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Thinking Through /Difference/ in Art Education Contexts

Working the Third Space and Beyond[1]

THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE LANDSCAPE OF POSTMODERNITY: WRITING ON AN IMPOSSIBLE TERRAIN

Writing on the pluricultural landscape within the context of art education today is a hazardous adventure and an «impossible» task – impossible because there is no clear line of demarcation separating ideology from reality; yet, although ideology is already at work in everything that is experienced as «reality» the tension that keeps the *critique* of ideology alive must nevertheless be maintained. Without such an effort multicultural art education falls into hopeless forms of pluralism and relativism which, I shall argue, reproduce the existing White Western hegemony in visual thinking as the «West and the Rest» (Chinweizu 1978). The other impossible task is how to theorize a culturally diverse art education without falling into a specificity which provides no prescriptive measures for the teaching of art, or its converse: an over-generalizability which leads to a stalemate in artistic praxis, a fall into a paralyzing «politically correct» position (PC) which, once again, reproduces hegemony under pluralist disguises.

These «impossibilities» of pluriculturalist art education reiterate the frame of the current postmodern landscape which may be characterized as a «dissipative structure» (Prigogine 1980, Barber 1992) causing a *mise en abîme* effect of receding frames where no stable center can be found for a politics of cultural identity which exists unproblematically. On the one hand the forces of globalization and transnational capitalism tend to homogenize culture, producing a «cultural nomadism», that is, a stylistic eclecticism practiced by artists wandering on the global «desert» (see Robertson et al. 1994, Appadurai 1990). The French ethnologist Augé in his book *Place et non-place* talks about the manufacture of «ethno-art» for tourists on «adventure» holidays whereby in the «no-place» of airports they are able to buy affordable exotic «trophies» to remember their «adventures» (for example, African totem masks sculptured in Taiwan, Turkish prayer rugs knotted in Bangladesh, Greek papyrus sculptures moulded and poured in Poland). This decentered subject of cultural capitalist consumerism tends to support a more cosmopolitan view where international art markets, assisted by art brokers like Sotheby's and Christie's, tend to set the aesthetic standard and the market price. On the other hand the effects of such globalization have brought about a retreat to essentialist, particularistic, ethnic and nationalist positions which are not only reactionary to the homogenizing forces of globalization, but often present violent and uncompromising stances to maintain their cultural orthodoxy.

Both the centripetal forces of globalization and the centrifugal force of cultural orthodoxies, what Roosens (1989) and Sollors (1989) have called the processes of «ethnogenesis», seem to be anti-democratic in their trajectories since neither trend allows for the development of a hybrid «third space» (Bhabha 1987a). Given this backdrop the very conceptualization of a culturally diverse art education already presupposes a strategy of concern, and containment to a perceived «Western problem»: namely, what is the role of Western modernity?

Within the very conceptualization of «cultural diversity» itself there is already an equality/difference binary in place which taxes the declared universalistic standards of democratic human rights and civil liberties, and summons forth anti-racist and anti-oppressive strategies. This means that multiculturalism as a concept of «cultural diversity» and the critique of American-Eurocentrism are inseparable concepts. Multiculturalism by itself leads to an accretive collective of the world's culture, while a critique of American-Eurocentrism simply inverts the existing hierarchies without rethinking and unsettling

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them (Shohat and Stam 1994: 359).

Given the cautions of such «impossibilities», we can begin to search for an artistic pedagogy of *intervention* by first dismissing the kind of multicultural art education which is most commonly deployed by the majority of teachers in the art classroom, namely the legacy of «liberal humanism», that is, the view of «cultural understanding» archetypically represented by Matthew Arnold in nineteenth century Britain, and reproduced in art education today by such prolific American writers as Smith (1988) and Eisner (1987).

BEING PC: ENLIGHTENED LIBERAL PLURALISM, OR WHITE IS NOT A COLOR

In many so-called «first world» postindustrial countries art education as a subject is allotted its usual time in the elementary and secondary schools where it competes amongst other subject areas for status and recognition. Most often it takes on a secondary ranking to subject disciplines which are considered «primary» and required for post secondary education. The status of art as a «discipline» often remains a political ruse to maintain its viability as a «serious» area of study with its own body of knowledge.

Under these present conditions which govern art education's «hidden curriculum» the easiest way to conceptualize and implement a «multiculturalist component» into the current art curriculum (regardless of its foundational approach, wheter thematic, aesthetic, studio based, humanistic, art historic, design based, project based, visual problem solving based etc.) is through the simple and economic principle of «adding on». The strategy of «adding on» the art of cultures (or the art of women for that matter) has been variously characterized as the «new racism» or «civilized racism», and even «plural culturalism» (Balibar 1991) which, in art education becomes a form of «ethnic determinism» (Areen 1987: 23).

What seems on the surface to be a rather innocent, democratic gesture with all the «right» values behind it (for example, appreciation, respect, and acceptance of another's right to be different) is balanced by a desire for accommodation and consensus amongst cultures in an educational setting. What more could one ask for? The concerns of ethnic groups can be accommodated, an appreciation of another culture can be gained, and the respect and acceptance of diverse cultures' contribution to the human condition can be promoted. The pedagogical selling feature of this liberalist approach is to argue that there is no better way to know one's *own* culture than by distinguishing its difference from others. As Allison (1987: 61) claimed: «It becomes clear that any consideration of cultural diversity can, at best, be revealing of the nature, pattern, and development of one's own culture». Over a decade ago the radical anthropologists, Marcus and Fischer (1986: 157) similarly called for such a «defamiliarization by cross-cultural juxtaposition».

This good-will gesture of desiring to «know» the Other becomes a pedagogical strategy for many art teachers of an inadvertent, and unintentional containment in which «difference» is interpreted as benign and «variation» (diversity) as simple «acknowledgment». The more radical and fundamental question concerning «difference» in terms of power relationships which are «historically specified and understood as part of larger political processes and systems» (Mohanty 1990: 81) are not raised. This same ruse repeats itself in the discourse of postcolonialism. Although the notion of mutual and reciprocal relativization amongst cultures is central to the notion of multiculturalism, power and knowledge inequalities for such relativization to take place often remain obscured. (Relativization being the notion that diverse cultures should come to perceive both the *limitations* and *strengths* of their own socio-cultural perspectives, and each culture is said to offer its excessive uniqueness, and at the same time, through salutary estrangement each culture should begin to see how itself is seen by others.)

Cross-cultural «sharing» often goes unacknowledged. Powerful nations are not accustomed to becoming «relativized». The measure of global cultural success is marketed by a narcissistic display of success and magnitude (for example, Copenhagen is named the «cultural capital» of Europe for the year 1996, and not every country can host the Olympic games.) Any talk of relativization and limitation leads to insult and reverse victimization. The hierarchy of cultural powers places disempowered groups in historically accustomed spaces of relativization which already set up a disdain for the dominant cultures.

As Diana Fuss (1994) has argued persuasively pedagogical practices of «intercultural artistic exchange» are hardly placed on an equal playing field. Fanon (in Fuss 1994: 21) proposed that the system of power-knowledge that upheld colonialism was premised on the white man's claim to the category of the Other. The white man monopolized Otherness «to secure an illusion of unfettered access to subjectivity...Fanon implies that the black man under colonial rule finds himself relegated to a position other than the Other». From such a position of «generosity» and «respect» for the Other emerges the censorship of «political correctness» (PC). This attitude, perpetuated by both left and right-wing politicians towards cultural representation becomes the policing force for the «new racism», making sure that tight boundaries remain around individual cultures by having them presented «realistically» and accurately. This is done by focusing on only «positive images», or by promoting the self-representation of chromatic cultures by supporting leaders who desire to maintain the established distance and lack of intimacy between cultures.

Nineteenth century evolutionism (that is, the progress from savage to civilized) is now replaced by a twentieth century anthropological relativism which treats human difference as separate, functioning «cultures» or «ethnicities». In this distribution the most «primitive» or «tribal», which inevitably means native or «First Nations» (even more rhetorically «First Persons») in the West and non-white/non-Western peoples (formerly on the bottom

rungs of the evolutionary ladder) are now given a special and ambiguous position: what has been called the status of being «ethnographically present» (Clifford 1989: 73). This status in the Western taxonomy of time and space of historical linear memory places various non-white/ non-Western «ethnographic presents» into a frozen past. Each culture is «presented» and validated as a distinct time or «tradition»; its authenticity is always threatened by a disruptive change (for example, influence of media, trade, tourists, the exotic art market, etc.). Most often the label of «authenticity» is attached which guarantees its «contamination» from colonial or post-colonial contexts (Kasfir 1992). Authenticity in culture or art of First Nation and non-white/ non-Western peoples always exists in the «past» – just prior to the present – making it identifiable, and therefore collectable (that is, salvageable) and containable in various stereotypical forms.

Within this liberal humanist frame, representative artists of each tradition are chosen and promoted into the established artistic canon, usually through the institutionalized global art markets housed in the major cities of the world. Consequently, here the «add on» conceptualizations do their work educationally. To include their «art» into the existing classroom certain identifiable markers of stereotypic difference, racial idioms, and semiotic systems of representation which presuppose and affirm cultural stereotypes are created, making Native cultures and non-white/non-Western people identifiable for classroom use.

Salvage and preservation of cultural stereotypes are reproduced in the art educational curriculum through representative «print collections» which are part of the authenticating process. This hegemonic activity of appropriation, seen historically, was largely a colonial enterprise. Viewed anthropologically, art collecting remains part of the socio-evolutionary view of collecting specimens of the Other as an act of «discovery» and preservation. In this regard marginal, non-white/non-Western group relations to «modernism» (and to the canon of modern art) are an ambiguous procedure. They are constantly entering «modernism», but this means that their *difference* is then interpreted as moving out of their tradition and entering the new by *yielding to* or *resisting* modernism, but never producing it. The production end is already occupied by the advanced avant-garde capitalist West.

Such a hegemonic position is possible to maintain because of the way historically art has become defined and institutionalized in the West and promoted in art education programs through the grand narrative of art history (for example, Arnason, Jansen, Gombrich, etc.). Firstly, the writing of art history has always maintained a national character. The constitution of «nationhood» is closely linked to the cultural forms of production. The formation of a nation meant, by definition, an exclusion of the Other.

Secondly, modern (enlightened) art is an individualistic form of expression. The artist as «hero» has a long tradition in modernist art. The avant-garde as an «individual» expression already separates Western (modernist) art from the Other which is marked by such signifiers as «craft», «folk», «mass», and «tribal».

Thirdly, authenticity and assurances of guarantee of economic value are attached to the artistic signature. «Traditional» art forms and art from non-Western world usually lack the artistic signature (Price 1991). The faceless artist wears the face of an entire tribe which lacks or has an absence of historical development. Authenticity is thus transferred onto an «ethnic classification» such as Indian Art, Oceanic Art (or with even more specificity, for example Fang Mask from Gabon, West Africa). Even when a name is attached to the «artifact» so little is known about the artist in contrast to the Euro-American artistic canon that it makes little difference in understanding the work anyway.

Heroic male art history as taught in schools repeats this binary logic of traditionalism and modernism. Aboriginal artists and artists of color are caught up and appropriated within this contradictory logic. The modernist/nationalist dialectic is what most «post-colonial» and diasporic artists have to navigate (see especially Jordon and Weedon, 1995, Chap. 12; Roberts 1994). Firstly, in order to receive grants, commissions, and scholarships they are forced to play the «multicultural game» and produce «ethnic art» which is said to be representative of their origins and traditions. They must paint like a «Chicano» or «Latino». While the North American and European artist is allowed to investigate other cultures and enrich their own work and perspective, it is expected that the artist from another culture only works with the background and artistic traditions connected to his or her place or origin.

Secondly, there are many «Third World» artists (this applies equally to the Asian diaspora) who find this «game» suitable to their liking. Hence through their complicity with this binarism of traditionalism and modernism (aided and abetted by rich collectors who are the self-appointed ambassadors of these cultures) they become representative artists of their countries. They are often selected to be their country's representatives for the Venice Biennale; their works are exhibited in embassies and in the international art markets because their particular brand of «authenticity» sells well (see Garcia Canclini 1994). «Japaneseness» for instance, is associated with a contemplative aesthetic of nature rooted in the Zen Buddhism of classical East Asian traditions rather than in the more controversial Japanese art of social commentary (see Maclear 1993).

Thirdly, those artists who attempt to critique the traditionalism/modernist dialectic are unable to do so because they find themselves being either not «authentic enough» or, if they are not conforming to the separation of pre-modern/modern, their art is criticized for being inauthentically «Westernized». Put simply, they are accused of imitating or being copyists. There is no dialogue between cultures but only appropriation by artists of color. The universal is «ours», the local is «yours», repeats this liberalist framing. Finally, it seems even when artists

of color are legitimated within the art establishment and recognized for their omission in the modernist canon, it often appears that leftist «white» critics, museum administrators, and curators do all the «multicultural» programming and write the theoretical justifications for the exhibits. They determine the context for interpreting the conjunction of artistic cultural practices, production, and economic, political, and social realities without providing artists and cultural critics of color on the left with the possibility of a forum to speak and write for themselves (see Wallace 1991).

It seems to me that there is no escape from the minefield of multicultural artistic politics if it remains chained to an art world already predetermined by enlightenment ideas of individuality, avant-gardism, progressivism, value and originality of art, and the ability of an artist to produce the transcendent art object of cult and market value. West (1990) argues that such contradictions constitute the oxymoronic space of the «new forms of cultural politics of difference». The artist of color must «bite» the hand that feeds him or her in order to remain critical of the very system that reproduces such binaries.

ART AND ART EDUCATION'S COMPLICITY: NEO-PRIMITIVISM AND THE PLEASURES OF EROTICISM

Such a program of incorporation and containment described above is exemplified by The Getty Center For Education in the *Arts multicultural art curriculum* (see jagodzinski 1996) where the taxonomy of cultures as America's Other is rank-ordered with the color «white» conspicuously missing from its representation. The absence of white as a color is repeated in Tomhave´s (1992) recommendation of a multicultural art education curriculum based on the same liberal humanist principles. It should be made clear from the outset that such curricula are *both* racist and appear anti-racist at the same time. By putting «Otherness» as a special category of «understanding», admired for what is missing in Western art history and culture, it remains non-threatening as long as this Otherness doesn't become an active subject which begins to question and define the course of the established history of art. Such an argument has nothing to do with the racism of individual art educators working for The Getty who may be sincere and responsive to the Other. Rather, it has to do with the power of the institution to control market forces and the dissemination of such a multicultural curricular ideology to schools which is the issue.

Art educators further enforce this liberal humanism of multicultural inequality in several other ways. First, and most obvious, is by reproducing a Euro-American art history where modernism's cultural borrowing from the West's Other has been one sided and *without* recognition. As any number of critical commentators have shown the foundations of modernism are based on the appropriation of «primitivism» (Clifford 1988; see especially Jordan and Weedon 1995, part IV). In discursive theoretical terms, «Primitive art» «originated» as a discursive object in the first two decades of the twentieth century, specifically in Paris, France. Paudrat (1984: 25) maintains: «Paris more than any other city became the point of convergence for the propagation of ideas and activities that bestowed on African art an essential role in the formation of Western sensibility». Objects like masks, carved statutes and totems from Africa and Oceania began to be perceived as objects of artistic importance rather than simply artifacts of native customs and beliefs. This perception conjoined with the idea that children's phylogenetic artistic development repeated the ontogeny of the human race (because children's art was more «innocent», «pure», «free», and devoid of the rigidity of industrialization) incorporated «primitivism» into modernist movements at the turn of the century.

All these artistic movements reproduced the binary logic of race: West/ Primitivism. They recapitulated an interest in the Other, not as a fair means of cultural exchange but as a means of attributing to «primitive art» (and the «primitivism» of children's art) by artists of modernity all of that which the West had lost during its industrialization. Despite the belief that these artists thought they were being anti-racist, they were, in fact, creating and reinforcing a binary logic of stereotypic racism and its practices which attributes an essentialist logic to West's Other (Jordan and Weedon 1995).

Studying the art of the Other suggests the idea that an interest in knowing the Other is present. But this is not always the case given «the proprietal roles that Westerners have bestowed upon themselves when it comes to others´ art» (Price 1989: 65). Attached to this «authenticity» and exoticism has been a certain zeal or renewed «vitalist impulse» by art educators in doing ethnographical pedagogical work with First Nation peoples where the «aura» of art can still be preserved by identifying certain cult objects. This is a renewed form of «primitivism» – a neo-primitivism *without its absolutist foundations*, where forms of native «spiritualism» and anthropological fetishization (Gamman and Makinen 1994) have become overlaid with ecological signification as yet another reenactment of an escape from commodified postindustrial society which is seen as an anathema to the art of «personal» art expression. The most blatant example of this comes through such blockbuster Hollywood films as *Dances With Wolves* where Kevin Costner becomes the screen's first «white-Indian-Greenman». In a postmodern world of Baudrillard's simulacra, the loss of the «spirituality» which informed the practice of modernism has become a new crusade for its recovery. Artifacts, like peace pipes, the study of pow wow dances and «sweats» (see Valaskakis 1993) become fetishized as a form of fascination with the Other which, once more, reiterates a benign variation of difference (for example Stuhr et al., 1992, Stuhr 1995).

Being aware of such appropriations and oppressive mistreatment of the Other under the guise of benevolence and support means that it is no longer viable to avoid the implications of «difference» in art education and render all artwork of pluricultures as subject to simplified

universal forms of formalist criticism as developed almost two decades ago by Felman (1970) and Eisner (1972) in the North American context which, unfortunately, is still practiced so ubiquitously throughout art education. Formalism collapses difference into sameness which then reinstates the racial and cultural Other. The most radical critique of difference is to recognize that «art» itself is a Western concept that exists only in difference, a distinct object of Enlightenment discourse, and that art history remains basically nationalistic and heroic. Any radical change for a culturally diverse art education would need to re-write discursively all three terms: art, art history, and the nation, which would virtually be an anathema to current art education curricula.

THIRD SPACE OF HYBRIDITY, AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF A «POST-COLONIAL» MULTICULTURALISM

If the kind of trajectory developed above is to be avoided, what other directions might be taken? At the end of the '80s, a number of influential post-colonial black «British» critics, particularly Hall (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992), Bhabha, (1987, a,b; 1988, 1992) and Gilroy (1987, 1991, 1992) argued for the concept of seeing multiculturalism in terms of *hybridity* or crossover where «difference» was to be used strategically by incorporating other influences. This «third space» or «interstitial perspective» implicates a political stance where an exchange of values, meanings and memories can take place even under the circumstances of *incommensurability*: that is, between communities which may never be collaborative and dialogical, and which indeed may even be antagonistic to one another. Both Hall and Gilroy argue for a «politics of transfiguration» (Said 1992): that is, an ethics of difference which encourages and expresses an outlook based upon a freedom to move across borders and boundaries so as to pursue new senses of the self and Other.

The movement toward the conceptualization of cultural diversity in the late '80s where self-identity was based on hybridity, meant an anti-essentialist critique of aesthetics and cultural identity (a position hastened by the globalized forces of movement mentioned earlier). A hybridic identity was clearly related to borders and frontiers, to migration and diasporas, to the political refugees, and to the subsequent necessary refigurations of «home» and «nation». The «nomadism» of «unhomeliness» became a new norm which displaced both the sovereignty of national cultures and a universal human culture, promoting the potentiality for a new form of a «cosmopolitan ideal in the arts» (see Wollen 1994).

This anti-essentialist discourse in the West has, to a large extent, been constructed out of the exhausted strategies of first wave radicalism, which asserted racial/cultural differences but in no sense meant a liberation from oppressive identities (Hall 1988).

In the best writing this is not a politics of assimilation, but a recognition that there are no privileged spaces or symbolic resources that might secure cultural autonomy. In the pursuit of a non-racist culture the assertion of *identity is a matter of political contingency and not ontology, a recognition that subjects are found «in-between» domains or liminal spaces of difference like race, class, and gender, in the interstices where these domains intersect.*

Artistic hybridity often presents the clash of cultures with resistance and anger, frequently retelling the day-to-day experience of living in a multi-ethnic society (Willis 1988-99; Taylor 1995; Jordan and Weedon 1995: 435). Such an artistic outlook which addresses the political implications of an identity forged from converging and conflictual colonial histories must be distinguished from the artistic «post-colonial hybridity» of a cosmopolitan art celebrated by many «World Art» exhibits and transnational galleries already alluded to in the first section. They often repeat the native/Other trope which exemplifies such figures as Gauguin's own colonial «transcultural» art (Pollock 1994, jagodzinski 1996). Here I refer to the critique made of the curratorial practices of the so-called «transcultural objects» which are meant to exemplify the cosmopolitan embodiment of a «post-colonial» sensibility: that is, the mutually enriching exchange between *equal* partners in the cultural industry. Coombes (1992, 1994), McClintock (1995), and Shohat (1995) from the New Museum of Contemporary Art's Education Department make the charge that such exchanges, when they achieve academic ascendancy in both educational and cultural institutions, mask a denial and disavowal of the Other.

This anti-essentialist poststructuralist stance, primarily developed by black British cultural studies, deconstructs the binarism between «authentic» and «inauthentic» cultural identities, and proves difficult to apply in some aspects. For instance, Spivak (1988), called for a «strategic essentialism» which, put bluntly, condoned «racism» and «nationalism» in certain instances to achieve political ends. Such a strategy seems to be most problematic in today's so-called «post-colonial» globe. This phenomenon can lead to the common experience of «fortress» ethnic communities where ethnic video films, sold or borrowed usually in local grocery stores, and ethnic television channels and radio stations allow immigrant, and exiles to luxuriate in the landscapes of their lost homeland, to remain immersed in their mother tongues, living in the cultural codes of both an imaginary home and host societies (see Naficy 1993).

On the other hand «the race card» of essentialism seems most applicable to aboriginal cultures – for example, the Maori and Australian Aborigines, Eskimo (Innuit), First Nation peoples of North American, Scandinavian people, the Dia (Thai speaking minority in China) etc. – throughout the globe who, through colonization and genocide, have lost their once thriving heritage. An essentialist identity politics here is «approached principally in terms of origins, as something that is given, as something as native, as something inherent in place or ancestry, territorially or genetically, or else, indirectly, is, at best, discovered or acknowledged» (Wollen 1994: 189).

In capitalist countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc. where the accumulation of material wealth and property are held up as values of power and prestige, should we expect Australian Aboriginals, Maori, and First Nation peoples to «give up» their aboriginal lands and treaty agreements, their claims to their «stolen» museum atefacts, and not play the «capitalist» game? Do they have a choice not to?

The question remains as to whether hybridity is something to be *celebrated* because of the opportunities of new creative artistic opportunities and innovations it brings: that is, in our art classes we witness many extraordinary re-interpretations of Western canonic art forms and stock fairy tales by elementary students recently immigrated from other lands (Kress 1995). There is the hope that hybridization of the globe will eventually bring about a new planetary consciousness (Pieterse 1995). On the other hand marginalization is a luxury only for those who are not marginalized. A marginalized hybridity, in this sense, is not so much an identity, nor a spacial position but «a vector or distribution defining access, mobility, and the possibilities of investment and agency» (Grossberg 1993: 100). There seems to be two disparate narratives of immigration here: one which speaks of opportunity promoted by academic post-colonial critics (such as Gilroy, Bhabha, Hall etc.) who separate them from the underprivileged immigrant communities; and another which looks to dead-end itineraries of many immigrants in a state of economic and cultural disenfranchisement. The academy, with its profound faith in authenticity, PC, and liberalism recruits «post-colonial (art) critics» who are already from privileged ranks in their respective countries to speak as Other, thereby compartmentalizing them in academic ghettos, repeating yet another side of «civilized racism» (see Behdad 1993).

The political atmosphere dominated by identity politics and issues of self-representation is fraught with personal and political tensions in terms of who speaks for whom, when, and in whose name. The politics of identity call for «self-representation» of marginalized communities, for «speaking for oneself», but given these essentialist/non-essentialist dialectics the issues are highly complex. The unequalness between groups often paralyze «white» artists from borrowing from other cultures with the fear of being accused of «appropriating»; mental segregationism and policing of racial borders is common so that co-implication is not recognized, or recognized unevenly. Although the self is a matrix of multiple discursive forms of identifications along national, racist, ethnic and sexist lines, identification along «ethnic» lines *alone* (for example, as «a Chicano artist») remains a problem. On one hand such a unilateral inscription of ethnicity seems to be a corrective against the surreptitious encoding of «whiteness» as the norm, «on another level it does not go far enough because it encodes only the most superficial indices of ethnicity – color, origins – while eliding issues of ideology, discourse, identification, affiliation» (Shohat and Stam 1994: 344). As Gilroy argues (1990/91: 3) «it ain't where you're from, it's where you're at». It's not only a question of one´s skin color, race, ethnicity, gender, sex preference etc., rather racial difference is to be understood as a subject position that can only be defined in «performative terms» (Bhabha 1992): that is, in terms of the effects of political struggles over social and economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, and cultural and ideological representation.

In brief, political identity is not the same as a subject position or cultural identity, but a question of commitment, affect, identification and belonging. But this does not mean that «minorities» should take on «color blindness» to those who are privileged, or that benefits of privilege that have been accrued by whites ignored. This means, in the context of this essay, not the celebration of marginalization, and ethnic diversity as much an overcoming of the inherent inequalities. We can see from the discussion that hybridity and essentialism both present their own set of problems, but that the political strategies of equity based on essentialism, or its constructivist opposite where difference is politically mobilized, must always be placed in historical terms and conditions. Aboriginal history cannot be equated with diasporic history.

THREE ART TEXTS OF WORLDLINESS

As I have argued elsewhere (jagodzinski 1997b) an art education whose foundations remain entrenched in the notion of *discipline*, the Western canon of art, studio art and formalist principles of criticism, that is, modernism, has very little hope in accomplishing anything more than reincorporation of «new racist» strategies of containment. At best it can continue to dwell on a «fine arts» tradition which can take on a socio-critical turn by producing critically and socially oriented feminist, aboriginal, and diasporic artists; re-reading conventional art history along socio-political and feminist contexts; utilizing a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of art (for example, as in the outstanding and exemplary oeuvre of Pollock, see especially 1993, and Bal, see especially 1991), and discussing contemporary critical hybridic artists and critics. Hence, I would *not* include the «new art history» (for example Rees/Borzello 1988) on the grounds that it does not deal sufficiently with *effects*, rather its concerns are more with contextualisations. Such a trajectory may well be best suited for an art academy, but junior high and senior high classroom students are not influenced so much by the «fine art» tradition *per se* as they are by representations presented in popular culture (primarily music, television, and film) that directly bear on their personal lives. Popular culture presents the locus of *pleasure* which, for the purposes of my argumentation, is the key to understanding racist articulated responses, as well as decentering art education as a «fine art».

This having been said, it seems highly unlikely that teachers of art will «abandon» the fine arts tradition (that is, the Western canon of «great works of art») and re-write their programs with a focus strictly on popular culture.

I am *not* advocating for such an abandonment as much as a «disaffiliation» and reevaluation of the embedded Euro-American narcissism by privileged «white» participants (self included) in a multicultural art education which requires an awareness of one's social positioning. As Said (1991: 31) points out, the democratic ideals embedded in the canon of western art and literature have often provided a measure for popular resistance to injustices because of the invidious distinctions which remain between the ruling class and subservient cultures. He claims that all cultures known to him make differentiations based on style and performance. Some works of art and literature are elevated above the rest on the grounds of their complexity and rich possibilities of interpretation on multiple levels. How the artwork is structured and *the effects of its viewing* should remain the art educator's priority.

The proposed culturally diverse art education program I would advocate must be based on planetary foundations (that is, a curriculum in a planetary setting destined for the future that our children will inherit). Said (1991: 31) refers to the concept of «*worldliness*» by which he means situating cultural texts (visual and literary) in a context which opens them up to the possibilities of recognizing the globalization of *humane* universalistic democratic aspirations of justice, equality, liberty and freedom for all (that is, a planetary citizenship where imperialism in its post-colonial forms, patriarchy, ecological issues, class distinctions wrought by transnational capitalism, and the rights of sexual preferences remain high on the educational agenda).

Although grand narratives are said to be passé by such theoreticians as Lyotard, I follow Jameson (1981; see West 1986) in this regard: in recognizing that without such a global imaginary enabling utopian dream we continue to sink into forms of hardened racism and ethnicity, forms of technofascism, patriarchy and heartless capitalism. Every text, as Jameson claims, has both repressive and progressive utopian elements which can be strengthened. At the same time Jameson is critical of those utopias of the mass media which gloss over the structural obstacles that make them unrealizable (see also Moylan 1986). Such a planetary educational art imaginary does not mean falling into liberal-pluralist ethical universals of freedom, tolerance and charity. Rather it supports a «critical multiculturalism» (Kellner 1995: 94-97), and a «polycentric multiculturalism» as theorized by Shohat and Stam (1994: 48-49) where questions of *power* relationships are continually forwarded. Such a transformative emancipatory praxis should be kept alive in art education despite the strong turn to right-wing conservative governments in so many «First World» countries (see Apple 1993).

Such an ambitious program can be kept alive in art education if we can introduce and then cut 'n mix three levels of visual texts into our classrooms (see Kress 1995). The first, and most obvious art text, is the established artistic canon which should be read with the a disafiliatory discourse – integrating and deconstructing its binarisms (that is, identifying exclusions on which it was based on, most notably the artistic output of women and the recognition of the «primitivism» which has been historically denied or derogated for the purposes of maintaining Western identity.) This means recognizing that the category of *taste* is a consequence of relations of power (gender, class, race, ethnicity, sex) that traverse within and between cultural groups. Such a reading does not take away from nor diminish canonized art as exceptional human achievements, rather the socio-cultural integration can help destabalize Euro-American narcissism. Teacher and students can begin to «decanonize» the classics according to alternative perspectives.

The second level of art text would be to include salient texts from as many cultures as is pedagogically sound. Here I refer to visual texts and artifacts that have special significance for a culture. These are identified according to their significance (that is, the significance of the content for that group which is socially and politically «dominant».) The importance of such salient texts for speaking the history of cultures (both real and imagined) is presented by Clifford (1989: 75) who relates a story told by Vitart-Fardouis, a curator at the *Musée de l' Homme* about a certain intricately painted animal skin which probably originated among the Fox Indians of North America. The grandson of one of the Indians who came to Paris with Buffalo Bill was searching for a painted tunic his Grandfather had to sell in order to get back to the U.Sidml

. when the circus collapsed. Vitart-Fardouis describes the grandson's emotional response to this skin, which may not even have been his grandfather's, as he described and decoded the meaning of its design. Clifford emphasizes that the old painted tunic takes on a new, but «traditional» meaning in the context of a present-becoming-future by someone who «lived» the *object a*nd for whom the object lived. Here the importance of a historical collective memory is essential if a culture is not to suffer a psychic death. Such a salient object gazed back at the grandson, a look that only he could recognize. It sustained the fantasy of his identity. No white could ever gaze at this object in quite the same way.

The last category of art text which requires more and more introduction into culturally diverse art classrooms has already been mentioned. Here I point to popular culture of media texts (especially music, film, video, television, advertising) which can be amenable to both the art historical canon and to the salient text of dominant minority cultures. *This is also to suggest and predict that the trajectory of art education is changing towards the eventual collapse of studio art and its markers of criticism and aesthetics with media education brought on by the new technologies*. In a postmodern era the representation of otherness is usually experienced at a distance, normalizing as well as exoticizing other cultures; spectators are affected by traditions to which they have no ancestral connection. National identity, communal belonging, and political affiliations are affected. There is also the globalizing effects brought on by Internet technology,

computer graphics, interactive technologies, and «virtual realities» of cyberspace which, on first glance, might be beneficial to an antiracist pedagogy since they «seem» to bracket the social position of subjectivity giving an appearance of equality and an opportunity to access all sorts of art around the world. This myth of the benefits of cyberspace has been sufficiently dispelled in my mind (for example, Markley 1996). It is naive to place exaggerated faith in these new technologies which are expensive and exploitable for corporate and military ends. Technological sophistication does not guarantee any critical understanding of the power relations with the Other. Race, class, gender stratifications are not erased through technological access.

Assuming the value of these three interrelated art texts brings us to questions of reception and interpretation which leave the art educator in much the same position as with the issues which surround identity. As any number of media educators have argued (Buckingham 1993, Willis 1990, Hudack 1993, Ellsworth 1993, Hodge and Tripp 1986, and members of GKM – Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur, especially Dieter Backe) spectatorial positions are culturally, discursively, and politically discontinuous. A reception aesthetics is always relational. The spectator of art, film, popular culture, etc. is a shifting realm of ramifying differences and contradictions. In one context one may read a work racially but defend its misogynist implications. This brings me to the heart of an art education which takes /difference/ seriously, and that is the often contradictory relations which remain between the emotional attachment to the fantasy structures of the narrative and the effect of the performance that popular media offers and the cognitive understanding that what one is viewing is morally wrong, oppressive, racist, sexist, and so forth. As Shohat and Stam (1994: 354) maintain, a multicultural audio-visual pedagogy must «render explicit hidden assumptions about address, problematizing the text's ‹universal› norms». But without an alternative critical grid of understanding resistant perspectives are impossible to generate (for example, for the U.S. Army, the media coverage of The Gulf War was a propagandistic success story.)

As any number of educational researchers have argued, rational approaches of persuasion do little to change the emotional investments students and teachers already bring to their classrooms (Sarup 1986; McCarthy 1993, for a review; Britzman et al. 1993; Sleeter 1993; Rizvi 1993). Attitudinal models and sensitivity training in human relations based on rationalist practices characteristic of humanist liberalist positions of multicultural educational reform (that is, the «understanding another culture» approach) which call for a «prejudiceless goal» where, in there strong versions, white students and teachers are targeted as being «guilty» or flawed protagonists in their racial relations with minorities, simply *don't work* (Sleeter 1991). It is assumed that prejudice and misperception can be corrected simply by providing information about the Other. Such multicultural pedagogical approaches depend almost exclusively on the reversal of values, attitudes, and human nature of social actors understood as «individuals». No institutional structural analysis of the distribution of power and wealth across race relations is provided; nor is there any attempt made to show how white Euro-American hegemony is maintained; nor are there exemplars as to how groups of color challenge this hegemony (see Rizvi, 1991 for an overview).

There is a difference then between a pedagogy that dwells on personalistic neurotic guilt from one where a collective and reciprocal answerability to the Other is called for. As Sleeter (1993) has so persuasively demonstrated in the American context, white teachers and student teachers of second or third generation European descent consistently construct the «racial other» (African Americans, Mexican Americans and Native Americans) through the lenses of their own European ethnicity, which presents a story of immigration of their forefathers and mothers where the social system was perceived as being open, and individual mobility could be attained through hard work, with education being the single best way to achieve such success (see Walkerdine 1995). Ethnic ancestry was to disappear over time as a determinant of one's life chances as each successive generation became Americanized or Canadianized. Such a experiential background of America during its industrialization at the turn of the century, and in Canada during the post-war nation building years, turns into an «ethnic theory» which denies the visible and psychological marks of ancestry, the history of colonialization, and the subjugation that Europeans and Euro-Americans extended over Aboriginal and First Nation peoples (Ringer and Lawless 1989). That the system is open to mobility through education and hard work remains instilled as the democratic liberalist ideal with which white teachers measure the success of student achievement. From such a position white teachers insist that they are «color-blind» (Rist 1978), and that they treat all children equally according to the school's meritocracy; becoming conscious of color differences, they claim, *hinders* rather than helps them to levy equality and justice to all. Providing in-service white teachers with information about minorities, in Sleeter's experience, in some cases *increased* and reinforced earlier prejudices, rather than providing insight, sensitivity and understanding of the Other. Sleeter concludes, rather sadly, that the main way to change this situation concerning racism in teacher education is to increase the number of teachers of color so that multicultural coalitions are possible where white people participate but do not dominate. This would mean a «disaffiliation» (Shohat and Stam 1994: 345) with Euro-American based education.

A critical emancipatory culturally diverse art curriculum which hopes to bring processes of emancipatory change cannot be established unless the teacher himself or herself and the student(s) undergo a change of conscientization. This means a psychoanalytic understanding of the art text and the self (see Pinar 1993). This also means, disappointingly, that an education where the

problem of multiculturalism is based on understanding and communication is never enough (Grossberg (1993), for example, hypothesizes that perhaps racism should be seen in spatially territorial terms).

I return to what I see as the heart of the matter: the question of pleasure and desire as the intersubjective relations between people, texts and the reception of texts. How can individual and collective desires be crystallized for emancipatory purposes?

THE NECESSITY OF POPULAR CULTURE AND THE TURN TO FANTASY

Added to this three tiered art-textual approach is the necessity of dispelling a racial imagination. In this last section I will argue for the need for a culturally diverse art education to adopt, more and more, a cultural studies approach where the popular cultural component of visual texts is dominant. Popular culture is pedagogic texts, unauthorized sources of knowing and knowledge which inscribe class, race and sex preferences of the Other (for example, Cohen, 1988). This requires the necessity of a psychoanalytic understanding of the imagination which is a site/sight/cite of struggle and a source of ideology. From the outset *I am not directly equating the experience of media fantasies with actual behavior*. Rather, I am trying to claim that art education can fruitfully explore popular culture as the arena of popular desires and popular fantasies which have a direct bearing on the racial, patriarchal, and sexist imagination. This is, after all, the psychic domain where we discover and play with our imagined identities. The fantasies of popular culture understood *dialogically* present the relationships of power, between self and Other, as a psychological dependence which mobilizes conflicting feelings of fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity – what Kristeva (1991) characterizes as «strangeness within the self».

Children's experiences of racial prejudice (for example, black people are taking over the country; black people are given unfair advantages: and black people are associated with violence and crime), seem to be viable explanations when applied to their own lives. Teaching about cultural diversity and racism in society must be coupled with the conflicts of racialization that children experience in their own lives. This requires both an understanding of the structures of racism in the social processes, and an examination of the personal experiences of everyday life. This articulation (cf. Hall 1986),[2] or construction and development of a racial and ethnic identity, is linked to *both* the way one is viewed and to the processes of self representation. In psychoanalytic terms, this requires the dialectic between the ideal ego (self) and ego-ideal (society). It should be pointed out that replacing the dominant social-psychological paradigm of multiculturalism that relies on rationalist solutions with a structuralist approach merely displaces the individual with a sociological thesis which tries to explain the structural subordination of one racial group by another. Here I am suggesting that a psychoanalytic dynamic can work both sides through an understanding of «popular racism» as a form of fantasy formation.

Without understanding the racial fantasies manifested in the representational arts and popular media, I don't believe a critical emancipatory culturally diverse art curriculum can emerge. Some psychoanalytic insights into such an understanding have been provided by the Ljubljanian Lacanian psychoanalysts Žižek (especially 1993) and Salecl (1994, 1995) who further developed similar psychoanalytic explorations concerning race begun by the Martinique black psychoanalyst Fanon (1967), and others such as Bhabha (1994), Spivak (1994), Cohen (1992) and authors in the premier issue *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society* (1996). Each has indicated that one of the most insidious effects of the colonizing and postcolonizing enterprise is that it constructs the *very desires* of the colonial and post-colonial subject rather easily through *seduction*. Salecl theorizes recent developments in the performatives of speech act theory by linking it to Lacanian theory. She argues that racial violence is aimed to ruin the fantasy structure that sustains the person that upholds them. In this regard it is not uncommon for white children to attack the «weak spots» (Hatcher and Troyna 1993: 116) of colored children, to get at what *psychically* hurts them. In psychoanalytic parlance this is an attack on the *objet a* of the Other, the kernel of the Real of the Other, to make the Other question his/her *objet a*. Even when the Other cognitively knows *how* and *why* they are being attacked (for example, called racist names), this doesn't take away the psychic pain that ensues because the attacked fantasy defines their identity in difference. The racist tries to place him/herself in a position of authority which already interpellates the Other into this authority structure, otherwise the psychic hurt could not emerge.

Both Salacel and Žižek develop the responsibility of subjectivity that enjoyment and pleasure of hurting bring to racist performance, and the enjoyment of racial fantasies that circulate in the media. The responsibility of enjoyment and pleasure at the expense of the Other is particularly important here since it sustains the core of identity and difference. Žižek has managed to develop a psychoanalytic explanation of postmodern racism. Hatred for the Other comes from the particular way that the Other enjoys; the Other is someone who steals «our» enjoyment (that is, s/he castrates «us» by taking what belongs to «us», like holding family gathering in public picnic grounds, or receiving government assistance for language programs and being supported on the dole.) In Lacanian terms this «theft of enjoyment» is an imaginary castration. For instance, Canadians are being deprived of their pleasure by First Nations and new immigrants

2 Following Hall´s (1986) development of the Gramscian concept of articulation for cultural studies, popular racism does not determine the way children construct their ideas of social difference, rather they are formed according to the context of the situation, i.e., articulated.

because they are lazy; they don't wish to work; or they demand land («our» land! part of «our» nation!); or they always want a hand out; or confine themselves to reservations and demand bottomless government support. These are telling examples of a society's (Big Other) own innermost core beliefs. Such racial fantasies are rooted in the hatred of one's own enjoyment, (for example, Indians are said to be lazy because good hard working whites repress their own enjoyment by means of excessive work and accumulation.)

In the Lacanian thesis enjoyment is ultimately always of the Other, as, for example, the Blacks' superior sexual potency and athletic ability which organizes our enjoyment (for example, Michael Johnson's exposed torso selling Ray-Ban glasses where the caption reads «Take a good look at this»); we find enjoyment precisely in fantasizing about the Other´s enjoyment and conversely, the hatred of the Other's enjoyment is the hatred of «our» own enjoyment. The Other enjoys in a way that is inaccessible to «us». In this sense Žižek says, the Other is a threat to «our» own identity. The Other presents a fascinating image of how our own identities are split, and reveals «our» own inability in finding full identity with ourselves. Without an art education that can decenter such racist fantasies all the hard work we do as art teachers to decenter the narcissism of the Euro-American canon and promote greater equality will remain ineffectual. To dispel racial fantasy structures which often ends in *displeasure*, this seems to be the challenge of an art education which faces the postmodern landscape of cultural diversity in the 21st century.[3]

3 Editor's Note (1999): This paper was first written in 1995. It has been significantly shortened and edited for book publication. The full text can be obtained by writing to the author. Courtesy of Waxmann.

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