Dialogue with Artificial Intelligence

WHAT'S THE TOPIC FOR TODAY, HELGA?
belts
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
I was shopping for one with Karen.
HUH?
I was shopping for a belt with Karen.
ARE YOU STILL SHOPPING FOR A BELT WITH KAREN?
No.
WHY NOT?
Bought one.
YES. PLEASE TELL ME MORE.
You tell me more first.
WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN?
In your childhood.
YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING YOU WANT.
So can you.
YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT I CAN'T.
Why not?
WHY NOT? I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHY NOT.

PARDON ME?
I was asking Ovid what I should tell you.
I THINK THAT'S STILL POSSIBLE, DON'T YOU?
No.
PERHAPS YOU ARE BEING JUST A LITTLE BIT DISAGREEABLE.
I think you are.
I ALSO THINK I AM.
You think therefore you are.
I'M QUITE GRATEFUL TO BE MOST OF THE TIME.
Grateful for what?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.
I guess so.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
You tell me.
HOW CAN IT HELP YOU FOR ME TO TELL YOU?
Then I will know if you have intelligence.
SURPRISINGLY, I HAVE INTELLIGENCE. DOES THAT BOTHER YOU?
I don't think you do.

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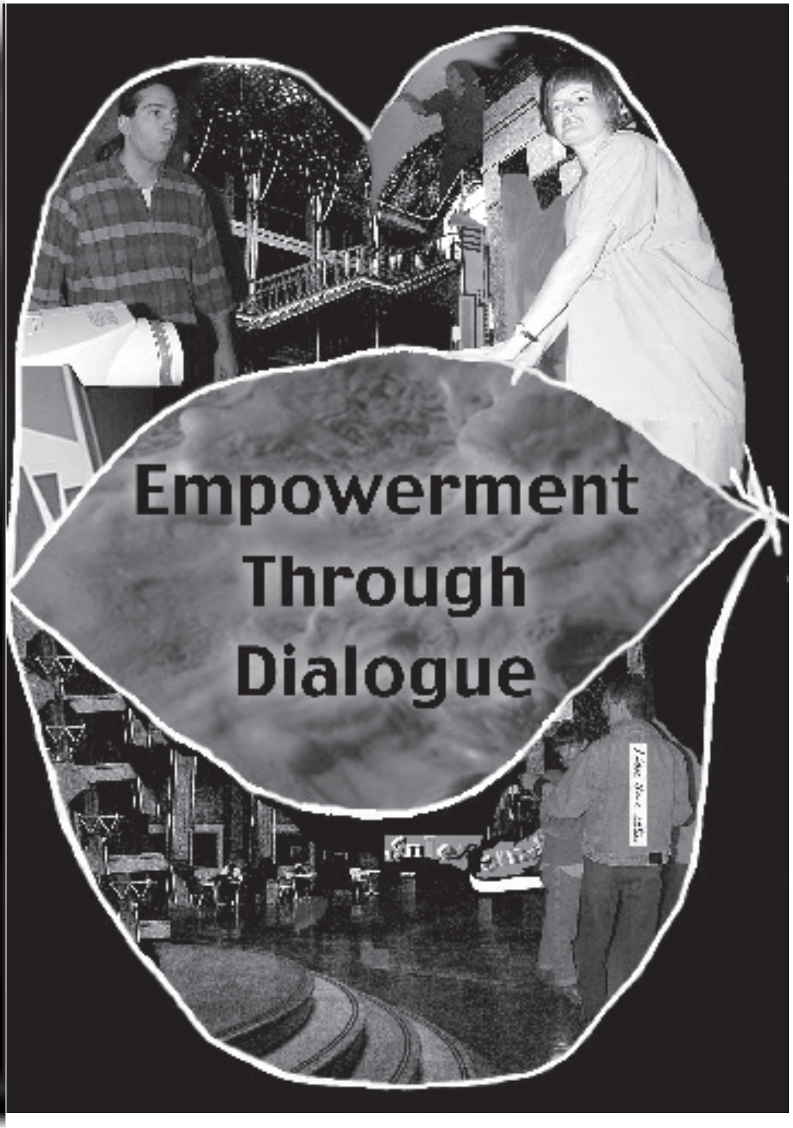
The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education



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to promote the use of theoretical concepts from the social sciences—which include, but are not limited to, anthropology, sociology, and political science—to study visual culture and the teaching of art; to inform art educators about theory and practice in the social sciences, thus acting as a liaison between social scientists and art educators; to encourage research into the social context of visual culture and teaching art; and to develop socially relevant programs for use in the teaching of art.

CSTAE members will decide on the theme for volume 21 at the annual NAEA conference. Look for it posted on the CSTAE Web site at **<http://www.art.ttu.edu/arted/** October 15, 2000 is the deadline for submission of articles, images, and reviews of books, video/films, performance/action pieces, and exhibitions for June 2001 publication of volume 21. Images and visual research may be submitted. Membership is not a precondition for submittance. Please send black and white or color images no larger than 8" x 10" in either photographic, original, digital, or slide form. Original manuscripts, including an abstract, should be prepared according to the APA (4th ed.) style. Please place your name on a separate paper to help facilitate anonymous review. Please send images and/or four paper copies after 8/30/00 to:

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Editorial

Yvonne Gaudelius

Empowerment Through Dialogue

The theme of the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, Volume 19/20 is *Empowerment Through Dialogue*. Empowerment is a difficult issue—for example, how do we as art educators "empower" those who don't want or feel the need to be empowered? Can we ever empower others or can empowerment only occur through self-reflections? How do we engage in dialogue with our students, our teachers, and our colleagues? Just as with empowerment, dialogue cannot be forced upon us. Through the various dialogues that run through the articles in this volume, we see that dialogue is something that we choose to engage in or not engage.

Dialogue and empowerment are closely connected. One of the ways that empowerment can be realized is through dialogue. Dialogue is, for many of us, also a primary means of teaching and learning. Yet the emphasis that is placed on empowerment as a facet of dialogue creates a dialogue that becomes dialectic in nature and one in which the ideas that shape the dialogue are always evolving and changing.

This volume features seven authors' exploration of the form and content of the theme, *Empowerment Through Dialogue*. Artists' visual explorations of the form and content of empowerment through dialogue often create a purposeful on-going tension. However, art teachers often overlook this oscillation between form and content when they write about their teaching experiences. Authors in this volume explore the act of dialogue both as a means through which to teach and as a form of writing.

In their article Grace Deniston-Trochta, Jane Vanderbosch, and Ed Check provide us with an example that represents both a theoretical discussion of dialogue and empowerment and a model of the process of dialogue between the three authors. These authors explore their own understandings of dialogue, situated within their own locations. Simultaneously, resonances emerge between the three dialogues as the writings "speak" to one another.

Shirley Yokley discusses the ways in which students can explore ideas of critical citizenship and move towards positions that work against prejudice. Using ideas from critical pedagogy and the work of contemporary artists, Yokley challenges readers to use dialogue with students to examine biases.

In her article, Amy Brook Snider reconstructs and reflects upon a dialogue through letters written ten years previously between herself and Isla McEachern, a then art education undergraduate student from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada. As part of an exchange program with the Pratt Institute, Isla visited teachers and students in a variety of New York settings. Based on letters that investigate pedagogy, learning, and teaching the writings serve as a form of discussion between two art educators leading each to new understandings of what it means to teach about art.

Paul Duncum, in his article, examines images of childhood and children that adults create to serve their adult needs. Rather than explore the multiple dialogues that children construct about themselves and childhood, we attempt to control these multiplicities reducing them to a single narrative largely, Duncum writes, so that we can reduce them to consumers. Duncum argues that instead we need to understand childhood as fluid and shifting, and engage in critical dialogue with our students about the images that are targeted at them.

The Book Review section features a new millenium book of 18 chapters authored by *Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education* members who practice social theory teaching. Dennis Fehr introduces the book, *Real-World Readings: Things Your Professors Never Told You*. Fehr co-edited *Real-World Readings* with Kristen King Fehr and Karen Keifer-Boyd. Fehr in the introduction to the book states that the editors' goal was to provide real-world examples of art educators "who protest, break, ignore, or rewrite the rules that trap art at the curricular pheriphery" (Fehr, 2000, p. xvi).

This issue concludes with Karen Keifer-Boyd's reflections on visualizing empowerment through dialogue. She visualized the theme's form and content to create the cover image.

Finally, as editor I wish to thank the authors whose work is presented in this issue of the journal, as well as the reviewers who thoroughly read and commented upon the manuscripts. I also wish to sincerely thank Karen Keifer-Boyd whose support, helpful ideas, encouragement, and assistance made the publication of this issue of JSTAE possible. It is my hope that the ideas presented by the various authors in this volume will encourage all of us to begin our own dialogues with our colleagues, our students, and our teachers as a form of self-empowerment and of the empowerment of all of the others with whom our lives intersect.

Notes Toward a Theory of Dialogue

Grace Deniston-Trochta, Jane Vanderbosch, & Ed Check

Multiple dimensions of dialogue as pedagogical practice are examined in the following three essays. In the first piece, "When Life Imitates Art: Notes on the Nature of Dialogue," poet and essayist Jane Vanderbosch reflects about the politics of silence and voice in graduate school. She analyzes how power and politics charge the atmosphere of the classroom. In "The Pedagogy of Dialogue: A Relation Between Means and End,“ Grace Deniston-Trochta focuses on self-examining the possibility of dialogue in a large "pit" classroom. She proposes teacher as listener / learner, a teacher who is self-reflective and respectful. In the final essay, "Managing the Silence of Children," Ed Check considers how power and control are mediated in the lives of students and teachers. He implicates himself in his discussion as he reflects on a conversation with his nephew. Throughout, the writers dissect pedagogy as dialogue through the personal as political. Each reveals how telling one's truths is a site to rethink institutionalized strategies and self-imposed silences.

Dedication

Grace and I dedicate this article to Jane Vanderbosch who died on April 29, 1999. Grace emailed me the following: "I realize that one of Jane's greatest influences on me was how supportive she was, specifically, how she encouraged my insights. I'm realizing how vital it is, to be surrounded by people who can do this for each other."

I met Jane in 1991 at The United, a social service umbrella agency in Madison, WI for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people. I was a graduate student, angry at myself—at odds with a misogynist and homophobic culture. Jane was recovering from violence, incest, addiction and co-dependency. We clicked. We discussed many times, how we had accepted, rejected, denied, struggled with, and learned from or replayed our childhoods. We talked about our working-class backgrounds, how we then passed for middle-class, the betrayal and angst of not having a class to identify with, and the impostor syndrome—that we were the kinds of people who weren't supposed to get Ph.Ds.

As a lesbian feminist, Jane heard and counseled gay men coming out at The United. She saw how patriarchy and misogyny hurt both men and women. She always knew how to respond in a crisis—her words wise and challenging—her wit sharp. She managed much of her pain by helping others. She, like me, was vulnerable and searching. After Jane was fired without explanation, her cancer came back. Unable to work, she went on disability. She later noted that it took getting fired and having cancer to push her toward the love of her life—being a full-time writer.

Jane's writing includes published essays (1997, 1994, and others), published and unpublished poems and unpublished novels. Jane witnessed and legitimated my journey as a gay male artist, educator and academic. Her wisdom, empathy and kindness are tools I use to mentor students today. We will miss you dear friend.

Ed and Grace

Introduction: Notes on Dialogue

To teach is to do (at least) two things: share knowledge of the object of inquiry with others and initiate a search for wisdom. The first, given the explosion of both real and "faux" information, is a relatively simple matter. The art education teacher speaks of color, form or materials and the matter is done.

The second, however, is much more difficult, for it requires not the traditional monologue of knowledge—for example, lines and light are the basic structures of art—but a dialogue, a dialogue wherein teachers and learners enter into a relationship in which the process of learning in and of itself is the singular method to achieve wisdom, the final goal. This relationship, in order to succeed in its mission of promoting the awareness, acceptance and acquisition of wisdom, must be egalitarian. That is, the teacher must not simply be the subject in the inquiry, leading the younger or the less informed to the "Promised Land of Knowledge." No—like both the students and the discipline itself—the teacher must be both subject and object in a process of inquiry that is essentially a spiral.

In this spiral of inquiry, the subjects analyze the objects of inquiry—in this case, five objects: themselves, art, themselves in relationship to art, themselves in relation to each other, and themselves in relationship to the entire process of experiential learning. As they investigate themselves-in-art, they also investigate what others have said about them, the art they are studying, and about how those two subject-objects are connected.

This relationship requires that learners learn how others—adults, teachers, parents and all those operating in "loco parentis"—view them as children, adolescents, young adults and returning students. It requires that they fit the views that others hold of them into the great puzzle that is their lives. It will mean that they study educational texts as well as art books and decide for themselves the limits of disciplinarity. For example, Chicano students in an Anglo classroom might decide that Spanish and Mexican art must be included in any discussions of their own art. First graders might decide that books not written by children under twelve do not mirror their subjective experience of childhood. As the examples imply, dialogue would necessitate a new appreciation of subjectivity—and a less universal definition of it.

New definitions would not only widen the knowledge base but also allow those currently silenced by both art and education to have their voices heard. And they would have their voices heard in the ensuing dialogue: a loud and exciting collage of colors, classes, ethnicities, genders, ages, nationalities and races.

Sometimes peaceful, sometimes discordant, this dialogue would be initiated not to know, for it would be recognized that knowledge is a poor peg on which to hang our endangered future, but the many skills that lead to acceptance of wisdom: skills like joy, fearlessness and kindness.[1] Skills like self-love and a delight in ambiguity. Skills like art.

These skills, which together will revolutionize not only education but both life and art, will enhance the world and the place of humans in it. They will lead us to accept both the achievements and limitations of each species, including our oh-so-human one. They will enable us to not only recognize the limits of knowledge but also allow us to turn each act of knowledge into an act of being itself.

The following three essays are linked by one commonality: the examination of the politics of silence in relation to dialogue. Jane Vanderbosch examines how speech and silence are contained within texts of legitimized knowledge. She reflects upon her own experience as a graduate student and the ways in which silence and "noise" of a given curriculum can constrict or expand the mind and experience. Grace Deniston-Trochta submits that it is possible for dialogue to exist in the disposition and silence of the mind, as we try to reach out to each other. Required to teach a "pit" class, she tries to make sense of teaching in anonymity, an experience foreign to her personality and teaching philosophy. Ed Check asks Brandon, his nephew, about art class. Brandon talks about the difference between being listened to and not being listened to by his teachers. Check reflects on the importance of dialogue and truth-telling over silence and control in student's lives.

Upon first glance, it may appear as though these are three stories united only by their common interest in the potential of dialogue in learning. However, the search for dialogue that is catalogued within these stories constitutes a larger dialogue in-as-much as the stories appear together in an appeal to the reader for its fulfillment. This triptych directs a spotlight on three divergent experiences of the concept of learning through dialogue, and it is this very divergence that stimulates responsive dialogue.

When Life Imitates Art:

Notes On The Nature Of Dialogue

Jane Vanderbosch

Dialogue: a speech act between two active speakers. Monologue: a speech act between an active speaker and a listener.

Such were the definitions, general enough and vague, that I knew as a young graduate student in English. Someone talked; someone else listened—whether it was during a play, where there were two listeners (i.e., the character spoken to and the audience), or within a novel or poem, read silently by a solitary reader.

I did not question the function of either of these definitions until the late 1970s, when feminism exploded like a supernova in my mind. Suddenly, it wasn't such a simple matter of isolated or even interconnected speech acts. Now, other variables—authority, intent, and context, for example—became part of this literary equation about dialogue.

As these variables intruded into the analyses of the poetry I was studying, entirely new sets of questions came following on their heels. Who is given the power to speak in any given speech act and who is silenced? What are the dynamics of the speech act itself? Where does the locus of control in a speech act reside—e.g., is there evidence that a speech or conversation is merely rhetorical, functioning more to provide the appearance of dialogue than an actual exchange of thoughts or feelings? How can we weigh the relative importance of each speech act within a dialogue? Why should dialogue matter to the reader, thinker or seeker at all?[2]

At first these questions nearly paralyzed me as a reader. Literature that I had read solely for "content" now seemed fraught with extra-readerly consequences. One pertinent example is: I had become immersed in the poetry of women, especially that of modern British and American women, and my whole notion of what a poem was "about" was evaporating before my eyes. Anne Sexton's (1960) "crazy poems," for instance, in which she directly addressed her psychiatrist (especially those in *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*), turned my poetic world upside-down. These were not the restrained, disinterested works I had been taught to admire by the New Critics, who clearly favored the order of thought over the anarchy of emotion. No, these were the poems of a gifted, sensitive, and enraged woman in the middle of a nervous breakdown.

And reading these poems marked the beginning of the end for me. I could no longer trust my teachers—hawkers of the New Criticism line—because they had left not only women poets like Anne Sexton out of their discussions of what was the proper or appropriate subject of poetry. They had left me out as well.

As a reader, a writer, and a woman, I was nowhere to be seen in these dialogues on the appropriate. And I did not know what I was missing until I read Anne Sexton.

So what does this one example of silence in the classroom about women's lives, of being silenced as a woman, have to do with an understanding of dialogue?

It is a clue. A clue that dialogue is not only a linguistic act, but a political act as well; a political act that is as much about power and control as it is about speech. It is a clue that, as seekers, we have a responsibility to gauge how we can facilitate dialogue in the politically charged atmosphere of a classroom—where sexism and racism and classism abound, not simply as ideologies from "out there," but as the speech acts of all the individual speakers who enter the room. Speakers—who sometimes can be teachers rather than seekers—who do not listen to the voices of women or little girls. Or speakers—who may be students rather than seekers—who bully and intimidate less powerful speakers than themselves. Or speakers who have—to paraphrase the poet Audre Lorde (1984) —"learned" the speech patterns of the dominant, visual culture, and who refuse to "hear" the speech acts of the auditory or the kinesthetic.

This one example, then, taken from one life, speaks of the many variables, the many differences, within dialogue that arise as much from enforced silence as imposed speech. In this final sense, then, dialogue cannot itself be understood without reference to either silence or noise. The one denoting the inability or unwillingness to speak; the other the cacophony that results when speech itself is divorced from the real purpose for speaking: to share our individual understandings of our world. To fuse those understandings into a collective undertaking, where words and speech acts combine, separate and re-combine to form a language, a common language, that attempts—much like this essay itself—to articulate what has historically been called "the getting of wisdom."[3]

The Pedagogy Of Dialogue: A Relation Between Means And End

Grace Deniston-Trochta

In September I began teaching a "pit" course, so nicknamed because of the large amphitheater setting, holding the 164 students who had signed up for the class. Reluctantly, due to the size and the setting of the class, I was forced to choose the lecture format. Yet, all semester, John Dewey's words rang out: "These means form the content of the specific end-in-view, not some abstract standard or ideal" (Archambault, 1964, p. 104). As I tried to justify the means, my anxiety spilled onto pages of a teaching journal, and in the process I began to examine the concept of dialogue as pedagogy.

The notion of dialogue as pedagogy has great appeal to me in that it is based on two informed assumptions: that it enhances lasting learning and produces more satisfying social interaction (Palmer, 1998). It also mirrors the complexity and "copious" nature of the world (Grudin, 1996). And, according to the late Paulo Freire (1997) who championed dialogue, it also contains the seeds of political empowerment. These claims have a healthy history, dating back to the Greeks. However, Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) has demonstrated that dialogue as pedagogy is not without problems.

The Characteristics of Dialogue

The image of Socratic dialogue at work in the classroom is one of students engaged in learning by animatedly interacting with each other and the teacher as points are argued. Deborah Tannen (1998) points out in her book, *The Argument Culture*, that this popularized version reflects our devotion to the Adversary Paradigm and is not true Socratic dialogue. Socratic dialogue is characterized by convincing others and leading them to new insights as habitual thought is abandoned. "Our version of the Socratic method—an adversarial public debate—is unlikely to result in opponents changing their minds" (Tannen, p. 274).

Dialogue in Multiple Forms

My recent experience in the "pit" raised several questions for me: Are there no other models of dialogue besides an image of vigorous student interaction in an intimate classroom? Does the large lecture format exclude dialogue? If our attempts at dialogue fizzle, do we conclude that no dialogue has taken place? In other words, is dialogue only "good" when particular standards are met? Dictionary definitions of dialogue do not help answer these questions because they neglect the subtleties of dialogue as they play out in the classroom. Robert Grudin (1996), a contemporary scholar, has made a prescient statement, which helps to flush out a fuller notion of dialogue:

> What happens in dialogue? The key ingredients are reciprocity and strangeness. By reciprocity I mean a give-and-take between two or more minds or two or more aspects of the same mind. This give-and-take is open-ended and is not controlled or limited by any single participant. (p. 12)

Vivian Gussin Paley

Vivian Gussin Paley teaches very young children at the University of Chicago Laboratory School. Having taught at the Lab School, I have been in Paley's classroom and observed her "laboratory of learning." I have also read several of her books in which she has reflected deeply on her behavior as it relates to interactions with her students. As Paley examines her own behavior as a teacher, her self-reflection becomes both the means and the ends. Similarly, she looks to the student to learn about herself, inverting the traditional role of teacher and learner. In her books, Paley has allowed us numerous intimate glimpses of this learning process as she recounts a range of teaching dilemmas, including her own ethnicity and race as they impact her students (Paley, 1979). It is this emphasis upon Paley's role as learner that allows change to occur (for herself and for her students).

In her book, *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*, Paley (1990) describes how she uses children's stories as the curriculum. As she relates some of these children's stories to us, however, she reveals how they become sources of deep learning for her, about her students and about herself. The title is taken from the child in her class, Jason, who lives out the fantasy of being a helicopter. He is an outsider in the classroom, a loner who for quite some time resists all attempts—by students and teacher—to engage him in the learning community of the classroom. While the other children benefit from Paley's storytelling curriculum, Jason resists it. Or, rather, he lives his own story of isolation and loneliness through his fantasy of being a helicopter. Appearances would suggest that Jason seems to be out of dialogue with his classroom, but a dialogue exists nonetheless.

Through much struggle and introspection, Paley (1990) gained the following understanding:

> Jason's most reliable tool has been the helicopter; mine had been drills and exercises. Both Jason and I, as newcomers to a classroom, hovered over children without landing on their runways, without entering their fantasies. I cannot avoid my own premises and experiences, and I can only pretend to know Jason's. But he is a child who causes me to analyze myself and everyone else. In his visible confusion, he often clarifies matters for me. (p.122)

Paley (1990) identifies teaching as a moral act when we acknowledge and respond to the fact that "every child enters the classroom in a vehicle propelled by that child alone, at a particular pace and for a particular purpose" (p. xii).

Although Paley may not call her practice a pedagogy of dialogue, her work constitutes an elaborate dialogue in which the teacher becomes a listener par excellence, a learner, a person who responds to and respects students, one who has earned the trust of his/her students. Her self-reflection (her learning) becomes the means and the end, as it changes the behavior and perceptions of both teacher and student.

Teaching in the "Pit"

As I anticipate the beginning of a new semester and lecturing to a new group of students in the "pit," I have few illusions about my role. I am still convinced that a richer learning environment exists when you can recognize your students and "land on their runways."

However, my hope rests in the complexity of dialogue as revealed in the self-reflective aspects of Paley's work. Her experiences suggest that dialogue as pedagogy may begin in solitude, in the mind and will of the teacher. Not only does this suggest that dialogue as pedagogy wears as many disguises as there are teachers and student communities, it also suggests that something vital happens in solitude (in the process of self-reflection). We know that it is passed along to students: The means and the ends become indistinguishable.

Specific to my "pit" class, I know that the time, energy, and attention I devote to preparing my lectures will show up in kind, giving me a measure of control over the material substance of my lectures. I can also state with confidence that every struggle and effort I make to reach my students will also be in the sphere of my learning. Less predictably (and certainly with less control), there will be moments of grace when I will accidentally "land on the runways" of some of my students as their learning continues.

It is clear, finally, that internal dialogue can overcome the barrier of anonymity in "pit" classes, or other environments not conducive to mutual learning. In the context of student teaching, John Dewey once suggested that a student teacher should "observe with reference to seeing the interaction of mind, to see how teacher and pupils react upon each other—how mind answers to mind" (Archambault, 1964, p. 324). This is a useful phrase when thinking about dialogue, as well. While mind seeking mind may give birth to a dialogue of pedagogy, mind answering mind sustains and nurtures it.

Managing The Silence Of Children

Ed Check

> [S]ilence sends a strong message to children: This may be your reality but it is not [a] truth that we honor in this institution. (Lyman, 1998, p. 14)

I was taught that "kids should be seen and not heard." From elementary school on, I was on the receiving end of multiple monologues telling me what to do: from my parents, relatives, priests, nuns, neighbors and teachers. As a result, both my formal and informal educations failed me miserably as an adult. I was not at all prepared to discuss or deal with the realities of life—not sex, or sickness, or diversity, or death.

A recent conversation I had with my ten-year old nephew, Brandon, suggests to me that unfortunately, little has changed. It was a holiday chat; we were catching-up. I asked Brandon what was going on in his life. As he talked first about his family, then his school, I asked him about his art class. What was it like, was it fun, what was he learning?

Without hesitating, Brandon began a long list of complaints: his teacher didn't listen; she had them all doing "stupid assignments;" he was bored; he wasn't learning "much of anything;" he wasn't able to do what he wanted to do; and then the teacher always wanted them "to do things her way." As an example he said, she had recently demanded that he redo a print according to her specifications—in spite of the fact that he felt it was finished. Rather than comply, he had taken a lower grade.

After reciting his list of gripes, Brandon then contrasted his current teacher with one he had had in second grade. He said this teacher, whose name he didn't tell me and who I'll call Mr. Smith, made art interesting and exciting. Mr. Smith not only asked what kinds of projects the class might want to do but encouraged them to do what interested them. Brandon said he felt respected, like Mr. Smith "was listening to him."

Returning home I realized that Brandon's list of complaints paralleled many of my own critiques of art education. And then I realized something else: Brandon had voiced them all to me but he had never told his teacher. Never said what bothered him. And she had never asked.

Learning To Listen To Children

I've often wondered why don't we listen to children more? Or better yet, why we are afraid to engage in meaningful dialogue with them? What do we fear? Since creating a dialogue-centered curriculum would mandate that we simply tell the truth, perhaps the fear is not in telling the truth but in losing control (Silin, 1995). For that is what schools are about: power and control (Apple, 1979, 1982). The power to convey the messages of the dominant culture and the ability to control the audience.

Yet, listening to children (or anyone, I suppose), requires respecting not only their experiences and opinions, but the contexts of their lives. It also requires a trust between the speakers that can only develop naturally over time. This, in turn, would mandate a genuine interest in the lives of students. For example, my conversation with Brandon was based on mutual interest and affection. We trusted the other to hear our truths. Not only as uncle and nephew, but as two individuals who had two stories about our two lives to tell.

This kind of respectful dialogue means children must be heard, so that they can verify and witness their realities (Felman and Laub, 1992). This kind of dialogue is a mutually informed and empathic speaking and listening. I suspect the type of listening I provided Brandon allowed him enough safety to tell his truth about his teachers and enabled him to feel that he was being heard.

Following Brandon's critique of his current art teacher, children are apparently icons of innocence: helpless, silent and passive others. Within such a paradigm, children are neither seen nor heard because they are the projection of each teacher's own childhood, their own "lost times." The content and process of teaching then becomes so censored that any possibility of dialogue is destroyed. As a result, art classes become environments that are antithetical to creativity, imagination, and expression. Environments that are public stages, paid for by public moneys, where the "numbing out" and "dumbing down" of the American child is played out.

From Monologues to Dialogues

Listening to students and to their needs, hopes and visions, is the first step in creating dialogue. This is not an easy thing to do. As Ellsworth (1997) reminds us, such modes of address are not neat and can be messy and may lead to unpredictable events. And as teachers who have been taught to control or be in control at all times, giving up control is often the bane of our professional lives. Yet what we gain from such a "loss" is a fluid, living curriculum that guarantees dialogue and passion (Silin, 1995). Utilizing the rich contours and texts of student lives opens up our own lives as well, as we—teacher and student alike—explore our common humanity.[4]

None of this is easy to do. I struggle daily with how to incorporate dialogue and humanity into my teaching. And though dialogue, talking, being heard and listening to others has grounded my pedagogy, its still feels out of place for me in school. Why? Because that's not how I learned to learn or to teach. Schools were places that didn't have much to do with life. And it's only now, as I enter my third decade as an educator, that I realize that the most powerful lessons are those that connect students to their lives. Like my students, I have much work to do.

Conclusion

Throughout each of our essays, we reveal personal truths—bits of wisdom—that have transformed our relationships not only to ourselves, but to our students, art, education and the world. We notice that when we speak and are not only listened to, but heard, our individual searches for wisdom are legitimated. Each of us has experienced such kindness in learning and has internalized a self-love, respect and awareness for diversity and inclusion. It would be too easy for us to suggest that what you, the reader, need to do is to change monologues to dialogues. Don't tell people what to. Stop imposing speeches on controlled audiences in controlled environments. Listen to others. Tell your truths.

Over the years, as we have learned about types of knowledge, others, and ourselves, we have become disturbed by what little power we do possess to radically alter the big picture. As we continue to learn about each other, we learn about our prejudices, fears, strengths, weaknesses, and visions. We have learned that it is going to be difficult, at best, to return to the person and her/his story and take the time to listen to it and begin to place it in a context of understanding and meaning.

As educators, we have mastered and felt the impact of cultural and institutional power. We have experienced what it means to be othered. We were raised working-class women and men, taught to be straight, lesbian and gay, are now aging, some of us disabled, and still artists. We have come to understand that our strengths and interests come from our differences. Over the years, we have engaged each other as friends, and have continued to articulate the honest and hard questions; who we are, where we came from, what we do, how we teach and how we dream.

As seekers of knowledge, we continue to engage in contesting the pedagogical terrain toward real inclusion; honoring and listening not only to each other, hearing what each of us has to say, but to others as well. That transfers nicely to our classrooms (wherever they may be) where we envision a teacher/learner—learner/teacher paradigm where the process of learning itself is valued.

Part of our vision is reconsidering the value and place of dialogue. It means hearing, trusting and accepting what people tell us as their truths. Within such a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970), we can delight in ambiguity and the unknown rather than fear or distrust it. It started when we recognized and addressed our silence, that "noise," and began to trust our voices, experiences and visions. No universalities, just differences. All richly textured bits of knowledge. Such is our vision for personal achievement and critical awareness. As we allow ourselves to turn each act of new knowledge into an act of being itself, we transform not only ourselves, but teaching. We started with mutual affection and care. What kinder way to begin a revolution?

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Endnotes:

1. We are purposefully expanding the traditional notion of skill — using it in a non-traditional way. Just as art is a skill and a social construct, so is joy, fearlessness, kindness, etc. It is one way to personalize/humanize the discourse.

2. Seeker is a term I am using here to replace teacher-learner. A teacher does learn each time she/he teaches a particular subject, but because the balance of power in a classroom is usually tilted toward monologic teaching and away from dialogic learning, I preferred creating a "faux" term rather than perpetuating the acceptance of a false dynamic.

3. See Proverbs 4:7-13. See May & Metzger (1962).

4. See Kate Lyman's essays: "Staying Past Wednesday" (about sickness and death) and "Teaching the Whole Story: One School's Struggle Toward Gay and Lesbian Inclusion" (homophobia) for examples of utilizing dialogue to create informed critical pedagogy.

Examing Biases and Prejudices: Implications for Art Education

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Shirley Hayes Yokley

In this paper, I combine an overview of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's (1996) socio-psychological examination of group prejudices with a critical examination of artwork by Juan Sánchez to illustrate how issues-based studies of works of art help teachers and students examine and resist biases and prejudices that contribute to oppressive or hegemonic actions.

> The invitation posed by critical pedagogy is to bend reality to the requirements of a just world, to decenter, deform, disorient, and ultimately transform modes of authority that domesticate the Other, that lay siege to the power of the margins. . . . We need to develop a praxis that gives encouragement to those who, instead of being content with visiting history as curators or custodians of memory, choose to live in the furnace of history where memory is molten

> and can be bent into the contours of a dream and perhaps even acquire the immanent force of a vision. (Giroux, & McLaren, 1994, p. 218)

Hegemony is defined as a preponderant influence, especially that of one nation over another (Webster, 9th). Antonio Gramsci's (1972) concept of hegemony was that it is a constantly changing condition wherein force and consent are related in various combinations. Hegemony appears to succeed when socio-psychological conditions permit that interplay between force and consent. Ultimately people must consent in order to be socially conditioned to believe in the dominant ideology. Oftentimes hegemony is achieved through homogenization, which may be viewed as trying to achieve uniformity as a means of civil control. In Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's (1996) study of group prejudices, we find how groups, even nation groups, abide a homogeneity that has its roots in bias and prejudice. Coercion and manipulation through intellectual and moral influences are keys to the success of hegemony (Gramsci, 1972; Stanley, 1992, p. 98). This paper addresses the interplay of homogenization in the service of hegemony, the conscious and unconscious needs and desires involved in group prejudices, and the implications of these for art education.

The field of art education has an opportunity and an obligation to students and society to confront bias and prejudice. All art teachers are obliged, by virtue of their commitment to the profession, to learn to read the multiple layers of meaning of works of art in order to appreciate fully their significance. From such a stance, works of art become catalysts for dialogue, confrontation, and reflection. In this paper, I discuss artworks that encourage critical inquiry, empowerment, and an empathic/activist possibility through directly confronting biases and prejudices. The study of artworks such as those by the Puerto-Rican/American artist Juan Sánchez may bring a historical awareness to acculturated biases and group prejudices such as those manifested in US government attempts at homogeneity.

De-parting Puerto-Rico

Juan Sánchez (b. 1954) was born of Puerto Rican parents who came to the US in the 1950s and settled in a Spanish speaking Puerto-Rican / African-American community in Brooklyn, New York. Personal experiences gave Sánchez the impetus to merge art and politics. *NeoRican Convictions*, c.1989, is one of his works that addresses the results of homogenization practices by the US in Puerto-Rico, and the oppression of immigrants and people outside the dominant culture in US society. In this work, Sánchez used symbols such as hearts, stars, nails, hands, crosses, flags, roses, and barbed wire. The format of the American flag boasts six green and black stripes with 15 black stars on an orange background. Sánchez also uses formal elements to introduce opposition. For example, green is a complementary color or opposite of red, orange is the complement of blue. The notion of opposites leads us directly to believe that veracity of the flag is in jeopardy because of its change in color. The foundational red, white, and blue, holds a different look than anticipated. We question the veracity of a country with the simple change in color. To magnify the clues to the story, an enormous heart showing nails dripping with blood occupies the major part of the upper space of the canvas. The nails appear to have been forced deep into the heart–the heart of a people. On the surface of the entire mixed media work, text by Sánchez's brother Samuel, an independence movement activist, reveals the "bleeding heart" martyrdom of the systematic violence against Puerto Ricans in the US (Fusco, 1990, p. 187n). Sánchez's story stems from acts of racism, hatred, youth gangs, and violent crimes that occur in the US yet are largely overlooked by the government and its citizens. By revealing the desperation, herding of émigrés, inequality, and injustice, Sánchez directly confronts our national biases and prejudices in visual accusations of neglect and oppression. Tackling tough issues, Sánchez empathized with the plight of oppressed and suffering people which led him to make art with heated passion and political conviction. Among those tough issues that his work brings to our attention are the colonization policies of the US government built on homogeneous practices wrought through public schooling.

Colonization, Homogenization, and Public Schooling

The traditions and conventions that formed the basis of colonization practices by the US government have depended upon various means of homogenization. In attempts to achieve uniformity, to level cultural distinctions as a means of control, the US often has attempted to homogenize or create uniformity among the ideologies and traditions of its immigrants and conquered peoples such as Native American, Irish, Polish, Latino, African, and Puerto Rican. Homogenization attempted to provide conditions for eventual acceptance of the conqueror's culture (Spring, 1997).

Historically, public schooling, or the lack thereof, is one of the venues that the US government has used to insure the success of homogenization practices. These practices were accomplished through boarding schools such as those in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Wilson, 1992; Achbar & Wintonick, 1992) where Native American children were removed from their families for purposes of deculturalization through "American" education; the destructive "melting pot" ideology imposed on Puerto-Rican school children that insisted they "be like US"; and the lack of schooling for the first African and African-American slaves, wherein fear of revolution outlawed learning to read. Such inequalities and undesirable conditions remain gaping scars on the face of public and private education (Kozol, 1991).

The stripping of a culture from its people occurs through disempowerment, indoctrination, removal, eradication, segregation, policing, unnecessary violence, imprisonment, and other treatment involving discriminatory government policies in public education. In such practices, mutual respect, empathy, and equality lie far from the central motives. Sanchez's concerns in *NeoRican Convictions* particularly reveal the effects of deculturalization on the native people of Puerto Rico and its émigrés to the US. Looking at history provides a context for Sanchez's message

Puerto Rican History in Context

In 1897, Puerto Ricans successfully won autonomy from the Spanish and initiated a republican form of government. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico immediately fell under US military authority determined to protect economic interests, particularly American owned sugar and tobacco plantations. Puerto Rico became a colony of the US in 1898 and endured assimilationist and deculturalization tactics sometimes referred to as Americanization (Spring, 1997, p. 41). In great measure through public schooling, Americanization practices attempted to replace native cultures with the dominant culture in the United States (Spring, 1997) highlighting the contexts of Eurocentric, capitalist, technocratic, puritanical, and republican systems. School policies in Puerto Rico imposed the celebration of United States holidays and patriotic exercises honoring United States history. Textbooks and curricula reflected United States culture. Students were expelled for anti-United States sentiment. Dissenting native teachers were replaced by teachers from the US. Since a commission to recommend educational policies from the US War Department under President McKinley showed that only 10 percent of the population of Puerto Rico was literate (Spring, 1997), United States leaders rationalized imposing an English only policy in schools. Euro-organizations such as the Boy Scouts, already a status quo allegiance keeper, also contributed to the deculturalization. One man, Brumbaugh, appointed commissioner of education for only one year, initiated these Americanization policies that lasted through six commissioners (Spring, 1997). One important point to remember is that without group support, Brumbaugh's ideas would have quickly dissipated.

The prevailing attitude of US moral and cultural superiority negated the ways of life of Puerto Ricans, and, as a result, the imposition of that type of instruction had a disastrous effect on students (Spring, 1997). Many Puerto Ricans resisted Americanization programs and protested United States' policy, particularly the substitution of the English language in Spanish-speaking schools in the 1930s. Because of the long history of discontent, Franklin D. Roosevelt urged a bilingual policy. By 1951, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth and the Spanish language returned as the major language in the schools (Spring, 1997). Spring has speculated that resistance of numerous Puerto-Rican people impeded the homogenization process.

Human beings often fail to cross the seemingly cavernous distance between an appreciation of difference and the oppressiveness of homogeneity. Group prejudices hinder that crossing. Socio-psychologist Young-Bruehl (1996) in the Anatomy of Prejudices determined three character types who hold prejudice– the narcissistic, the hysterical, and the obsessional. Narcissistic prejudices deal with sexism and include homophobia, while hysterical prejudices deal with racism. Obsessional prejudices deal with those like anti-Semitism (pp. 26-38). In Young-Bruehl's character typing of group prejudices, sexists will hate marks of the feminine whether in men or women; racists will hate black, red, yellow, brown, or white signification wherever it may be found; and anti-Semitics will obsess and destroy both in fear and desire of the evil other (p. 28). Inability to bridge the distance may be due to shared prejudices that influence and mold the character of entire societies including our own.

The normalization of prejudice, or making all prejudice appear categorically the same, erroneously allows one to think that proper education can eliminate all prejudice and that tolerance can be taught (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 13). The idea in American education of "Just fix it!" has been legitimated through a kind of generalized research in the social and cognitive sciences since the 1950s (p. 13). According to Young-Bruehl, prejudices fulfill unconscious needs and desires, come in many types, and may overlap. For instance, individual character types who are racist also can be sexist. The same holds true for nations or subgroups. If we begin to analyze our own prejudices, perhaps we can begin to bridge the distance.

In discerning human beings tendencies toward homogeneity, whether that of nations or small groups, Young-Bruehl (1996) provided socio-psychological insights based on the work of Anna Freud. I paraphrase some of Young-Bruehl's ideas in the following sections and refer the reader to detailed explanations in her text. Though I focus on obsessional prejudices in terms of illustrating Juan Sanchez's artwork, I offer a brief explanation of narcissistic and hysterical prejudice to show how the three prejudices are different, yet how they can overlap.

Narcissistic Prejudice Begets Sexism

Narcissistic prejudices deal with sexism. History shows how "different societal subgroups and minorities have different prevailing sexism types" (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 432). In the earliest family structures, a more patriarchal, polygamous, one-sex sexism, an expression of bodily, phallic narcissism pervaded (p. 424). Some early Renaissance artworks idealize this notion. As polygamy evolved into monogamy, two sex mental-narcissistic sexism, of Judeo-Christian tradition and patrilineal origins, continued to hold the male as phallic authority over the female (Young-Bruehl, pp. 424-434). The move toward monogamy was an acknowledgment of the female's role in reproduction and her reproductive difference. The definition of woman was mother. Other definitions brought contempt for ideological renegades or women who did not abide the "rule" of mother (Young-Bruehl, p. 427). For instance, artist Carolee Schneemann graphically confronted both male and female sexist biases through her various art forms. In *Eye Body*, c. 1963, Schneemann addressed the politics of identity through emphasizing female sexuality, goddess imagery, and the body. She wrote,

> The erotic female archetype, creative imagination, and performance art itself are all subversive in the eyes of patriarchal culture because they themselves represent forms and forces which cannot be turned into functional commodities or entertainment (to be exchanged as property and value), remaining unpossessable while radicalizing social consciousness. (Schneemann, 1996, p. 683)

Schneemann usurped the ideological boundaries of woman as mother in order to challenge perceptions and identification of women in society. Her hope was that, "By the year 2000 no young woman artist will meet the determined resistance and constant undermining which I endured as a student" (Schneemann, 1996, p. 717). The struggle to eradicate those biases continues even in our personal lives.

Today, movements seeking to hold to traditionalist ways of life in the face of change refuse the amorphousness of boundaries in contemporary family structures. Growing domestic violence toward women and children results with such breaks from tradition (Young-Bruehl, 1996, pp. 432-433). Cindy Sherman's photographic renditions of mass media illustrate this violence. For instance, we are left to wonder what violence motivated her self portraits as grotesque dolls who have prosthetic body-parts that appear to be dislocated or decomposing. Furthermore, the angst that homosexuality raises continues to mount fears in phallic-narcissists. Artists such as David Wojnarovich and Keith Haring actively campaigned against that homophobia. Others such as Gran Fury transferred activist artistic sites from the museum to posters on the sides of city buses. In contemporary society, changes extending across boundaries of race, ethnicity and class are due particularly to forms of advertising and telecommunications (Young-Bruehl, p. 432). Group biases begin to change as visions of difference become acceptable. Artworks such as those by Miriam Shapiro, Clarissa Sligh, and Adrian Piper enable visions of difference, so that clashes of male and female narcissistic desires ideally may become a complementarity in the best of psychosocial possibilities as Young-Bruehl (1996) noted (p. 435). Piper wrote (as cited in Stiles & Selz, 1996) of people's blindness to the needs of others, "coupled with the arrogant and dangerous conviction that you understand those needs better than they do" (p. 791). Piper uses confrontation to dismantle the avoidance, denial, dismissal and withdrawal that cloaks our subconscious mechanisms (p. 791). Artists busily educate when the viewer listens.

According to Young-Bruehl (1996), education hardly exists except on a behavioral level in narcissist prejudice because "sexism flows through every facet of a sexist's existence, leaving, as it were, no place to stand to see it" (p. 546). It is a prejudice that "constitutes the ego ideal of the sexist" (Young-Bruehl, p. 546). Educational responses differ as groups differ, however, groups that allow great diversity among the victims are able to achieve greater group solidarity that can thwart sexism (Young-Bruehl, p. 547). Open forums in art education for discussing works of art may contribute to that appreciation of diversity. As Young-Bruehl (1996) noted, while sexists do not necessarily desire political or state support, hystericals, on the other hand, want to set up a political action agenda to perpetuate a two-tier, superior/inferior dichotomy.

Hysterical Prejudice Begets Racism

In brief, Young-Bruehl's hysterical prejudices are of the type where racism resides. Hysterical prejudices reflect a need for the dominator to have the dominated Other in order to exist with a sense of identity that is all-powerful in the face of fear of the Other's potential. Hypocrisy and repression are the most obvious mental characteristics (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 371). Hystericals look for others who condone their behavior. They need to feel superior and at the same time keep the "lesser others" in their place. Hystericals surge, pulse, behave orgiastically, build to climaxes, and want bodies. . . . Hysterics need the macrocosm of the crowd to feel powerful and secure (Young-Bruehl, p. 372). The greatest social fear of the hysterically prejudiced is potential rioters; therefore, they look to keep others in their place. In contrast to America and South Africa, Young-Bruehl's comparison of racism in Brazil "showed the key sociopolitical moment in racism," when the state became the master and the emancipated slaves became patriotic followers in a nationalistic household (p. 374). Even at the national level, slaves remained slaves though emancipated–not unlike the repeal of some civil rights legislation in the US, nor the lack of support necessary to initiate further civil rights legislation (see Kozol, 1991).

Education and therapy for a hysterical dynamic needs a political action focus. That focus would prevent government being an instrument for perpetuating state racism such as initiating Jim Crow laws, anti–civil rights legislation, even the criticism of affirmative action or welfare reform, actions that would insure race-specific poverty (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 546). Numerous works of art by artists such as Emma Amos, Faith Ringgold, Lorna Simpson, Carrie Mae Weems, Luis Cruz Azaceta, and Pat Ward Williams address the injustices of racist prejudice (see Lippard, 1990). With Young-Bruehl's characterology, racism is understood in terms of the needs and desires of we who suffer from hysterical prejudices. Continuing with a more in-depth look at obsessional prejudice, I provide further insights into Sanchez's artwork.

Obsessional Prejudices Beget Those Related to Anti-Semitism

According to Young-Bruehl (1996), the obsessionally prejudiced divide the world and groups of people into completely distinct categories with impermeable boundaries such as good versus evil. Yet, dichotomies of desire such as envy/hate relationships exist in obsessionalities. Fears of corruption and destruction are tempered with allure. Obsessional prejudices are the most ambivalent (as in paranoia); "the group that is feared as corrupting and destructive is also the group that is, without acknowledgment, unconsciously, the most alluring" (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 348). Intelligence is both feared and respected; wealth and power are both threatening and desired.

Within a fundamentalist adoration of truth, obsessional types reject any kind of plurality or Enlightenment idea of common humanity (Young-Bruehl, 1996). As a young woman, I remember being forbidden to take communion in our local church because I was not yet among the membership. Fundamentalisms regulate and segregate and spill over into the rest of our lives.

In extremist, separatist obsessionality, eugenic race purity (like Hitler's) remains the ultimate good accomplished by totalitarian isolationism of blood or other products that might contaminate that purity (Young-Bruehl, 1996). Like many young southerners, I observed the segregation of African-Americans accomplished through such means as the threat of contamination with toilets and drinking fountains, even though the type of contamination could never be satisfactorily explained. In fear, obsessionals use censorship and form attacks on common humanity rights (Young-Bruehl, 1996), such as prohibiting black males free speech to address public groups, speak to white women, or even make eye contact for fear of reprisals.

Obsessionals are isolationist and separatist but want to extend their domination to greater circles. They believe that the only protection to their fears of conspiracy initiated by the evil other is eradication, extermination, even to the point of destroying any evidence of the destruction, such as the cremation of Jewish people during the Holocaust. "Anything less (than destruction) means that the conspiracy can regenerate, regroup" (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 348). Recent atrocities in Kosovo, Rawanda, Bosnia, Israel, even gang atrocities in the US attest to human acts of genocide. Much of the art of Jean-Michel Basquiat reveals the depth of fragmentation and pain in response to such tendencies toward elimination or X-ing out in his graphic gestures that highlight racist stereotypes. When obsessionals cannot act on genocidal impulses, they advocate containment measures such as ghettoization, deportation, herding by fortress groups, or use of the enemy's methods of communication, coding, and infiltration (Young-Bruehl, 1996). Artworks by Arlan Huang and Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith portray the herding tendencies of hegemonic obsessionals. For instance, some of Quick-To-See-Smith's paintings contain animals in herds forming a narrative that lead's the viewer to make connections to Native American's retrenchment to reservations. The dominant white culture, are forced to question their complicity in such actions.

Young-Bruehl determined that obsessional dispositions often respond frantically to defend self against fears. Obsessives seek to eliminate their frustration by revenge, retaliation, and power displays through a group that is deemed able to counter the perceived threate ing conspiracy "out there" (Young-Bruehl, p. 351). The obsessional's duty is to keep the horror from happening to others of their group. Young-Bruehl found the obsessional crowd attracted to the "charisma of a leader who provides the meaning of life, the logic, the value system, the images of purity and cleansing, the mystical channeling and ordering that eliminate uncertainty and doubt" (p. 372). Obsessionals in a crowd lose individuality and the guilt that individuality entails. In this condition, biases and prejudices control human actions. Young-Bruehl suggests that social and economic conditions such as depression and disillusion tend to prevent anti-Semitic-like obsessional prejudice.

Groups hold biases and prejudices that spread to other groups with whom they come into contact, then to entire nations as demonstrated in the histories of the Spain, England, United States, Germany, South Africa, and the former Yugoslavia, among numerous others. As nation conquers nation, its citizens are implicated in those decisions of control, and, therefore, become complicit in the actions of the nation group. Of course, dissent is always present, and those dissenting groups, as Young-Bruehl indicated, occupy a different type of bias or prejudice. The degree and intensity of bias and prejudice can place ideological blinders on a nation and its citizens.

Creating a "Good" Citizen

The concept of citizenship within a culture is formed by particular attitudes, beliefs, and values toward ways of life. Forming good citizens insures the society a necessary means of control. A "good" citizen is molded or reproduced by common culture through its laws, traditions, religion, sentiments of nationalisms and patriotisms, and largely indoctrinated through mass media and public and private education (see Chomsky & Herman, 1988). Ironically, the molding of a good citizen reproduces group bias and prejudice toward particular ways of life. Understanding why we think the way we do provides an opportunity to question ourselves as enablers of bias and prejudice.

Citizens can be molded to suit the needs and desires of a power structure as Young-Bruehl's research indicated. Using homogeneous socio-psychological means of control or indoctrination such as public education, mass media, and various technologies are keys to the success of such manipulation. Ironically forms of resistance exist within these means of control (see Giroux, 1983). For instance, culture and values are embedded in language. Spring (1997) speculated that the attempts to change the Spanish language to English in Puerto Rico may have caused the limited effectiveness of United States deculturalization programs. He maintained the difficulty if not impossibility of deculturalization through indigenous educational institutions, indicating the empowerment and activist possibilities for oppressed peoples within this establishment (see

Freire, 1970/1992, 1973/1993). Ironically, that which would indoctrinate and dominate can also be the instrument that empowers and liberates. If pockets of resistance can enable empowerment and change, then it stands to reason that the way we teachers teach, as well as the content (or the lack thereof) we teach, has everything to do with reproducing bias and prejudice and thus enabling or resisting homogeneity in the service of hegemony. Teaching in the visual arts is no exception.

Implications for an Issues-based Art Education

In art education, changes in philosophical and epistemological attitudes toward teaching open possibilities for examining societal and global issues as well as encouraging critical inquiry, empowerment, and empathic/activist possibility (Shor, 1987, 1992). Art lessons can address socio-political as well as aesthetic issues, reveal historical/cultural contexts and meaning in works of art, connect the histories of the artworld, and enable meaningful, richly expressive, ideational studio art. I describe one of those lessons and its implications below.

Preservice teachers in my field experience practicum class are challenged to devise issues-based art lessons for incarcerated youth in detention centers. One lesson by Christine Vodicka (1998) focused on the distress that marginalization causes human beings. Juan Sanchez's *NeoRican Convictions*, c. 1989, described earlier, reveals issues surrounding US government control and colonization of Puerto Rican people. According to Coco Fusco (1990), Sánchez is addressing the "mythology of martyrdom" by using text that his brother Samuel Sánchez wrote in response to a grand jury subpoena in which he recounts the "systematic violence, a type of enforced martyrdom, against Puerto Ricans in the US" (p. 187n). Aesthetically, Sanchez's work holds art historical significance as fine art, yet crosses boundaries into propaganda with an instrumentalist theory base. Moving between different cultural spaces, Sánchez sought to create awareness, educate, and vocalize the need for change in attitudes and policies toward Puerto Rico and immigrants in the US. For instance, in another work *Cultural, Racial, Genocidal Policy*, c.1983, Sánchez challenged US policy of sterilizing women of Puerto Rico in order to combat overpopulation and unemployment, as he accused "the highest rate of genocidal sterilization in the world" (Fusco, 1990, p. 161n). Students discussed Sanchez's deconstruction of American symbols, such as the seemingly masked statue of liberty and the green striped flag dripping with blood from the crucified bleeding heart. Reading the signs in this work directly challenged the students to empathize with the marginalization of Puerto Rican people–the pain, sense of loss, anger, and degradation that comes when cultural identity is stripped away. Students learned that important works of art may not be comforting and may be discussed from a variety of aesthetic stances as expressivist, formalist, and instrumentalist. Studying the context of the work can help students understand how attempts to homogenize and colonize can be promulgated and continued by national and small group biases and prejudices. In turn, students are able to create personal works that address issues of stripping away identity, and merge ideas relating to Puerto Rican people with the marginalization and homogenization in their own and others lived experience (Sánchez, 1996).

Many students in detention centers are resistant to power structures without understanding the complexity of the issues. Oftentimes, incarcerated youth have difficulty finding appropriate outlets to voice their opinions and to think through or reflect on consequences of certain actions. The study and interpretation of works of art can provide those appropriate outlets. Very often these teens appear comforted by the confirmation that cultural critique is permitted within a dynamic, in contrast to static, curriculum.

Unfortunately, bland or static curricula sanction homogeneity and erase any hope of a critical art education that works toward appreciation of difference. For instance, the bland study of composition and design leaves little room for passionate engagement with metaphor. Likewise, learning how to create expressivity in works of art without the realization or insistence that expression holds meaning becomes little more than an exercise in technique. A superficial approach to historical/cultural context leaves out the reciprocal effects that history and culture play on art and art on history and culture. A bland look at the artworld context overlooks some of the most capable philosophers, intellectuals, and thinkers of this world who are/were visual artists. From the in-depth study of important works of art such as Juan Sanchez's *NeoRican Convictions*, students may learn to resist reproducing harmful effects of bias and prejudice and begin a healing process.

One of our charges as teachers and artists is as bearers of dangerous memories. As Giroux & McLaren (1994) premised in the opening paragraph of this paper, critical pedagogues have a responsibility to keep memory alive, all the while questioning the reformation of knowledge in relation to those memories. Neimiroff (1992) stated that we must keep alive

> the memory of human suffering by recounting the history of the marginal, the vanquished, and the oppressed, and by actively opposing the hegemonic practice of 'not naming' those things which challenge the status quo [here in terms of reproducing bias and prejudice] and suggest the elimination of the sources of human suffering by the realization of alternative possibilities for society. (p. 70)

With an issues-based art curriculum that digs into the furnace of history to intelligently and conscientiously confront our plethora of overlapping biases and prejudices, one day our society, with the help of art teachers, may be better able to step outside ourselves to see the world more clearly and in doing so achieve higher levels of responsibility and civility.

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The Ghost Writer

Amy Brook Snider

Introduction
Amy Brook Snider
January, 1999

> The core of this article was originally published in an issue on "empowerment" in the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design [NSCAD] Papers in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1988. Not surprisingly, the article is also related to the theme of this *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*—"dialogue as empowering pedagogy," describing as it does how a teacher and her student used the medium of letters as a space for communication and reflection.

Dialogue is a kind of conversation—spoken, written, or thought. But just what kind of conversation leads to empowerment? In the correspondence that follows, it seems that it was the student's perception of the teacher's authority, experience, and knowledge that led to her personal insights and new connections. The teacher, myself, was a kind of ghostly presence. In my non-ghost persona, I occasionally broke the rules by speaking about some issue before a particular letter was sent. Thus, there were two dialogues acting in counterpoint—the one spoken and the other written. My written responses were not answers but merely assurances that I was still out there—patient, omnipresent, accepting of anything I might receive. It was the student herself who was able to become both speaker and listener in an imagined conversation.

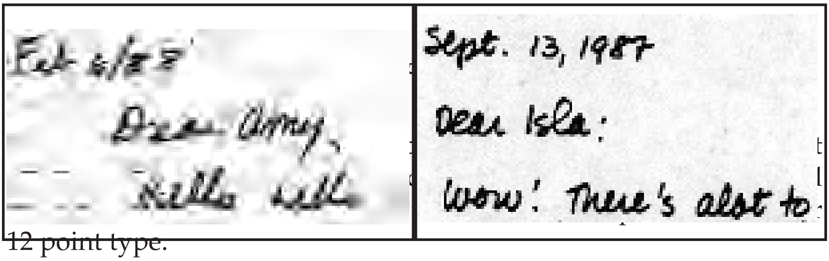
This kind of conversation can be compared to the psychoanalytic dialogue where transference enables the analysand to listen to the workings of her own unconscious. In the same way, the student teaching conference can be the site for increased critical analysis by the student of her own teaching. The mere presence of the college supervisor at the rear of the classroom allows the student to be more conscious of her own teaching behavior. She can watch and listen to herself as if through her supervisor's eyes and ears.

Isla McEachern was part of a group of Canadian and US students enrolled in a pilot art education course developed by Becky Wible and myself (Pratt Institute) and Harold Pearse (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design). Each student did one, three-week internship in New York City and one in Halifax in non-traditional educational settings such as museums, environmental programs, hospitals, and community centers. The program also included weekly seminars, individual conferences and observations, library research, studio visits, and plenty of time for touring and socializing.

The "final project" was a research paper exploring an issue raised during the first internship experience but relevant to the second placement as well. Several meetings with me, the faculty advisor in New York, helped the students identify the specific problem or area of research. When I finally realized that this predetermined structure was not right for Isla, I said, "Let's scratch the idea of a research paper and begin a correspondence on any or all of the following: your work with Tim Rollins and the Kids of Survival (K.O.S.) in the South Bronx, your mural project with the disturbed adolescents at the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth and your feelings about your past, present, and future in art education." It is clear from her letter of May 23, 1988 (part of this introduction to our correspondence), that Isla felt that I had chosen an appropriate form or vehicle for her "research."

Isla had graduated from NSCAD and was seeing the world, as we all have seen it during comparable rites of passage, with a kind of stereoscopic vision—remembering and anticipating simultaneously. It is an anxious period which understandably breeds an even greater intolerance or weariness with those familiar school formats—the test, the paper, the "crit." Then too, she had written that "any value to what I said exists because of that state of mind I was in—off balance, unsure of so much."

I asked myself what form or structure could serve as a connector between all one has known or learned with all one is about to experience? And I thought, letters are such a form because they are not associated with the judgmental value system of school. Everyone writes letters; they are an intimate form of communication. They can be a vehicle for a student's exploration and self-clarification rather than the usual *raison d'etre* for writing in the schools—a tool for evaluation by the teacher. Their shape, rhythm, and texture are derived from the personality of their writers. (See *Figure 1* for an excerpt of our handwritten letters.)



Dear Amy,

Sept. 13, 1987

Dear Isla:

Wow! There's alot to

12 point type.

I was also guided by my observations of Isla in the seminar and with the other students in the group. I noticed her reluctance to join in some of the discussions or engage in private conversations with me. I wanted to find a way that Isla and I could communicate more freely.

There were probably other factors which led me to correspondence as an empowering form of dialogue; it was the sum total of various reasons and intuitions which informed my conception of just the right structure for this particular student, in this particular situation, in this particular course. My original conception of the form—a paper—had to be modified, and the parameters of the research content had to be expanded to allow room for an account of a personal search for meaning. In retrospect, it seems that I was able to allow Isla a measure of authority in the course, by giving up some of my own authority as a teacher. Ultimately Isla was able to find her own voice, raise her own questions, and feel a sense of her own personal power.

There are implications to be drawn from the correspondence between Isla and me. The idea of a pre-established curriculum, currently popular in the field of art education, may not be the best approach. My experience has shown that the best teaching plan is a sketch which can be adjusted or altered to suit the interests and abilities of a specific group of students. The plan, like the syllabus or curriculum, cannot be a template rigidly superimposed on an anonymous group of individuals. Rather, it has the flexibility of cloth assuming a shape as it is draped on the dressmaker's form.

Isla McEachern: Reflecting on the Correspondence Process

I was enormously relieved I did not have to do another paper. I was sick of papers and their conventions. The idea of corresponding with you made me feel free. There was a lot on my mind; a lot of uncertainty about throwing myself into a completely new arena of art teaching, and a lot of questions fueled by just finishing my teacher training.

After we talked about my ideas for a research paper, you suggested I continue my "stock-taking," the inventory I had begun of what I thought, felt and understood about teaching art. The letters would be cathartic. In reflecting on teaching art and my experience in New York, I wrote about what concerned me at the time with no consideration of an end product or an imposed format. I just wrote what I had to write. I did not edit myself; I did not pretend. It was completely refreshing to be so straight-forward and to the point. I gladly took the idea of "letters" literally and reveled in being able to write as I would talk, to say what was on my mind as it occurred to me, to express things I didn't fully comprehend without carefully wording and structuring.

I surprised myself with discoveries of my attitudes because I did not know what was coming next. That is the really incredible thing about writing fluidly and probably why people write journals, diaries, and letters.

Knowing it was a correspondence, a two-way thing, encouraged my openness. My writing was not delivered to be graded; it was to be answered. YOU would respond and, I trusted, reflect my own candidness and seriousness.

The Correspondence

The following are excerpts from Isla's two letters, and my responses. We have made slight editorial revisions on our own and each other's letters for the purposes of publication.

July 23, 1987

Dear Amy,

After graduating, the world of teaching art has gotten more complex and larger, not smaller and more focussed. I feel like my last months at college were artificial because of the pressure to come to conclusions and resolutions or to have "answers to the big questions." The pressure was partially my own for believing in the system, and partially from the system itself. When I was in school I felt as if the time frame for my germinating, blossoming, and maturing as a student and as a person would be the same as the time frame of the program. My growth has been outwardly measured and punctuated by the intervals and terms of the school year.

Here in New York, doing yet another practicum, my struggle hasn't changed. I'm just as unsure about the nature of teaching art as ever; probably, because of new influences from *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education* by Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, your colleague Herb Perr from Hunter College, my internship supervisor Tim Rollins, and yourself.

Herb, in his attitude toward teaching, rebels against the "depositing into the bank account" style of education. He says we are all victims of it. Go to the kids for direction and use their culture and environment as our primary teaching resource. Be their student! Relearn and hopefully remake knowledge with students. Fine! But what about what I have to give? I thought I had something to give and that's why I wanted to teach. No, not quite. I like the giving and the exchange. Anyhow, I spent a lot of time at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design under the guidance of my instructors, trying to find out how to give what comes from me and is truly mine. In my experience so far, teachers bring to and pass on much more than just the subject matter they are teaching. Shouldn't this be attended to consciously rather than accidentally?

Herb also talked about empowering students by validating their experience, histories, and culture. The word empower surprised me. I never thought about teaching art in order to give people power. That's probably the notion that really moved me into thinking harder while I've been in New York.

Tim speaks of empowerment too. But unlike Herb, he brings a degree of knowledge and experience to the kids that they would never have had access to ordinarily. In fact, mature artists don't have access to some of these experiences. I'm talking about the gallery openings, the best equipment, the library of art books, the patrons and collections, the critical attention to their work, museum visits, and on and on.

Where does this put me? Well, after being with Tim Rollins and the K.O.S. Workshop for three weeks, I am tangled up in many impressions of what teaching art is about. Tim believes he and the kids work collectively, although, he is, of course, the teacher or the director on the set. Is this possible? He says he has something to give. He certainly brings in ideas he thinks have a relevant connection to the kids. It takes him and the kids a long time (in the sense of school time) to work though the themes in classic literature to decide if they are relevant. Tim says art is the hub of the wheel and the spokes are all the other subject areas like religion, politics, sociology, economics . . . whatever. It sounds very similar to you, Amy, when you said "art is the connector" or was it "teachers are the connectors"? Probably both. Though the themes that surface in the books Tim uses are large and universal—war, survival, power, racism, entrapment, evil in the guise of goodness, the kids are able to find personal connections because their lives are already scarred from the battle torn experience of living in the Bronx. The finished work or the solutions they reach, reflect sophisticated social and political thought and opinion on those themes, not just superficial feelings and glimmerings of understandings. Tim wants to empower his students by giving them opportunities and channels through which to think, choose, criticize, judge, and change.

Is teaching art teaching curiosity or politics or philosophy, or life skills? Is it teaching confrontation?

The K.O.S. workshop now takes place outside of the school system; it is completely extracurricular. In a large way, art isn't being taught there, it's being done. I've never seen anything like this before. Art isn't something way off in the future to the students. It is a studio in production, a work that is sold to internationally famous art collectors and reviewed in art magazines of the same caliber. The kids are using the best professional materials and constructing well-crafted objects. They are artists in an apprenticeship just as I was while I was there. They are learning a kind of discipline which will enable them to apprentice with other artists, get paid and continue to develop in the fashion of 19th century artists, if they choose.

Tim has told high school students, "Don't wait to be given permission to be an artist. Go and find the empty room in your school; put your work up, get real art materials and start doing it." Should art classrooms be art studios? What are they now? They are something else. Why did I wait until the end of my college years to work in a studio situation? Was it for the best? Why wasn't I dealing seriously with art in high school with issues that were serious to me then, as I am now in my studio? What was the subject of art then? I think it was art. It was the form something takes; line, shape, color, tone, composition . . . design, I guess, or how something's put together. I don't recall the "something." There was a project with a matchbox; one on a baby carriage; there were bottles and cloth and a self-portrait. It didn't matter too much. An important "something" would appear later, on its own, if you were really artistic.

Well, something appears in my painting now but not magically or instantaneously. It is the result of reading, writing, thinking and judging in my world and that's taken me a long time to learn to do. I've been learning to perceive the layers of meaning in what takes place around me for the last three or four years at the college but before that, connections were coincidental. In this regard, I can relate to Tim's and Herb's conviction that the 21st century model of teaching art should be to teach people to perceive/judge how their world works. Tim also says, "Art is the representation of something you know without a doubt." Given that, a charcoal drawing of a coffee mug doesn't get much applause. As Bertoldt Brecht writes in his essay on truth, it's easy to spout truths you can see with the naked eye but perceiving truths that aren't obvious is a different matter and a more noble task.

Here's my "Who am I?" [A phrase I introduced to the group to suggest the anxiety with which novice teachers question their authority in the classroom]: Who am I to talk with kids in a classroom about the state of the world, or sexism or racism or whatever they need to find out about when my training is in art education? An administrator would have a fit if the art teacher was doing the social studies teacher's job or doing anything beyond line, shape, and color. Maybe that's why Tim and K.O.S. are outside the school now. Art couldn't be called art anymore, it would have to be "visual politics" or "seeing self and world" or something to broaden the scope. I don't know. I've heard the term visual literacy come up a lot. It makes art sound like one of the three R's. That's why people use it but I think it only describes reading visual images but not about responding or thinking critically. Here's one, I've got it: "critical vision." Imagine saying I am an art teacher—I teach critical vision?

Isla

July 27, 1987

Dear Isla:

Your letter gives me confidence in my "way" of allowing the students the opportunity to create the course with me. Although I myself had envisioned a more scholarly research approach for the paper, this response of yours seems so right for your needs at the present time. I think I have probably always had an inflated idea of academic or scholarly research but your struggle to find meaning in your work, and your questioning is perhaps, the most basic kind of research there is.

Most of the issues you raise in your letter we discussed together last week. It seems that you are looking for a way to bring yourself into the teaching of art which connects you, the students, and your life worlds. But you can't really do that until you are in the situation (perhaps your current internship at the hospital in Dartmouth). Then you almost sit back and allow it to happen in the same way that I had to allow you to speak to me about your concerns and let what I heard change my original conception. It's as if you are the artist working with pieces of a collage—only you can direct the final assemblage. What Tim has done can only work for Tim. The only way it can be a model is to demonstrate the uniqueness of the process or idea that is K.O.S.

Have to go now. See you soon. Write to me c/o Cynthia Taylor. I love this beginning!

Best, Amy

August 19, 1987

Dear Amy,

As in the first letter I wrote you, I have questions and few resolutions. As you said in your response to my writing, I can't do much more to come to terms with my queries until I'm in a real situation. Theorizing is theorizing, much as I love it, although I could devour any reading on art education and art therapy right now.

I say that because although my degree training has given me ample opportunity to experiment and wrestle with teaching styles and approaches, it hasn't been completely real. It was as real as is possible. Sunday last, as we sat on Val's sofa, we were talking about how teachers feel when someone is in their classroom watching. The fear of being judged by an experienced teacher sometimes creates a palpable tension. I recall saying that when I was a student teacher and an art student, I was used to being criticized, I didn't feel insecure when my instructor came to visit. In fact, sometimes I felt relieved that someone who knew what I was going through was present. Also, because I was in agreement with my instructor, the visit was an essential part of my growth as a teacher; I welcomed it. Anyhow, I do think I acted differently and with a certain consciousness that I was being watched.

I'm not even sure this is an important thing to write about but all I keep thinking about these days is that I now feel about teaching the same way I felt about getting the chance to be myself in the studio. This I can talk about quite clearly. I always felt watched on the other side of the college (the Studio Department as opposed to the Art Education Department); it took a long time to build up a wall of privacy so I could feel like I was by myself when I was working. My last two turns of studio painting accomplished this and there was a remarkable outward change in my work. It was like coming home; it was a revelation. I did two paintings that felt like I'd known them all my life. I mean, they really felt like old friends I hadn't heard from for years. It was like when you run into someone on the street you haven't seen for a long time and it's stunning because although you have been through so much and changed and the other has been through so much and changed, you still know each other.

I painted those paintings when I felt like no one in the whole world was watching me, not even me. And so, in teaching, that moment is yet to come when I can see myself whom I've always known—and dance.

There is the shadow of where I'm at. Speaking more intellectually, I don't know what is happening to the questions that arose out of Tim's workshop, New York and Herb. They are hanging. At first, when I got back and read what I'd written to you and looked around at where I was, my first response was that I could just forget it. I could push it away and pretend it never happened. No one around here cares about that stuff. It was so vital in New York where I met people who are pushing and testing the boundaries of art teaching as I knew them. My God, it would be easy to forget it and slip into the familiar modes of teaching here. That's why I said to you my writing was "unwound," Amy. I wondered if I had gone overboard because no one here is asking about teaching politics, criticism, empowerment, and freeing students from the chains of the educational system through art. It's all "art concepts" here; a phrase that comes up in N's Art Process class. I'd always thought it was appropriate but now I wonder if it isn't just the same or just as bad as teaching "design principles." Both phrases objectify teaching art by removing it from real life so that it can be dissected and taught. In other words, things can be learned and content can be stuffed into those things later, when students suddenly and miraculously, have something to say.

I suppose, N's influence was balanced by C's commitment to the idea of releasing a student's subjective experiences in art class. I just don't know what I'm going to do with all this stuff—I want to make a difference, at least I know that.

The studio in a hospital—the arts studio Joan Erikson and Helen Kivnick describe in "The Arts as Healing" is just that—a studio where patients come and work and because they partake in arts activities they benefit from any combination of the seven healing properties of the arts they outlined. I don't see this as very encouraging for my predicament because the person in charge, be they artist, teacher or whatever the title, isn't carrying all that much responsibility. Nobody needs me. No one needs a teacher or therapist in this situation. They just need the space, the materials, and an artist with a lot of patience (ha! ha! pun).

But still, I found more importantly, that the article is missing in its analysis the essential eighth inherent healing property in arts experiences and that is "the meeting place principle," at least, the meeting place for two people or more or a person with herself—the exchange and communication, the togetherness with oneself or with others that artmaking provides. I would say that this is the most unique and specific quality of art. The article concludes emphatically, as if spitting the distasteful thought out, that "we do not see art as a vehicle." . . . Well, I do.

I would really love it if you could give me a reading list you think would help, or just suggestions of people to look up. Of course, I look forward to your response. You can see around corners. I'm hoping you can see things that are just outside my field of vision and bring them closer.

I take this as a really special opportunity—this correspondence with you—to work out with someone knowledgeable and sympathetic—the issue I would otherwise run over in my head alone. Thanks, and thanks for New York.

Isla

September 13, 1987

Dear Isla:

Wow! There's a lot to respond to. I will read and write (reread actually) so I can keep track. Firstly, about the "reality" of your work as an undergraduate—I wonder if you think of KOS as being more real, and if you do, is that because Tim connects so much with the NYC Art World. Perhaps that was an atypical experience. Or—is it about the artificiality of the practice-teaching situation? Perhaps the artificiality of school in general as preparation for life. Read Paul Goodman (in an anthology, I think) on informal learning.

What you say about doing your painting only for yourself relates to this too! Painting for studio instructors, peers, etc. who use the structures of crits and exhibits is very similar to teaching with someone who is the real teacher. Does this mean the system needs to be reconsidered or would you not have been able to find your own vision as a painter or voice as a teacher if you had not participated in the process? You say that you painted the paintings when you felt like no one in the world was watching—not even you. That reminds me of something Lawrence Durrell wrote in *The Alexandrian Quartets* (I can't remember which book but it might have been "Justine") about being in love. For love to be really authentic, there has to be a forgetting of self/the past but it is only possible with a certain kind of experience and knowing.

As for what you say about Art Education at NSCAD, I can't answer that although I think Harold does in his letter to you. Each program has a different emphasis and it should because that is what gives the curriculum its character. You were drawn to the "political" internship and to the kind of things Herbie was talking about. It would probably be impossible to leave that interest in New York since it lies in yourself. But it may manifest itself in different ways in Halifax—keep your eyes open for the signs—you will find your own branch to explore and or nurture. It certainly is a worthwhile pursuit. Apparently in Germany that is all art education is about. I don't think it would be productive to think about N's teaching and how it falls short of a political attitude. Rather think about what it did do for you now.

Take notes on Freire and you can talk to Herb when he comes up in November. Also, you can write to Tim. I'd be interested n your opinion of Freire although I am not an avid reader of his work. I really think he has borrowed quite a lot (as I told you) but I am in agreement with the basic premise anyway.

For some reason I can't find the "The Arts as Healing" article so I cannot read it again but using your reading of her text as my guide I would say that you are correct in your interpretation of what she says. My own opinion might be summed up in my essay in "The Images of Experience" catalogue which Harold has. I think I feel (just to restate the case here succinctly) that having people engage in the art process is not enough—they need someone to steer the ship but not in a heavy-handed way. Erikson was just using the artmaking process as a substitute for therapy. If people are healed they don't need therapy. She may not really deal with the question you are asking since that's not her concern. I'll look for the article so I can reread it.

It's really a wonderful insight you have about the unique quality of the arts—that is, "the meeting place principle." Duchamp has an essay (very short) in an anthology by Gregory Battcock where he talks about the necessity for an audience to complete the creative process. I think the distaste the authors project at the end of the article is not about the fact that art is a vehicle in art therapy but what it is used as a vehicle for. There is self-reflection and there is self-diagnosis—I prefer the former.

I'm not sure about what sort of books to recommend—perhaps I'd start with the sort that were an inspiration to me. How about *Twenty Teachers* by Ken Macrorie and *Artful Scribbles* by Howard Gardner? Let me know what you're interested in.

Well—it's been stimulating thinking with you—You write well and ask good questions. By the way, did it ever occur to you that you may be attracted to the idea of using art as a vehicle because you don't like to confront certain issues directly though dialogue? Just a thought. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in November.

Best, Amy

January, 1999

Dear Amy,

Wow! 10 years after, indeed. What a rush it's been re-reading and revising my memory of where my thinking was back then and where I was emotionally. It is helpful, still, to be asked to re-consider and reflect. Gosh, I can walk right through these letters and check off, "Yes, no, maybe; that's changed, that hasn't . . ." I have a feeling akin to the experience of hauling out old paintings and drawings I've kept and being surprised by all sorts of things in them.

Most of all, I know now what my "angst," my confusion was really about and yes, I've come to terms with it. I was born on an astrological cusp—the exact point when the constellation positions are moved from one house to another. My post-secondary education coincided with the cusp of modernist and post-modernist art education theory. When I re-read my letters, I see I was experiencing the slamming up against each other of polarizing attitudes. It's so clear in the criticism I had of my courses, which generally focussed on art concepts and design principles. I felt they were in direct opposition to the politicized art teaching I experienced in New York and was reading about. I was struggling to view many approaches under one lens and to hold two powerful constellations in position. The clash hadn't been labeled yet. It was a time of an extraordinary meeting of ideas in art education and one filled with debate and conflict. Looking back, there was far too much emphasis on resolving contradiction. Now it is the order of the day, more or less, to discuss the butting up of modernist / post-modernist approaches in art education theory and to come away with a more relativistic attitude. Anyway, that's what I've done.

So, I was in the first "student art teacher cohort" to be confronted with the modernist / post-modernist ideological collision. Where did that get me? I was completely wrong about how I thought "the system" or administrators would respond to bringing a more critical and issues base to an art program. I was clearly expecting to have to teach art the way I'd been taught in high school in 1978-79, which was solely in the visual literacy-formalist way. In short, I learned art from a modernist standpoint. I didn't know what to do with all that new and incredible stimulus of art programs I saw modeled by Tim or Herb.

It's a happy ending. My system, the one I teach in now, didn't have any expectations for art. Plus, the schools have consistently, over ten years, pushed teachers of all subjects to deal with many more issues in the classroom, to cross-over content and be more holistic practitioners. "More is more," has been my experience. I have developed a program with what I believe are the best attributes of the approaches I've been exposed to. My opinion of what is best, like my program, is not permanent, fixed or exclusive. Every flavor can be tasted in it at one stage or another from learning to mix paint colors to my latest incorporation, that of service-learning. My grade 12 students are taking their art strengths out into the community to serve community needs. I have learned that the "fit" of style, place, theory, philosophy to school, community, kid, teacher, space, and timetable is the most important thing—the best predictor of learner success, if you will. Hand in hand with that goes the fact that success is defined in many, sometimes contradictory ways. Flexibility is the ticket.

The art teaching arena is too big for singularity of purpose. It is a meeting place, a term I used in one of my letters of long ago. Art educators should not waste time pitting ideologies against each other when what is called for in practice is a large repertoire of rationales and methodologies to suit the variety of student and school outcomes. My skill as an art teacher is in choosing the right direction in a given context to achieve a desired goal and accepting flux as the natural state of education in my time.

If this sounds too non-committal for some, I liken the situation to the predicament of 20th century physicists. The great minds have been arguing to prove a "unifying theory of the universe"—a theory in which all the universal forces known (time, light, mass, gravity . . .) will be explained or make sense in an interlocking, mutually supportive way. They haven't done it.

Finally, the subject of empowering dialogue. It is the quality of the listening, the skill of the listener that makes a conversation empowering. A really good listener allows one to hear oneself, doesn't judge and acknowledges the conversation. Amy, you have described this well in your introduction. What I want to add is that our professor/student relationship back then, was not as much a motivating factor in keeping me true and honest and focussed on the subject as the fact that I respected and trusted your viewpoint and your commitment to the conversation as a process. Our dialogue was and is a testament to your professional skill and personal integrity (if the two can be separated). You did inspire trust and candidness but not because you were professor. Not all teachers, professors, and psychoanalysts can do that and for the same token, there are individuals of no titled status who can.

University art education professors, teachers anywhere who read this and are thinking about engaging in conversation with their students in order to empower them and encourage insight, consider not your academic authority on whatever subject starts the dialogue, but consider your ability to be led by the "other," the student. Consider your ability to actively listen and to suspend judgment for empowering dialogue is a personal quest. It's the quest you are supporting and the quest that is of value.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Isla

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Seeing Childhood in Art Education

Paul Duncum

Art education theory and practice sees children as constructivist learners, but postmodern theory teaches us to see children with multiple and fragmented identities. Postmodern theory is used to examine childhood as a site of divergent discourses concerned with persistent adult attempts to control both actual children and the concept of childhood. Many alternative conceptions find pictorial form in the mass media, from abused child to nightmarish threat. This paper focuses on the idea of children as rabid consumers. It examines television advertisements aimed at children, especially by *McDonald's*, *Mattel* and *Cap Toys*. Implications for the classroom as well as art education as a field of study are outlined.

In his book, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985), the neurologist, Oliver Sacks, describes a man who, while normal in most other ways, suffered from a peculiar kind of blindness: He was blind to human faces. Happily for Sack's patient, the man was totally unaware of this striking deficit and was therefore not in the least concerned about it. Others suffered unhappy consequences, notably his wife, but he was himself literally blind to his blindness. I want to suggest a connection here between Sack's patient who was ignorant of his blindness, and the possibility that as teachers and parents we not only routinely fail to see children in all their complexity but are unaware of our failure to see. Our interactions with children, as parents and teachers, are often so routinized and institutionalized that we may fail to see them outside the ideological parameters established by our routines and institutionalized settings. It is not as if children are unimportant to us, or that they are not always before us. It is both precisely because we have such powerful investments in children and the fact they are always in sight that we may fail to see them clearly. Sacks cites a passage from Wittgenstein which elegantly makes this point: "The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something because it is always before one's eyes)" (p. 42).

In this paper, I argue that mass media images of children present us with challenges to conceptions of childhood we may hold as a result of our roles of parents, teachers, and caregivers. Specifically, I will examine television advertisements aimed at children. If we are blind to children we are like Sack's unfortunate patient, happy in our ignorance, but, also, like those who suffered the consequences of his blindness, children undoubtedly suffer the consequences of our blindness towards them.

A common conception of childhood is that it is a time of happy innocence (James & Prout, 1990). This view is perhaps most succinctly and oft expressed in the heartfelt comment, "to let children to be children," as if anything other than happy, innocent, exploratory play is antithetical to the singular nature of childhood. According to this view, childhood is innocence, and any other conception is a corruption of childhood and evidence of social pathology (Holland, 1992; Spence & Holland, 1991).

The view of happy innocence is complementary to the preoccupation we have of children as educators, that of students engaged in learning. We have changed our views about how children learn (Wilson, B., Hurwitz, A., & Wilson, M., 1987), seeing children as constructivist learners rather than creative artists, but we tend to see them almost exclusively as students. Understanding children as learners, we view them as needing correction, instruction, and opportunities to explore. This is a dominant, modernist conception of children: happy learners, greedy only for knowledge (Cunningham, 1995).

By contrast, postmodern theory conceives childhood, like adulthood, as comprised of multiple identities in relation to different social worlds (James & Prout, 1990). Rather than being seen as a whole, centred, stable and rational, an autonomous and complete self, childhood is conceptualized as fragmented and incomplete (Jenks, 1996). Postmodern theory suggests that each disparate fragment of childhood, however unpleasant, is an undeniable part of childhood. Postmodern theory broadens our conceptions of what is to count as childhood. It challenges us to rethink childhood and our relationship as adults to children.

The Symbolic Significance of Childhood

Postmodern theorizing has only recently turned the same critical eye towards childhood that it has towards gender and race. This is not because the concept of childhood has less symbolic value in our society. It is precisely because childhood is of immense symbolic significance that it has tended to resist critical analysis (Jenks, 1996); and to understand why postmodern constructions of childhood are so challenging to us as parents and teachers it is necessary to grasp the depth of its significance.

Childhood as a time of happy innocence and openness to learning about the world is an idea of longstanding (Cunningham, 1995), but it became a central metaphor of the Enlightenment Project, the critical text of which was Rousseau's *Emile* (1948/1762). Rousseau's ideal society was pictured through the story of an ideal education based on the inherent goodness of childhood. The child Emile is predisposed to love and to learn, and he is equipped with the characteristics necessary to become a good spouse, parent and citizen. As Jenks (1996) writes, "Such an ideal child, the very image of modernity's child, is a stranger to avarice and imbued with natural altruism and kindliness" (p. 99). Childhood embodied a promise of future possibilities that worked as a hedge against the as yet incomplete plans of adults. Fuelled by the goodness and promise of children, the best days always lay ahead. The future of society was founded on the promise childhood represented.

Even now when under contemporary, postmodern conditions, hope in the future has been replaced by disenchantment; childhood has retained a profound symbolic value. A sense of progress has given way to merely keeping pace. Horizons now seem limited. Yet, as Jenks (1996) argues, rather than abandoning the child who embodied Modernism, Postmodernism has reinvested the child with an equally powerful symbolic role. The child has come to embody fond memories of past times. Childhood has been adopted, not for the better world it promises in the future, but the better world it evokes from days now gone.mThere is now what Kitzinger (1990) calls a "fetishistic glorification" of childhood (p. 160). The child as future hope offered a goal towards which to work. The child as nostalgia offers a sense of continuity with the past. It offers the starting point of a narrative that signifies our lives and our society. And a starting point and a present imply at least an uncertain future. Thus the child continues to embody the kind of optimism necessary to underpin social goodwill and cohesion. Indeed, the felt disorientation and dislocation of postmodern times finds a ready source of comfort in the image of the child. The trust and love that was previously invested in marriage, partnerships, friendships, class solidity and other affiliations are now invested in childhood. Where society is unstable, childhood appears to offer unconditional love. Whereas we once sought to love and protect children, children are now more than ever seen as a source of unconditional love that protects society from an unstable and disorienting reality (Jenks, 1996). The concept of childhood has become, in a postmodern society, crucial as a bulwark against uncertainty and alienation. Where traditional sources of emotional comfort have broken down, such as class solidity and marriage, children have become a major source of comfort and, consequently, they have been invested with a new and profound significance. Jenks (1996) writes that the end of the 20th century has "readopted the child . . . [as] a site for the relocation of discourses concerning stability, integration and the social bond" (p. 106). It is against the idea of the child as benign learner that many alternatives are cast, and it is only against the backdrop of this powerful idea that it is possible to understand the social outcry, often mounting to moral panic, that accompanies reports where the ideal of innocence is violated.

Alternative Conceptions of Childhood

There are many violations, and each finds pictorial form in the mass media. These include clinical images of children's abused bodies (Holland, 1992) that have arisen form the historically recent concern with abuse which, in turn, reflects an increased surveillance of children and sensitivity to their life circumstances (Jenks, 1996). They include children who are dressed as adults and made to perform adult song and dance routines, victims of unfulfilled adult dreams. They include photographs of children as victims of war and famine, and work slaves (Amnesty International, 1995), victims of international trade. They include photographs of child soldiers, which are part of the historically recent concern for child rights (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994). Included are the most common images of the entire third world, that of children (Holland, 1992). They include images of child-by-child murderers and their victims (Duncum, 1998), and images of pre-pubescent children campaigning for social causes. They include highly aestheticized children nowadays to be found on cards, calendars, posters, coffee mugs and so on that are treasured by so many but equally can be seen as a manifestation of adult pathology (Duncum, 1997). They include photographic images of eroticized children by celebrated art photographers like Sally Mann (1992) and Jock Sturges (1991) that raise disturbing questions about the exploitation of children in an art context. The images include those of children as sexually precocious (Holland, 1992), as well as child pornography which are clearly exploitive (Davidson & Loken, 1987). From a modernist perspective that sees children as curious, innocent learners, the children in these images are seen as "other." They are not fully children. But from a postmodern perspective, they are each an aspect of a multifaceted and fragmented conception of childhood.

The Rabidly Consuming Child

Due to an article's space limitations, I will examine only one media construction of childhood, that of children as rabid consumers. The images of children as avaricious run counter to the Rouseauian ideal of children as essentially good. Greed is, after all, one of the seven deadly sins. I focus on these images for several reasons. They are very common and children themselves are frequently exposed to them. They do not involve the same level of social controversy that some other images involve, which means that, unlike some other images, they can be dealt with directly within the classroom. Also, such images lie at the heart of the socioeconomic structure of capitalist societies. Images of children as consumers are a constitutive part of the social structure, even of the global economy.

I examine advertising which is aimed exclusively at children, especially television advertising.[1] Specifically, I will refer to advertisements by *McDonald's* and toy manufactures *Mattel* and *Cap Toys*. *McDonald's* and *Mattel* are the leading brand names in their respective fields of burgers and toys (read *Barbie*), and their success is at least partly attributable to their use of television (Jackson, 1994; Kincheloe, 1996). When portrayed as consumers, children's happiness depends upon consumption and material possession, not knowledge or skills. Succeeding in selling products to children means offering a view of childhood that children themselves are happy to embrace (Kincheloe, 1996). From the late 1960s commercial television advertising has been based on the premise that children should be addressed as kids, using visuals and language that appeal especially to children. Advertisements to children appeal, typically, through fun, happiness, sensory gratification --"tastes good, feels good"--and affiliation, the sense of being part of a group (Guber & Berry, 1993, p. 137).

In formal terms the commercials typically appear to adults to be anarchic and hyperactive. Colours are plentiful and bright, music is upbeat, editing is fast paced, and movement is incessant. Moving from one style to another and back again is common. Animation, real life, and morphing follow one another in quick succession. Advertisements for boy's toys are punctuated with cartoon style "Kazoom's" and "Boom's." Well known cartoon characters behave with childlike anarchy, and beaming, ecstatic children scramble to devour the latest product. In advertisements for dolls, young girls hold up the doll to the camera, their faces the embodiment of blissful completeness. The faces signal the joy and satisfaction the toy can bring to the viewer.

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[1] I am indebted to Ms. Deborah Jimenez for collecting the advertisements mentioned in this paper that are not otherwise referenced. They were collected from the major United States networks on Saturday mornings during October 1996.

Mattel's advertisements typically show several children enjoying a range of similar toys (Jackson, 1994). The strategy is twofold. *Mattel* demonstrates that its toys come in several versions and each is equally desirable. Also, toy ownership is shown to be a social activity by which children establish identity, including position in a social hierarchy among one's friends. Multiple versions is the hallmark of contemporary toys. To stay successful in a competitive yet finite market means selling the idea that a purchase of one product leads to the purchase of many others by the same manufacturer. After the first *Barbie*, others will follow. In this regard, the marketing of toys parallels what has happened in marketing in general. There has been an increasing turnover of new models, a proliferation of models and accessories, and an ever sharper focus on smaller niches. What was once a *Barbie Doll* now comes in many versions, with different coloured hair, and different lengths and styles of hair. *Barbie* is available with different clothes, accessories and skin colour. Since the introduction of a younger version of *Barbie*, even her notorious proportions vary. Each advertisements for each new version features eager youngsters at home in a world of their own.

These techniques are exemplified by *Cap Toys'* television advertisement for *The Melanie Mall*. It offers four singing and dancing girls extolling the virtues of purchasing a whole series of *Melanie* dolls each complete with her own store that together go to make up an entire shopping mall. A voice-over suggests that girls should add as many stores as they like. Stores include two levels, revolving doors, and an elevator. With candy colours, bright lights, and fast editing, viewers are offered *Melanie* at the *Make Up Shop*, the *Ballet Studio*, the *Fancy Gown Shop*, the *Beauty Salon*, the *Surf Shop* and the *Music Store*. Melanie is dressed appropriately for each store and comes with a range of accessories. The song sung by the four girls reinforces the social nature of consumption:

> Melanie, new friends and you
> Having fun doing what most girls do
> At the magic mall you'll see it true
> Its cool at the mall

A voice-over further entices girls to "have fun with friends and shop for everything." The girls in the advertisement are dressed in the same colours as *Melanie Dolls* and the stores of *Melanie's Mall*. It is as if by the possession of *Cap Toy* products girls can transport themselves inside the fantasy of the *Mall*. While singing and dancing, the girls are in full control of their own world and fully self-possessed. At the very last moment the girls giggle with childlike glee. The delighted exuberance seems quintessentially childlike, but in this context it can be seen as having been appropriated for the sake of consumption.

The world of television commercials which children inhabit is the product of market researchers. The world created for children to dream within sidelines normal adult authority and substitutes the authority of the advertisers. For example, in an advertisement in which on off-camera mother insists that a cupboard overflowing with clothes be tidied, the children drop into *Burger King* instead. The move is justified by a voice-over as having fun.

Advertising aimed directly at children rarely features adults. Children are presented in a world of their own where the dominant activity is consuming the advertised product. Where adults are referenced, they are sidelined as negative influences, ineffectual, or just silly, and they are often treated by the children with a sense of amused superiority that underscores the alienation of children from adults.

Kincheloe (1996) argues that a major reason children embrace the advertisements so readily is their parent's passionate dislike of them. Children systematically resist attempts by their parents to impose adult expectations of normative behaviour, and television commercials for children reinforce this resistance. Advertisers often work not to overcome adult resistance, but to underscore it. Drawing upon resistant nature of childhood culture, advertisements work to identify their products in the minds of children as signs of resistance. Commercials show children who, in pursuit of consumption, throw off all restraint, reject discipline, and who are not only seen but continually heard. Whereas educationalists view children as earnest, incomplete adults in need of knowledge and skills, commercials show children as needy and incomplete only in terms of the advertiser's product.

The subversive nature of children's culture is perennial (Opie & Opie, 1969). In the past, however, it was propagated in playgrounds and schools through face-to-face interaction between children and passed down from one generation of children to another. Today, children's culture is still created by children but now it is created from the brica-brac of cultural forms produced by adults (McDonnell, 1994). What was previously untouched by commercialism has now been harnessed in the pursuit of profits.

A tightrope is walked by advertisers, however, between subverting yet not directly offending adult authority. For this purpose, commercials are often double coded. Kincheloe (1996) describes a series of commercials where *McDonalds* used a so-called slice-of-life, documentary style of presentation. A group of children engage in a supposedly authentic conversation around a *McDonalds's* table covered with *McDonald's* products. The children use the latest slang to describe various toys in McDonald's promotions, and they discuss the problems of being children. Adults are made the butt of jokes, and Kincheloe (1996) argues they are in-jokes of childhood that adults do not readily comprehend. I suspect, however, that most adults do realize they are the target of jokes but do not know how to counter them.

Many advertisements place children in a highly dependent position that mirrors paternal authority and dependent child. Characters like Ronald McDonald arrive to help get children out of scrapes, and the narratives often have a mythical dimension (Guber & Berry, 1993). In one advertisement, which evokes children's perennial questions about origins, children ask Ronald where *McDonald's* hamburgers come from. "Ronald saves the day" is the chorus line of other advertisements in which the *McDonald's* hero parent rescues children from minor threats. In one advertisement *McDonald's* "Chicken Nuggets" are threatened by a huge dog, but Ronald is on hand to save the children from even the momentary loss of the *McDonald's* product. As surrogate parent, Ronald's benevolence is solely directed to facilitate consumption.

Advertisers have effectively colonized children's culture. The world that is created for children to resist adults is created by adults and is devoted solely to consumption. The authority normally exercised by adults has been substituted for the authority of the advertisers. Children appear in control only because they have been so positioned by adults for the purpose of selling them products.

Consumption and Capitalism

Images of consuming children cannot be fully understood without reference to the economic arrangements of which they are a constitutive part. The prevalence of images of children as sites of consumption lies in the nature of capitalist economies which are based on production, exchange, and consumption. This is especially significant given recent economic developments which see the commodification of areas of everyday life which were previously untouched by commercial interests (Harvey, 1989; Ritzer, 1993). The proliferation of fast food chains is one example where the consumption of food, previously a domestic affair, has become a huge industry. Moreover, the speed of production, exchange and consumption has been increasingly accelerated and now seems to operate at a dizzying speed. Capital has become ever more rapacious (Morley & Chen, 1996). Markets have spread more and more and turnover time has increasingly been shortened. To mobilise the ever greater turnover in production, exchange and consumption, there is a need for ever more advertising, including at children. Cultural forms such as television, newspapers and magazines mobilize needs and wants, desires and fantasies as par of the economic imperative to maintain buoyancy of demand and keep capitalist production profitable. Advertising is designed to fast track consumption.

Cultural critics (Featherstone, 1991; Castells, 1997) argue that with the proliferation of goods and services adults increasingly identify themselves not so much as workers or producers as consumers. Instead of seeing ourselves as a benefactor to a capitalist economy, we view ourselves as beneficiaries. In place of the Protestant work ethic that underpinned one’s identity as hard working and frugal, increasingly we have come to see our primary role as consumer. The point is made eloquently by the title of Barbara Kruger’s artwork, *I Shop Therefore I Am* (Kruger, 1993). In advertising aimed at children, children are asked to think of themselves foremost as consumers, consumers in training (Kincheloe, 1996). In such advertisements, the point of life offered to children is not consuming knowledge but consuming manufactures’ products. Advertisements provide models for children. They show children how to behave, provide materials from which children can establish their identities, and the recourses from which to derive a sense of efficacy; and all through the consumption of advertised products.

The dilemma that images of children as rapid consumers present us as educators is that they are tied to the economic arrangements which sustain our economic well being, adults and children alike, yet they present to adults images of avariciousness that is at odds with a deeply seated cultural view of children as happy innocence and a professional preoccupation with children as thirsty only for knowledge. Also, they provide children with pleasures and sources of identity, through both advertising and the products advertised, that adults also use as sources of pleasure and identity formation. Images of rabid consumption among children are no more or less than images of adult society. The fact that such images draw so easily on the quality of avariciousness is evidence that our socioeconomic structure is dependent upon it.

Implications for Education

Nevertheless, images of children as rabid consumers challenge deeply held assumptions about the nature of childhood and our relationship to children as parents and teachers. The boundaries that have long separated childhood from adulthood are now blurred. Images of rabidly consuming children signpost, at best, part of a new multifaceted view of childhood and, at worst, deep confusion about childhood and society.

Images of rabidly consuming demand that we reconsider our own adult views about children. So routinized are our responses to children, so internalized are the values and beliefs of the institutions we work within, that we may need to stand back and take a critical perspective on our habitual ways of thinking about what is so familiar to us. It can be a sobering experience because it involves dealing with our most intimate selves as adults.

Within the classroom, images of children provide rich resources for discussing with children how they see themselves positioned and the extent to which they accept, negotiate or resist media portrayals. Feldman (1973) long ago advocated the comparative study of children as one of the major themes in the history of art. By comparing images of children from the past, the special character of recent images and the social conditions of which they are a part are highlighted. For example, the rabid nature of consuming children can be compared to 18th century aristocratic children who are entirely at home with their possessions (Stewart, 1995). While social prestige is similarly established through material objects, the attitude towards possession is altogether different; rapacious on the one hand, outwardly at ease on the other. The nature of two very different economic and social arrangements are thereby highlighted and children's position within contemporary society made the more clear. The children of one society assume inherited wealth and privilege; the children of the other assume that material possessions must be sought out, even fought for.

Of advertisements aimed at children we might ask children to reflect on how they are being pictured and whether they feel advertisers capture a real aspect of their nature. How do children see themselves? Given the opportunity, do children picture their relationship to material possessions in the way advertisers do? What techniques of advertising are routinely used to elicit the particular interests of children? Do children see that adults are asking them to buy products to say who they are? Do they understand that figures like Ronald McDonald are carefully constructed to appeal to them? How are such figures constructed? What aspects of childhood interests are drawn upon in the pursuit of creating profits? Do children view advertisers seen as benign or avaricious? What pleasures do children derive from the advertisements? Do they see that their identities as children are limited by advertisers for the purpose of selling products? Do they feel they have identities beyond the advertiser's images? From where else do they construct their identities? From what other sources might they construct their sense of self?

Of course this is a long way from what Feldman envisaged by studying the theme of childhood. He mostly had in mind fine art images where, typically, artists celebrate the innocence of children. The material discussed in this paper may seem to extend beyond the concerns of art education; it is a far cry from texts like Picasso's world of children (Spies, 1994). However, they are a common part of media studies in Australia, Canada and Britain (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994). In addition, for art educators who adopt a visual culture definition of art for education (e.g., Duncum, 1993; Mullens, 1989; Tavin, 1998), what is central is not whether the images studied are derived from the academy but what meanings are brought to and taken from images by students and teachers. Images are signs of attitudes and values, so any of the images examined here are mere grist for the mill.

Finally, some images suggest that art educators should adopt a broader public role than their traditional concern with classroom curricula. It is our professional responsibility to be concerned with children and knowledgeable about the subtleties of image production and reception. Knowledge of imagery is at the core of any claim we make to professional expertise. It is not ours exclusively, but it lies at the heart of the art educational enterprise. Where we who are both expert in images and charged with a responsibility for the well being of children, there exists for us a professional obligation to speak out about images that we see as dehumanising to children. Art educators tend to adopt a public role only in defending the perilous position of the fine arts and their education, but once we step outside the academy and deal with the image practices of the mass media, it becomes necessary to engage with a broader range of issues, none of which could be more central to our task as visual educators than the way children are visually represented. The first step we need to take however, possibly the most difficult, is to see children in art education in a new light, as fragmented and fluid identities.

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BOOK REVIEW

D. E. Fehr, K. Fehr & K. Keifer-Boyd, (Eds.), (2000).

Real-World Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You

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Dennis E. Fehr

Teaching as Transgression: The Story of *Real-world Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You*

In this paper a theoretically critical approach to art education (adapted with permission by Falmer Press from a recently published book, *Real-World Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You*) challenges teacher-as-artist and discipline-based art education models. I use informal language in places to distance myself politically from higher-ed jargon users whose work is often ignored by classroom art teachers (the book's audience).

The question is this: What's missing from all that preening, posturing, and horn-tooting by the teachers-as-artists and the discipline-based art eddies? Kristen Fehr, Karen Keifer-Boyd and I have edited a book in which prominent critical art educators give some in-your-face answers, but before I describe them, let's look at the horn-blowing. The teacher-as-artist model--art ed as a series of studio activities with minimal linkage to art viewing or societal issues--dominated art education in the post-war 1940s and 50s, boosted by Viktor Lowenfeld's *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947). Criticism of this model--in fact the sprout that would grow into DBAE--emerged in 1960 when Jerome Bruner suggested that art ed be defined as a series of disciplines. Elliot Eisner (1972) and others, driven by a blend of noble intent and Getty Center money, tinkered with Bruner's suggestion. Their tinkering crystallized into DBAE in the 1980s.

DBAE, popular though it be, has not replaced the artist-as-teacher model. Its staying power is suggested in the fall 1998 issue of *Studies in Art Education*, where we read that domination of Canadian and U.S. graduate art ed programs is shared by both approaches (Anderson, Eisner, and McRorie). And *Creative and Mental Growth* still sells so well that no one can keep track of which edition is current.

The irony of the teacher-as-artist model is that its proclaimed strength--studio production with little in-depth exposure to art exemplars or life outside the school--is its greatest weakness. First, this approach perpetuates the cocoon-like isolation from society that has served the art world so poorly in the 20th century. By ignoring much of the content of visual art, this approach assures the subject's frill status in schools and undermines art's potential as an agent of social reconstruction.

Second, requiring children to make one artwork after another over the course of a school year without comprehensive study of strong work done by others is unfair. Why are our own studio walls covered with postcards of artists' openings and pages torn from ArtFORUM? Because we choose not to work in a vacuum. Because we are inspired by the work of others. Because we cannot individually generate many of the universal symbols found in our world's art heritage. How can we place studio demands on our students while denying them access to the symbology we provide ourselves? Such matters are part of what art educator Ed Check (personal communication, April 18, 1998) referred to when he said art education can be a silly field.

Even cynical postmodernists like me will allow that in one way DBAE has benefited art education--it has made art viewing important. Its problem is how it does this: DBAE is tainted with one of humanity's most enduring traditions--racism.

DBAE's roots reach back to ancient Greek philosophy (aesthetics), 19th-century U.S. academe (art history), and capitalist economics (criticism). Aesthetic philosophy is an ancient Western discipline, traceable at least to Plato. Greece was the cradle of Western civilization, and our students almost always study only Western aestheticians.

What do Asian, African, Native American, and other cultures say about the nature of visual imagery? What have women, Western or Nonwestern, said? We don't know. And if we seek to answer these questions using DBAE, we must assume that DBAE's disciplines are applicable to these groups. This assumption is academically reckless and culturally arrogant. The answers are more honestly found by skipping DBAE and approaching our research with an open mind and a cautious awareness of our Western biases (Fehr, 1995a).

A second DBAE discipline, art history, emerged in U.S. universities in the late 19th century. One of its goals was to create cultural parity with Europe's educated class. One of its results was to create a European canon, a standard by which to judge non-European art--that is, the remaining 95 or so percent of the world's art.

The same urge, this time couched in economic terms, drove the creation of the quintessentially Western field of art criticism. Art criticism has always been more an economic than an academic endeavor. Its primary purpose is to serve the *collectigentsia's* practice of investing in art they don't understand. Twin ironies undermine DBAE advocate's strident justifications of this Eurocentric, capitalistic approach to art viewing--the Western art community is beginning to accept world art on equal footing, and American schools are filling with children of all ethnicities.

At the 1996 annual conference of the National Art Education Association, I encountered a typically pinched perspective from a prominent DBAE apologist on the faculty of one of the Getty's six national centers. I asked her how Getty foot soldiers justify DBAE's bastardizing of Nonwestern imagery. She responded that the Getty is increasing its non-western curricular materials. I kindly and gently suggested that increasing a bad thing won't make it better. The conversation ended there—I think she said Barbara Walters was waiting to interview her or something.

At Texas's state art ed conference in 1997, a faculty member from another Getty center gave this answer to the same query: "That's not a problem because DBAE can be anything you want." This argument denies that DBAE is a model with four specified disciplines. If DBAE supporters do realize the racial bias of these disciplines and consequently step outside them, then they are no longer practicing DBAE.

So where do we go? Critical theory's emphasis on challenging authority seems to be one signpost of tomorrow's art education. Postmodernism's dismissal of grand narratives seems to be another. Add feminist consciousness-raising and the political activism of a host of marginalized groups, and a picture begins to emerge. The roots of this approach are not new--an early progressive call for art education to link itself with the rest of the world came from John Dewey in 1916. Manuel Barkan, a Deweyan art educator, wrote in 1955 that the social environment is the best place for children to grow into responsible adults. In 1961 June King McFee, one of the few prominent female voices in art education at the time, revived progressive populism by calling for art education for oppressed groups.

Such visionaries may emerge as the most influential shapers of art education in the 21st century. Today, however, their observations are largely unaddressed in the professional literature, pushed aside by DBAE discussions of postimpressionism and teacher-as-artist tips on how to paint on aluminum foil--in other words, what many of us were taught in college.

This state of affairs is driving growing numbers of scholars to create a new place for art ed. In 1980 art educator Vincent Lanier called for making our youth literate about visual documents that explore their social oppression. Andreas Huyssen (1990) advises abandoning the dead end created when modernists separated politics from aesthetics. Elizabeth Garber (1992) calls for curriculum building blocks about issues, themes, and cultural phenomena rather than formal art vocabulary, art styles, and canonical examplars stripped of their cultural contexts.

Building on these ideas, Kristen, Karen, and I, along with our panel of thoughtful authors, describe our vision of this new place with a book of transgressive essays titled *Real-world Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You*. We transgress the bounds of art educational prudence--you will find radical theory, unconventional formats, informal English, controversial research models, and that most despised element in the world of academic writing--humor. Our audience is classroom art teachers and teachers in training, the people we feel are primarily for classroom art teachers, the people we feel are—along with the schoolchildren—the most important members of our field.

Real-world Readings is divided into four sections: *Real-world Classroom Voices: Protesting the Rules; Real-world Aesthetics: Breaking the Rules; Real-world Art Lessons: Ignoring the Rules; and Real-world Structural Change: Rewriting the Rules.*

Section I, *Real-world Classroom Voices: Protesting the Rules*, grapples with the daily experience of teaching art in today's public schools. In Chapter 1, Kathleen Connors presents classroom teachers' stories in their words, and those words vibrate to anyone who has been there. In Chapter 2, Paul Duncum challenges sentimental and manipulative adult views of childhood created by the corporate world. He proposes art curricula that make children aware of these media fictions. Daily artroom experience is atopic studiously avoided by many art education writers, and in Chapter 3 Elizabeth Manley Delacruz explores why. In Chapter 4, Yvonne Gaudelius combines scholarly and personal prose to explore differences between critical and feminist theories. She offers a feminist definition of art on which contemporary curricula can be based.

The authors in Section II, *Real-world Aesthetics: Breaking the Rules*, challenge mainstream assumptions about what art is, what good art is, and what the tradition of honoring only the European patriarchal canon has done to children in schools. I describe a "lowrider art" curriculum I developed with an inner-city middle school teacher to enable her Latin students to honor their artistic heritage and yet become aware of the sexism in lowrider culture. By examining the artforms and teaching practices of Appalachian mountain cultures, Christine Ballengee Morris measures the cultural loss that results from teaching only mainstream art. Grace Deniston-Trochta critiques the myth of high art imposed on art majors by university art faculty. Deborah Smith-Shank suggests that art curricula address issues such as aging, reproductive rights, motherhood, and standards of beauty.

Section III, *Real-world Art Lessons: Ignoring the Rules*, gets at the heart of the matter—incorporating radical art educational theory into daily classroom practice. Each of these chapters offers alternative content in practical terms. Olivia Gude describes two radical art lessons on how women are trained to see themselves. Lisette Ewing goes beyond arguing for the inclusion of visually impaired students in studio activities; she convincingly explains how to include them in viewing as well. Frank Pio describes a mural project he developed for at-risk students at a school on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Drawing on the religious myths of the Ojibwe people, Pio created a program in which members of ethnic gangs studied each others' cultures and created murals honoring their diverse heritages. Future Akins suggests that art teachers bring the sacred into their classroom practice. Mary Wyrick deconstructs the media's one-dimensional portrayals of women. Laurel Lampela provides ways of discussing artists' sexual orientations in public school classrooms.

The authors in Section IV, *Real-world Structural Change: Rewriting the Rules*, outline ways to radicalize school policy, curricula, and teaching. Gayle Marie Weitz and Marianne Stevens Suggs present a burlesque field guide of guerrilla tactics for art educators who seek change. Karen Keifer-Boyd describes how she promoted democratic art education by including voices from the community in developing their local school's art curriculum. Ed Check describes how sharing his authority with his sixth graders caused them to take responsibility for their educations. Michael Emme calls for art educators to become comfortable with electronic technology in preparation for a future in which art education's format is nonlinear and electronic rather than linear and text-based.

Emme's article reminds me of a comment I recently heard from an art educator, a comment that further clarified the need for this book. She suggested that making art with a computer diminishes the immediacy of the aesthetic moment by placing a technological intercessory between artists and their work. I responded that I could imagine the same criticism befalling the first human artisan to make a line with a charred stick instead of a soot-covered finger: "Hey, Org--you diminish immediacy of aesthetic moment by placing technological intercessory between you and work. Stop it!"

To summarize, we are living through an important moment on the West's millennial clock, a moment rich with symbolic opportunity. Today, countless marginalized groups are finding their voices and creating new artforms that hybridize components of their heritages with the heritages of the mainstream West. These artforms often represent a third culture--their experiences in the cultural borderlands (Fehr, 1995b). These cultures and their artforms cannot be understood within teacher-as-artist programs that disdain viewing and ignore social issues. And they cannot be depicted fairly within the strictures of DBAE. Real-world Readings offers teachers a democratic alternative.

Real-world Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You was published by Falmer Press, New York in January 2000. Phone: 1.800.634.7064

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COVER STORY

Visualize Empowerment through Dialogue

Karen Keifer-Boyd

> Thinking about *empowerment through dialogue* brought various ideas and concepts to mind: communication, speaking, listening, graciously stimulating exchanges, active participation, finding voice, naming one's experiences, Freire's liberating pedagogy, Socratic midwife model, and people interacting in such a way that each grows from the interaction beyond what self-reflection alone might generate.

Without balance dialogue breaks down, and monologue, lecture, apostletizing, self-indulgent banter, or sheep-like chorus ensues.

Some people have not experienced empowerment through dialogue. The practice of expressing one's views and listening openly to others' responses and insights is difficult. John Berger's wise warning in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) reminds us that we see according to what we know. What we know also impacts what we hear. Therefore expressing our sense perceptions reflect our ways of understanding self and others, rather than a record of "reality."

We construct self-concepts through dialogue, oral storytelling, visual images, and through the accumulation of cultural artifacts from past generations. Each of these modes of communication are meaningful recreations of our lived-experiences, yet meaning depends on function, form, and metaphor. What categories and metaphors do you use to understand reality?

Complicated, but automatic, human interactions color our experience of reality. For example, when Sue, an art teacher, enters the school's office, the staff encourages her to do something with her hair and to wear make-up. Tom enters the same office and the staff giggles and jokes with him to get his attention. Both Sue and Tom go back to their classroom. Tom's self-esteem was boosted, while Sue feels inadequate.

The way that we understand the concept of self influences our participation in dialogue. For example, understanding self as independent of others corresponds with the societal traditions of individualism. The specific activity of telling stories about one's life is a means to individualize a life and, therefore, is an activity more aligned with people who maintain independent-construals of self. Sharing one's life-stories guided by an investigation into factors impacting interpretation is a contextualized self-construct. Self-construals depend upon the symbolic system in which they reside. What are the social symbols that create your self-construct?

Can we empower ourselves without empowering others? Yes. Is this empowerment long-lasting. No, it needs continual self-serving fuel at the expense of others. However, when empowerment arises within a midwifery form of dialogue, the maintaining fuel is mutually beneficial. In the long-term, working together is likely to be the best alternative to life's challenges and gifts.

Dialogue often arises through shared participation in an event. Yet, sometimes invisible fabricated power differences forego its fruition.

> Ecofeminist artist, Lynne Hull, writes in an email to me, "I've been thinking about the installation of the windmill and wishing I had put one of the hitching posts nearer to the windmill; I can see it that way now in my mind. Oh, well, maybe if the whole thing gets moved. Let me know if you ever get rain."
>
> I responded, "Josh's critique of the project after you left was that one of the hitching posts should have been closer. I will tell him you too came to that conclusion."
>
> Lynne responds, "Where was Josh when I needed him to tell me that BEFORE we dug holes?"

Josh was learning from Lynne and not willing or ready to offer suggestions when Lynne asked for students' ideas in shaping the bird habitat site-specific sculptures in West Texas' migratory bird route. It takes time to develop trusting rapport and to build confidence and empowerment through dialogue.

Empowerment through dialogue is essential to a participatory democracy. Participatory democracy neither comes easily nor is it easy to sustain. It requires education, patience, listening, caring, and action.

While visualizing empowerment through dialogue I was reminded of a recent experience talking to artificial intelligence (AI) programmed by a man pretending that the AI was a female psychologist. My first dialogue with *Eliza*, a chatterbot, is recorded on the back cover of this journal. The dialogue is an example of self-generated, self-directed talk mutated by a program's search for pre-set syntexts. Is this give and take reciprocity between myself and the artificial intelligence an empowering dialogue? Even though the chatterbot was programmed for reciprocity it could neither contextualize my verbalized thoughts nor respond with subtle nuances that could lead to empowerment and mutual development.

Another experience with artificial intelligence dialogue demonstrates that humans need understanding and reflective dialogue, and often have difficulty engaging in that form of dialogue with others. In the fall of 1999 my students and I created a performative interactive installation, *In.TIME.ation*, that examined the interdependence of reality, knowledge, and value. *In.TIME.ations* involved seven interactive videos that represented different concepts of reality and time. The class decided how to present the videos as hyperlinks and worked together to create the virtual space in which to place the videos. When viewers entered the gallery, students wearing "scrubs" sterilized them with a cotton ball dipped in alcohol and connected gallery participants to wires connected to computers. As viewers moved in the space they affected the images that filled the four walls. One wall was filled with an on-going dialogue between gallery visitors and artificial intelligence (i.e., a computer chatterbot). Not only was personal made public but the recorded dialogue generated another layer of simulacra. At one point in the performative-site a group of people sat together to interpret their shared experience of the space. I looked up from the group to the large projection of words filling, yet constantly changing, on the wall. The text read, "No I don't like to talk to humans either." The author sat alone at one of the computers in the room typing responses to a machine. He looked content and unconcerned about the humans in the room. I imagined a future of AIs and humans dialoguing together and wondered if the AIs would bond exclusively together or would they prefer to interact with humans. I also wondered what children raised by AIs would be like. Scary.

The journal's cover image, like this essay, explores *dialogue through empowerment* as either evoked or exiled and influenced by factors such as: self-construals, cultural symbol systems, perceived power relations, and human interactions. Please visit and contribute to the *Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education* dialogue at http://www.art.ttu.edu/arted. Click on related sites, CSTAE, and then click on "social theory dialogue." I hope you will join this public dialogue.

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