Rather, I want to offer one possible counter-narrative that interrupts the “common sense” or taken-for-granted understandings of “at-risk.” As Foucault suggests, attention to knowledge defined as illegitimate by the dominant discourse allows the possibility for things to be
otherwise (1980). Privileging the perceptions of youth regarding their risky behaviour opens a space for re-framing “at-risk,” presenting a more complex picture than one of deviance and deficiency currently suggested by the label -towards an understanding of youth and risk that more fully reflects their reality and better responds to their needs.


Artifacts-Personal History


Bob Bersson

1995 *Gulf War Series*

1996

*Untitled*

8 X 6.5 (mixed media)
We begin this article with an epigrammatic manifesto: Art education should be a political project that engages visual representations, cultural sites, and public spheres through the language of critique, possibility, and production. Art educators should help students understand, critique, and challenge how individuals, institutions, and social practices are inscribed in power differently, to expand the possibilities for freedom, equality, and radical democracy, through relevant and meaningful production. These are the elements and principles of a politically engaged and socially just art education. This is art education as visual cultural studies.

This article attempts to take-up these elements and principles through the exploration of a graduate art education course at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago: Art Education 5020: Critical Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and the Making of the Cultural Worker. The article examines the general focus of the course, provides brief examples of past projects, and presents three narratives by former graduate students that focus on investigations of popular-cultural texts and public sites. These individual voices represent three stories of imagination and intervention which took place within and beyond the classroom. The student projects provide a set of considerations to help mediate the transformation of art education K-12 practice towards visual cultural studies.

Doing Visual Cultural Studies
Students in *Art Education 5020* investigate articulations between critical pedagogy, cultural studies, and visual culture, as sites of convergence and contention in order to address issues of representation, knowledge, and power. Central to this course is the issue of how individuals and groups are affected by forms of discourse (visual and other) that either constrain or enable various forms of agency.\(^1\) The course combines theoretical inquiry, dialogic exchange, and social action. Participants read and respond to selected texts on critical pedagogy, cultural studies, and visual culture.\(^2\)

At one point in the semester, individual students present their critical response to the readings and engage the class in a dialogic seminar that encourages discussion, debate, and exchange. Through this seminar, students link theoretical issues with wider practical and pedagogical concerns through personal narrative and intertextuality. Students are encouraged to position themselves as reader and author and critic and participant by situating the selected texts within a field of other texts and knowledge in the context of other knowledge. In this sense, students respond to the articles through their own experiences and concerns, discovering and sharing “the connections between the text and the context of the text [and] the context of the reader” (Freire as cited in Shor & Freire, 1987, pp. 10-11). At the end of the semester, each participant in the class analyzes and interprets a site, text, image, and/or set of images through critical theories that investigate what, when, and how discourses are produced, consumed, and regulated. The final project culminates with an in-class presentation, outside field trip, or other critical activity led by an individual student.

During the past few semesters, students have focused their attention on specific popular visual texts and public and corporate sites in and around the city of Chicago for their final project. For example, a returning graduate student who is a mother of two teenage
daughters decided to explore magazines targeted at young women. After researching scholarship on representations of women in the media she engaged the class in inter-individual interpretations of images from a variety of teen magazines. She focused on the commodification of sexuality, the construction of identity, ideals of beauty, and codes of romance by distributing magazines and asking students to place images on the wall under various headings. Students compared images, wrote commentary, and created counter-collages. Through her project, she facilitated oppositional and decentered readings of the images—interpretations that flowed alongside other complex and often contradictory narratives.

During another final project, a student led the class to the Hard Rock Café in Chicago. Participants were guided through the restaurant and asked to explore the visual narratives and artifacts deployed on the walls. The class took note of who was represented and how their story was conveyed. Subsequently, the class spent hours, over mediocre food and drink, discussing the corporate construction of cultural memories—where ideology, belonging, pleasure, and passion anchor into hyperreality. Maintaining the melodic theme, another student escorted the class to Chicago’s Rock and Roll McDonald’s, a site crowded with American icons and images from the 1950s and 1960s, for her final presentation (see Figure 1). The student provided the class with a fifteen page self-produced guidebook, complete with articles, essays, and questions to consider. The readings included critiques of McDonald’s by Kincheloe (1997, 2002) and Ritzer (1996), and other articles from www.mcspotlight.org. In addition, the packet contained promotional material from McDonald’s and other pro-McDonald’s essays from business journals and magazines. After reading the material, students were asked to consider the following questions:

Figure 1. Rock and Roll McDonald’s
“How does McDonald’s link patriotism and so-called family values to consumption?” “What do the representations in Rock and Roll McDonald’s teach us about our history, gender rolls, diversity, and innocence?” and “What are the working conditions and labor practices of McDonald’s in the United States and abroad?”

Another graduate student led the class to Niketown, a corporate mega-complex replete with swirling shoes, video rooms, museum cases, and thousands of retail products (see Figure 2). The student divided the class into 5 sections, asking each group to focus on one element from The Circuit of Culture: Identity, Representation, Production, Consumption, and Regulation (Du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Mackay, H., & Negus, K., 1997). Participants were asked to analyze and interpret representations of athletes (their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, age, etc.), promotional material, architecture, consumers, and the placement, type, and cost of Nike products. Students inspected product labels to determine the country of origin and then contextualized the materials
Bucktown-Niketown

within the discursive space of Nike’s self-promotion as innovative, youthful, irreverent, authentic, fun, and all-American.

Figure 2. Niketown (Chicago)

A third project involved “peeking into the past” at American Girl Place in Chicago, where corporate culture celebrates “Girls of Yesterday and Today.” The participants in the class wanted to know what girls were being celebrated and at what cost (financially and ideologically). Once again, the class was divided into teams to cover all four floors of the superstore. One group of students investigated the lower level of the complex where large dioramas of each doll’s life are displayed (see Figure 3). Students were asked to consider what and whose history was being exhibited. The group concluded that all the dolls, regardless of the temporal context (1774, 1854, 1864, 1904, or 1994), were represented in a safe, one-dimensional ontological zone—living a simple, wholesome, innocent, and privileged life, free from the struggles, conflict, and atrocities of the past. The only possible exception was Addy Walker, an African-American doll whose life takes place during the civil-war era.
Other participants in the class re-searched different areas of the mega-store, including the café, theatre, clothing, and other retail sections. Students explored *American Girl* books, toys, computer games, accessories, make-up, beach towels, and blankets. The class problematized the line of products and the company’s philosophy using a set of questions from Brady’s (1997) article, *Multiculturalism and the American Dream*. These questions included: “Do these texts provide the opportunity to name the experience of oppression and then identify structures of dominance that function to cause the oppression?” “Do [these products] erase America’s shameful character?” and How does *American Girl Place* “legitimate diversity as a marketing strategy” (pp. 219-226)?

The final presentations outlined above represent performative acts of interpretation through visual cultural studies. In this sense, performativity...
Bucktown-Niketown

provides an articulating principle that signals the importance of translating theory into practice while reclaiming cultural texts as an important site in which theory is used to think politics in the face of a pedagogy of representation that has implications for how to strategize and engage broader public issues. (Giroux & Shannon, 1997, p. 2)

Students analyzed, interpreted, and critiqued specific popular visual texts and corporate sites in and around the city of Chicago through the lens of critical social theories. Students operated on and through these theories in order to set their world and themselves in question. Students challenged participants in the class to become politically engaged by confronting specific and substantive historical, social, and/or economic issues “drawing upon provided cultural signs [and] resignifying them to address the local politics of home” (Morgan, 1998, p. 126).

The following brings together the voices of three former students from Art Education 5020. The students describe their final projects, which took place during the spring 2002 semester. The first piece addresses the representations (or lack thereof) of persons with disabilities in mass media, specifically, within the film genre of comedy. This project interrogates how particular representations have the potential to shape the way disability is understood in and through culture. The second essay presents a thoughtful investigation of the phenomenon of gentrification and its impact on a particular section of Chicago known as Bucktown. The essay outlines the history of Bucktown and then provides a summary of the aesthetic and cultural factors that serve as a basis for pedagogical intervention. The third piece takes a critical look at violence in the media, specifically in and through movies and video games. This essay explores the connections between representations of violence and the responsibilities of artists and cultural workers. By challenging how individuals, institutions, and
social practices are inscribed in power differently, these former students attempt, in their own ways, to chart a course for reconceptualizing art education as visual cultural studies.

(Dis)Missing Representations: Persons with Disabilities in Mass Media

Lea Lovelace

Recently, my classmates and I embarked on a semester of questioning as we took a critical look at mass media and popular culture through a graduate art education course. Throughout the semester we learned to recognize hegemonic practices and power structures reflected in examples of popular culture. This was facilitated by reading and responding to texts on critical pedagogy and cultural studies and deconstructing images in films, television programs, videos, print media, and advertisements. We engaged these images through a critical pedagogical process to reveal social inequalities present in dominant culture and discourse. We analyzed not only who is represented, but also who is missing and what messages are being sent through those absences.

For my final presentation I focused on representations of persons with disabilities in media, specifically, the film genre of comedy. I was interested in this topic for several reasons. Recent statistics reported by the National Organization on Disability in Washington D.C. show that 1 in 5 Americans has a disability and these figures are expected to increase as people live longer. It is projected that by 2010, 1 in 3 persons will have a disability. I reveal these statistics to problematize disability in relation to societal construction of normalcy. Over the past two decades, as civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have been passed and as
disability awareness has increased, television programs and films have taken up story lines regarding disability. Although there have been some films in the recent past that have addressed the topic of disability through the genre of drama, most recently, there has been an increasing number of representations of persons with disabilities within the genre of comedy. Many of these comedic films are box office hits, grossing over a hundred million dollars. I was interested in digging deeper into this topic to find out if these films help bring about awareness and understanding of disability and/or further perpetuate discrimination and negative stereotypes. To find out I screened segments from *Happy Gilmore* (1996) and *There’s Something About Mary* (1998) and facilitated a dialogic discussion with my classmates on this topic.

To introduce the topic of my presentation I had the class read several articles regarding disabilities studies, including Hahn’s (1997) *Advertising the Acceptably Employable Image: Disability and Capitalism* and Berube’s (1997) *On the Cultural Representation of People with Disabilities*, which I distributed a week before my presentation. On the day of my final project I presented information on the definition and history of disability and provided listings of movies and television programs featuring characters with disabilities. I distributed essays and reviews regarding the Farrelly brothers and their films, as well as biographic information about the actors who played characters with disabilities in some of their films (Cagle, 1998; Reiss, 2002). Numerous films directed or produced by the Farrelly brothers such as *Me, Myself, and Irene*, *Say It Isn’t So*, and *There’s Something About Mary* include characters with different physical or mental disabilities in comic scenes.

After distributing the information on the Farrelly brothers, I displayed scenes from *There’s Something About Mary* (see Figure 4). I led a discussion by asking a series of questions related to the film and the readings. I focused most of the discussion around the character of
Warren. This character, played by actor, W. Earl Brown, is the mentally challenged brother of the main female character, Mary, played by Cameron Diaz. Warren is known for being especially sensitive to persons touching his ears and can be recognized throughout the movie wearing earmuffs and constantly fidgeting.

During one of the first scenes of the movie, Ted, played by Ben Stiller, comes to pick up Mary, his date for the prom. As a kind gesture he proceeds to do a magic trick for Warren and pretends to pull a baseball out from behind Warren’s ear. Alarmed by someone coming near his ears, Warren’s response is to violently scream and attack Ted with physical force resembling a series of pro-wrestling moves. I revealed this portrayal of Warren to the class as well as several less violent scenes featuring his character. I then asked several questions such as: Does the portrayal of Warren advance our understanding of persons with disabilities? Would you categorize the character of Warren as a sympathetic representation of a person with mental retardation? Why or why not? The Farrelly Brothers compare the character of Warren to the character of Forest Gump; do you agree that they are similar representations? The Farrelly Brothers argue that they are pushing the envelope for the sake of hilarity; do you feel that they are successful? Do they go too far?

Figure 4. Cameron Diaz and W. Earl Brown in *There’s Something About Mary.*

During this discussion, I read a segment from Berube’s (1997) article that states “Every representation of disability has the potential to shape the way ‘disability’ is understood in the general culture, and some of those representations can in fact do extraordinarily powerful-or harmful-cultural political work” (p. 2). I asked my classmates to describe what impact, if any, they feel representations of persons with disabilities
in the Farrelly Brothers’ films and other comedic films have on cultural or political work. We then addressed the following questions: Do you feel that it is problematic to have representations of persons with disabilities in a comedy film? What about a drama film or television show? What impact do representations of persons with disabilities in other (less comedic) movies like *Rain Man* or television shows such as *Life Goes On* have on cultural work or cultural awareness?

During my presentation I also asked the class what their thoughts were on having actors without disabilities play characters with disabilities in films and television (W. Earl Brown, the actor that portrays Warren, for example). We discussed this topic in relation to Hahn’s (1997) essay, which explores the history of disability and employment in relation to advertising and the media. Hahn writes:

Without exception, the so-called “stars” of these new commercial productions, who became role models for entire generations, have displayed anatomical characteristics that, while they
might shift slightly according to the latest fads, exemplify an appearance that others are encouraged to strive to emulate. In fact, given the prevalence of these ideals the suggestion that anyone who embodies a significant departure from these normative prescriptions—such as a visibly disabled person—might become a movie or television idol seems almost incongruous and incomprehensible. (p. 183).

To make the argument more complicated, I revealed that I had watched the DVD version of *There’s Something About Mary* with the director’s comments and I learned that the character of Warren was modeled after someone the Farrelly Brothers knew when they were growing up. I learned that during a scene in the middle of the film, the “real” Warren from their hometown has a cameo appearance in a short scene that takes place in a group home for persons with developmental disabilities. Although that scene features at least five actors representing persons with disabilities, I learned from the directors’ commentary that only one of them had a disability—the real Warren. Although I appreciated that the Directors included Warren in their casting, I wondered why they had chosen to use actors without disabilities playing characters with disabilities for the small non-speaking appearances.

As Hahn (1997) points out, although there are programs and films taking up issues of disability either through drama or comedy, that doesn’t necessarily mean that actors with those disabilities play those roles. So the problem continues to exist that has always existed with employment for persons with disabilities. Actors with disabilities are seldom cast in roles unless disability is the topic of the film or program, and even then, there is likelihood that an actor without a disability will be cast in those character roles also. Persons with disabilities are not often cast to play themselves and so the marginalization of this population continues.
At the end of the class we proposed ways that this topic could be used with K-12 art students. One classmate felt that it would be interesting for art educators to lead a discussion or research project regarding persons with disabilities in popular culture and media in conjunction with a critical look at how persons with disabilities have been represented by artists throughout the course of history. There are many paintings and photographs that feature persons who are blind or have mobility impairments. Perhaps middle school or high school students could address this topic in the context of an art education classroom. Students could work collaboratively in small groups to research the definition of disability, history of disability, and disability statistics and facts (and fictions). Students may research this topic by doing Internet searches for disability statistics pulled from websites of activist groups or disability awareness organizations. Then the class could brainstorm representations of disability in popular culture or media by suggesting different commercials, television programs, or films featuring actors with disabilities or actors playing characters with disabilities. Students could form small groups and choose one of the examples brainstormed by the class (some groups could choose comedy films and others could choose drama films) to further research. Each group may screen the film and formulate questions about how disability is addressed and what message is conveyed about disability. Students may choose to show clips from the film to the rest of the class followed by a discussion about these representations. Then, art educators could facilitate a discussion about the topic of disability and how persons with disabilities are represented in visual culture including how the societal construction of normalcy and consumer culture has affected persons with disabilities. Students may choose to create a video, collage, or hypertext by juxtaposing still images from films and television series representing persons with disabilities with information about disability/ability.
By engaging students in dialogic discussion regarding popular culture images, art educators help students to become critically aware of how images are created and how media representations such as film and television programs often promote hegemonic beliefs about persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations. By having students deconstruct images from media and popular culture and recreate their own images they are empowered to convey their own messages and influence the thinking of others—in this case, offering new perspectives to social constructions of normalcy, ability, and disability.

Nouveau Nowhere: Gentrification and the Uses of Culture

Albert Stabler

In the name of making neighborhoods safer and more attractive, public and private interests in cities have recently caused manufacturing industries, working-class neighborhoods, low-income immigrant communities, and housing projects to be priced out of existence or just entirely leveled and uprooted. In their place have arisen artists’ lofts, art galleries, trendy boutiques, live/work spaces, and funky bistros.
Bucktown-Niketown

The very success of these merchants of uniqueness force them to eventually give way to upscale condominiums, high-end restaurants, and franchise retail stores, in keeping with city development goals. In neighborhood after neighborhood in city after city over the last thirty years or so, similar trends can be seen. This phenomenon is known as gentrification.

Gentrification provides not only an object of debate for urban activists and policymakers, but also an excellent lesson for art education as well. There may be no more clear example of fine art in particular, and “high culture” generally, being deployed with far-reaching social and economic consequences, all of which can be considered under this heading of “quality of life.” While the economic changes in cities may seem merely a matter of generally improving conditions for the majority of urban citizens, the divergence between local grass-roots experience and City Hall development politics in gentrifying areas has been documented (Brand, 1995; Ley, 1996). Life in a neighborhood imbued with cultural capital (Bordieu, 1984) improves the quality of life for some, but undoubtedly degrades it for others.

Researched for my final project, my discussion of gentrification attempts to connect phenomena in the realm of culture to social and economic factors. Urban politics is a wonderful contemporary example of how this can happen. I’ll begin with some history of a local gentrified area, the Bucktown area on Chicago’s near northwest side.

Bucktown just received its own write-up in the Travel section of the Sunday New York Times (Fowler, 2002) as well as continuously being featured in local publications on food, fashion, and nightlife. After some more background on Bucktown, I’ll sketch out some theoretical viewpoints on development politics and some pedagogical strategies. From an art education perspective, my interest is in aesthetic issues of
gentrification in relation to their social and economic context.

With Chicago’s boom in industry and transportation in the 1860s, Russian Jews, Polish, and Italians started flooding into the Bucktown area. In 1871, the Chicago Fire burned down much of the area, which took some time to be restored, as downtown commercial buildings were rebuilt first. Nearly all the buildings in Bucktown to this day, nearly 80% as of 1987, were built in the period from 1871-1905, mostly on land owned by the Wicker brothers of Boston, for whom the local Wicker Park is named. The heart of Bucktown proper, the areas surrounding intersection of Milwaukee with Damen and North Avenues was developed at this time. Approximately 400 buildings in this part of town are on the U.S. National Historic Register.

The working class and lower middle-class Polish and Ukrainian residents of the Bucktown area appeared relatively non-threatening to wealthier whites, despite the activist history of those local groups. They maintained a superior reputation for being a hardworking and trustworthy group, versus more recent and poorer Latino immigrants in surrounding areas. As a result, young professionals had started buying up Bucktown’s architectural treasures as early as the 1970s, and middle-class artists had begun moving into area warehouse spaces. Once enough artists and white landlords had colonized the area, it could be promoted as a tourist destination to middle-class people throughout and beyond Chicago. Various studies (Jager, 1986; Ley, 1996; Warren, 1993) cite a distinct trend wherein gentrification takes root most particularly in areas with the odd mix of architectural significance, a fair amount of absentee-landlordism, and a lower-income white population inoffensive to more prosperous whites. So it was in Bucktown. And with the inception of neighborhood arts festivals such as Around the Coyote, based in a landmark building, culture played a key role in changing the neighborhood.
Bucktown-Niketown

Many theoretical approaches exist to describe the confusing moral and philosophical terrain of cities today, though they may not stray far from traditional descriptions: a secular utopia vision of a cosmopolitan Mecca of diversity and culture versus (but often combined with) a grim religious vision of a doomed, depraved Babylon. Opposing “white flight” to the suburbs, “New Urbanism” is a more utopian view that dates back to liberal urban renewal policy agendas from the 1940s through the 1960s. It also recalls influential architect and planner Daniel Burnham’s vision of Chicago as a “City Beautiful,” in his 1909 “Chicago Plan” (Foglesong, 1986). Articulated in recent years by many writers, notably James Howard Kunstler (1993), New Urbanism posits the city as a place where individuals of all different backgrounds can live and work alongside each other, owning the property they use, and where dense populations can utilize efficiently and thus conserve scarce resources through fostering smart growth.

Advocates of this view generally favor “mixed-use” zoning, where business and residential purposes can be integrated in a single area, and “mixed-income” communities, in which class segregation can be discouraged through proper planning—an idea now being attempted rather stumblingly in Chicago as a replacement for public housing. Convenience and accessibility are desirable byproducts of a dense, mixed-use urban situation with good streets and public transportation, often given a real-estate spin with the term “livability” (Mills, 1993). Versus the economic advantages of suburbs, urban boosters like Richard Florida (2002) note the importance of “culture” in spurring the revival of blighted areas and the upgrading of public services in cities. But as Kleiman (2002) points out in her critique of Florida, “you disdain mere economic reasons for choosing a location—if you’re a prosperous white man under 40” (p. 12).

With the exception of traditional city-haters and manifest-destiny
suburban boosters like *Edge City* author Joel Garreau (1991), many urban critics resistant to the New Urbanists may admire the ideal vision they seek to bring about. But such writers deplore the stark difference between the New Urbanist ideal and the state of affairs now seen in cities. These are the decriers of gentrification, angered by the replacement of local ownership by chain stores, the displacement of working renters, homeowners, and small businesses for condominium development, and the colonization of a perhaps economically low-end, but perhaps socially stable, culturally thriving area by an oblivious group of sybaritic hyperconsuming professionals—otherwise known as the ever-scapegoated “yuppies.”

Cultural-studies writers (Deutsche, 1996; Rosler, 1991) closest in optimistic spirit to the urban boosters, have a statist nostalgia for a public space without private interference, equating this public space with access to citizenship in a true democracy. A more critical materialist-Marxist element (Jameson, 1984; Jager, 1986; Ley, 1996) see the recent urban shifts as related to a bourgeois ethos of lifestyle derived from a colonizing habit of class appropriation. In the terms of Bordieu (1984), the central city is cast as a *habitus* of hidden cachet and lost authenticity, in which both higher- and lower-class imagery is deployed to individuals wanting to display and accrue cultural capital. Jager (1986) describes this appropriation as clearly visible in the fetishization of restoring, rehabilitating, and augmenting older architecture. I would extend this as well to the fabrication in such areas of ultra-slick new architecture based on bygone styles. Jencks (1981) refers to such contemporary phenomena as “double coding.” Lastly, post-Situationist urbanism writers and performers (Miles, 1988; Reverend Billy, 2002) deplore the oppressive commercial homogeneity of city space and the hypnotic distraction of the ubiquitous urban spectacle.

There are a number of ways to critically interpret gentrification.
Bucktown-Niketown

But how can all this be discussed with children and youth? For starters, some useful ideas may be to imagine and create ideal, historical, predictive, or fantastic urban spaces, in any variety or number of media. In these cities various groups with different needs can be discussed and role-played, and new structures can be planned accordingly. Many projects can also be developed on the various kinds of double coding. Projects such as these can strike any balance between research and imagination, and between collaborative and individual work.

While my biases are evident, many students in Chicago see and face the consequences of gentrification-related changes, and often are more aware of the issues than teachers who live outside the area. Art teachers need to be patient and imaginative in presenting material such as this, to solicit student contributions and ideas, and to encourage open-mindedness from both themselves and the students. It is possible to show students how economic and historic realities that shape their lives are materially related to fine, popular, and retail culture. The excitement and beauty of culture, which kids certainly understand, can, in turn, be meaningfully connected to the life of cities and to the people who try to coexist in them.

**Fighting Representations:**

**Violence in Mass Media**

**Jason Maxam**

Recently, I was walking down the street and saw a nice sports car. The keys were in it, so I went for a joyride. Along the way, I bumped into other cars because I was going too fast. At one point, I ended up on the sidewalk and killed a few people that were jogging by. Someone started shooting at me, so I got out of the car and returned fire with my M-16 machine gun. When I heard the police sirens, I pulled an elderly woman out of her car and drove away. This is a typical occurrence for
me when I play *Grand Theft Auto 3* on my *Playstation 2* game system. The goal of the game is to steal cars and murder people while performing various missions for criminals. You can use your fists, weapons, and even vehicles to harm and kill your targets and also any innocent bystanders.

For my final project, I decided to take a critical look at violence in the media—specifically in and through movies and video games. I wanted to explore comparisons of increased violence in society and increased violence in media. My research yielded convincing statements against violence in the media, yet some contradictory arguments were also found. I also discovered that this is by no means a new issue; in 1952 the first of a series of congressional hearings took place in the House of Representatives before the Commerce Committee to discuss violence in the media. Since then, a debate has been going on among politicians, parents, teachers, and television executives. Many have testified at congressional hearings and spoken out on their concerns about television violence. As recent as February 2, 1995, the Children’s Media Protection Act was introduced by Senator Kent Conrad (North Dakota). According to the American Psychological Association (2002), “Children who watch a lot of TV are less aroused by violent scenes than are those who only watch a little; in other words, they’re less bothered by violence in general, and less likely to see anything wrong with it.” The American Academy of Pediatrics (1998) simply states that “media violence can lead to aggressive behavior in children.” Of course, there are many people who disagree with these statements.
In *The Media Violence Myth*, Richard Rhodes (2002) attempts to discredit many activists and politicians who are against violence in the media. Rhodes states “one way we in the United States avoid accepting responsibility for the violence in our society is to pretend “the media” inflict it on our children.” One of the reasons for the ongoing debates is that there has always been violence in the world, long before television and video games. It seems there is no end in sight for more studies being conducted to determine if exposure to violence in the media increases one’s chances of becoming violent.

As an art educator, I want to engage students in discussions and projects that deal with violence in the media. I created a twelve-minute
video that consists of violent imagery found in movies that I own (see Figure 5). I used footage from cartoons, sports, video games, action movies, comedies, and dramas. Students could create similar projects based on imagery found in their own environments, games, action figures, comic books, posters, movies, and so on.

My video presentation contained a wide variety of clips and two voiceovers. The first voiceover is a description of the events of Columbine High School combined with a scene from *The Matrix*. The scene depicts two characters entering a building carrying black duffel bags filled with weapons and explosives, wearing black trench coats concealing more weapons. The two characters proceed to walk down a hallway and shoot everyone in their path. I chose to juxtapose this scene with the shootings at Columbine because *The Matrix* opened in theatres three weeks before two high school students proceeded to follow the same course of action. This is the text for the first voiceover:

Littleton, Colorado, April 20, 1999, 11:14 a.m.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold arrive at Columbine high school.

They walk into the school’s cafeteria wearing black trench coats and carrying two large duffel bags filled with explosives. The gunmen place the bags on the floor beside two lunch tables and walk back out to the parking lot and wait for the bombs to explode. They planned to shoot any surviving students attempting to escape after the bombs explode. Klebold and Harris also have bombs constructed with timers in their cars, set to go off once they go back inside the school. With 9-mm semi-automatic weapons hidden under their coats and carrying shotguns, Klebold and Harris begin shooting at students in the area. Thus begins what is now known as the worst U.S. school
Bucktown-Niketown shooting in history.

The second voiceover contains my final thoughts. It can be heard while a scene from the *Outsiders* shows teenage boys in a ‘rumble.’

This is the text:

From the beginning of time, people have experienced many forms of violence. Domestic disputes, war, abuse. These are all part of our human existence. But through the glorification of violence through various forms of media, we are being exposed to more violence than ever. I watch the news and I see road rage, school shootings, disgruntled employees shooting their bosses and coworkers, small children killed after re-enacting wrestling moves seen on TV. Countless forms of abuse and violence occur every day. We are absorbing mass quantities of violence through television, film, and video games. With so much exposure, we are becoming desensitized to violence. It becomes part of our daily lives.

After showing the movie to the class, we had a discussion about our own views on violence in the media. We discussed censorship, political agendas, responsibilities of moviemakers, and various personal experiences with viewing violence in media. My goal was to make people aware of what we are seeing and how it may or may not be affecting our actions and society in general.

**Conclusion**
In the winter 2001 edition of *Studies in Art Education*, Michael Parsons, in an editorial titled, *Change, Again*, argues that “art education is not the same as cultural studies” (p. 99). Unlike Parsons, we believe art education *is* cultural studies, and much more—Art education is a political project of visual cultural studies. As visual cultural studies, art educators and their students should engage visual representations, cultural sites, and public spheres through the language of critique, possibility, and production. Art educators and their students should examine, understand, and challenge how individuals, institutions, and social practices are inscribed in power differently, to expand the conditions for freedom, and equality, and social justice. Through this project, art educators and their students should embrace the impure—cannibalizing the useful tools and methodologies of a wide variety of other disciplines and fields while recognizing the indeterminacy of outcomes.

**References**


Bucktown-Niketown


Giroux, H. & Shannon, P. (1997). Cultural studies and peda-


Bucktown-Niketown


Reverend Billy (2002). March 8 Performance at the A-Zone. Chicago, IL.


**Notes**

1. In this sense, agency is understood, in part, as access to discursive, personal, and social resources that facilitate informed decision making and active participation in the world (Davies, 1990).

2. Selected texts for the course include works by Buckingham (1998); Freire (1970); Giroux (1994); Grossberg (1992); Hall, S. (1992); hooks (1994); Mirzoeff (1999); Mitchell (2002); Steinberg & Kincheloe (1997); Weiler (2001) and many others.


4. Examples include, *Forrest Gump* (1994); *There’s Something About Mary* (1998); *Say It Isn’t So* (2001); *Me, Myself, and Irene* (2000); *Happy Gilmore* (1996).

5. Examples include, Frida Kahlo’s numerous self-portraits with her in a wheelchair; Paul Strand’s photograph, *Blind Woman* (1916);
Bucktown-Niketown


6. A good deal of my research was conducted through informal surveys and interviews with area residents and proprietors. I conducted interviews at a performance by Reverend Billy (2002) at the A-Zone, in the Logan Square area, and received a great deal of assistance from Laura Weathered, executive director of the Near Northwest Arts Council, and manager of the Acme Artists Community artists’ affordable housing initiative. I also utilized newspaper archives and neighborhood information resources of the Chicago Historical Society.
A striking phenomenon in this technology-laden and media-driven modern Taiwanese society is that fan culture has become overly active and enthusiastic. Adolescents make up the major percentage of the fan population. Whenever a famous singer or movie star launches an event, a mass of youngsters are sure to chase him or her throughout the series of fan parties that go on afterwards. This phenomenon also happens in comic/anime fandom. In August of 1995, an event of *Meeting Anime Stars* given in a department store across the Taipei Train Station attracted more than fifteen thousand adolescents who lined up for hours so that they could meet the artists of those famous anime stars. In recent years, ComicWorld, a two-day event for comic/anime fans to sell their own comic arts, has thousands of youngsters attending daily.
when comic fan culture was overly oppressed by the mainstream culture. However, comic books still remained a strong popularity among youths as underground reading materials. To many teenagers, including myself then, comic books were important vehicles for satisfying our emotional needs for fantasy and pleasure in those boring classes, but it was certainly frightening to get caught. Reading then was not allowed in school. Adolescents’ comic/anime fan culture in contemporary Taiwan has been paving its course of fanatic social action into a wide and open flow of venues and expanding its influence through a variety of forms and events like ComicWorld and internet forums.

In this paper, I do not intend to trace back the
history of comic fandom in Taiwan, neither do I explain what caused the change for its popularity. Rather, I focus on discussing the social phenomena and the underlying values of the adolescents’ comic/anime fan culture currently active in Taiwan. Adolescents’ comic/anime fan culture is a complex, multidimensional site which could not be fully explored in such a short paper. I therefore base my discussion substantially on the events of ComicWorld which I have been observing and studying now for quite some time.

**ComicWorld in Taiwan**

Since the first introduction to Taiwan in 1997, ComicWorld has been held twenty-three times and the average number of attendees is about five thousand each time. In Taiwan, ComicWorld is also named as Comix World or Doujinshi Sale Convention. It is regularly held four times every year in the greater Taipei metropolitan area. At the beginning, events of ComicWorld were mainly for comic fans to share, exchange or sell their coterie publication or non-commercial printed
Comic/Anime Fandom

material (also called Doujinshi in Japan). The emergence of Cosplay in the late 80s has soon become the spotlight of ComicWorld conventions. It is also the most attractive and entertaining activity for the comic/anime fans to indulge themselves in “simulated fantasy”.

According to Santoso (1998), “Cosplay is a Japanese fan term for Costume Play; it’s equivalent to the Western term masquerade.” In Taiwan, most participants consider the cosplay section as the soul of ComicWorld. They perceive it to be the most precious opportunity to transform their fantasy into “real” reality by playing and dressing up in the costume of their favorite anime characters. Besides imitating the costume, most adolescents insist that a cosplayer should speak in the anime character’s words, act in the character’s way, think in the character’s thoughts, and play the anime character’s soul. In other words, they attempt to bring their favorite anime characters to “life.”

Although it was not until the late 90s that anime conventions began to appear in Taiwan, the exchange and sales of doujinshis had been started circulating among the anime fan clubs since the mid-80s. Doujinshis were distributed by mail order, or through stores that specialized in comic books for rent. But the annual sales of doujinshis at that time were so low that doujinshis were little known to the public. ComicWorld conventions paved a new avenue for the doujinshi hobbyists to display, exchange and sell their doujinshis. Moreover, the advent of internet technology catalyzed doujinshi distribution. The doujinshi community has boomed rapidly and became a powerful force that propels the comic market in Taiwan. Comic/anime fans have formed their own specific culture. With an enormous influential power on youngsters, this subcultural phenomenon has propagated quickly among adolescents in Taiwan.
The Comic/anime Fan Community and Social Identity

Outside the ComicWorld conventions, you can’t ever notice the existence of the comic/anime fan community in Taiwan, not even a bit of fanatic zeal. However, if you surf into Taiwan’s cyberspace along anime fans’ footprints, you will realise how large and complex the fandom is. By then, the anime fanatic craziness and enthusiastic frenzy may have infected you. If you want to know more about their communities, idols and activities, you can talk to them online, or link further to Japanese or American anime fandoms. From the eventual, temporary meetings of the ComicWorld conventions to the anime fandom in cyberspace, this subcultural community is no less than a fluid mass, featuring its capricious character, blurry borderlines, and a “geographic dispersement” (Jenkins, 2001, p.3).
The comic/anime “fannish” community is held together as a loose basis of shared interests in circulating texts of comics or animation, as well as its acquired attributes. The community in turn brings them closer to the subject of shared identity and symbols. As Kanemitsu (1998) has emphasised, “The significance in doujinshi subculture does not originate in the medium that they are using, but rather the distinct social identity that [they] are able to assert through participating in this medium.” The comic/anime conventions seemingly function as essential machinery to strengthen the social impulses among the comic/anime fans and intensify the distinct features of their socio-cultural identity.

A feature in this comic/anime fandom is the popularity of using its own jargon, preferred comic books or animations, popular discourses, criteria, and values. As a result, this unique sub-cultural literacy would make an outsider feel completely like an illiterate. Thus, part of the process of becoming an anime fan is to learn its cultural practices. Fans have defined criteria to judge good doujinshi or a cosplay. Such experiences and knowledge are usually accumulated from practices and the participation in fan activities.

While entering this anime/comic fan community, you must realize that most comic/anime fans have another name when they communicate with one another, but they are easily distinguished as these virtual names tend to be fantasy, exotic, fairy types, and mostly like those found in Japanese comics, animations and fictions. The anime fans often use their virtual names in their social activities such as the ComicWorld conventions, forums in the internet, or fan clubs. Also, they utilize their virtual names when signing their artworks or doujinshis.
In the ComicWorld conventions, cosplayers are usually recognized through the names of their costumed characters. For example, if one plays the character named “Nabaku,” people in the convention will recognize him as “Nabaku.” Another could be “Uzumaki Naruto” from the comics “Naruto.” In the cosplay area, what you could see are anime characters who have all become “alive,” which might confuse you, as if you had entered a comic world. However, my niece Kitty Shu, a teenager, a comic fan artist and my tour guide to this society, provides an insight into this comic world, “It was a fabulous experience, everyone came to have fun together and did not care who you were and what you did in the real world. You know, it is so free here. No racial, economical, and gender discrimination.”

Certainly, the society is not as Kitty believed, free of “racial, economical, and gender discrimination.” They are simply transformed
Comic/Anime Fandom

into different shapes that can be barely recognized. Japanese comics, animations, and video games are dominating the texts, contents, and values of the fantasy world; they shape its social contexts, and direct its marketing flows. Its dominance has been drawing subcultural communities in Taiwan’s popular culture closer to the Japanese comic/anime world than the one we live. It is also true that many adolescent fans tend to identify themselves with the comic/anime subculture rather than the mainstream culture. As Jenkins (2001) notes in his book *Textual Poachers*, the traditional notions of “culture” and “community” defined by classic anthropology is problematic and should be reconsidered from accounts of fan culture.

Fantasy Appropriation and Reproduction
In the anime fandom, in particular the doujin world, there is no clear-cut line between artists and consumers. Almost all fans are potential artists who have made significant contributions to the cultural wealth of the community, which is in turn a nurturing place to seek technical help and social needs. Normally, adolescent anime fans use an alias in communication with each other as if the community is equivalent to a fantasy world where everything is made up and completely divorced from mundane society. Although every fan artist in the anime fandom is merely an imaginary character, all together they integrate and form a pseudo-fantasy world. Mostly in such a simulated world, one tends to be recognized by his/her favorite comic book character rather than his/her real status in society. Such phenomenon is most apparent in the cosplay activities in anime conventions.

Everywhere in the anime fandom on can see the regeneration of the imaginary and the operation of its sign system. In the anime conventions, which are the most intensive moments of all in the fan culture, multiply, circulate and also confirm the signs of the imaginary of comics, video games, or animation. Every fan has the right to appropriate, adapt, recreate, rework and actively challenge the original texts in any possible way by virtue of their own preferences and creativity. In a sense, the comics/anime fans are welcome to work through their own efforts to give comic characters a new incarnation, or totally different lives. It is also acceptable for them to incorporate other author’s characters to their own works or stories. In the doujin world, the genre of adaptations and parodies are very common, and can be subdivided into many categories. How to make a smart imitation on the costumes and the character of a favored comic/anime figure becomes a major access to the achievement of the success in a cosplay. The fan artists’ efforts and creative minds are required to interpret and bring their favorite anime characters into life.

Although there are many genres of doujinshis and devices for
making doujinshis, I found the following seven devices popular among Taiwanese doujinshis appearing in the ComicWorld conventions.

1. **Only making a slight adjustment to the ending.**

   This is the most common device for making a doujinshi. For example, a fan artist may adjust the tragic ending into a happy one.

2. **Making many changes on the plots and the characters’ natures.**

   Taiwanese adolescent fan artists are fond of making changes on the character’s nature and plots of comic stories dramatically and turning them into bizarre, funny and entertaining comics.

3. **Adapting from a novel.**

   This is a very challenging device because the artist has to develop new plots and dialogues based on the characters in the novels. This type of doujinshis is so creative that they can be viewed as equivalent to the original fictions. A doujinshi artist, who is a good friend of my niece Kitty, told me that she is now working on a doujinshi adapted from the novel of *Harry Potter*. Although the characters in her doujinshis were derived from the film *Harry Potter*, she insisted in developing the plots directly from the novel. She believed that it was much more challenging and fun to find her own Harry Potter from the novel, and visualize him through her own comic book.

4. **Mixing up characters from different comic books and placing them in newly developed plots.**

   This device is very tricky and highly favored by young adolescents
as they find it interesting to place those characters from different comic stories in the same settings or plots. For example, Hanamichi Sakuragi and Kaeoe Rukawa from the comics of *Slam Dunk*, Kasumi and Xiangfei from the video game of *The King of Fighter*, and Gon Freecss and Kurapika from the comics of *Hunter X Hunter*, all appear in a new plot where they are fighting to search the valuable sword and treasure.

5. Expanding the story of a comic book into many relevant sub-stories.

Many fan artists imitate the original authors of their favorite comics, and begin to transform some parts of the stories into more entertaining and complicated plots. It seems that the comic book is printed in many versions, and each version characterizes some parts that could not be completed in the original version. For example, if a fan really hopes to see the main character of *Slam Dunk*, Hanamichi Sakuragi, dating Itaruko Akagi, she or he could just make up one to satisfy her or his own curiosity.

6. Imitating the styles of a comic book including the plotting, the characters and drawing techniques to create an original fiction.

Many adolescents attempt to make their own shonan or shojyo mangas, but their fictions were built upon the styles of certain well known comics. There may be two reasons for this: (1) those adolescents intend to learn from imitating the styles of their favorite comics in order to create their own, and (2) they may have been influenced by their favorite comics so deeply that they are unconsciously creating their works in similar styles and techniques.
7. Focusing on portraying comic characters

A great proportion of doujinshi artists tended to focus on making portraits of anime characters. Many of these portraits were imitative pieces, while some were original works. The fan artists usually started by tracing and copying characters from popular comics, animation, and video games. After they became more skillful, they would create their own charming and fabulous anime characters. These portrait drawings were made into letter paper and envelopes, bookmarks, cards and stickers.

As could be concluded from the above discussion, anime fan artists appropriate raw materials from the commercial comic books, animation and video games to create a broader and more diverse world of their fantasies. As stated by Jenkins (1992) “The aesthetic of fan art celebrates creative use of already circulating discourses and images” (p.279). Although the meanings or values of the images and signs have
been changed or distorted, the imaginary characters have grown into life; they continue to live through different times, experiences and environments. Comic/anime fan artists are “active producers and manipulators of meanings” (p.23). They are just like what Jenkins’ description about fans as “active engagement with the media” and creative “textual poachers” rather than “cultural dupes, social misfits, and mindless consumers” (p.24). Fans are able to appropriate and inflect mass culture images and meanings to produce their own and to go beyond the mass-produced texts which provide raw materials for their social interpretation.

Conclusions

As far as this paper goes, I could claim that these adolescent anime fans live out double lives: the mundane reality and anime fantasy. Nevertheless, these two worlds do not conflict with each other
as neither doujinshi authors nor cosplayers attempt to challenge the views of society or bring about social attacks through their media or activities. On the contrary, while being an escape from real life, anime fandom could be a temporary mend of frustration in real world, a symbolic outlet of self-expression and a sense of well-being through artistic achievement. Unfortunately, the adolescent anime fandom and its social events such as anime conventions may not be comprehensible to many people, and may be alienated by the mainstream culture. They are frequently mistaken as a zealot, orgiastic, mischievous and gang-like cultural phenomenon.

Extending from the anime world, the realms of doujinshi and cosplay evolve and become even more complex and diverse. On one hand, the images, stories and signs are materialised, and become concrete objects that can be manipulated, reproduced and exchanged. On the other hand, anime fandom is also a regeneration and fermentation of imagination toward real “reality.” The creative imaginary is in fact the real substance and essence of the anime fandom. Although one may merely find phantasms, recycling of dreams, fairylike and legendary images everywhere in the anime fandom, to many adolescents it is the secluded moment of free expression and enjoyable imagination in a utopian dimension which is being indulged. While perceived as detouring from our main stream society, this comic subculture of fantasy poses no harm but encouraging the freedom of creativity, strengthening interpersonal bond and helping mend the frustrations of a stressful “real” world.

References


http://www.tc.umn.edu/~kane0034/doujin/dousub00.htm

Unromancing
The Stone of “Resistance”
In Defence of A Continued Radical Politics In
Visual Cultural Studies

jan jagodzinski

Abstract

The question of resistance as a pleasurable activity continues to be a theme within cultural studies. This essay argues that the ideology of pleasurable resistance is precisely the way that capitalist patriarchy maintains its hegemony through seduction. By focusing mainly on the writings of John Fiske and his employment of Foucault’s power/knowledge couplet and Barthe’s appropriation of jouissance, it is argued that the discursive subject position overlooks the value of the psychoanalytic understanding of fantasy identification. It is suggested that a more radical understanding of jouissance as developed within a psychoanalytic view of the split-subject needs to be addressed (or reinstated) into visual cultural studies research in order to take the seductive workings of fantasy into account. The essay ends with a call for a return to neo-Gramscian counter-hegemony through “popular visual education.” The difference between cultural studies and “visual” cultural studies is one of emphasis only. Throughout the essay the visual has been absorbed by the larger general category.
Like the alchemist’s philosopher’s stone, which was a substance that supposedly changed other metals into gold or silver, and like the fabulous diamond in the film *Romancing the Stone* which was to fulfill every possible fantasy, cultural studies has found its stone in the pleasures of “resistance.” In the consumerist markets of transnational capitalism the resisting subject clears the space of agency in what would otherwise be a Baudrillarian sutured “ecstasy of communication” whereby all possible meanings have already been precluded, including the message and the receiver. While the question of “resistance” has been a laudable goal in visual cultural studies, I wish to interrogate this concept, perhaps adding a little tarnish to the stone’s brilliance. My primarily argument is that this concept, as it is currently deployed in postmodernism, is *over-romanticized* in its suppositions (cf. Curran, 1990; Schlesinger, 1991; McGuigan, 1992).

The “popularity” of resistance emerged during a time of neo-conservatism of the mid-’80s when the transformations of the New Right—Reagan/Bush in the US., Mulroney in Canada, Thatcherism in Britain, Helmet Kohl in Germany—required a response by a Left which had lost its authorial agency. One response to this crisis of the Left was provided by the neo-Gramscian proposal for a radical democracy as developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). The “new social movements” at that time (feminism, green politics, animal rights, identity politics) were to be politically “articulated” by way of a discursive organization in a chain of equivalences between different forms of oppressions and struggles to form a counter-hegemonic force that was to oppose the current power bloc. Such a horizon of opportunity presented itself at a time when these social movements already had “antagonistic” relationships with the state; its members required no “conscientization” (cf. Paulo Freire) to make them aware of the inequalities of power and oppression. The decade that followed the publication of Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony & Social Change*, however, saw the New Right make
continual gains in dispersing and recuperating these movements under
the need for greater self-autonomy and less state control. A “culture of
narcissism,” as Christopher Lash in 1978 argued, had fully emerged.
The “war of position” had been lost, along with a troubling confirmation
that class, race and gender as markers of stable identity, were no longer
entirely adequate to theorize this change.

What arose simultaneously was the eventual supplantation
of neo-Gramscian hegemonic struggles of “the people” with a social
imaginary filled by Foucault’s power/knowledge couplet and de
Certeau’s tactic/strategy games where “resistance” in both cases was
coded as “good” because it was against the dominant ideology. The
Left was characterized as avoiding the practicalities of everyday life,
too concerned with the macro structures of society and expecting major
social transformations which never came. These new social explanatory
forms, supplemented by reception theories and ethnographic studies,
which were more fluid in their applicability to capture the “morphing”
conditions, seemed to answer the call of agency. However, the stress
placed on the “pleasure” of resistance, as developed by one strand of
cultural studies, has been particularly confusing in the wake of these
post-Gramscian developments. It almost appears as if the pendulum has
swung the other way. I refer to the difficulty of identifying resistances
and struggles that are merely complicit with the power bloc from those
that are antagonistic to it. With the concept of “false consciousness” as
an illusory representation of reality having lost ground amongst post-
Marxist circles, and with the theorization of Althusser making ideology
fundamental to the human condition, the question of social progress
remains “undecidable” unless a fuller democratic potential can be
realized and “false consciousness” re-coded as still a useful concept.
The valorization of “resistance” in cultural studies, with its subsequent
flattening out of its qualities and forms, has overlooked the education
of subjects opposed to the manifold and varied forms of power, which
was part of the Gramscian *moral* tradition of cultural studies in the first place. This has been replaced with a naive belief that consumers are more clever than was once thought. The stress on “resistant pleasures” has brought with it a tiresome and banal corollary: “the masses are not to be taken as cultural dopes” (cf. Morris, 1988). This essay explores the suspicion that this is precisely the subject-ideal that contemporary capitalism desires: subversive and de-stabilized identities who seek new modes of enjoyment through forms of romanticized resistances made possible by the “deterritorializations” of capitalism as exemplified by liberalist pluralist subject positions.

More specifically, the thesis entertained here is that the ideal subject of capitalist consumption is the exact *inverse* of the ideal subject of “real” socialism. In the socialist system, according to Havel (1985) and Salecl (1994: 48), the private citizen did not believe in the system; the regime was criticized privately but obeyed publicly. Capitalism is a system which is resisted publicly through democratic social actions, but obeyed privately in the belief this is the best that is possible. Socialist ideology functioned as long as the public rituals were obeyed. Capitalist patriarchal ideology maintains itself by constructing a symbolic space, which creates formations of fantasy whereby spectators are allowed to escape the traumas of everyday reality through forms of romanticized resistance. Capitalism’s staging of “the fantasy of resistance” through commodity culture provides the satisfaction that the subject’s own ideal ego has been achieved by exercising agency and free choice. The argument to be developed here is that many of the examples that are said to offer popular resistances of pleasure. Shopping, music and computer videos, fashion, game and quiz shows, soap operas, the science fiction genre and reality television are the *constitutive forms* of capitalist ideology, while “resistance” is the very *surplus* that comes with consuming enjoyment. “Resistance” to these forms is the very “symptom” of contemporary capitalism. Following Zizek (1989: 21),
Romancing the Stone

I want to suggest that this consumer “enjoyment” (jouissance) which makes the participation in these forms possible, already includes the “tactics” of resistant self-reflexivity. It adds to their enjoyment, which is what I mean by romantic resistance being a “surplus.” In other words, the ideological “being” of the ideal capitalist subject is offered a fantasy structure whereby resistance is symptomatic of the very logic of late capitalism. How else to account for the apparently obvious premise that the most successful popular cultural forms are the ones that are most financially successful because they reach such wide and diverse audiences? Hegemony operates precisely through popularity that is enhanced by the polysemic nature of a text (Lewis, 1991). Both complicity and contradiction are “factored” into the “bloc buster” texts (films, music and computer videos, books) including the academic market as well. As Ronald Jones sarcastically remarked, “Spending time devising the next confrontational culture is how the culture industry organizes the time of the intelligentsia” (in Hewison, 1990: 9).

In the preface to their second edition of Escape Attempts (1992/1976), Cohen and Taylor confirm the cynicism of “resistant” postmodernism: “twenty years ago we were fascinated by the ingenious and desperate ways in which people tried to ignore, subvert or resist paramount [dominant] reality. Now, we would have to start with the ways in which paramount reality ignores, subverts and resists itself all the time. At the same time there has been a spreading out, a popularization. The tricks, routes and programmes of the elite have become better known (if not actually available) to all ...” (16-17, my emphasis). Films like Robert Altman’s The Player or Roland Emmerich’s Independence Day, for example, self-consciously “wink” at their audiences, letting them know that what they are watching is simply exaggerated artifice. Said differently: “the emperor is naked and the media trumpet forth this fact, yet nobody seems really to mind—that is, people continue to act as if the emperor is not naked ... “ (Zizek, 1994:18).
Resistance as symptom is a paradoxical element within capitalism. Peter Sloterdijk (1987/1983) names it “cynical reason.” Cynical reason describes the ideal capitalist subject: resisting on the outside but still believing on the inside. Zizek (1989:29) rephrases Marx’s “false consciousness” of “they do not know it, but they are doing it,” into its contemporary postmodernist reality: “they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it.” Romanticized forms of resistance exhibit this form of “enlightened false consciousness.”

Even when one knows the particular hidden interests at work in the various capitalist forms of consumerism, they are not renounced, rather the pleasure is found in enjoying and believing in the subversions that their fantasy formations allow. As Cohen and Taylor (1992/1976) argued some time ago, following Erwing Goffman´s lead of “role-distance,” mockery, irony, and skepticism as forms of self-consciousness of the social predicament provide “escape attempts” to protect oneself from the fear that one’s behavior is determined by the rules of the cultural setting. “It did not mean however that they now acted against the institution, it more usually meant that they went along with its edicts with an easier heart, reassured by the distance which they could mentally maintain from its social arrangements” (56). Such behavior, as Zizek remarks, is different from Sloterdijk´s term kynicism inspired by Diogenes which represents popular plebian rejections of the official culture by means of irony and sarcasm (see Scott, 1985). The forms of popular culture discussed here do not fall into this category which are informed by a fundamental “antagonism.” On the contrary, in an act of “romanticized resistance,” as for instance when women of lower socio-economic standing are “liberated” by replacing “masculine money with feminine knowledge” by playing The New Price is Right (Fiske, 1990: 137), an ideological fantasy or unconscious illusion structures their social reality, and their desires to fill their lack. In this case, this unconscious fantasy is a liberal patriarchal one: the imaginary metaphorical displacement of working class women and housewives to
be like their husbands by having equal economic power; an aspiration which is a denial of the actual existent conditions. Their enjoyment (jouissance) masks the trauma of their inability to achieve and occupy this subject position given their present material conditions. As Zizek (1989) argues, “the place of illusion is in the reality of doing itself” (33). Under this formulation, Fiske’s ‘art of making do’ becomes “they know that, in their activity [e.g., playing the quiz show] they are following an illusion, but still they are doing it” (ibid., my italic).

“Power, Power Everywhere, but not a Drop of Freedom !”

Fiske (1991) has strongly addressed Baudrillard’s characterization of popular culture and television in a postmodern age, arguing that his theory of postmodernism is largely stuck at the level of macro-structure and misses the concrete, contextualized practices where the socially produced images and socially positioned subjects intersect. The play of signs, the refusal of genre categorizations, and the pastiche style of postmodern sensibility belong largely to the middle- and upper-classes who can afford to play such “dress up” games. For the lives of the subordinated the story is quite different. In Power Plays; Power Works (1993) Fiske puts into play the figure of a group of “homeless” men watching Die Hard within the confines of their shelter’s VCR system. One of the men gets up and abruptly turn the video off when Bruce Willis, the film’s protagonist eventually begins to side with police authority. Fiske refers to this incident several times throughout his book as a way of demonstrating the conflicts of power that surround any media reception. He argues that this incident demonstrates the agency of resistance despite the fact that these men occupy one of the most powerless and helpless subject positions in society.

Another often cited demonstration of active agency comes from
“critical” (post-Marxist) educational theories of Michael Apple (1979; 1982), Henry Giroux (1981), and Paul Willis (1981). To avoid the charge of Marxist structuralism which characterized their writings in the early ’80s, they (much like the “late” Foucault of The History of Sexuality) turned their attention to “resistance theories” (e.g., Giroux, 1983). This trajectory easily drifted toward questions of “self-identity” which began to play on the academic hit-parade. The “hidden curriculum,” as the unintentional curriculum that emerged “behind the backs” of both students and teacher, was theorized by the complexities and ephemeral nature of Foucault’s knowledge/power dynamics. A particular good early example comes from the semiotic theory of television viewing developed by Hodge and Tripp (1986:183-187). They give the example of the Australian soap opera Prisoner, whereby school aged children (11-13) identified with its story line set in a women’s prison by perceiving themselves as prisoners of the school system, subject to similar punishments, experiencing the same hierarchy between “them and us,” and identifying their teachers as its wardens. Arguably such an interpretation could well change as they grow older and become parents and teachers themselves. Hodge and Tripp dealt only with the general consensus of the school children as to the soap’s popularity. Gender differences were not explored, nor were those children who disliked the soap questioned for their contradictory readings. Further research, if desired, could identify the economy of other existing power inequalities. Their study, however, made it obvious that such “resistant” meanings attributed to images were inseparable from the material social conditions of those who produced them.

The study by Hodge and Tripp, and Fiske’s suggestive “homeless” example demonstrate how the micro and macro come together in resistance according to Foucault’s theory of power. The inequalities of both the institution of education and the state can be teased out by theorizing everyday life. As Fiske argues, the construction
of “meanings” as part of a set of social and power relations is never static but fluid; it is the site/sight/cite of constant contestation and struggle. But is this, in itself, a limiting proposition? The multiplicity of the axes of social difference, i.e., sex, gender, class, race, ethnicity, ableism, age, are continually evolving into new kaleidoscopic arrangements. Power, as Foucault had conceptualized it and Fiske had appropriated it, is forever enigmatic. It does not possess us, but rather it invests and turns us into an element in the play of multiple forces, which seem to have no specific point of origin. In McGowan (1991) summative words: “it [power] is productive; it is only exercised by individuals but never possessed by them [i.e., the individual is constituted by power]; and it is involved in every social relation” (127). In this formulation “the individual exercises power at certain times and in certain places as a functionary of power’s intentions, not her own” (ibid.). Foucault explicitly supports the rationality of power as “characterized by tactics that are often quit explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power)...” (Foucault, 1980: 95). In other words, Foucault’s view of power constitutes the cynical individual of postmodernism. Resistance is always theorized against the position of dominant power which, in turn, forms Fiske’s definition of “popular culture.” “[T]here can be no popular dominant culture, for popular culture is formed always in reaction to, and never as part of, the forces of domination” (1989:43).

**Split Subject of Psychoanalysis versus the Poststructuralist Discursive Subject**

Foucault dismissed the “split-subject” of psychoanalysis; i.e., the dualistic vision that pits an inhibiting power against an autonomous and oppressed subject (Copjec, 1990:13-15; Salecl, 1994: 95). Instead, his positive concept of power conceives resistance as emerging from the
process that installs the subject (the body) into the social. Law is a norm based on power. There is no power without the potential of refusal or revolt (resistance). Intersubjectivity, what Dews (1987:198) calls “the reciprocity specific to the social domain,” is by and large, diminished in Foucault’s thought. Psychoanalysis in contrast, conceptualizes the negative force of power in the sense of rejecting one’s own desires. Power is a force of exclusion or repression. In the theoretical stance of Fiske, fantasy as the seat of ideology drops out. Resistance cannot be theorized along the lines of fantasy formations; rather it becomes a reactive formation against power structures. The homeless men, for instance, sided with the weak against the strong. “By erasing the end of the movie, when the normal [power relations] reasserted itself, they made sense of the temporary victories of the weak as if they were permanent” (Fiske, 1993:129, original italic). The “as if,” which is the seat of ideology, is under theorized. These homeless men exhibit the cynical attitude referred to earlier. There is resistance all right, but the subsequent “freedom” is rather empty since no action to achieve particular purposes has taken place (cf. McGowan, 1991:130). The strength of informing this account with the fantasy structures that support the homeless men’s sense of maintaining their “as if” structures, in short their “reality,” would move the question of “resistance” onto a whole other level. Fiske (1993) does develop the sociological grounds as to why the spectacle of violence is enjoyed by men in a patriarchal capitalist society (Chapter 6). Only by dissolving the fantasy structures that support the viewing of spectacular violence would it become possible for these homeless men to redirect their energies into other, more active forms of resistance, perhaps organizing themselves into a collective. “The subject can ‘enjoy his symptom’ only in so far as its logic escapes him—the measure of the success of its interpretation is precisely its dissolution” (Zizek, 1989:21). In brief, unconscious knowledge is what structures their fantasies.
The difficulty with theorizing resistance along Foucault’s trajectory is that it lends itself to an analysis of micro-politics based on place or location. Foucault’s rhetoric of its complexity leaves an unbridgeable gap between these micro-procedures of power and any formulation of its centralization.\textsuperscript{3} The “disciplinary procedures” that operate at the level of “micro-power” seem to by-pass ideology altogether since they are not made accountable to some knowable or unknowable external power or organizing principal.\textsuperscript{4} Fiske (1993:34, n.9), for example, utilizes the concepts station and locale as developed by Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and Gidden’s notion of locale to develop his “power plays, power works” thesis. The question, however, now becomes whether the sense of place (“locale,” “habitus,” “station”) is still conceptually adequate to theorize power in a postmodern electronic world? Is this not also a romantic holdover? As Best and Kellner (1991:23) point out, Foucault’s wide-ranging analyses of power omitted “any discussion of the key contemporary mechanisms of power and social reproduction: media, consumption, fashion, leisure, and semiotics.” If Meyrowitz’s (1985) thesis of “no sense of place” is to be accepted, the electronic media such as television and the computer have undermined the traditional relationship between physical setting and social situation. Space (cf. Harvey, 1989) and not place, is where such theories concerning power should take place. In Forget Foucault (1987/1977) Baudrillard argued that power as Foucault had theorized it was obsolete in an age of simulacra determined by models, codes, information, and the media. Power had become abstract, unlocatable in either the micro or macro structures. In The Electronic Disturbance (1994), members of the radical left Critical Art Ensemble conceptualize power as absent and invisible. In an electronic age they argue, it is a cyber-elite—postmodern Scythians—who possess “nomadic power” in their ability to compress time and space at will by occupying the power of the decentralized and deterritorialized cyberspace. Electronic space controls the physical logistics of manufacture. “In most cases sedentary
populations submit to the obscenity of spectacle, and contentedly pay the tribute demanded, in the form of labor material, and profit” (16). In sci-fi dystopias like *Fortress*, *Blade Runner*, and *Total Recall* even the memories and fantasies have been artificially implanted by a corporate cyber-elite colonizing the last vestiges of proletarian private resistance.

How can “sedentary servants,” in Critical Art Ensemble terms, cause a “disturbance,” under such nomadic domination? What can “paramount” or “dominant” reality mean in a hyperreal world? Where is the Gramscian “power bloc” located if power is so decentralized? What are you resisting when you cannot locate in any adequate way, except perhaps from feelings of melancholia and apocalyptic doom what it is that is oppressing you? (Jay, 1994:35) Such questions raise the possibility that the “multiple,” fluid or morphing subjectivity is exactly what late capitalism needs. On one level, it allows a moneyed class to be mobile, fluid, and nomadic like the cyber-elite themselves. “Multiple selves” can enhance the multiple effects of pleasure through even more consumption. Here the mantra of modernist categories of class, color, ethnicity, gender, ages and so on as critical categories no longer hold. If they do, they can become counter-productive for profit as in “color” and “green” capitalism. Post-fordist capitalism treats them as designer categories. Any combination of these signs produces a specific target population. As Mercer (1990:426) has argued, this radical pluralism has resulted in “the challenge of sameness” where “no one has a monopoly on oppositional identity.” (emphasis in original) The sign of being /black/ for instance, is dispersed over a wide discursive field. Patricia Williams (1991), a lawyer from Harvard deconstructs her experience of being barred from Benetton because she was /black/, but here her color was profitably misread and overdetermined by the clerk who refused her entrance. The racial signifier /black/, under other circumstances, identified members of an underclass that did not have the money to
Romancing the Stone

shop there which she did. Her fluidly blocked—which under other circumstances would have never happened—Williams’s anger was channeled in exposing Benetton’s racist practices. Clothing companies such as Cross-colors and Mondetta have already recognized the counter-profitability of maintaining exclusive categories, as has the fashion industry that is profiting from cross-dressing and “designing women” (cf. Gaines and Herzog, 1990). Perpetual cultural deconstruction of meanings and identities as excesses of desire propels consumerist capitalism. In this respect, Madonna’s continued proliferating identities makes her The material girl *par excellence*.

On another level, capitalist marketing targets specific life-styles as so many *fractal spaces* whose descriptive composite is generated by a computerized profile made possible by the “electronic body” each of us already has, registered through bank accounts, consensus questionnaires, social insurance numbers, income tax returns, credit ratings, organizations to which we belong, and so on. Although as agents with “free will,” we do not have to empirically identify with these discursive “market segmented” subject positions prepared for us by capitalist engineers, the very fact that post-fordist designer capitalism reproduces itself through such a broad range of consumerist interests testifies to the success and profit that the pluralization of difference brings. Chaos theory, which has to deal with indeterminacy and uncertainty through stochastic statistical analysis, is precisely the very ideology necessary to manage transnational capitalism which has to configure (factor in) this plurality of differences. The proliferation of cable and satellite channels which will meet the whims of every possible interest group provides the alibi of liberal pluralism that differences are being served, and that the “end of ideology” and the “end of history” is indeed here despite critical analysis from the Left to claim otherwise. What can “resistance” possibly mean under these circumstances?
In *Seduction* (1990/1979:8), the book that immediately followed *Forget Foucault*, Baudrillard makes the following suggestive remark: “that seduction represents mastery over the symbolic universe, while power represents only mastery of the real universe” (original italic). With seduction we enter into the Imaginary and the “reality” of fantasy, what might more adequately described as the contemporary cyber-space of the mind, where “the sublime object(s) of ideology” (Zizek, 1989) are to be found; where the really “real,” or virtual real is simulated fantasy. *Hegemony and seduction occupy the same territory* (Miller, 1990). As Cora Kaplan (1986:162) adds, “the reader identifies ... most of all with the process of seduction” (my emphasis). The interrogation of psychic investments which go into fantasy provide a way to go beyond the “cultural populism” (cf. McGuigan, 1992) of resistance. To theorize how readers/viewers of images and films are caught up in these webs of power requires the supposition of fantasy. However, reading/viewing cannot, in and of itself, be radically individualized and any generalizations that have been attempted by psychoanalysis and textual analysis have led to a stalemate. In other words, taken to their radical extremes, psychoanalysis which “theoretically” deals with an N=1 results in a specificity which cannot be generalizable, while ethnographic approaches which use sociological variables (social class, gender, age and so on) as pre-given categories often end up in reductive generalizations and conflictual findings. As Rodowick, who might be counted as one of the early few psychoanalytic theoreticians questioning any direct correspondence between desire and a sex/gendered subject position, has this to say:

Despite the achievements of psychoanalytic film theory and textual analysis in the past twenty years, I would insist that all claims made about processes of identification in actual spectators, powerful and important as they may be, are speculative. In my view the analysis of forms of enunciation, or point of view, in fiction
Romancing the Stone

films may tell us a great deal about ideological representations of gender differences. However, they can tell us nothing definitive about the forms of sexual identification, or the potential meanings, produced with respect to actual spectators.

(Rodowick, 1991:viii, my emphasis).

Walkerdine (1986;1993) is perhaps one of the few researchers who has tried to bridge this psychoanalytic-sociological divide in cultural studies by attempting to provide an explanation for the role which certain fantasies play in specific family situations through a self-reflective and cautious ethnographic approach. Her research suggests that the available fantasy formations, which are consumed, are crucial to understanding resistance as a “romantic” ideological form.\(^7\)

Our sense of self-identification to various socially created subject positions cannot be denied; feral children aside, no one escapes socialization. But we are dispersed subjects, overdetermined by some positions and not others. In Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985:111) turn of phrase, “This field of identities which never manage to be fully fixed, is the field of overdetermination” (original italic). The paradox of overdetermination means that self-identification is “articulated” by a particular element which otherwise remains as a subordinated part to self-identity as a closed “whole” system, i.e., our sense of ourselves as moi, as a self-assured ego. As we have seen with the example of /black/, as a “free floating signifier” (Laclau, 1977) in particular context like the Benetton store, the identity of Patricia Williams was overdetermined by it, whereas in another context her position as a Harvard lawyer has more determining power. As dispersed subjects each of us is subjected to a variety of discourses differently. The riddle of postmodern political
subjectivity comes to mind: What do a trade unionist, a racist, a Christian, a wife-beater, and a consumer have in common? Answer: They all can be the same person! (Ross, 1990). Fiske makes no mention who it was amongst the homeless who turned off the film. Did he represent the wishes of all these men? Did he hold a place of privilege because he was a leader? Did that leadership come about because of his rhetorical power? or due to his physical strength? Was their fantasy of resistance merely a cynical repetition?

Can it be that Baudrillard’s “ecstasy of communication” is closer to describing the way ideology works if contradictory readings are equally accounted for? After all, the Hodge and Tripp example confirms the structural similarities of power in all modernist institutions: schools, asylums, police departments, corporations, hospitals, religious organizations which continue to function despite their inherent contradictions. Accommodation and complicity is as much of this reproductive process as is resistance. These are all examples of “total institutions” (Goffman, 1961) which have built in structural forms of power along with built-in safety features for their criticism. They are like Bakhtin’s “loophole” texts, anticipating the objections and faults to their very structure. The difficulty of attributing specificity to the media/reader couplet prompts me to ask whether the continued vogue in popular cultural studies isn’t inadvertently supporting a fantasy structure of resistance which is the very mechanism that allows patriarchal hegemony to reproduce itself through consumerist seductions? As Todd Gitlin (1991:336) once asked, “does it engage in the politics in the strictest sense ... or does it simply make the most of consumption?”

**Questioning Jouissance: “Enjoy Your Symptom More than Yourself”**
Romancing the Stone

Gitlin’s question is a difficult one to answer. In one sense, subversive resistance provides great pleasure as developed in the well-known and (by now) well-worn thesis by de Certeau (1984), where the subordinate’s uses of “tact” prevail over the dominant’s “strategies” of containment. The same may be said of Fiske (1987; 1989 a, b; 1990; 1992) and Stam (1989) in their interpretations of television series, game shows and films respectively with their appropriation of Bakhtin’s notion of carnivalesque opposition. Stam (1989:197) has eloquently analyzed Woody Allen’s *Stardust Memories* as brilliantly displaying Bakhtin’s notion of a “loophole text,” a filmic text which anticipates, in advance, all possible criticisms of itself and its director. Yet, despite this, the journalistic reviews charged the film with the very faults that it had already charged itself. For me, this indicates that the effects of the text far exceed the inner workings of its form, no matter how clever that form may prove to be. Stam enthusiastically embraces the resistant practices of the carnival, and yet I would temper his enthusiastic assessment of the subversive potential of the “cinematic” carnival with Umberto Eco’s more sobering assessment of the carnival as “an authorized transgression deeply dependent on a law that it only apparently violates ... [T]he powerful have always used the circenses to muffle popular rebellion, just as the contemporary mass media, instruments of social control, operate a ‘continuous carnivalization of life’ “ (in Stam, 1989:91).

In cultural studies, perhaps Janice Radway (1984) has been given the most quotable credit in recent years for introducing this resistant view in her ethnographic study of women reading romance novels who identify with a particular feisty heroine who fights against her domineering male antagonist. Fiske’s encapsulation of resistance as the “art of making do” with what’s at hand, and the political use of pleasure by women in popular culture, especially in women’s genres of soap operas, romance novels, melodramas, the fashion
industry, shopping for pleasure, and popular music require cautious assessment. Their locations, by and large, are shaped by institutions already “structured in dominance” (Hall, 1980: 134). This is an extremely difficult issue to think through since all texts are constituted by aspects of utopia and ideology (Jameson, 1981). Fiske constantly reminds his readers that the potentiality of disruption, subversion and liberalization always exists in the bodily excesses of *jouissance*; i.e., in carnivalesque pleasures where bodies escape being managed and disciplined by the social order. Despite such assurances, I believe it is still a highly contentious proposition to underestimate the license given by the prevailing social order to allow such forms to exist as a “strategy of containment” (Eagleton, 1981). Without such allowances the discursive rhetoric of “democracy” as the best that can be currently achieved could never be maintained. *Jouissance* is itself, under-theorized and a problematic concept. French feminists (Cixcous, Irigaray, Clément, Montrelay) wrestled the term away from Lacan precisely because Lacan admitted that *feminine jouissance* in particular existed outside the containment of the Symbolic Order. As the Symbolic Order’s limit, they found the excesses of *jouissance* as a liberation from phallocentrism. Writing around the same time, Barthes’ (1975) appropriation of the Lacanian term as developed in his “pleasure of the text” thesis, gave him leverage to break with orthodox notions of ideology critique. This fit neatly into Fiske’s further reappropriation of the term into popular culture as a form of resistant bodily evasion. However, because Fiske rejects the “split-subject” of psychoanalysis, theorizing Foucault’s discursive subject instead, his interpretation of *jouissance* fails to recognize that resistance coupled to *jouissance* as he interprets this term is the seat of ideology *par excellent*. From a Lacanian psychoanalytic view enjoyment, as *jouis-sense* (“enjoy-meant,” or “enjoyment-in-meaning”), means a mis-recognition of the very “substance,” or “kernel” of one’s desire which remains hidden and unknowable. In contrast, Fiske’s interpretation of *jouissance* is comparable to *plaisir* in Roland Barthes
sense—mundane pleasure that confirms one sense of identity. Under these circumstances, resistance as pleasurable meaning means avoiding the Real (unconscious) of one’s desire. Access to such knowledge would mean paying for it with a loss of enjoyment. The stupidity of enjoyment as “resistance” is only possible on the basis of ignorance, or unconscious non-knowledge.\(^\text{10}\) Facing the “kernel” of one’s desire is a terrifying and fearful event, one where “freedom” means breaking the symbolic reality in which one is embedded. Here jouissance takes on quite a different meaning. In Zizek’s qualifying phrase:

What should be pointed out here is that enjoyment (jouissance, Genuss) is not to be equated with pleasure (Lust): enjoyment if precisely ‘Lust im Unlust’; it designates the paradoxical situation procured by a painful encounter with a Thing that perturbs the equilibrium of the ‘pleasure principle.’ In other words, enjoyment is located ‘beyond the pleasure principle.’

(Zizek, 1993:280, n.6)

Fiske’s employment of Barthe’s term jouissance throughout his writings is more closely related to the pleasure principle of plaisir, and to the more familiar experience of catharsis than it is to the psychoanalytic realm of jouissance as defined above. I believe a case can be made for equating “resistance” as a postmodern form of catharsis. Catharsis has the same elements of jouissance as Fiske uses the term, namely as a “loss of subjectivity” that seems to escape the control of culture. Doesn’t the cathartic purging of fear and pity, which characterizes the classical sense of tragedy, fall under plaisir, as pleasure contained within the
social order? In the famous Lacanian (1982) seminar on the “ecstasy of St Teresa,” is her jouissance to be read as still under the recuperation of the Church’s power (after all, she is in ecstasy with God)? Or, is she now experiencing the delight of her own body, orgasmically and metaphorically represented by Irigaray’s (1985) “two lips”? How radical has her escape from the Church Father’s been? (see Ash, 1990)

Linda Williams (1991) has further complicated the issue of jouissance. Again, her discussion presents the possibility of naming resistance as a cathartic experience of containment. She has cleverly pointed to other filmic bodies in excess—in ecstasy—as they relate to specific film genres which have low cultural status, but a high repetition of consumption: overwhelming pathos in the “weepy” melodramas, the orgasmic body in pornographic films, and the violence and terror of the body in horror films. All three forms, which relate to sex, violence, and strong emotion, would fit Fiske’s “Barthian” definition of jouissance as a primal orgasmic experience of fantasy (see note 12). “Visually, each of these ecstatic excesses could be said to share a quality of uncontrollable convulsion or spasm—of the body ‘beside itself’ with sexual pleasure, fear and terror, or overpowering sadness” (Williams: 1991:4). These primary embodiments of pleasure, fear, and pain, which range from the masculine pole (pornography) to the feminine pole (melodrama), with horror in between for adolescents “careening wildly between the two masculine and feminine poles,” (ibid.) are played out over the bodies of women in extremely complex ways. If Williams is to be followed, pleasure becomes an extremely complicated issue as the cinematic gaze bounces all over the sex/gender landscape with no easy way of separating the boundaries between pleasure, fear and pain. Often pleasure turns to pain and visa versa as in the practices of sadomasochism. For a teenager, fear can be a pleasurable experience while watching a horror film (Glover, 1992).

We have now reached a point where sex/gender confusions
Romancing the Stone

abound in terms of subject positions which any one text offers (Adams, 1991; Rodowick, 1991). Evasive pleasures may be found in the new genres of pornography developed specifically for women, heterosexual couples, bisexuals, gays, lesbians, as well as for the transgendered community. The recent phenomenon of male “weepies,” melodramas like Dad have appeared. Is it possible to interpret these bodies in excess which are allowed to let off “bodily steam,” so to speak; to ejaculate, shudder, spill blood, sob and cry as a way to avoid the “normal” and banal disciplined existence of mundane life as a containment strategy by dominant hegemony? We are back full circle to the question of catharsis. The difference being that such societal catharsis is not classically defined as tragic—purging fear and pity—but its postmodern varieties which purge yet other anxieties of the age: the insecurities related to sex/gender and power. Isn’t the border between Barthes’ weak dichotomization between plaisir/jouissance represented by the very institutionalized forms of cathartic release: Greek tragedy, Roman gladiatorial fights, Medieval public executions, and today’s postmodernist spectatorial forms of audience participation, like telethons, live aid, sports spectacles and rock concerts? With the loss of authority and faith and trust in the Symbolic Order, the question of perverted jouissance once more emerges on the landscape. What role does hysterical and obsessional behavior as it relates to the Law have for young people today? How can be identify desire which is potentially transformative from the drive impulses that are more destructive? Euphoric “hooliganism” that young men experience during soccer matches, or the “slam” dances of skinhead culture, or the drug-induced euphoria of rave dances, strictly speaking as resistant displays of jouissance surely are not to be interpreted positively. Rather, they are symptomatic of the psychic pain that young people suffer today, where “skin games” (piercing, tattooing and cutting) have radical ways to “feel” (jagodzinski, in press).
There is no radical psychology of desire incorporated into cultural studies, at least to my knowledge, which would help theorize how the identification in fantasy with a heroine by a “housewife” who regularly consumes specific novels Janice Radway describes, leads to actually changes in the real conditions of her existence. Her experience of jouissance (as plaisir), and the cathartic release that comes with it may simply be one of emotional release, a way to sustain a hope that her future will change. These are accommodations to the structure, rather than challenges to its limits. It may well be that this form of empowerment provides her with more space by challenging some of her husband’s patriarchal practices. But should such resistance be interpreted as liberating? Concessions to some of her demands on her husband’s part may well be made in order to maintain a relationship of subordination. Put pejoratively speaking, if the “natives” are restless, then yield to some of their demands; give then some “rope” so that their “work” can go on. Isn’t this precisely what this melodrama does? As Schröder concludes in his discussion of Dynasty:

In other words, TV melodrama establishes an aesthetic contract with its viewers. It offers them an opportunity to explore individual and social tensions and to face behaviour which is shocking or threatening to prevailing moral codes. Furthermore, it promises that the experience will end on a note of reassurance and moral acceptability, and be stranded with frequent implausibilities so that viewers can suspend involvement and withdraw to a position of superior distance, should they begin to feel uncomfortably affected by the fictional distance of agony and immorality (Schröder:1988:76).

After the viewing of each episode of Dynasty, after the reading of every romance novel, the social structure remain essentially the same. It would
have to take a lot more than just reading such romance novels for a woman to get away from the reality of an abusive relationship.

In the mid-90s, Ien Ang (1996:91) reaffirmed that Sue Ellen character in *Dallas* was by far the most popular character with whom women identify with. As a heroine, she represents the very embodiment of the melodramatic imagination—masochistic and powerless—a surrender to forces outside the subject. As a symbolic realization of a popular feminine subject position this alone should continue to send out the message that feminist struggles are far from over. Yet, there is persistence that “reading the romance” is a resistant form that should continue to be honored. Ien Ang (1996:107), when reviewing Radway’s pioneering work, claims that the psychic investment in the romance fantasy should be taken seriously. “And it [the romantic fantasy] is this enduring emotional quest that, I would suggest, should be taken seriously as a psychical strategy by which women *empower* themselves in everyday life, leaving apart what its ideological consequences in social reality are” (emphasis mine). Ang is uncertain how feminism should respond to this, but she has no difficulty in chastising Radway for her rationalist feminist proposal to overcome the ideological function of the pleasure these women experience. Recognizing the psychic investment in the romantic fantasy is not the problem here. Rather it is the very pleasure these women experience as a form of “resistance” and “empowerment” which is precisely how they avoid the Real of their desire. They enjoy their “symptom” (i.e., being powerless and caught in a masochistic relationship) more than themselves. The “repetition” of the romance fantasy is sustained by maintaining that the external circumstances they find themselves in cannot be changed—the psychic investment to make such a change is not worth it. It would cause too much “suffering.” Children and financial circumstances seem to make it “impossible.” Rather than facing the “freedom” that comes with *jouissance* in the psychoanalytic sense, they absolve themselves
of agency and displace it on external circumstances. As a further complication, if these women feel guilty and morally responsible for the state of their marriage, then there is no need to examine the ideological, political, and economic conditions of patriarchy that sustains their unhappiness, depression, and frustration. Reading the romance is a way of making the present oppressive circumstances tolerable. Such pleasures (e.g., like Sue Ellen’s occasional extra-marital affairs) often prevent them from falling into a completely cynical position which comes by completely blaming external circumstances. Instead they remain “good” housewives rather than falling into total rudeness and hate toward their husbands. Such a form of resistant agency acts like a “crutch,” keeping hope alive that circumstances may change. In Derrida’s (1987) sense, where the frame itself is part of the framed content, the romance fantasy is the frame that frames these women into patriarchal ideology. It is the supplement which must be continually consumed in order to keep the picture tolerable. And that picture calls for an immobility regardless how strong the heroines are.

Looking now into the new millennium, a decade later, have things significantly changed since the mid-90s? Can we say that postfeminism of the liberal variety, exemplified by such television series as *Sex in the City* and the reality shows that have begun to pervert marriage (Joe Millionaire, The Bachelor, The Bachelorette, Meet My Parents, Married By America) have significantly altered the complaint? Admittedly, liberal feminism has introduced a “revolution” in the romance novel. It may be said that today’s postmodern heroine has been transformed into playing a “stronger role.” She has been given the strength of character to challenge her male antagonists. The same may be said for heterosexual and lesbian detective novels. No one would deny that the reading of such romance and detective novels may potentially contribute to a housewife’s eventual departure from an intolerable situation, or that lesbian detective stories don’t provide
Romancing the Stone

*positive* fantasy models for women who are questioning their own sex preferences, or searching for confirmation regarding their own life styles. But, an answer which speaks to the reasons for change confined to the influence of media *alone* is undecidable. Much like *there is no causal link between watching video violence and committing real acts of brutality*, a finding which is often repeated by media researchers even in controversial areas like pornography and televised and filmic violence, but continuously rejected by the pro-censorship moral guardians of society, the benefits of romance novels to women have been over-exaggerated (Clancy, 1992; Purdie, 1992). Surely the social relations and the material conditions of the support communities which circle and contextualize the reading of romance are much more influential in determining the direction women’s lives will take?

It is often forgotten that such liberalist melodramatic romance forms have contributed to the gains of very small strata of white middle-class women. Issues of race, ethnicity, abelism complicate this situation enormously. On another register, the reception of soaps by working class women and by women in “third world,” as well as what were once one-party state communist countries, namely Russia, find American soap operas fanciful projections of life styles they could never hope to achieve. They read them as being “unrealistic,” confirming more what they don’t have than what they hope to have (Brown, 1990 a,b). Soviet capitalism fashioned a decade later has been conditioned and shaped by these very unattainable fantasies. Joyrich (1988; 1990:162-63) is especially perceptive in her account of showing how the tropes of female proximity, fluidity, and “nearness” which are codes of “feminine textuality,” offered as subversive alternatives to masculine models of identity, support the psychology of the perfect consumer. And, as forcefully argued by Rosemary Hennessy (1993, 2000), this emergent “new woman” is the exemplar for the logic of late capitalism.
Concluding Thoughts

The dangers of resistant pleasure have been well voiced throughout cultural studies. It has been my thesis that such resistant pleasures enable capitalist consumerist ideology to reproduce itself. Cynical reason is one resistant response; the resistant repetition involved in the consumption of romance is yet another. Cathartic release through the media experiences of violence, melodrama, and erotica (pornography) purge the body of its pent up desires to change social conditions. In order for capitalist patriarchy to maintain its hegemony, seduction through fantasy formations must provide a broad enough range of subject positions to psychically satisfy and preserve the existent class, race, sex/gender, ethnic, age dynamics. The relation between fantasy and lived experience becomes the key site/sight/cite for counter-hegemonic intervention. For groups like ACT UP the fantasy formations of AIDS created by the media, the state, and the medical profession have been exposed (e.g., Crimp, 1988), consequently their resistance have been “antagonistic” rather than the complacent kind developed in this essay. For a more active form of resistance it seems that a return to a neo-Gramscian agenda of “popular education” is in order (Hall, 1996). Ang (1996) worries how feminist cultural workers might avoid the “moral high ground” when confronting the fantasies of their non-feminist informants. It seems to me that a visual cultural studies education that steers, or oscillates between the fantasy subject positions offered by any given text and an investigation of a personal psychic investment and commitment to specific fantasies by informants-students-co-researchers and researcher or research team would be one possible way to level the moral ground (jagodzinski, 2002). Leaving ethnographic investigations at the level of discourse theories alone enables an abdication of social and ethical responsibility by all those concerned. If the context and the “already ready” historical discourses
Romancing the Stone

determine the subject then the subject must continually reflect the guilt or makes excuses why the situation cannot be changed. Only by recognizing the impossible gap which exists between the enunciated subject and the subject of enunciation can responsibility be taken for the fantasies we identify with. Perhaps then, certain fantasies which prevent “freedom” towards more democratic social relations can be rejected and replaced by more enabling fantasies. But this may not be a pleasurable matter.

Notes

1. McGowan (1991: 131-134) provides three succinct criticisms of Foucault’s theory of power which could be characteristic of cynical reason. First, freedom conceptualized as resistance is empty. ‘All power in Foucault is equal, just as all resistance is approved’ (132). Foucault never qualifies the resistance by questioning its goals. Second, freedom is exercised in resistance rather than in power. In other words, he has not an articulated sense of the positive sense of power—especially its capacity to achieve collective goals. Power has a ‘distinctly negative charge’ (133) which bifurcates his theory into power as conservative action against resistance as transgressive action. And third is Foucault’s difficulty identifying when ‘power is not an evil’ (134).


3. In contrast to Althusser (1971), for instance, who conceives these
micro-politics of power as part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA’s). The individual is ‘already ready’ interpellated by the ideological big Other (the state).

4. Here I follow Copjec’s (1994) critique of Foucault. The ‘unknowable’ nature of the organizing principal of society is crucial here. Society as an ‘open system’ can still be usefully theorized by speculating on the cause which is occluded from the system but which nevertheless establishes the system in the first place. This first principal functions as a phantasy structure of ideology. According to Copjec, Foucault’s rejection of psychoanalysis places him as a ‘historicist’ who grounds being at the level of appearance and avoids any questions of desire (as fantasy) which is registered negatively (as absent) in language. ‘[W]e are calling historicist the reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations of power and knowledge’ (6).

5. Benetton’s racist advertising has been well exposed and documented. See Giroux (1994); Back and Quaade (1994); Thévenaz (1995).

6. Chaos theory is a science of process rather than state, of becoming rather than being. It incorporates the erratic and the irregular, discontinuity and disorder, oscillation and wild swirls into a science that searches for new laws that encompass these patterns so as to make a strong claim about the universal behavior of hypercomplex systems. Chaos means a special complex kind of prediction and probability assessment. Irregularity can now be analyzed now that powerful computers available (see Gleick, 1987).

7. Her 1986 study examined the pleasures of violence by working
Romancing the Stone

class men. The fantasy provided a ‘romantic’ hope that they could get ahead in the world through physical struggle ‘with their hands’ alone. It becomes a specific masculine response to overcome humiliation and cowardice. In her 1993 study with June Melody she identifies how the fantasy formation of the ‘orphan child’ in the film Annie enables six year old Eliana to cope living with her dysfunctional family. Pleasure is found in Annie’s escape from her drunken mother and finding true happiness with a wealthy man.


9. Fiske’s (1987:50-51) definition of jouissance as developed by Barthes goes as follows: ‘Jouissance, translated variously as bliss, ecstasy, or orgasm, is the pleasure of the body that occurs at the moment of the breakdown of culture into nature. It is a loss of self and of the subjectivity that controls and governs the self—the self is socially constructed and therefore controlled, it is the site of subjectivity and therefore the site of ideological production and reproduction. The loss of self is, therefore, the evasion of ideology. ... The orgasmic pleasure of the body out of control—the loss of self—is a pleasure of evasion, of escape from the self-control/social control ... an escape from meaning ... ’

10. See Zizek (1989:68-69) for jouissance as theorized more as a question of plaisir. Fiske (1987:229-230) admits that ‘the distinction between plaisir and jouissance is often difficult to make in practice....’

References


——— (1990b). Motley Moments: Soap Operas, Carnival, Gos-
Romancing the Stone


Romancing the Stone


Romancing the Stone


This essay is an excerpt from the third volume in the ii ae / Analogos series by the author, now in preparation. DBAE refers to Discipline Based Art Education while ii ae refers to interactive interdisciplinary art education. In this essay I posit that there are two co-dependent ‘game’ plans informing the orientation of contemporary art education as represented by these two curricular orientations, and that one is sustained inside the other. As set forth by Carse, each one gives rise to a very different set of activation rules for players; this forms the basis for an attempt to tease out a concept of the ethos streaming through the current state of art and art education. To be involved in art without knowing the basic Art Game rules of Finite and Infinite play is to carry an enormous handicap into the playing.

In orchestrating art-events, (i.e., in planning art-events/sessions as an artist, teacher, researcher, and/or critic; or on the other side of the dialogue, as a beholder, a student, a research subject, or a critical reader) with how much skill are we able to maneuver through the Art Games of Finite and Infinite play? Do we engage in art differently in a Meta-Modernist world than we do in a Modernist world?

I am indebted to James P. Carse for his extra-ordinary treatise, *Finite and Infinite Games: Vision of Life as Play and Possibility*, which articulates a
basic premise of this essay in much greater detail than is possible here. I have encountered no other text that unearths with such precision and with such dexterity-of-word the potential for understanding (standing-under) what I have come to call the Meta-Modern, the contemporary condition of being aware of being aware. The term Meta-Modern has been coined in order to better define the new ethos that has emerged with greater clarity and continuity as successive Modernist movements come and go. (It is posited here that the Modern and Meta-Modern movements are both present in the contemporary world; accordingly, the term post-modern is regarded as inadequate since it suggests the displacement of one reality by an other.) The Analogos, (Horner, pp. 21-28), a paradigm/syntagm construct designed to facilitate the layering of complex ideas, is invoked here as the preferred means for mapping the revised construct (a short-cut version is included at the end of this paper).

A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing the play...It is an invariable principle of all who play, finite and infinite, that whoever plays, plays freely. Whoever must play, cannot play (Carse, pp. 3-4).

From the above two axioms, one can surmise that the dialectic of play centers on the difference between collaboration (Infinite play) and competition (Finite play). And since, according to Carse, everyone plays the game they choose, even if they try to argue that they are doing it under duress or limitation, then everyone must be considered responsible for their decision to participate in whatever game they end up playing in any given time period. What is important here, however, is not the differentiation of Infinite and Finite play from each other, but rather the dynamic of their inter-active relation., for I argue that this metaphor, this construct of one surviving inside the other, speaks to the relationship that I suggest exists between Meta-Modernism (as a
Infinite Games

prototypical Infinite ‘game’) and Modernism (as a prototypical Finite ‘game’).

Finite games can be played within an infinite game, but an infinite game cannot be played within a finite game. Infinite players regard their wins and losses in whatever finite games they play as but moments in continuing play….While finite games are externally defined, infinite games are internally defined. (Carse, p. 7)

In a finite game the aim is to win by silencing the Other; in an infinite game the aim is to continue the discourse through an Other. In the former the aim is to become the winning speaking subject; in the latter it is to share the role of speaking subject. In the former the rules must not change during the play; in the latter the rules must continually be updated to guarantee continuity. “Finite players play within boundaries; infinite players play with boundaries” (Carse, p. 10). Trained to predict and head off surprise, a Finite player tries to control the future, “to prevent it from altering the past.” On the other hand, an Infinite player insists on the future triumphing over the past.

DBAE and iiae: Playing Finite and Infinite Art Games

Meta-Modernism and Modernism can be regarded as two disparate ways of being in the world. One, the Meta-Modern, carries the torch of continuity, i.e., of an Infinite game that must not be allowed to dissipate—as such, it carries the endurance needed to play host to the intense, competitive periods, or Finite games, that temporarily flare up, run their course, and then are finished with clear resolve. This is a very different concept from the notion that regards Modernism as dead
because it has been displaced by Post Modernism.

The Analogos schema (Horner, pp. 21-28) cannot be constrained to remain within the protracted limitations of a (modern/postmodern) linear-displacement notion; it insists on mapping the persistence of co-existing layers of any phenomena (Horner, pp 25, 44). It posits that Modernism and Meta-Modernism not only co-exist, but that there is a specific inter-relation between them. The shift in terminology from Post Modern to Meta-Modern is similar to that which has taken place in stage-step theories: previous versions of developmental studies often rendered the displacement of each period by a subsequent one. In contrast to this lock-step schema, the Analogos supports the updated version of developmental processes that regards an individual’s experiences from all previous periods as remaining co-existent in a continuous present—as available repertoire for current action. In this regard, it follows that each age is sustained by its on-going Infinite continuity, a ground beneath and a vision above, that needs to be secure if it is to support the sporadic break-outs of Finite discontinuity and definitive resolve. Salient characteristics of iiae, posited as a prototypical Meta-Modernist construct (Horner), and of DBAE, posited as a prototypical Modernist construct, are charted below.

While charts like the accompanying one are typically understood as polemical, it is of utmost importance that this not be seen as the case here. For that reason the chart is organized as an Analogos paradigm to be read from bottom-to-top and as an Analogos syntagm of triangles to vivify the specific, intrinsic inter-relatedness between all the aspects of the two columns. Parts i and iii are Infinite, that is, Meta-Modernist in character; parts ii and iii are Finite, that is, Modernist in character.
Infinite Games

It is also important to note that, while the terms and definitions in the chart try to suggest pure characteristics, real life as lived offers an endless variety of transitional states, trial-and-error scenarios, that often seem to survive in a not-so-clear mid-world between the two extremes—before they find their direction. (It should also be noted that the DBAE/Modernist prototype set forth here is a construct; and that many real world off-shoots from its disciplinary origins already exemplify an ongoing iiae/Meta-Modernist orientation.)

If the ultimate run-away Finite game to emerge historically is the human attempt to wage war with and win over nature, then one can understand the urgent need to see it in the context of a larger continuity, that of the Infinite game wherein human nature is an integral part of primal nature (Abrams). In short, it is critical that we remain mindful of the potential inherent in a construct of Finite-/Infinite interdependence. Infinite (collaborative) play needs to be safeguarded as the mode that offers an enduring present; Finite (competitive) games need to be fully respected as temporary forays into the need for closure and containment in the face of an otherwise infinite endlcssness.

References


http://www.finearts.armstrong.edu/SIEA%20Folder/page8.htm


### Infinite Games

3. DIADE and IIAE: Playing Finite and Infinite Art Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta-Moderatism and Modernism</th>
<th>DIADE and Finite Modernism (II)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) and Infinite Meta-Moderism</td>
<td>(Analogous Paradigm Version)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Evaluation
- Critics are engaged in evaluating the cultural worth of a particular response experience with art. Individuals are expected to reflect on their own direct responses and construct tentative interpretations before engaging the responses and ideas of others of more experienced practitioners. (Homer)

#### Judgment
- Critics have a mission to judge the social worth of works of art, to endorse them or reject them. Individuals are disposed towards critically examined work, to learn the expert interpretations and to pass them on to others. Ready-made, constructed knowledge, when acquired, carries a status value.

#### Subject Focus
- Multi-practitioners regard the complex of forces, image/word/image flux as a central focus. The subject spoken, the art work, resonates in the mid-world between the speaking subject and the spoken subject; it informs the meta-spoken (the meta-art work)—i.e., what is spoken about the spoken subject.

#### Objective
- Specialists regard the art work as a subject (detached from the artist who created it), as their central focus. The art work informs, i.e., carries the evidence ‘used’ by practitioners within the other disciplines (art historians, art philosophers, and critics) to carry out the work specific to their disciplines.

#### Activator
- Multi-practitioners are fluent in role-shifting as a practice and in trading places with their Others—as such, they can identify with their Others and regard outside input as minimal to any on-going dialogue.

#### Director
- Specialists are experts in their disciplinary practice, as such, they regard practitioners of other disciplines as Others. Thus, shifting from one discipline to another requires a full stop at the border.

#### Multi-practitioner
- The four roles are regarded as interactive and inter-related. One needs to be as fluent as possible in one role, but ready to engage in the experience of wearing the other hats, and sometimes even shifting to another role as the new ground.

#### Specialist
- Artists are specialists in one focus, making art, leaving other experts to focus on the other secondary disciplines (art history, reception, and art criticism), all three of which are regarded somewhat as ‘passive’ manifestations, feeding off the work of artists.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Design/Linguistics: The text Analogs regards technique and linguistics as significant vehicles streaming through all four roles of engagement with art objects. Outer imaging is impossible without them; inner imaging is impossible without regarding their role in the process of gathering meaning. They evolve historically. Styles shift according to the infinite needs of the specific subject/mode involved by the specific event.</th>
<th>Styles/Periods/Moments attach great significance to individual artists who perfect a unique (winning) style that stands out from the usual for a given period of time. Technology and language are regarded as domain-specific and their relevancy is understood as operation within the confines of the historical development of each medium in each discipline.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence Meaning is born out of dialogue that must be regarded as on-going, i.e., not as finalized or finished—not regarded as perfected, as that would be rendered false in the future. All knowledge is questioned and subject to ongoing cultural revision.</td>
<td>Product Meaning is born out of evidence in objects that contain truths, proclamations, final conclusions. The collectedanner set forth as the great masterworks constitute the highest form of knowledge as implied by the 'top' experts and connoisseurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusive Multi-practitioners invest in community-shared technique and language to promote tolerance and engage in intra-inter-actions with their Others as a means of gaining a more comprehensive broad-based, and therefore, more inclusive knowledge.</td>
<td>Exclusive Specialists invest in specialized technology and language ('jargon') with Others within their designated discipline as a means of sustaining a more intensive, vertical, domain-specific, and therefore, more-exclusive knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infinite games: Multi-practitioners like to share control, to include everyone in the process of constructing communal meaning that is on-going. (Common)</td>
<td>Finite games: Specialists like to guarantee group control by recognizing winners and celebrating and supporting them in top positions of power and status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use/DEAE Orientations: Inner Criteria (a-b)
| c-1 | Art response: Multi-practitioners who focus on teaching themselves or others are interested in eliciting multiple responses in order to construct a broad-based meaning that resonates in a community of voices. |
| c-2 | Interactive roles: i.e., designates four analogical roles in which subjects can engage in dialogue as multi-practitioners: art-making, beholding, researching, subject-participating, teaching/learning, and critiquing/reading. The roles make explicit that there is always a One and Other, interacting (both are inner imaging and outer imaging); and that the four roles are open for all to experience, one role arising as the ground for the others. Each role has a history, a story, for each individual, each group, each complement (each period). A student's ability to learn how to teach themselves is regarded as a key role. |
| c-3 | Art appreciation: Specialist teachers have a mission to pass on the accepted expert meaning of an art work to the uneducated-with-potential, who will then be able to appreciate its status value and pass on the 'truth'. |
| c-4 | Specialized disciplines: DBAE designates the four disciplines as Art production, Aesthetics, Art History, and Art Criticism. These are held as distinct and separate domains related to each other across borders, each one being isolated in time and space in the K-12 curriculum as a reflection of their source: the long-standing tradition of their exclusivity in university departments. In contrast to this, Analogy/Art makes a concept which includes several histories), Art History is regarded as a separate and distinct discipline and (self-teaching/education is not included as a discipline. |
| c-5 | Transitional art: Multi-practitioners prefer art works that layer multi-tracks of content in an effort to bridge the gap between speaker and spoken subjects. As a result, the subject spoken (the art object) appears more specific to the needs of the local art/beholder, researcher/subject, teacher/student, critic/reader. This has the effect of grounding the work in a site-specific/time-specific cultural context (Winnicott). |
| c-6 | Autonomous art: Specialists prefer art works that are self-contained—works that carry within their form the codes needed to read them. As a result, the subject spoken (the art object) is detached from the speaking subject who makes it and the spoken subject who reads it. This has the effect of liberating the work from local conditions and making it available as a social commodity (Greenberg). |
### Meta-Modernism and Modernism

**Dan and Infinite Meta-Modernism (II)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>OB4E and Finite Modernism (II)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Analogies</strong>: Meta-Modernists integrate parts by means of a paradigmatic constructivist such as the Analogies. This ensures that all parts of any entity are not only related to all other parts but that each part carries a specific and unique segment designed to fulfill the whole. This means intrinsic value in the culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Avant-garde Modernists regard whereas as parthenial, each part being unique, each domain is marshaled by means of a domain-specific avant-garde ethos that ensures the declaration of winners and the celebration of losers as the basis for promoting autonomy, commodity value and economic status in the society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Subject history</strong>: Historians (of art, research, education, criticism) pursue stories to reveal subjects. Life/Art: Bejelka &amp; Life/Bejelka: Life/Art...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Object history</strong>: Art historians read domain-specific objects to make documents that make art history. Art Bejelka: art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Subject research</strong>: Researchers favor qualitative methodologies and subjective, participatory, intimate, intra-action with their subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Object research</strong>: Researchers favor quantitative methodologies and objective, outside observation of their subjects as other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Passages Meta-Modernism offers a bottom-up view and a pluralistic, collaborative perspective, the dynamic of which is intra-action and inter-action and open to play with rigid boundary.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>Boundaries</strong>: Modernism offers a top-down view and a central, hierarchical perspective, the energy dynamic of which hinges towards the borders where it then theoretically diminishes to zero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>Interdisciplinary</strong>: Multi-practitioners regard their home-discipline as a ground that survives in the survival of other disciplines...where similar infrastructures of resources are studied to facilitate cross-border engagement (shirikien).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>Disciplinary</strong>: Specialists guard their intellectual territory with rigor so that only those measuring up against established credentials are recognized as members. Other disciplines are too unique and compete to be understood by anyone but insiders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the issues when faculty wishes to teach art students critical or alternative practices with newer technologies not yet widely available to the public? Can one teach alternative practices that consider social or personal contexts when the technologies are not yet publicly available?

What other issues are involved when teaching art students to do fine art with such technologies, and when not training artists to do commercial work for the communications industry or mainstream media? What does it mean for the art student who wants to use these technologies for fine art to have ideas for their use, but with no access to them?

Clearly many answers to these questions will be better understood in hindsight, when the said technologies are in place and questions around their social and cultural use have clear examples to study. I will use a class I am currently teaching on art and mobile technologies as an example from which to draw conclusions to some of the questions raised here. Other answers however, may be sought outside of the classroom, but within the infrastructures surrounding the classroom.
Future Technologies

Infrastructures

In teaching contemporary art practice using new technologies (i.e., ‘new media’), certain factors related to the vision of the department regarding technology and the resulting infrastructure can enhance or problematize whether the faculty is able to teach in alternative or critical practices for new or future technologies.

One factor is tied to the department’s vision of what role technology has in their curriculum. Is technology in the arts a major and what emphasis does this major have? Does the curriculum have a focus on fine art practice using technology or is their focus on training for computer-related culture industries such as communications or popular culture. Does the department have a relationship to departments of engineering or science as part of the curriculum (i.e., shared courses or faculty)? These may influence whether these departments have relationships outside of the school that bring in scholarship money for students, donated equipment, student internships, and visiting speakers and faculty who are active in the artworld or in technology or culture-related industry.

Three other influential factors related to the departmental curricular focus are: 1) the presence of faculty members who understand and work with existing technologies and practice in new media. This requires faculty who are aware of previous and existing art practices outside of new media, but who will approach new media with its own specific considerations; 2) the existence of adequate related courses in art and media history that consider technology in relation to culture; and 3) whether the department has adequate funding for purchasing and maintaining hardware and software.

The four factors cited above tend to be the typical issues one faces
in teaching any existing practice in new media, and determine whether in fact faculty have a supportive environment in which to teach ‘new’ media as opposed to teaching ‘old’ approaches using new technology. This is not to say however that even when these four factors are supportive, that ‘new media’ is necessarily taught in a ‘new’ way.

Certain other factors also will determine whether the classroom environment is ready for new media alternative practices to be considered as part of a curriculum.

A further important factor is if the department fits within an art-school model of arts innovation and experimentation, where faculty and curriculum may be oriented towards more innovative strategies that focus on specificities of the media itself (as can be seen in the history of video art). However, this can also be a problem if the school cannot truly embrace ‘new media’ such as programming as an art practice that produces software as art rather than programming or software to produce works related more to previous artforms. To accept this really does require a mental shift on the part of those in the arts who see programming as the realm of technologists and not of artists.

**Student Awareness of New Media Practices**

While on the one hand, the department must create a supportive environment for students to work critically or alternatively in new media, on the other hand, students are not necessarily prepared to do so themselves. Many students arrive to their first new media class without any sophisticated knowledge of art history or contemporary art, let alone having knowledge of ‘new media’ art practice as a separate discipline. In fact, most students arrive to new media classes imagining that creating art using technology must mean either using the computer to do older art practices (i.e., image-making, 3-D modeling, animation, or special effects for film) more efficiently, or to do computer-related
Future Technologies

communications media such as websites. Those wishing to do the latter normally have very mainstream media knowledge of web-art practices.

Clearly students are not being taught about contemporary alternative art practices using technology before they enter college. Since museum acceptance of these media is fairly recent, students may also not have had any exposure to artists’ work in this media. This limits what students generally expect from the term ‘new media.’ Despite the term, frequently they expect what they also expect of ‘computer’ courses: pop-culture or mainstream culture expression and approaches, mainstream political perspectives, and training for these. Any alternatives they have in mind tend to be based on practices of particular subcultures, such as those within game culture.

This situation is further complicated if any students have had limited exposure to working with technology due to histories of economic, geographic or other disadvantages that place them beyond the so-called ‘digital divide.’ Such students often also have limited or no exposure to contemporary art practice, including new media. While this lack of experience can be overcome and needs to be addressed by the teacher, it does set such students apart from those who have prior (and privileged) experience and knowledge and creates an uneven situation in terms of skills and knowledge at the beginning of the class.

Finally, another limitation and the one that I will focus on in the remainder of this paper, is that of teaching new media practice for technologies that are not currently available. Can this be done? How can this be done? What is to be learned if one cannot actually ‘practice’ within the medium being studied because that media is not yet easily available?
Teaching Beyond Limitations: An Example

I am now reaching the end of the term teaching an upper-division undergraduate seminar/production class I designed titled “Pace/Place/Interface” on art and mobile technologies in the Department of Visual Arts at University of California, San Diego. In the context of this course, mobile technologies are portable devices that utilize technology and are designed for use while being portable. Examples of these devices are cellphones, laptops, PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), MP3 Players, portable audio and video players and recorders, pagers, portable digital cameras, portable game systems, as well as wearable devices and chip implants. Many of the newer mobile devices I was considering can employ wireless technology and thus be used as communications or transfer devices.

When I designed this course, I expected that some students would not have had any experience using more recent wireless mobile technologies. However, I was surprised to find that many students did not even own a cellphone or digital camera, and that they tended to own particular devices only due to a specific area of interest (i.e., portable games) or skill (photography). I was faced with my own prejudice that the younger generation of students whom I was teaching were all “techno-savvy,” using PDAs to connect to the web at every moment, passing along SMS messages to each other several times an hour. Indeed many students were Interdisciplinary Computing in the Arts (ICAM) or Media majors and had a range of technical skills, but my misconception failed to acknowledge a major factor in the life of an art student: economics. While very few of my students would be considered from a low-economic background, the educational costs students currently face in the U.S.A. is extremely high and many of my students work at more than one part-time job. Expensive gadgets (as is currently the case) that have no direct application to their lives
Future Technologies

and work are simply beyond their means, and in art departments with no industry-research link, free access to these are few and far between. My class met in a lab that had many desktop computers, but we had no mobile technologies as part of the course. Were the class to be offered again, I would consider reaching out to industry for temporary donations for the course.

With most students having little or no experience using these devices, they would have two battles: first, their minimal experience as users meant they would be less familiar with physical, behavioural, technical and cultural intricacies entailed in use; and second, they would have no previous technical or aesthetic experience and knowledge in creating art for or with these devices.

To complicate matters further, I knew that many things we would discuss in class had few supporting materials: few artworks had been created using many of the devices we would discuss, we would have no opportunity of experiencing those artworks first-hand, little serious critique had been written about the works that had been produced, and most related writing outside of the field of art seemed to be either very technical or very commercial.

Despite these complications and limitations, the course seemed timely and important. I was certain that we could turn the situation to our favour, and that I could lend my own personal experience working in this and related areas of art practice. As it turned out, we had more than enough content and too little time to adequately discuss it before turning to practice.

Working Within These Complications and Limitations
The key factor of students not having first-hand experience using many of the devices or of viewing artworks utilizing mobile technology was not as much of an obstacle as expected. I first introduced students to “Speakers Corner,” a work using cellphones that offered a new kind of space for public speech based on the model of free speech in traditional ‘speakers corners’ in the UK. The work was discussed in relation to two related articles on the online journal Horizon Zero³, particularly Matt Locke’s article “Speakers Corner: Wireless Culture Performs in the Temporary Intimate Zone” which discussed the concept of the “Temporary Intimate Zone”, a behavioural space created in the use of cellphones. I assembled the students into groups to read the article and and to answer some of my own questions around the reading, as well as to engage with the piece via the Internet. As the work was created in the UK, we could not participate with our cellphones.

Since most students had used cellphones and all had opinions about public cellphone behaviour, an active discussion ensued and students were able to grasp the issues related to public or private speech and behaviour posed by both the artwork and the article. However few seemed to grasp the spatial issues posed by the concept of the TIZ. Many seemed to interpret the space being discussed as a space of distraction, rather than an actual or metaphorical space that is formed by communication with another via a network, and that there could be an attempt by users to replicate the ‘intimate’ space of communication had when both parties are together in a shared physical space.⁴ In later discussions it became clear to me that many students had little understanding of sculptural concepts of space or of sculptural works in public space, as well as concepts of ‘networked space’ as discussed by Manuel Castells⁵ that would have helped to expand on and contextualize these ideas. Clearly these are important readings to
add to this course in the future.

The following week’s reading and discussion focused on space and the terms ‘psychogeography’ and ‘derivé’ (drift). Both terms originate from the French political/cultural group known as the Situationists who had two main periods of activity between the late 1950s to the late 1960s, and whose critical writings and activities on “unitary urbanism” have been influential for artists and architects doing work related to public space. Guy Debord, who had led the Lettrist International and was a founder of the Situationists, wrote in 1958 “Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. The adjective psychogeographical, retaining a rather pleasing vagueness, can thus be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and even more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery.”

The term ‘derivé’ was defined in the June 1958 publication of the Internationale Situationaiste as “An experimental mode of behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique for hastily passing through varied environments,” describing an activity where one approaches urban space in a random fashion in order to derive a new understanding of that space.

The rationale for discussing these terms was threefold: first, many of the works I intended to present to the students could be discussed in terms of psychogeography, and second, I intended to show a work by the contemporary British artists’ group “Social Fiction,” who are influenced by the situationists and design urban walks based on algorithms. Finally, it was important that students began to understand mobile technologies not only in terms of the technical possibilities of
the device, but also in terms of being engaged in social space, and to situate their use culturally in a history of public art.

I followed the readings on psychogeography and the walk with an introduction to a range of artists’ works related to expeditions and walks, from the 19th century practice of European artist-treks in Asia and Africa [coinciding with European colonization of these lands] to more recent practices by artists that use walks to discuss issues related to borders, ecology, transformation, or mass-culture, for instance in the works of Heath Bunting, Francis Alys, Richard Long, the group Social Fiction, or the artist Janet Cardiff.

To give these examples and our readings some grounding in an actual work, we then had a close reading of the work “The Missing Voice” by artist Janet Cardiff. As with other of Cardiff’s audio walks, the piece is a narrative using binaural sound designed for headphones. The user plays the piece and is guided by the audio text and sound through several locations in London, England. The work is influenced by Cardiff’s reaction to being a female alone in a strange, bustling urban space and situates her response to the spaces she guides you through in a film-noirish narrative. After listening to the entire work (albeit not in situ) and discussing it after, students were assigned readings based on Cardiff’s work or the work of other artists using the form of the ‘walk’ and asked to look at the work in relation to psychogeography. At this point, I felt that the class had the beginnings of a critical and theoretical framework from which to look at mobile technologies themselves and various works using them.

Students spent the next two weeks giving team presentations based on a list of topics I gave them, such as “The Tagged Body,”
“Sound Art and the Cellphone,” “Surveillance and Mobile Technology,” and “Subcultures and SMS.” To my disappointment, many students still did not approach topics critically and/or within an art-historical framework. One the one hand, this is due to infrastructure—the students have had few history and theory courses that address new technologies and frame them in a critical art practice. Students had little exposure to this kind of work and little practice in discussing it critically—prior to the class they were used to discussing the mobile devices themselves rather than cultural practices, especially critical or alternative ones, using mobile technologies. However, I also had to take responsibility for this in not realizing how much the ubiquitous marketing hype surrounding ubiquitous technologies displaces critical public dialogues that take into account an understanding of shared histories rather than marketable efficiencies. Without dampening enthusiasm for the genuinely exciting possibilities that some of these technologies offer the artist, follow-up commentary linking back to our earlier readings became an important part of students learning that they must be critical and conscious subjects as opposed to passive consumers when working in and discussing this media.

This created the ideal situation to follow up with a critical evaluation of the work of artists using alternative and critical strategies in art using mobile technologies. The following week we used Gert Lovink’s and David Garcia’s article “The ABCs of Tactical Media,” as the framework to analyze both historical critical media art as well current approaches by artists and communities to using mobile technology for critical art practice and to reach to communities who have previously had little access to technology.

According to Lovink and Garcia, “Tactical Media are what
happens when the cheap ‘do it yourself’ media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture. Tactical media do not just report events, as they are never impartial they always participate and it is this that more than anything separates them from mainstream media.” Key components of tactical media are that they are “do-it-yourself”, they “demonstrate a political use of the technology,” and they demonstrate a “bottom-up struggle against power centers.” Another underlying current in much tactical media work is humour, such as the exchanging of Barbie and Ken voiceboxes in the work of the “Barbie Liberation Organization” supported by the group (r)Tmark or many projects on the Bureau of Inverse Technology (B.I.T.) website.⁹

After a close reading of Lovink and Garcia’s text with the entire class, students then assembled in groups to analyze the work of several artists’ groups such as the Bureau of Inverse Technology (B.I.T.), Insitute for Applied Autonomy (I.A.A.), and (r)Tmark, all of whom work in the realm of tactical media.

Students were asked to focus on a work from one of these groups and discuss it in relation to Lovink and Garcia’s terms for tactical media, and to write an argument whether or not the work was successful as tactical media and whether it could have been done using older artforms or technology. This assignment also meant to reinforce that critical or alternative practices can arise from specific possibilities or constraints (i.e., contexts) of media, technology, society and culture.

From Theory to Practice
By this time in the quarter, students had begun the initial phases of their final projects—writing up concepts and creating sketches for works they would execute and present to the class at the end of the quarter. The following two weeks were spent with close individual critiques and discussions of project ideas and feasibility.

Additionally, we had two out-of-class exposures to current practices in mobile technology. The first was a visit to the UCSD Department of Engineering where we were given two presentations—an overview from Dr. Lawrence Larson, the Director of the Center for Wireless Communications on the future of wireless technology, and a student presentation on research using wireless and surveillance technology at the Computer Vision and Robotics Research Lab. In both cases, students were made aware of some directions that wireless is going in terms of research and development, had scientific terminology explained to them in a clear and nonspecialized manner, and were exposed to the ties that scientific and engineering research departments have to government and industry who support their research. As art students, they were both awed by the material support these departments had, but also relieved that they did not have to confine their own research to these outside interests. The visit was inspiring in terms of suggesting possibilities and broadening their understanding of wireless history, terms, and the goals and constraints of current scientific research. Simply seeing some of the equipment brought out the do-it-yourself tactics of artists (perhaps also inspired by the Tactical Media reading), as students were trying to figure out how they could make cheap and simple versions of equipment we saw to be used in artworks.

The second exposure to current practice was a guest lecture by
artist/architect Kati Rubinyi about her artwork “The Gambit,”10 a site-specific narrative for PDA, headphones and digital compass that took place at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. The work references film and architecture in its structure and tells the story of a worker at the hotel. In presenting the work, Rubinyi emphasized the importance of ‘site’ on artworks taking place in public space, referring to earlier site-specific works by Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson, as well as to how the circular design of the hotel and other factors such as time-based media (i.e., film) influenced the design of the work and how the audience would move with it through space.

Both visits were advantageous in presenting the students with first-person accounts of practices that were relevant to artists working in this media. Clearly, hearing Rubinyi speak not only emphasized the earlier points of psychogeography and Temporary Intimate Zone, but also made clear how the artists’ process was so thoroughly influenced by place and our experiences with technology rather than simply on technical aspects of the media.

At the time of this writing, students are finishing their projects to present next week. The works range from conceptual pieces that utilize the cellphone for performance drawing, or PDAs for algorithm walks that use swarming as a means of forming collective memory, to narrative works for Disk players, PDAs and Laptops to documentary works on SMS or game cultures, and an installation on gender and surveillance. In most cases, relations between body, technology, and physical or social space have become paramount in the works. The range of media being used and my emphasis on meaning and critical approaches has meant that students have focused on content and aesthetic issues and less on treating the class as a means of ‘training’ in software. Clearly, several students are limited by current states of technology and market (i.e., inexpensive cellphones not yet available to do an MMS project, or few
low-cost, camera-equipped wireless PDAs at this time), and many are limited by their lack of programming skills, or by the constant tweaking and bugs when programming.

Overcoming these last points are the ones that can determine whether a student entering into the realm of ‘new media’ practice will push the media in a critical or alternative direction, even when they do not have optimum conditions of access, or the skills acquired over long-term practice with the media.

Even in this case, some disadvantages do remain. Students don’t always get to see things in situ, to see their project through as they imagine it. Having to work with proxies and prototypes means they may not have the necessary critical experience of the work or understand fully the social/experiential/aesthetic aspects of project ideas. Furthermore, financial constraints mean they don’t get the fancy toys to experiment with, or the funded time and milieu to pursue their research.

In this course we found that the limitations of not having available low-cost media (and low-cost related services such as SMS—another situation created by U.S. markets that raised comparisons with Europe and Japan) can be offset for art students by critical and close readings of related practices—either of works done in that media elsewhere, of historical and current artworks that address similar issues, of critical readings about those works, and by providing critical contexts through related theory.

Additional relevent knowledge can be gained from looking at current related practices and research in science and technology. Clearly new media departments need to make links to science/engineering so students can a) see what is being developed and consequently will
have some public form in the next decade; b) establish contacts with
scientists and engineers; c) possibly contribute to design processes
with aesthetic/critical POV; and d) understand technology in a more
hands-on, do-it-yourself fashion rather than as consumers/users of
commercially available media.

This should allow students to think outside of the box as well as
to think ahead of what is readily available to them via existing
infrastructures and markets and to be aware of current research outside
of their immediate field that will eventually have an impact on their
own thinking and practice.

Notes

1. The term ‘New Media’ will be used in this paper to refer to
an art practice using technology (programming, computer hardware
and software) to create and present work, for instance as the term
is described in Lev Manovich’s book, The Language of New Media

2. For instance, the Walker Art Center’s Gallery 9, one of the first
museum-supported online art exhibition areas in North America, is less
than ten years old. See http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/

the Temporary Intimate Zone” Horizon Zero; Issue 04. Horizon Zero is
an online journal published by the Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada.
It is not uncommon to use serious critical online texts as teaching tools
for new media. Very often this is not only the most current place to find
these texts, several online journals and lists (i.e., Ctheory or Nettime)
are considered appropriate critical resources for academic study of
new media

4. I have since found a text titled Heidegger, Habermas and the
Future Technologies

Mobile Phone by George Myerson that I would contrast with Locke’s TIZ. Myerson does not seem to be able to accept that mobile technologies could have such a space; in part I believe that this is because his argument is based on the speech of advertising and media around mobile communication and m-commerce rather than on a reading of the actual practices, behaviour, experiences, and conversations of mobile phone users, as does Locke. Were Myerson to do a reading of users’ behaviours, dialogues and experience, he may find that they symbolically create a space, such as the TIZ, where they can replicate the experience of F2F communication, and that such a space has validity as a meaningful communicative space.


9. BLO can be found online at http://www.rtmark.com/blo.html, The BIT website is http://www.bureautit.org/

10. See http://www.datsun.net/kati/gambit/
4. I have since found a text titled Heidegger, Habermas and the Mobile Phone by George Myerson that I would contrast with Locke's TIZ. Myerson does not seem to be able to accept that mobile technologies could have such a space; in part I believe that this is because his argument is based on the speech of advertising and media around mobile communication and m-commerce rather than on a reading of the actual practices, behaviour, experiences, and conversations of mobile phone users, as does Locke. Were Myerson to do a reading of users' behaviours, dialogues and experience, he may find that they symbolically create a space, such as the TIZ, where they can replicate the experience of F2F communication, and that such a space has validity as a meaningful communicative space.


9. BLO can be found online at http://www.rmark.com/blo.html. The BIT website is http://www.bureautit.org/

10. See http://www.datsun.net/kati/gambit/

Canceling the Queers Heightens National Awareness in Arts Education

Donalyn Heise

In November 2001, a state art education organization conference session entitled Sexual Identity and Arts Education was canceled. If the original goal of this panel discussion was to bring awareness to issues related to the topic; then, I conclude that the unfortunate cancellation of this session has resulted in exceeding its goal. Had the conference session taken place as planned, issues related to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and arts education would have been explored and discussed on the state level (Keifer-Boyd, Fehr, Check, Akins, 2002). However, because the session was canceled, publicity and subsequent public outrage has heightened awareness at the national level. Furthermore, I contend that it is the responsibility of arts educators to provide an inclusive curriculum that encourages self-expression and exploration of identity to prepare students for participation in a democratic society.

Arts education can play an important role in a democracy. Educators have explored the relationship between art and society by expanding art making to include opportunities to explore social issues and the interconnectedness between art, community, and environment (Lankford, 1997; Stuhr, 1994; and Ulbricht, 1998). Arts education can
minimize or illuminate underlying values embodied in a community, including homophobia, racism, and sexism. John Goodlad (1994) states that the arts can create and strengthen a democratic society by "introducing the young to the human conversation and the narratives that constitute it" (p.14). In the case of the canceled conference session, it appears that hatred or fears of homosexuality prevented conversation on content of sexual identity in arts education (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2002). One powerful, homophobic administrator demanded that teachers in the local school district not attend the conference if the sexual identity in art education session was part of the conference offerings of sessions. Therefore, the teachers were not allowed to participate in this important conversation.

For centuries, John Goodlad has advocated collaborations between university faculty, teacher education programs, and K-12 teachers so that they can engage in dialogue, pursue education renewal and develop strategies for educating in a democracy (Sirotnik & Soder, 1999). Goodland and his colleagues at the Institute for Educational Inquiry contend that education is a moral endeavor (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990). A four-part mission guides their efforts: access to knowledge for all, nurturing pedagogy, stewardship of the schools, and enculturation of youth in a political and social democracy. The planned panel session seemed a perfect opportunity for university and K-12 teachers to engage in dialogue about arts education pedagogy, share beliefs, and strategies. The educators that coordinated the panel for the state convention seem to be acting as stewards in the schools and change agents. They are helping to change attitudes, promote tolerance and understanding and to provide an inclusive curriculum for all students.

An informed public is an important component in a democratic society. Forums such as the panel discussion advocated by the conference coordinators encourage research and dialogue that seeks to understand Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) content in artists' work; as well as provide greater equality and visibility of LGBT people in art classrooms, schools, art museums, and other educational realms. Postmodern theory in practice is the study of an object's meaning in relation to its context (Hurwitz & Day, 2001). When we teach students about artists, we tend to stress the relationship between the artists' life and their art, but if the artist is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, many art educators are uncomfortable or unsure how to discuss the art. Is it appropriate to reveal artists' sexual orientation when discussing their art? What are some ways to discuss art that expresses a gay artist's life without getting fired from our jobs if we work in a homophobic environment? These are questions I have encountered as a university supervisor of pre-service teachers. These questions could have been discussed at the state conference panel session.

Admirably, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) has recently begun to provide leadership in this area by forming the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues Caucus (LGBTIC). This group met in Miami at the 2002 NAEA Convention to discuss such issues. The cancellation of the panel session at the state art education conference was one of the items on the agenda. Participants represented several states across the nation. Many were outraged at this oppressive, homophobic incident. Conversations about the cancellation continued after the meeting, involving art educators who were not aware of the state conference incident and who are not members of the LGBT caucus. Many rallied to explore activist solutions.
Other people became aware of the cancellation of the art education conference session from reading the article in the 2002 publication of the Journal of Social Theory in Art Education entitled, *Canceling the Queers: Activism in Art Education Conference Planning*, by K. Keifer-Boyd, D. Fehr, E. Check, F. Akins. This article not only documents the incident but also emphasizes the struggles to break the silence. Ed Check and Future Akins expressed extreme frustration and distress from the state’s decision to cancel this important session. Their efforts to establish a foundation for communication and advocacy are timely and admirable. It is understandable that they seemed incredibly burned out. There are Gay-Straight Alliances being formed in schools and colleges across the nation. Students and adults need role models that let them know it’s okay to stand for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues if you are straight! As Future Akins (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2002) expressed, “human rights are important to us all” (p. 139).

I suspect that had the session entitled *Sexual Identities and the Art Classroom* taken place as planned at the state conference, fewer at the national level would have heard about it. If we had heard that the session had taken place as planned many would have responded favorably to a session that seeks to help art educators share pedagogical strategies. But since it was censored, greater numbers of art educators throughout the national organization learned of the overt homophobic attitudes that pervade our educational institutions and organizations. We are more passionately involved in this issue because we were outraged at the injustice of some not recognizing all voices in our society. Simply being aware does not constitute social change, but may be the first step (Conti, & Counter, 1991). As Dennis Fehr (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2002) said, “The world is different now” and therefore “Art education must change” (p. 127).

In a recent community transformative research project, three stages were documented as essential to social action, 1) awareness, 2) active involvement, and 3) social reconstruction (Conti, & Counter, 1991). Awareness is important. Shared vision is essential. I think that before active involvement is prompted, one must be passionately involved in the action. As previously stated, simply being aware does not make one want to be involved. People need to be deeply committed and willing to put forth the necessary efforts to act as change agents or stewards in our schools or communities.

Karen Keifer-Boyd (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2002) reminds us that exploring one’s identity and one’s heritage is one of the National Standards of Visual Art. Then if we interpret this standard to mean cultural identity exclusive of sexual identity, we are ignoring our responsibility as art educators.

I recall when the multicultural movement began in my district. Administrators were emphatic about teachers including a multicultural component in each unit. Soon it became a requirement. Teachers scrambled to learn more about diversity and cultural artifacts, components that were already embedded in art curriculum. I remember how one African American student’s eyes lit up when we began to learn about the art of the Harlem renaissance. He worked harder than he had all year because he loved that unit. He could make a personal connection to the curriculum content. And I remember how proud one Japanese student was to share family traditions of her cultural heritage. I also recall a student coming after class to thank me for reading a story to the class about an “adopted” grandmother. She felt she could relate to the girl in the story because she too had no blood relatives, so she now felt empowered to share her story of her neighbor, a woman she considered family. How powerful it would be for more art teachers to introduce students to what Dennis Fehr (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2002) calls...
“real art to real kids”. (What a concept!) It would empower students to learn about a gay artist, or an artist in a non-traditional family by expanding conventional definitions of “normal”.

John Dewey (1916) contends that schools should serve as a microcosm in which students learn particular processes, values and attitudes to live effectively as citizens in a democratic society. He emphasized that democracy entails habits of mind that citizens cultivate as they participate. What habits of mind are we encouraging by censoring the voices of the disenfranchised?

Benjamin R. Barber states, “[The Arts] have the power to give voice to and hence empower and recognize the marginalized and the minorities, and the same moment to constitute from them an inclusive culture from which none were excluded” (1997, p. 1). Maybe its time we used this power as arts educators to create a nurturing environment in which all students can successfully learn and grow. Only then can we all participate in the human conversation.

Art Education and New Technology: Are You Ready?

Susan Witwicki

I don’t think I’m ready...

As an Art education major, I was somewhat daunted by a recent job offer requiring me to teach in the Career and Technology Studies department. As a recovering technophobe and lover of scissors and paste, I was cautious of this ‘Brave New World’ of computers. I perceived post-millennial teens to be cyber savvy know-it-alls, largely due to the way in which they were portrayed in the media. As well, if the ads were true, teens weren’t the only ones riding the new technological wave; Cisco Systems 1999 television campaign presented a global Utopia of citizens united through surfing the net. Shot in a series of exotic locales, the Cisco ads featured various cultural ambassadors garbed in ethnic dress asking the western TV audience “Are you ready?” Ready for what, you ask? Well, the Internet, of course! Cisco shows us a (fake?) Greek grandma tending her flock of sheep and she’s asking you if you’re ready for the new information age! Get with it, dude! If Mongolian nomads were hip to on-line education and instant messaging, I could only imagine the dizzying cyber heights being reached by upper middle class teens in Canada!
I don’t think I’m ready…

As an Art education major, I was somewhat daunted by a recent job offer requiring me to teach in the Career and Technology Studies department. As a recovering technophobe and lover of scissors and paste, I was cautious of this ‘Brave New World’ of computers. I perceived post-millennial teens to be cyber savvy know-it-alls, largely due to the way in which they were portrayed in the media. As well, if the ads were true, teens weren’t the only ones riding the new technological wave; Cisco Systems 1999 television campaign presented a global Utopia of citizens united through surfing the net. Shot in a series of exotic locales, the Cisco ads featured various cultural ambassadors garbed in ethnic dress asking the western TV audience “Are you ready?” Ready for what, you ask? Well, the Internet, of course! Cisco shows us a (fake?) Greek grandma tending her flock of sheep and she’s asking you if you’re ready for the new information age! Get with it, dude! If Mongolian nomads were hip to on-line education and instant messaging, I could only imagine the dizzying cyber heights being reached by upper middle class teens in Canada!
Are We Ready?

Well, after six months teaching Web Design and Computer Applications to grade 10 students, I can positively say that the Cisco ads were more than a bit misleading. While I find the ads offensive for their superficial and saccharine vision of the ‘techno-global village’, Brian O’Neill, chief creative officer of Cisco’s ad agency, insists, “becoming a brand that is shaped by humility and humanity is critical.” Despite my cynicism, I can partially buy into O’Neill’s view; not the branding stuff, but the part about humility and humanity. As an art educator, this was my ‘in’. As well, my teaching colleagues had assured me that classroom routines and management were key; an expert-level understanding of computers would not guarantee student success. (A case in point: a close friend of mine is currently enrolled in a beginner level computer course. She cannot count on assistance, however, from her Web designer husband, who becomes frustrated when she needs him to ‘dumb down’ and explain simple concepts at a beginner level. He is an expert, but not a teacher.)

The kids are ready…

Nonetheless, I was intimidated by the high degree of student bravado. In support of my preconceptions, many individual students gave me the impression that they already knew everything there was to know about computers. (Somehow, I doubt this would ever happen in a Social Studies classroom, where the ‘cool’ factor is significantly lower). However, while most of my students had grown up with computers, they were not accustomed to thinking about the potential risks and hazards. For instance, many students were incredulous when I began the course with a lesson on Internet safety and privacy. The National Film Board’s “Caught in the Net”, a film about the potential for deceit in online relationships, was openly mocked by the class for its attempt to encourage youth to use caution and critical thinking while surfing the net. Admittedly, the film was a little clunky and preachy, but the issues
remain significant; on-line acquaintances may misrepresent themselves and online information must always be scrutinised.

After this brief discussion of online issues, we began the hands-on portion of the course. Most students seemed to be very comfortable on the keyboard and compulsively clicked and jerked the mouse with confidence. Assigned tasks were completed quickly. In fact, many students were completing projects too quickly and when I marked their introductory activities, I realised that much of the work was only partially done. Frequently, specific instructions had been overlooked, files were missing or incorrectly named and entire assignments were improperly submitted. It became apparent that my students were equating speed with quality. I venture to guess that the need for speed was reinforced by exposure to instant messaging and online chatting services. Some students actually complained that e-mail was too slow for their liking. But while communicating in ‘real time’ was preferred, it demanded extra speedy typing skills. Out of this on-line frenzy of chatting emerged a kind of shorthand script; a language of creatively ordered characters, numbers and symbols that approximated both English phrases and human expressions: B4N (Bye For Now), BRB (Be Right Back), LOL (Laugh Out Loud), the more intense ROFL (Rolling on Floor Laughing), L8R (Later) and GR8 (Great). Students also enjoyed using and creating emoticons that communicated facial expressions and body language:

>:-("Angry
:("Frown
(((((name)))) "Hug (cyber hug)
:O "Shocked
:) "Smile
;) "Wink
Are We Ready?

While some of these symbols and codes demonstrate the kind of economic creativity that is required by real time chatting, they also raise some interesting questions about the changing nature of language and communication. While language relies on the use of conventions, these keyboard shortcuts reduce communication to a generic set of expressions understood by all frequent chatters.

As a result, the kind of online chatting enjoyed by my students largely consisted of snappy and superficial one-liners. As well, the brevity of such expressions eliminates the need to construct sentences that express uniquely personal feelings and opinions. If these shortcuts begin to interfere with a student’s ability to articulate original ideas and compose paragraphs using a pen and paper, then parents and educators must begin to consider the long-term effects of online chatting. Lowercase letters are also predominant in on-line communications and, as a result, the rules of capitalisation are increasingly ignored in student work.

While on-line chatting and instant messaging were popular computer applications, students were also involved in game playing and sharing music files. Based on informal observation, it appeared that on-line activities were somewhat divided along gender lines, with girls preferring to chat and boys preferring to play games. What soon became obvious was that my students used computers largely for entertainment and social purposes. This really should not be so surprising, as such activities, in some form or another, are often sought out by teenagers.

In a classroom situation, however, the exciting distractions offered up by the Internet often proved to be too tempting and resulted in a kind of technological attention deficit disorder. Many of the most boastful, competitive students would rush through their assignments so that they
could ‘get on with’ chatting, downloading music, and checking out the hottest new games, as if computers really had been developed for these more fun activities. While many of my students were capable of using a computer to entertain themselves, they were not able necessarily to use a computer to create quality projects. Simply using technology and using it well are two different matters.

_The whole world is ready (or is it?)_

Many of the more zealous proponents of computer education often overlook this important fact, while those who make even cautious criticisms of computer use in schools risk being labelled as Luddites. Nonetheless, educators must be prepared to examine the widely held assumption that computers are benign and essential in today’s schools. In fact, the uncritical acceptance of computers as a great educational panacea in an era of globalization acts to reinforce the very values that threaten the health of the planet. New technologies are transformed into highly charged status symbols that eventually become essential household items. (For example, in the early days of the personal computer, only a handful of my friends had computers in the home and, indeed, families were not automatically expected to own a PC. In the last 20 years, however, it has become more unusual not to have a computer in the home)

Western consumer society has accepted the cycle of spending and upgrading that comes with planned obsolescence and we are taught that we cannot function without the newest and fastest products. VCRs are currently making their exit from the technological life cycle, therefore, forcing consumers to purchase DVD players. Few pause to realise that as last year’s gadgets are tossed aside and new ones are purchased, enormous sums of money and resources are wasted, all while millions
of the world’s people remain illiterate. The commonly held belief that North American children need to have access to computers so that they can be ‘globally competitive’ does not acknowledge such problems as resource distribution and disparity. In a neoliberal climate of reduced social spending, how can public schools afford to keep up with institutionalised techno-turnover? The United States Department of Education recommends a student/computer ratio of 5:1, while most schools struggle to meet a ratio of 21:1. Some schools have resorted to forging school/industry ‘partnerships’ to gain access to extra resources. We cannot forget, however, that there are enormous profits to be made by computer manufacturers, software companies and Internet providers, so these arrangements are far from neutral. As well, the industry is not above resorting to guilt-inducing advertisements to convince caring parents that their children will not be able to succeed in life without high-speed home Internet access.

In a radio advertisement a couple of summers back, a local Internet provider had featured a whining gender-neutral child complaining to her/his parents about how unless s/he had high speed internet s/he would have fewer opportunities in life and would end up working for her/his more privileged neighbourhood pals one day. The ad’s “keeping-up-with-the-Jounces” approach attempted to spawn sales through appealing to parental shame and fear; the advertisement’s core message is “Get high speed Internet or else your kid will end up as a loser.” What if a family cannot afford a computer and the monthly bills that come with Internet use? Do these parents care less about their child’s future? The message misleads and manipulates listeners by granting the Internet a disproportionate amount of credit for being able to guarantee a child’s future success in life, which is defined solely in terms of job status.
Having taught Web design to a group of teens, I can attest that high-speed access and fancy gadgets in no way guarantee academic excellence. Parents and educators who have been convinced to believe otherwise are guilty of a dangerously superficial kind of technophilia that derives pleasure from computer technology in and of itself. In Technopoly, Neil Postman describes schools as

one of our primary means of socialising the young into technology, a culture that subjugates people to the interests of technology, and elevates that pursuit of quality of information over meaning, and divorces that population from the belief systems, as information management has no moral core.  

The seemingly dry world of information studies can drive away some of the ‘artsier’ students and discourage teachers in the liberal arts from collaborating with those in the computer technology department, as I witnessed firsthand. As one of the ‘artsier’ ones in my department, I felt that I could see both the potential and great need for an approach to computer education that goes beyond techno-fetish. Just as a kitchen full of the latest gadgets and best ingredients do not transform Suzy or Stevie Homemaker into a great chef, the latest technology does not bestow brilliance upon the user. In the kitchen, one must develop a ‘feel’ for flavours and textures, timing and touch. Likewise, in addition to technical know-how, Web design requires a ‘feel’ for design, organisation, appropriateness, communication and ease of use. As a teacher, I had a difficult task: I had to convince my students that their favourite toy was also a powerful and complex tool.
Are We Ready?

As an art educator, the most natural approach to Web design concentrated on design and composition. That is, rather than stressing technical wizardry for its own sake, I would present Web design as a creative form of communication. I did this by concentrating on elements of layout, text, font faces and the use of colour, as well as the overall purpose and logic of the project. Projects should look good, be well organised and include meaningful content, in addition to properly functioning when viewed on the Web. Surprisingly, some of the most technically advanced students had the most difficulty with this design approach; techno-snobbery did not always correlate with high quality products. Some of the more technologically advanced students rushed through projects and completed the bare minimum requirements. I often discovered these students playing online games or checking their e-mail after hurriedly submitting their work. On the other hand, there were students with less computer experience who readily learned the basic technical skills and spent much of their time developing highly creative projects. I was continually surprised by such outcomes and I feel that I learned a tremendous amount about young people and technology while teaching this course.

During this time, I was also influenced by the work of Ernest N. Savage, who spoke at the Edmonton Public School Teachers Convention in February 2002. Throughout his presentation “Don’t Forget the Soft Stuff”, Savage argued that technology is replacing the need for students to think independently and that the lack of education about the origins, content and impact of new technologies is contributing to a society of semi-literate automatons. Savage calls for more cross-curricular treatment of computer technology and asks educators to resist being “seduced” by gimmicky new machines. Instead, educators must show students how to think about computers rather than simply how to operate them. Art teachers can probably attest to this quite easily; the most expensive paintbrushes don’t teach a student how to paint. A great painter can create beauty using twigs and toothpicks in place of
brushes because she understands how to paint. Computer technology is a tool and is only as effective as the skills of the person using it. These aspects of technology education can no longer remain invisible and must be integrated into the curriculum so that students can benefit from computers and learn to use them thoughtfully and responsibly.

In my own free time, I have enjoyed making collages both with and without computers. However, I find that the limitless possibilities of creating computer-assisted art are, paradoxically, stifling. With so many possible ways to create and compose, using software such as PhotoShop or Flash, I begin to feel overwhelmed and my creativity dries up. Somehow, sitting on the floor with a stack of old magazines, scissors and glue is still more satisfying. I am continually more excited and surprised by the outcomes of my projects when I work with hard copies. The obvious advantages to using design software is the opportunity to edit for various effects and produce a ‘slick’, polished final product. Sometimes, this helps to achieve the desired look. (I have included two images in this regard.) Other times, this results in a final piece that lacks charm; smudges and bumps and uneven surfaces have their advantages, too. While teaching our students about computers, we mustn’t forget about the ‘soft stuff’, as Savage puts it. Without it, computers serve us very little and can actually spawn additional problems. Technology means ‘tool’; a sharp rock is a tool and can be used as a weapon. It can also be used to help build a shelter or prepare food; it’s the users choice. Computers are like this, too.
References

