THE TEACHER AND THE SKINHEAD:
A STYLE OF PRIVILEGE AND THE PRIVILEGE OF STYLE.
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SUBCULTURAL STYLE
AND ITS RELATION TO YOUTH AND PRIVILEGE.

by

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Abstract

In the contemporary educational context, youth and their relationships to the larger society of which they exist is a complex field of deep symbolic and cultural meaning. Success in the system is often based on complex negotiations of privilege that shape the outcomes and expectations we place upon youth. This thesis takes as its central theoretical underpinnings the notion, as expressed by Paulo Friere and his successors within Critical Pedagogy, that access to education and its benefits is heavily mediated by relations of power, privilege and social capital. The concept of subculture as it was developed by thinkers such as Stuart Hall and Dick Hebdige and its deployment as a means of regulating and shaping youth provides a frame for the analysis of the various ways in which narratives of privilege shape our image and perception of youth and the institutions of education. The thesis examines the how images and portrayals of youth are shaped by examining the representations of youth and subculture in film and in art in the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties. The analysis, instead of focusing upon oppression, looks at the ways in which narratives of privilege create oppression through the strategic privileging of particular identities and ways of being for youth and how this impacts upon them through institutions of education.
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the mohawked, black nail polish wearing, blue haired kids out there, both past and present. It gets better because of you.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 A Question of Privilege

The goal of the research presented herein is a sustained critical inquiry into youth and education and how both of these concepts are heavily impacted and determined by particular cultural narratives of privilege and power. The research looks outside more mainstream pedagogy and curriculum to other organizing schemas and ways knowing to highlight how systems and narratives of privilege exist and shape cultural expectations of both education and youth. The genesis of this research comes from some of my own very personal experiences as a new teacher - in particular the difficulties faced in integrating the theoretical and academic interests I had cultivated in a long and varied post-secondary education to the actual craft and practice of teaching. It was in my practice, both personally and professionally, that I began to feel that there was a large gulf between the ways of knowing and examining the world that I took for granted in my own lived experience and the ways, knowledge and expectations of the profession. The ways I had been taught in my academic career to view and understand the world were heavily grounded in a tradition of social critique, a tradition that was heavily engaged in examining the inequities that were built into our society at a structural level and to be critical of them; to look at the way things are and to imagine how they could or should be. In my practice I found that there was very little space for this type of critical inquiry in the curricula and professional demands of teaching in the system. Moreover, criticism of the system itself and its inequities was strongly discouraged, leaving little room for discussions of how to improve both teaching and the system itself from a critical perspective. This thesis is, therefore, in many ways an attempt to redress the imbalance, to find ways to both express the gap between the kinds of knowledge that I had been immersed in for many years and the culture and practice of teaching that I experienced.

When I became a teacher I was thrust into a whole series of situations and spaces wherein my identity, position and status needed to be negotiated and affirmed as I stepped into new spaces of
privilege and power. I was often forced to defend my own identity categories against attack from those who sought to determine it for me. I am of mixed Aboriginal and European descent, growing up in an indigenous community and culture while my fair skin and hair means that this fact is not immediately obvious. This has often been a point of tension and conflict, as to many observers there is a disconnect between who I am and who I appear to be. In this I am not unique, but my position as both inside and outside traditional formulations of power and privilege does inform my own research interest in examining both privilege and the often porous border between the subjects and objects of privilege. I was forced to constantly affirm, negotiate and manage my indigeneity in the school; even my professional duties as a teacher were determined by my origins as I was hired to work directly with aboriginal youth as a support teacher, to work in between the school and all it represented and the aboriginal community of students. I was a teacher in name and yet I was not in practice, often being told by administrators and colleagues that I was either not a real ‘teacher’ or somehow not a ‘real Indian’\(^1\) at the school, based on my role and position.

From this very personal perspective of trying to situate myself in the role of teacher within the world of education I became fascinated by questions of place and positionality in the larger context of education and schooling, especially how and why some positions were preferred while others were relegated to the margins. It was here that the concept of privilege and privileged positions in terms of both ideas and ways of being began to become central to the inquiry and broad relationships between this privilege and the tension I felt was directly related to this. I began to look at two closely linked iterations of privilege, the privilege inscribed onto outward appearance and the supposed connection between this outward appearance and notions of inward worth and value and how this relates to the privilege of naming, designation and determination that is enjoyed by those

\(^1\) In this case I use the term Indian deliberately to express a package of beliefs and attitudes about aboriginal peoples generated by and through colonialism that are inherently euro-centric and are meant to mirror and reflect the colonizer while rendering invisible the colonized, creating a false image or Imaginary Indian. This is detailed at length in Daniel Francis’ *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.
with privilege to both inflict and enforce particular narratives of value. The privilege of naming and determining the categories of that designation are a cornerstone of the inherited colonial privilege of the West and my dual heritage has meant that in many ways I both hold privilege and also am subject to its constraints. This uncertain position mirrors in many ways the situation of youth who themselves are in a transitional state of identity forms, somewhere between the child and the adult, between dependence and the privilege and power of self-determination as adults. The limits placed upon my own self-determination, my ability to determine my own self-identity, by systems of privilege that I only intermittently or incompletely am allowed to access means that even as an adult and even a teacher I still in many ways occupy a position more aligned with youth. This realization of my position on the border between insider and outsider, adult and youth forms the central impetus of the thesis, the belief that the same processes that create, manage and ultimately determine my identity externally are part of larger and more universal processes that seek to manage and determine all aspects of our personal and collective lives to benefit and privilege the few; that a sustained examination of the kind of privilege that I had so much difficulty in negotiating for myself as a teacher has value beyond my own experiences; that the knowledge and ways of knowing and being that were outside the boundaries of this traditional and contemporary privilege have value to a school system and a larger society.

To this end, I choose to examine other identities and groups that occupied differing positions upon this spectrum of privilege, choosing key points of both interaction and analyses that often occupy complex and even multiple positions. The phenomenon of subculture, which intersects insider and outsider perspectives as well as drawing primarily from the same youth involved in the education project occupies a similar position on the boundary that I described above. It provides both a proof of the veracity and ubiquity of the particular privilege of interest to the thesis, but also provides a contiguous point of reference to examine this privilege and how it impacts upon youth, schooling, education and society at large. My examination of subcultural style looks into two key
aspects that are integral to both subculture and youth, film and art. Film and the world of fine art may at first blush seem far away from the school and the classroom, but each provides valuable insights, especially in that all three are visual mediums, thus allowing a deep and sustained examination of the privileged place that appearance and image occupy in the cultural imaginary. Youth are deeply immersed in the visual culture and subcultures derive much of their cultural cachet from their visual aesthetics. In examining these cultural artifacts, I examine perspectives that often fall outside mainstream pedagogy, but occupy significant positions in other disciplines; Art History, Cultural Studies and Critical Theory are all respected parts of the academy, but often fall outside the purview of pedagogy and practice and yet can provide meaningful insights within teaching. Furthermore these disciplines have established traditions of examining visual images and provide ways to greater understand the visual culture of youth and how that relates to both how they learn and what they learn in the classroom.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

My interest in the boundary between the sanctioned and unsanctioned, the preferred and undesirable is deeply shaped by the works of other contemporary thinkers who examined similar territory and influenced my own perspectives. I was exposed to the works of Edward Said as an undergraduate, and hearing him speak on the subject of Orientalism and Post-Colonialism was a profound influence upon my own worldview. Specifically in Orientalism (1979), he discussed a relationship between the 'Orient' and the West wherein the Orient was a constructed fantasy of non-Western civilization that was based not on fact, but on Western projections of negative and romanticized cultural stereotypes. The exotic 'Orient' was constructed not as it was, but as an opposite reflection of the ideals and culture of the West. This construction was not only dependent and subordinate to the West, but, perhaps more significantly, as an invention of the Western cultural imaginary, inherently Western. The 'Orient' does not so much reveal the non-Western world, but functions to illuminate the values of the West through the negation. What is critical is that Said not
only articulated a relationship between the West and the Orient where the West is given the position of privilege, but perhaps more critically began to look at how this position of privilege is created, maintained and defended. Post-Colonialism builds on this insight and further articulates the relationship of power and privilege between the West and locales and cultures that were colonized by Western powers not just politically but also culturally. As a person of mixed aboriginal and European descent, I have experienced the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer is an everyday part of my lived experience.

However, the relationship Said articulated is not confined to the West's relationship with the non-West, but can be seen in many ways in all aspects of our society where imbalances of power and privilege intersect. The work of Michel Foucault\(^2\) is seminal on the subject of discipline as a type of social control. He posited that discipline was a form of social control and was instrumental in creating docile populations that would accept without complaint the domination of the privileged classes. He suggested that actually such dominance was created through control and manipulation of what was and what was not considered acceptable, enforced through social narratives that sanctioned certain behaviours and ways of being while simultaneously condemning and vilifying others. He called these social narratives discourse and that controlling such discourse allowed the privileged to create a hegemony, or unified meta-discourse that sanctioned and reinforced the privilege and power of the elites. I use the term narrative in the thesis to reinforce the fact that such narratives of privilege are in fact created or invented and that they are neither static nor unassailable. They are merely stories that we are told and tell ourselves that seek to control and shape our potential. Moreover, this interaction begins to demonstrate a dominant culture that affects not just the marginalized, but all aspects of society.

Subculture as a concept began to develop in the postwar period as part of the general

\(^2\)See:
challenge of the elitist views of culture that sought to give cultural agency to parts of society that had been denied this historically. In many ways the development and deployment of the term subculture began to look at the ways in which dominant culture not only colonized the colonial other, but its own culture as well. In particular the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (CCCS) looked toward working and lower class expressions of cultural creativity as a subcategory of the larger dominant culture rather than as outside it in the strictest sense. Though describing the same processes as earlier sociological and ethnographic researchers who looked at non-Western cultures, their analyses can be viewed as a significant break conceptually, as they were engaged in a deliberate and ideological project to expand the concept of what culture constituted and who had the power to define create and participate within culture. The work of CCCS member Dick Hebdige in, Subculture the Meaning of Style, is seen as a seminal text of subculture style analysis. As a text it takes as it subject the material and sartorial articulations of postwar British working class youth. Groups such as Teddy Boys, Mods, Skinheads and Punks are all examined through an ideological lens that is closely aligned with previous theoretical work of thinkers like Stuart Hall (Resistance Through Rituals). The sartorial expressions of youth were examined not as mere fads of fashion, but in terms of symbolic resistance to dominant culture creating ‘alternative’ or ‘new’ cultural spaces. The CCCS was heavily influenced by both the Marxist theories of Louis Althusser and the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes. In this structural analysis every act of dress represents class experience and class struggle as every pose takes on an ideological significance that is expressed through the meaning invested symbolically in material objects (Hebdige: Subculture: The Meaning of Style 16-18). Yet, as the century and millennium ended, our culture was in a process of radical reorientation; the collapse of the Soviet Union also undermined the Socialist ideology that sustained it. In the West no longer was there a viable counterpoint to the dominant Western ideologies and ideals. Class and class analysis becomes unfashionable with the failure of political Marxism. Yet inequity remains and has perhaps become
more pronounced, but we lack a schema to tackle the phenomenon as the old ways of understanding cease to be dialogic between collectivity and competition, and the dialogue fades almost altogether on the macro level. The individual becomes paramount and inequity becomes intensely personal and personalized. Our understanding of social categories fractures into ever more discreet units of race, sexuality, gender, and socio-economic standing.

This is where Critical Pedagogy, and in particular the work of Paulo Friere, is useful as his ideas straddle a line between the individual and the collective. His work looks at how groups interacted with other groups in society, particularly the subordinate to the dominant groups in a society in the context of understanding literacy and acknowledges the idea that different elements within society 'read' texts differently even when they are reading the same text. Yet his way to understand and react to this kind of dynamic literacy was through the medium of critical self-reflection as the educator. In this way his thinking and writing on pedagogy examines and relates to the collective differences of various groups and their own interactions with culture through a lens of being reflective of our own individual position and relationship with our society as a way of understanding that others both collectively and individually occupy their own space and position. Interpretation is more than merely an individual experience, but relates to our shared experience. Friere and the other Critical Pedagogists that followed respond to the problem presented by Said and the later Post-Colonial theorists by suggesting that there exists a mechanism for meaningful dialogue between East and West, the privileged and the oppressed that allows for a re-imagining of the traditional boundary between the two. It allows for multiple sites and positions and creates a framework where the inherent privileging of certain positions can be mediated and mitigated through a process of learning not only the literacies of the dominant, but also for those of the oppressed, wherein instead of speaking from privilege one speaks to it as well. The dialogue is not so much in speaking, but in learning how to listen meaningfully, to create a shared language that respects both the speaker and the listener.
As part of the structure of the work I deliberately deploy a language which tries to promote a meaningful engagement with not only other theorists and academics, but also teachers who themselves may not share the same deep understanding and grounding in theory. Clar Doyle and Amarjit Singh express this concern in their own discussions of teaching the critical pedagogies of Henry Giroux to graduate students and future teachers as one where the students often find theory and theoretical language intimidating, almost like a language they do not in fact speak (Reading and Teaching Henry Giroux, 82). To be mindful of this I often do not use theoretical terms, but try to use language that would be more familiar to teachers. In particular, much of the analyses rely upon the work of Michel Foucault and his understanding of hegemony and discourse. His concept of discourse, the social and cultural narratives that shape our understanding of reality, and how discourse is often in the service of a dominant cultural paradigm or hegemony that seeks to replicate itself though the denial of counter narratives and enshrining of its own are key to the methodology of the work. However, I deliberately do not use the terms whenever possible, using terms like narrative and narratives of power and privilege in an attempt to create a language that is less intimidating and more accessible.

1.3 Overview

The subculture chapter examines subcultural style and its structural meaning as it has evolved in the postwar era and is central, therefore, to the cultural perceptions and understandings of most contemporary adults in the education system. The study of youth subcultures gives us a vision of this process of in action. Furthermore, it also allows us to not only look at the ways youth both are viewed and view themselves, but also how they respond and are responsive to this situation. In the educational context we can use this analysis in several ways: in teaching anything we are demonstrating value and values. What we teach, how we teach it and in particular what we exclude are significant to us in the dominant position of teacher. Additionally, what students tend to value that falls both inside and outside what is being ‘taught’ forms a similar dyad to what the curriculum
teaches or fails to teach. Similar processes of resistance, adaptation, negotiation and interpretation are being enacted in the classroom as much as they are enacted in the outside world. In the same ways youth negotiate dominant culture creating 'new' culture in the context of youth subculture; the process continues into the classroom where they create new knowledge from the knowledge and information they receive. By understanding or being sensitive to this dynamic, as educators we have the opportunity to have a more complex and critical relationship with our students and they with the institutions of society.

The second section, which looks at the popular medium of film, begins with a critical examination of youth-based cinema, created to be a popular entertainment consumed by youth. The focus in the first section is on the work of John Hughes in the nineteen eighties, a period of generational flux as Boomers and Gen Xers both come of age and begin to interact, the Boomers truly now beyond youth and the Xers on the doorstep waiting to enter into the halls and galleries of cultural power and privilege. Today, both groups constitute the old and new guard of educators and education: teachers, administrators and parents. The argument takes the concepts of youth and their position in the larger social order and looks at how dominant society manipulates and attempts to manage their transition into acceptable roles and responsibilities. In many ways the representation of youth in this cinema reveals not youth themselves, but a vision of youth that is challenged and challenging but ultimately nonthreatening to the existing narratives of dominance and subordination. This construction of youth is also significant insofar as it also creates a consistent and coherent fantasy not only of youth, but the world in which they inhabit that is also a fantasy of the middle class, a Suburban Idyll. These films can be viewed then as an intervention by dominant culture into culture of youth, one that seeks to insinuate a youth culture that replicates adult Boomer culture while appearing youthful and youth-centric.

Continuing on both the theme of the subcultural Skinhead, and the examination and situating and reproduction of privilege through symbolic narrative, the final section examines the works of
the painter Attila Richard Lukacs. Lukacs provides a snapshot of the immediate Post-Cold War era wherein many of the truisms of our culture we reshuffled and realigned with the collapse of not only the Soviet Empire but also the great ideological other of the twentieth century, Socialism. As such, his work lives in the place where this new reality gains traction and begins to replicate itself. Lukacs’ work engages directly with the narratives of dominance and privilege that evolved out of the collapse of Soviet Socialism and speaks directly to dominance in that his intended audience, rather than the youth that are the subjects of his work, are instead the very holders of dominant privilege. In this way the analysis shifts to examine privilege directly, but is still mediated through the deployment of images of the margins, subculture maintaining the common thread of examining both privilege and its lack through the Skinhead subjects of his work. It extends the examination of the screen Skinhead, delving deeper into the symbolic and cultural privilege encoded into the body. Through the privileged medium of Art and its more privileged audience, Lukacs is able to examine whole histories of privilege and begin to explore and challenge both their existence and power.

The final arc of this paper will be an analysis of the existing state of Critical Pedagogy that will attempt to re-situate the discussion towards a new kind of analysis that might open up the discipline to new directions and a new vision of teaching and education. I will attempt to provide an answer to critical pedagogists who themselves are searching for a new kind of critical imagination, one that looks beyond the current realities of society and education and towards an undiscovered country of new possibilities. Youth are capable of tremendous capacity and potential for more engaged and critical relationship with power and privilege; the great social changes the boomers began to enact in the nineteen sixties demonstrates this. However, this potential must be cultivated and fostered and educators are ideally placed to facilitate this kind of critical potential in the youth that they serve.
Chapter 2: Youth, Privilege and Pedagogy: Subculture, Film and Fine Art as Cultural Texts of Youth

2.1 The Privilege of Style: A Movement From the Margins of Invisibility to Over-Visibility.

2.1.1 Being Seen and Being Scene: From Fashion to Style.

The concept of subculture in the context of subcultural style developed in the latter half of the twentieth century as a theoretical response to the radical social and cultural re-alignments that were being observed in Western Society in the aftermath of the two World Wars. The insinuation of style subcultures into the cultural imaginary in the early to mid-twentieth century is part of a larger re-alignment of culture and privilege that resulted from the erosion of the power and privilege of the historical aristocratic classes in the West, and the sometimes precarious iterations of power and privilege that replaced them. Privilege in the contemporary world is often expressed in subtle ways and through subtle narratives of dominance and subordination that rely increasingly on position and association with approved modes of cultural expression and ways of being both viewed and understood in highly visual ways. Images have become highly significant to the formation of identity and how this identity is interpreted, positioned and ultimately if it is sanctioned or denounced. One of the ways this re-orientation manifested was through the privilege of determining acceptable boundaries of visual and sartorial display and in how dress and sartorial expression encoded status and privilege. Privilege is manifested and enacted through the shaping of what is and is not considered acceptable, but also how what is considered non-conforming is interpreted and perhaps more significantly how this non-conformity is disciplined and positioned. This process can be critically evaluated through an examination of the concept and practice of subculture as it developed in the academic literature as a way to comprehend and explain the changing cultural place of visual display through dress. In particular, subcultural style evolved to provide a way to understand and interpret the impact of the increasing potency, symbolically at least, of that visual display, especially displays that are interpreted as non-conforming and challenging to mainstream
sensibilities. The term subculture itself seems to suggest a particular kind of relationship with what would be considered by default, culture, the sanctioned identities and identity expressions that are privileged with being considered normal or at least outwardly conforming to the baseline expectations of normalcy and acceptability. Subculture and subcultural style are both a part of the dominant culture as sub-units of the dominant culture in which they inhabit, but also separate and subordinate, not granted the privilege of the full endorsement and status of culture with the privileges of acceptability and normalcy: they are either on the margins or even outside the bounds of accepted expression.

Specifically, in the context of the emergence and evolution of subculture and style, the historical privilege of fashion, with its almost exclusive connection to failing systems of aristocratic privilege, is increasingly devalued and marginalized by the emerging holders of privilege. Sartorial fashion as a form of visual status and display relied on the privileging of such obvious displays as the preferred expression of both collective and individual status and power. As this status waned, those that engaged in such visual displays needed to be placed within the new narratives of privilege and power and the hierarchies of status they supported. To be fashionable and unfashionable were still significant markers of privilege, but this relationship was complicated by the emergence of groups that still deliberately and strategically deployed overt visual sartorial display as part of their own identity construction. Subcultural style becomes closely aligned not only with youth literally as the dominant consumers and creators of subcultural style, but also conceptually. 'Youth', like subcultures and subcultural style, is also a concept that has been subjected to and heavily determined by those with more power and agency. Educators, parents, marketers and others are at once often both fascinated and yet separated by adulthood from the youth they once were and now seek to shape. Youth, like fashion or style, is ever changing and full of newness and possibility, the possibility and power of this potential fading with age. Subcultural style, therefore, is a potentially significant point of research in the discussion of youth and the institutions that adults create to
contain and shape youth because it acts both as a direct medium between the culture of youth and adults, but also acts as a metaphor for the ways in which the relationship is conceptually and symbolically understood.

While the fascination with clothing and style might be a passing phase for many youth, this fascination is rarely isolated to clothing, but comes as part of an overall style package that is really an identity package. Music, ideas and culture are all part of the symbolic package. The embrace of subcultural style by youth is often a cause for reactionary concern by parents and authority as was similar reactions against Rock and Roll in the fifties, the Hippies in the Sixties, Punks in the Seventies and Eighties and so on to the contemporary moment that were often expressed in violent reaction against them. The Zoot Suit Riots, violent protests against Rock and Roll, attacks on Hippies in the sixties, Punk Rock Riots in the early eighties - all involved largely youthful populations coming into violent conflict with the agents of the establishment. While the dominant cultural narratives disavow fashion, it seems its youth flock generation after generation to it as a means of self-identification and self-expression through their understanding of style. The power and potency for youth expressed in their willingness to endure brutal reaction, for the establishment by the potency of the reactionary fear and its response.

Yet in the context of schooling and the institutions of education the significance of style and identity politics of youth is largely ignored by the institutions that serve them. As educators a basic understanding of the potency that subculture and subcultural style has and continues to have for youth is significant, yet largely ignored. Worse yet, the school is often the site of confrontation and reaction against expressions of fashion. If greater engagement with learners is a goal then one of the fronts where this can be achieved is through greater understanding and regard for the significance of fashion to youth, even if as adults we are largely forced to deny it in our own lives. Our positions within the school system allow us the potential to re-imagine this relationship between youth and dominant society.
Subculture and subculturalists, while only a small portion of youth, act as outliers in the struggle between dominant and subordinate narratives of culture. Schools as a primary point of interaction between youth and dominant culture become significant sites of potential resistance to forms of domination that seek to exclude some and privilege others. The historical example of fashion generally and subcultural style as it developed specifically is significant as it has occupied a similar site of tension in our society between competing narratives of power and privilege and the ways in which this power can be reshaped. Schools and youth are then strategically placed on the boundary between privilege and the narratives that defend and support them. Youth and the symbolic power of display through dress and style interact at the point of subcultural style and the ways in which these are managed by the education system is significant to the ways in which the school itself is positioned as the gatekeeper for established cultural forms or as a site where these narratives can be re-evaluated and challenged. Like youth, schools and schooling occupy a position wherein they too are both inside and outside privilege.


To understand the emergence of the concept of subcultural style as it evolved in the postwar era firstly the radical shift in the position and meaning of fashion and society must be understood. This fraught position is further magnified when the concept of fashion is deployed with an equally contentious term, subculture, to examine what exactly subcultural fashion describes and if it in actuality describes anything at all. Fashion is itself a term that is deeply determined by its association and disassociation with dominant narratives of privilege and power. Fashion as an historical term and concept is heavily determined by its cultural associations with both femininity and elite status. Fashion historically was the jurisdiction of the upper classes of Western society as they were the only group within society that had the necessary economic and social freedom to engage in significant acts of sartorial expression. Fashion as mediated through dress can only have
significance if one can afford to purchase and maintain the requisite articles of clothing that would make one fashionable: the lower classes of society simply did not have the time or financial capital required to purchase and acquire new clothing for the purpose of being ‘fashionable’. Fashion was significant as a marker of being cultured, and historically the upper class aristocracies had sole ownership of the resources and agency to define what is and is not significant. It was the privilege of the upper class to engage and determine culture, of which fashion was an important marker. The emerging wealth and dominance of the industrial classes who became wealthy through industrialization and who had been historically excluded from the privilege and power, created a fracture within this model of privilege, of which fashion and being fashionable was a cornerstone. Displays of wealth and rank are universal in human culture and most societies and cultures have complex rules and regulations surrounding sartorial expression and display. Further, even if those holding the reins of power change, the need to establish those who hold rank and privilege from those that do not is still intrinsically necessary to underpin any hierarchical power structure. In the Late-Modern period, dressing well becomes an act of at once expressing refinement, without appearing to embrace ostentation or too much attention to the act itself.

Gender is also significant to the historical formation of the term fashion as since at least the mid-eighteenth century it became increasingly defined as an intrinsically feminine pursuit, which further influenced how it has been conceived within both popular consciousness and within the academic literature. In what is described as the Great Masculine Fashion Renunciation, men and in particular masculinity defined sartorial fashion as a frivolous and feminine (and therefore an unmanly) pursuit. Joanna Bourke describes the process as one where, “since the end of the eighteenth century men had been progressively ignoring brighter, more elaborate, and more varied forms of masculine ornamentation by 'making their own tailoring the more austere and ascetic of the

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... men 'abandoned their claim to be considered beautiful' and 'henceforth aimed at being only useful” (Bourke 23). Fashion became increasingly associated with femininity in the cultural imaginary of the patriarchal order, which sought to deny the potential power and prestige associated with it.

In its association with femininity and women fashion was seen to be outside the more significant and masculine pursuits, which were the acquisition and exercise of power through economic and political means. Through this double conceptual blind fashion became both an exercise of upper class prerogative, and femininity. With the rise of the middle class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the waning of aristocratic control, fashion, in its association with femininity, can be seen as a way to undermine the power of the failing aristocracies whose concern over fashion was seen to be frivolous and shallow by the emerging new elite classes. In many ways fashion came to express a kind of paradox of negation: on one hand it can be seen as an exercise in conspicuous privilege, the deliberate consumption of resources for non-utilitarian ends by those with the means to do so, but at the same time it is associated with the femininity which negates it power, as femininity was expressed discursively as a lack of power.

However, the rejection of fashion by the dominant classes was not universally embraced by all segments of society, especially by marginalized groups that were, like women, excluded from the narratives of privilege and power. Since fashion in the sartorial sense had been rejected by the dominant narratives, it was marginalized and those within the margins took up the symbolic power of fashion and deployed it for their own ends. Men from marginalized groups who still had an interest in fashion and display had to be situated within the new narratives, especially when this interest in fashion extended outward from minority groups to the youth of the dominant social groups. In this way the development conceptually of subcultural style can be seen as a way in which the symbolic potential of fashion that was still being deployed could be understood within narratives that rejected the codes of dress and fashion for men. Some of the earliest style subcultures in the
Twentieth Century, Zoot Suiters in North America and the Teddy Boys in the UK demonstrate the ways in which the rejection of bright colours and ostentation were denied by males from groups that were already marginalized. These early style cultures presented a problem to the narrative of masculine renunciation as they were creating a counter narrative where masculinity was adorned and concerned with its presentation and appearance. However, fashion was only part of a larger package of identity that included music, dance and activity that were also considered non-conforming, and sartorial expression was only part of the overall social challenge these groups were perceived to present. Fashion becomes a significant aspect of what would become subcultural style as it is often the easiest and most overt way to identify and classify the subculturalist as separate and distinct from the mainstream culture as music and dance trends are often extended and shared by the mainstream, but sartorial and style displays were often, at least initially, exclusive to style subcultures. As a privilege, fashion and its concerns with beauty and display migrated away from a position of central significance by the powered elites to the margins and the marginalized who then re-appropriated for their own ends.

2.1.3 Subcultural Style and the Birmingham School: Resistance through Style.

Subculture as a term in the academic sense is a relatively new phenomenon; however, the term itself and how it is used is deeply embedded in the historical conception of culture itself. In particular the concepts of high and low culture are significant to the academic discipline of Cultural Studies as it developed particularly in Britain in the postwar era –in particular the work of the Birmingham School or CCCS. Prior to this, culture and society simply was and anything outside the definition of ‘culture’ was conceived of as non-culture. Culture itself was determined by those with the hegemonic power to enforce their narratives and as such culture was the domain of the elite. Non-elite formulations of culture and those who participated in them engaged in ‘folk’ or ‘traditional’

^Many Zoot Suiters were of Hispanic or African American backgrounds, while Teddy Boys were predominately lower and working class young men who had little economic or social power.
activities. They were outside ‘culture’ and were themselves subjects to be studied to perhaps inform culture, but they were not agents or creators of culture. Youth has historically occupied a similar border position between culture and non-culture, power and powerlessness. Expressions like teen angst and teen age rebellion hint at the ways youth have been historically constructed in the late modern era. The teenager as a concept is a cultural invention of the twentieth century and demarked the frontier between childhood and adulthood as a border region between the two. It becomes a place wherein ‘Youth’ becomes a contested region between the demands and privileges of adulthood and the innocence, dependency and lack of agency of the realm of ‘Child’. The emergence of subculture and especially subcultural style (fashion) as it is deployed here is intrinsically linked with the emergence of the teenager, as subculturalists have often been associated with youth and divergence from privileged (adult) norms.

With the large scale renunciation of fashion by dominant culture in the latter part of the twentieth century the spectacle, the possibility and transformative potential of fashion passed into new hands, making visible what had hitherto been largely invisible. The intersection between the desire for expression and self-determination by those on the outside of dominant culture, the working class, the poor and especially working class and low status youth and the encoded power and potential of fashion begins to be deployed by academics and researchers under the new concept of subculture and subcultural style. The subculturalists of the nineteen seventies had begun to 'see' this in the youth subcultures that they began to study. Many of these subcultures had by the point of study become quite historical, having percolated out into the street corners and clubs of the urban city, on display to be seen and digested not just by themselves, but to confound and confuse the public itself. What is interesting beyond the individual iterations and what they speak to in terms of the particulars of their image expression is the timing in which academic interest began to focus in a serious and sustained way upon them as subjects worthy of sustained study. As youth subcultures, they had been largely ignored and reviled in the mainstream as intensely shallow and childish fads
of fashion, and youthful frivolity. The superficiality of the subcultures, with fashion and image as defining aspects of its very existence had been largely dismissed, but by the seventies and the eighties the image had begun to be seen with ever more significance, not just in terms of youth, but culture and society in general. The embrace of fashion and a style distinct from those of the dominant centre distinguished them not just from the mainstream dominant culture, but also from each other. Rather than an undifferentiated mass of acultural non-status or low status substance, there began a process of claiming and carving out new and often novel cultural spaces by creative and energetic individuals and groups. These groups existed at the margins of culture and their deployment of fashion on their own terms marked them as legitimate creators of culture.

Dick Hebdige, whose *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* is foundational in the study of subcultural fashion, believed subcultures use dress and style to create a *spectacle* of their symbolic defiance wherein their non-visible and internal deviance is expressed externally in grand and collective spectacles of resistance (101). The concept of resistance to dominant culture is consistent with Hebdige’s Marxist ideological framework and is expressed as part of a larger class struggle. In Hebdige’s analysis subcultures and subculturalists are engaged in a symbolic game of becoming and enacting visibility and presence in the mainstream (93). As members of the underclass they have to force themselves into visibility as they are symbolically invisible within the cultural imaginary that is focused by and on the upper classes of society. Through their sartorial distinctiveness they deny the undifferentiated nature of their existence as a collective ‘other’ of *working class*. Subcultures exist in direct relationship with the dominant culture that looks at them. *In Posing … Threats, Striking ... Poses*, Hebdige articulates that “power is inscribed in even the most ‘superficial’ sartorial flourishes. Power is inscribed in the look of things, in our looking at things” (298, original emphasis). In this analysis, subcultures and subculturalists are engaged in a symbolic game of becoming and enacting visibility and presence in the mainstream. They exist in direct relationship with the dominant culture that looks at them.
In Hebdige’s analysis the process of becoming visible creates particular sets of relationships between the subculture and the dominant society. Their place is constructed within the existing discursive hierarchies and their sartorial creativity becomes slowly incorporated into the dominant style formations. From the invisible outside, their visibility is mediated through subcultures that exist within the gaze of the dominant society who act in this way as stylistic middlemen. Their early adoption of marginal style is linked by their presence on the fringes of the discourse and their spectacular displays allow the mainstream by proxy to extend the gaze outward toward the darkness. The concept of *bricolage*, the appropriation of material objects from a wide variety of sources and their symbolic reinterpretation to create new meanings, is significant as a mechanism for symbolic resistance. Subculture functions as a repository of dissent and defiance as working class youth resist the social hegemonies that constrain their realities through subverting the symbolic codes of fashion to their own ends (Subculture 85). For Hebdige the subcultures he examines are sites of collective symbolic resistance to dominant social order (86). Style and dress become key symbolic battlegrounds for this class struggle, allowing the subculturalist to defy dominant cultural tropes through the inversion and disruption of the symbolic unities of society. The values and hegemony of the mainstream expressed through the conventions of dress and taste are subtly (and in the case of Punks unsuitably) subverted by subculture to provide new and dissenting symbolic articulations.

Hebdige's analysis, though, is heavily class based, looking at the ways in which class is experienced as a structural point of resistance. Subculture is examined along class lines; it is an articulation of Marxist ideological concern with material and economic inequities that are designed to maintain an economically hierarchical society where labour is devalued and capital and economic privilege is concentrated within a hierarchical structure that concentrates economic and social power within the highest echelons. One of the key features of this type of analysis is the focus on material objects, clothing, jewelry and makeup that are symbolically expropriated and repositioned to create a symbolic rupture from the dominant usage of these items. The symbolic value of the objects relies
to a certain extent on the concept of material fetishism, where objects are invested with social meaning outside their practical usage. This Marxist concept underpins most class-based analyses as objects and artifacts cannot be symbolically re-appropriated without first having a symbolic significance to the dominant society. Many subcultures that are examined from the structural position of class can be seen as taking objects associated with class affiliation and subverting their symbolic meaning. The Teddy Boys deployed upper class Edwardian fashion within a distinctly lower class setting, symbolically challenging the hegemony of fashion’s association with the upper class while being separate from the upper class. The spectacle of their sartorial fashion marked them as separate from the upper class source as they did not simply try to pass as upper class through their costuming. Conversely the Skinheads elevated working class attire to the level of fashion. The work boots and denim pants that were practical necessities for the working class were given symbolic significance as a fashion representation divorced from their practical necessity. Resistance is at the heart of how subcultures have traditionally been conceptualized. It creates an inherently oppositional relationship between the subject and the representatives of the dominant society, the researcher. This creates a sense of oppositional relationality that can be seen from both objective researcher and the subject informant. While the literature has moved beyond conceptualizations that describe subculture in terms of deviance, the concept of subcultural fashion is inherently one that is bound into the discourses that defy and define hegemony. Fashion is about visual display, and subcultural fashion is about creative re-imagining and reworking of the social codes that dictate fashion. While the relationship is not purely a binary one, as arguably personal identity expression also plays a significant role in the equation, it is one that is bound to Western dominant discourse that is intensely hierarchical and binary. While it challenges discursive hegemonies it does so through strategic engagement and disengagement from them that puts them within the discursive realm of visibility.
2.1.4 Subculture and Youth: A Class Apart.

The CCCS analysis of youth and subculture is heavily influenced by class and class analysis and although this preoccupation leads to interesting and meaningful insights, it does have limitations. In particular the analysis does not adequately account for the concept of youth as it has evolved in the more than thirty years since they published. While often expressed through strategic consumption, youthful subculture as symbolic site does more than engage in a symbolic game of engagement and disengagement with the dominant culture to become visible. The structural denial of the culturally determined roles is consistent with symbolic resistance suggested by the CCCS formulation, except that in many ways youth now suffer from an almost over visibility rather than invisibility in their constant regulation by the dominant social institutions that create for them the category of youth with its set expectations. Both within and without youth institutions, youth as a category is one of intense scrutiny from without by youth workers, parents and social and economic institutions that seek to either prescribe or profit from them. The ways in which subcultures and subculturalists have been scrutinized by the dominant culture mirrors the ways in which all youth regardless of sartorial choices or style are looked upon and examined. Youth are no longer seeking to be seen, but rather they can be seen to be trying to strategically manage their own overexposed image. By engaging in the codes of fashion and in particular subcultural fashion youth are not merely signalling their disaffection with the structural expectations and the cultural indoctrination they are forced to participate in through compulsory education and constant media bombardment designed to shape their consumer habits, they are trying to escape it.

Youth as a social category can be seen as significant category in that are structurally conceived in terms of what is described as alienation from the dominant adult world. In Metalheads, Jeffrey Arnett offers a sustained analyses of the ways in which youth are marginalized from dominant culture and identity constructions, causing them to look toward subcultural forms of self-definition. As a group that has little other power than their ability to express themselves and to
congregate with other youth, their subcultural style becomes a way to alleviate personal alienation through collective sartorial displays and rituals like concerts. The uniformity of style formations creates a sense of community of youth and can be viewed as a kind of response to the lack satisfactory identity constructs within mainstream culture. In this iteration, youth create subcultural expression not as a form of resistance to dominant culture, but to create a community and culture of their own. Youth in their alienation from the adult world create alternative communities bound together by their collective adoption of visual cues designed not to antagonize the dominant society, but to make them recognizable to themselves. Subculturalists and subcultural style can be seen as threatening to this project insofar as they offer alternative narratives to the absorption of youth into dominant culture. Youth naturally occupy a border position between visible and invisible, but as subculturalists rather than look inward and into the defined boundaries of dominant privilege they turn their attention to the undefined and protean spaces outside the gates. Society depends upon youth to become the consumers and champions of the systems of privilege as they exist today and youth threaten this project by offering glimpses into the future. Their very status as youth defines them as outsiders to the full privilege of adulthood and yet this is managed primarily through strategic engagement with youth to align them to the goals and desires that align with the established cultural narratives. It is precisely because they will one day assume the mantle of adulthood that youth must be contained, their focus shaped to service the needs of those in dominant positions.

Yet, their very attempt to organize a youthful (sub)culture separate from that of adults is deeply threatening to dominant society. This perceived threat is often reacted to strongly by dominant society. In *White Panic and the Racial Coding of Violence*, Henry Giroux compares the reaction of dominant society to youth and youth culture the same way it has historically reacted and feared minority groups. He links the historical cultural narrative of racializing violence and deviance to the ways in which similar processes are also enacted upon youth (27-54). In his estimation the established relationships of privilege and power extend to youth across lines of race and class as
youth themselves are collectively excluded from power and privilege based on their age and their subordination within the economic system to adults. Further, he compares the ways in which the panic surrounding youth violence mirrors historical panics around the violence of minorities. Skott-Myhre goes further and suggests that through this process youth themselves are as such strategically denied 'whiteness', the dominant package of privilege and power that has historically been constructed in America along lines of colour in the context of the European colonial project (167-174). In this way youth rather than projecting a loyalty to class or race or gender can be seen as unified through their collective immersion in the structures of dominant society through schools and their media saturation that seeks to over determine their place within society. The concentration of youth into schools and other institutions separates them physically as well as symbolically from the world of adult power and privilege that they can only enter after successful passage through these institutions. Teachers, youth workers and the institutions of schooling become proxies of dominant culture and as such are themselves regardless of race essentialized as 'white' (173). While they are in a sense excluded from whiteness, youth are not permanently resigned to the othered position and a great deal of the cultural narratives aimed at youth are inclined to orient them towards whiteness as the ultimate and achievable goal.

As such youth are separate from class, distinct even from race and other groups due to their potential for becoming white, or absorbed into dominant cultural narratives, while in contrast to be 'black' is to be forever outside privilege and power. Even youth from these disaffected groups are bifurcated into youth and their position of origin: minority-youth, lower class youth, gay or queer youth, demonstrating that insofar as the dominant culture is concerned they are still cadets, trainees or interns to the project of whiteness. They can be made to fit the desired outcomes of those in the position to determine the acceptable forms for youth to take. However, individuals as old as thirty (Summative Evaluation: Youth Employment Strategy) now qualify as youth in the context of federal employment programs, demonstrating how the concept of youth is symbolically linked to concepts
of economic dependence and adulthood to economic independence. With the failure of the economy in recent years, the economic pressures have forced many even well-educated to remain trapped in financial dependence and, therefore, remain symbolically and culturally trapped in the category of youth well into their third decade. The upward age pressure on the category of youth means the delaying of adulthood and adult roles and the power and privilege to a larger demographic of youth who must be constrained and managed culturally while marginalized economically, denied 'whiteness' or the privileged position of economic power and symbolic authority of self-determination.

The Hipster subculture can be seen as an example of this process in that many hipsters are in their second decade and exist in the margins between youth and adulthood. They are often older and their style less confrontational and more subtle, their codes and symbols often consuming the various elements of earlier subcultures. They use their consumer power not to purchase status in the sanctioned mainstream sense, but try to attempt to find connection with and create a more authentic vision of culture than one that has failed to open space for them through the recycling and re-appropriation of the symbols of previous subcultures. They actively cultivate their border status by strategically proclaiming themselves both part of the world of dominant privilege and its appropriation and consumption of the outsider, but maintain their allegiance to the outsider by refusing to surrender their outsider status. Their identity is still fluid and not set, open to change and reinterpretation, and therefore still youthful and youth orientated. As our population ages and lives longer it seems that youth becomes an ever more saturated space both literally and symbolically. As youth is extended it seems that the boundaries of the concept become less fixed and more chaotic, meaning that the relationship between youth and institutions that contain them like schools is also conceptually less fixed and more chaotic, creating spaces of increased tension. The identification of whiteness and blackness in the context of youth is an attempt to find meaningful frames and ways of expressing this fraught boundary. Youth are fast becoming a global underclass in the contemporary
economy and begin to find that they dwell in the darkness outside the light.

2.1.5 Privilege Deferred: Youth and Identity

The symbolic power of fashion and style, once held exclusively as the purview of the wealthy and powerful, has since the end of the first World War been increasingly far more strategically deployed by segments of society as a means of self-expression that often undermines the top down discourses of power and privilege. This is expressed in this instance in the power to self-define and determine one’s identity and affiliation through dress and costume. The fracture caused by the fraught relationship of the powerful middle class in North America with fashion and its historical associations allowed fertile symbolic territory for often marginalized segments of society. The intermingling with the symbolic power and identity creation associated with fashion merging with the aspirations of the disenfranchised and dispossessed forged the new cultural form described as subcultural style. From the Zoot Suit to Afros to modern African American inspired 'Urban' fashion and Hip Hop culture, the rejection of fashion by dominant society has created space for a largely disenfranchised and disempowered minority, a space of cultural production that is not necessarily dominated and dictated by the dominant culture that often feigns disinterest. However, the popularity of so called 'Urban' fashion and style to the youth of the dominant white majority in North America cannot be ignored.

The emergence of style subcultures or subcultural style can be seen as significant in that subcultural style has historically been closely allied to the cultural outputs of the systematically socially disenfranchised, whether on grounds of race, class, gender, sexual orientation. These groups while largely culturally invisible or deliberately ignored on their own are made visible through the embrace of subcultural style and the symbolic codes of fashion. Subcultural style and its connection to a youth who are intensely observed and monitored in the contemporary world demonstrates both a pattern of cultural output that is not necessarily dominated by privilege, but can be seen as indigenous to the youth that creates them. This indigenous culture of youth has often been seen as
quite threatening to dominant or mainstream society as youth orienting towards this loci are moving away from the prescribed roles of mainstream culture. The often violent historical reaction by dominant culture to popular outpouring of subcultural sentiment amongst youth can be viewed as part of the project of disciplining youth towards acceptable positions. The great fear is perhaps not that this culture will somehow usurp the authority and legitimacy of the dominant adult culture, but that in its conceptual opposition to the dominant culture it will simply remain forever inscrutable and unruly, defiant and recalcitrant in its wholesale rejection of the necessity of 'adulthood' as a concept. In this way it is not youth itself that is the fear, but that it does not need ever end, and that youth culture becomes a true alternative of not just values beliefs and experiences that one carries over into their eventual transition into the dominant world of the adult, but a permanent position of perpetual childhood as a state that does not and need not ever leave the nursery, the Soda Shoppe, the High School, a Never Neverland without adult roles and responsibility.

The cultural anxiety is of course rooted the anxious hopes and dreams of the parent, both in the literal and figurative sense as the overseers of the process of adulthood. Historically speaking, adulthood was far less of a gradual process than it can be seen as in contemporary North America. While societies marked the passage from childhood to adulthood with various rituals and rites of passage, our society has been since the end of the Second World War ever lengthening the period of childhood and deferring later and later the adult cultural roles. First was the teenager as a division between pure childhood and adulthood, a time after puberty wherein the no longer child, but not yet adult existed in a space between the two. Public education played a major role in this new state as increasing numbers of more or less affluent middle class families could afford to keep their children in school longer, delaying the necessity for wage employment that was perhaps the greatest divisor between non adulthood and full adulthood, the ability to be financially independent, and to start building the wealth necessary to begin the very adult role of child rearing and thus repeat the process of shaping and creating youth not in their own image, but rather our own.
Those who are subordinated by narratives of privilege, however, have the same impulse to create and manage their identity as those who deem themselves in the position to determine their identities and culture for them through sanctioned cultural outputs. Subcultural style is the culture and identity of the historically invisible made visible through ostentation and overt display that challenges the authenticity of the dominant narratives. The development of subcultural style as a means of self-expression can be seen as a way for youth and others excluded from full adulthood to find alternatives to the identity categories that were created for them by the fully empowered adults who held the privilege of controlling great aspects of their lives. Subcultural style allows a space for youth and others disenfranchised in similar ways to create new cultural spaces that are less determined and more open to new ways of thinking and being. The visual and symbolic potency of style is that it is conceptually understood as a way of expressing one's identity, both individually and collectively, with subcultural style a more visually and therefore symbolically potent way of expressing this impulse. The subcultural impulse can be seen as a way to manage the inequities of privilege that give the power of determining and creating culture only to the privileged few. Subcultural style can be understood then as the exercise of the privilege of creating culture: style, music, language and ultimately identity by those who are deemed to not have the privilege. However, just as youth are attracted to subculture for its potential to help shape their identity, those who hold the dominant positions are themselves also engaged in the same process of creating attractive style culture through their own means.

The next section explores how the dominant 'culture industry tries to engage with youth through the familiar tropes and symbols of subcultural style to provide an attractive package for youth that is less threatening to dominant privilege even while seeming to provide an alternative to it. The analysis is expanded to the ways in which youth and subculture is represented in a popular media that is shaped and maintained by those in positions of privilege. In particular, the mass medium of film is examined to look at the ways in which youth are positioned and manufactured in
films aimed specifically at youth. While packaged as popular entertainment the film also engages in specific codes of privilege and regulation. Key to the analysis is the emergence of the Skinhead, which becomes symbolic of the reaction or resistance to the motivations that underpinned this movement. The fascination with the Skinhead as both an aesthetic and a symbolic object is clearly manifested in the medium of film, where in the early and mid-nineteen nineties the racist Skinhead became a subject to be explored. The Skinhead films offer a critique of the privileged representations of youth of the first section partly through the deployment of a particular style subculture that is positioned to offer both a critique and examination of dominant privilege in North America.

2.2 Youth on Film: The Suburban Idyll and its Skinhead Other

2.2.1 An Introduction to Privilege: Narratives of Youth on Film

Building on the work of Stuart Hall and other thinkers in Cultural Studies, this section focuses on the popular medium of film and in particular the idea of a youth-focused cinema, one that deploys popular culture tropes discussed in the previous analyses, but takes them to the further level of symbolic abstraction insofar as the constructed world of youth and youth cinema is even more of an artificial construct created to give the suggestion of reality. The analyses continue the exploration of identity and how it relates to narratives and systems of privilege, but also expands the focus to examine more deeply the particular narratives of privilege and power that are created to 'instruct' or 'educate' youth. Hollywood and its connection to wealth, fame and celebrity is intimately connected to dominant culture and acts, in America, as one of its primary creators of popular culture. In the context of this analysis the film output of the writer and director John Hughes in the nineteen eighties provides a template for the type of popular culture that was manufactured and packaged for the youth audience. However, this suggestion of reality is not merely an artifice, but can be viewed as a carefully constructed symbolic narrative that subtly and not so subtly reinforces dominant cultural values in the ways in which the characters are placed in 'real' youth situations and how they
negotiate this world. This negotiation is significant in that it can be viewed not as merely entertainment, but also as a primer or text that instructs youth on the preferred values and identities they should seek to emulate. This affirmation and re-affirmation of the privileged values and ways of being demonstrates both the values and how they are packaged and 'sold' to youth as the preferred way of being. Style is significant in the development of this process, as the strategic deployment of style in the films creates a version of youth culture that is seemingly grounded in the lived culture of the youth it was targeted at while simultaneously constructing a highly romanticized and idealized vision of youth and youth culture that is aligned with dominant narratives of privilege. The unity of the content and style of the films creates a meta-narrative that transcends the individual films, but creates an overarching vision of youth that becomes an idyllic version of the American teenager. This vision articulates and propagates a worldview consistent or at least non-threatening to dominant forms of privilege in American society, a utopian and suburban narrative I describe as the Suburban Idyll.

This youth-centric Idyll built around the dominant ideologies of the nineteen eighties is contrasted sharply with two films from the nineteen nineties that take on the dominant narratives of the genre of youth film, *American History X* (1998) and *Higher Learning* (1995). This vision can be seen as a response to the earlier films and presents a darker dystopian vision of both youth and society. In particular these two films deploy the subcultural iteration of the Skinhead and this iteration is central to their critique of dominant cultural tropes. The Skinhead as it is deployed in the

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5 While earlier examples like *Romper Stomper* (1992) are also seminal examples of the Skinhead in film, my own examination of the Hollywood Skinhead will focus almost entirely on the two movies *American History X* and *Higher Learning*. While it is impossible not to mention at least briefly the impact of *Romper Stomper*, especially in its influence on the later films, *Romper Stomper* was not a Hollywood movie in any way, made in and expressly for Australia and the Australian cultural experience of violence and masculinity, that while similar to the North American experience, is unique to the cultural and historical context that is Australia. While the discussion of how the symbolic potency of the Skinhead archetype in this era meant that it left the narrow confines of British style cultures that birthed it and became a much more global phenomenon of which both Lukaes' Skinhead subjects (Berliner street Skinheads) and the Australian Skinheads of *Romper Stomper*, the particular interest of this discussion is the particulars of the North American version of the 'popular' Skinhead and how it tapped into pre-existing discourses of race, power, whiteness and most interestingly in some ways, youth and education.
two films is not simply a figure of resistance to dominant cultural narratives, but is in fact deployed as an extreme example of the negative aspects of white patriarchal hetero-normative systems of domination. Rather than a nexus or loci of resistance, the Skinhead as it is constructed in the two films is an example of the extremity of these narratives taken to a negative and anti-social form. In many ways the films critique the dominant narratives through an exploration of the internalization of those dominant values taken to a militant extreme and the 'reality' of their failure. The alternative reality of these two films is just as much a constructed fantasy as the Suburban Idylls they critique; their gritty, less romanticized portrayal of American life is still a highly stylized fiction of reality that exists within the continuum of film making and kinds of narratives that are 'fashionable' within a particular cultural context.

What the Skinheads articulate to the dominant eye is a direct and negative articulation of privilege that must be disavowed precisely because it actually speaks to privilege as something that must and should be maintained at all costs rather than implicitly tolerated and reified while at the same time denying its very existence. The Skinhead makes overt what must be kept opaque. The existence of the Skinhead demands a conversation about the very systems of dominance and subordination that they champion. It also forces us to discuss the nature of who is in power and why.

In the narratives that sprang up to explore this aspect the site of this conflict is within the institution of the school, which is both an active part of the system of dominance and subordination, but also stands in a microcosm of the society it is complicit in creating and maintaining. The aesthetic of the Skinhead had, by the time it found itself in the mainstream cinema, become totally identified with the Skinhead as racist and militantly white. This Skinhead was a direct representation of the fears of the white hetero-dominant patriarchal centre given form as the young and angry youth who had been denied the American Dream, losing his sense of self and identity in the face of the multicultural and civil rights agenda. Additionally as symbolic of the reaction against affirmative action they also force the conversation to the continuation of these policies, which also points out the systemic
inequalities that required the creation of the programs in the first place.

A primary site of this conflict is within the institution of the school and in education, one of the places where systemic inequality of access has been most pronounced. In the meritocratic ideology it has also been used as a one of the key points of rationalization for justified privilege as the more educated are inherently more intelligent and therefore can take greater advantage of the freedom of competition. The 'school' as a symbolic site is both an active part of the system of dominance and subordination, but also exists as a microcosm of the society it is complicit in creating and maintaining. In the context of the two films this kind of reasoning is both historical, as far as the moral justification of Confederate protection of the institution of slavery in the name of States’ rights and freedom, and contemporary as American society continues to struggle with enacting the promise of civil rights and equality with resistance to the enhancement of civil rights often couched in the same rhetoric of protecting freedom from injustice as the newly legally enfranchised are somehow given an unfair advantage over an otherwise fair system.

2.2.2 Youth Cinema Before and After the End of the Cold War: The Suburban Idyll.

Youth culture was, by the time the Generation X began to come of age, increasingly expressed through images and image. Television had become the dominant form of home entertainment and as a generation the ubiquity of the television in every home had meant that not only had they been subjects of an ever increasing barrage of imagery and images, but as a group they had also been directly marketed to through commercial advertising on the same medium. Katie Mills argues that “Gen X differs from previous generations in that it grew up when television options proliferated, when MTV commodified the music and graphics that galvanized its audience” (Await Lightening 227). The music and graphics Mills described were essential aspects of the identity and style of the youth of the era, a style that was based on and around images seen on television and in film. While arguably the television existed in the Baby Boomer home as well, the sheer force of media was not as pronounced as the television was still new and had not fully
displaced other forms of entertainment, nor had marketers realized the potential of youth as a marketing demographics. In the eighties we begin to see the splitting of youth demographics into ever more tightly defined units. While youth culture was alive and well in the nineteen sixties and seventies, by the late eighties especially youth culture was increasingly used by advertisers to package their products as part of a larger and consumer driven model of youth and youth culture. The advent of MTV was not only a watershed moment for the music industry, but also for the youth culture that supported it: the image had fully been entwined with the music; they had become inseparable. More than video merely killing the radio star, it marked a cultural divide between the increasingly imagist youth culture of the Gen X and its emerging and new cultural forms. This obsession with image and consumption also permeated the dominant culture as well, as the 'Eighties' as a decade was defined by the excess of the new Yuppie, young professional Boomers with their first tastes of affluence as they progressed out of youth cultural spaces into the dominant economic position in the emerging financial and technology sectors. Another key innovation of this era was the emergence of personal computing, an invention that by the end of the decade spawned the next leap forward, the internet and the online world. The significance herein is that as images began to become the dominant form of cultural expression, usurping the word, the manipulation and control of images becomes an ever increasingly significant part of the cultural tool kit of the youth that came of age in this milieu.

This development is particularly true in the context of Hollywood and the popular mass culture aimed at American youth. The early teen movies of John Hughes, while modern classics in the genre, focused almost exclusively upon the trials and tribulations of white, middle and upper class youth whose preoccupations were fitting into the culture of wealth and consumerism, or at least how to manage the expectations of the American Dream that was in this iteration, white and suburban. *Sixteen Candles* (1984), the earliest of his teen films, examines the very middle class world of its protagonist played by Molly Ringwald. Her own sweet sixteen birthday is forgotten in
the various pomp and rituals of the middle class wedding of her older sister. Much of the movie is spent in her finding love and solace in the environs of her upper middle class world. She feels forgotten and neglected in the whirlwind of activity and consumption that accompanies the wedding. Her family and parents are too busy with the financing and execution of the wedding to remember her own special day. This theme of alienation in the face of affluence is reflected by many of the other characters of the film who as teenagers seem to exist in almost a parallel world of teenaged youth within the Suburban Idyll of the adults. Adults exist on the fringes of the movie, as teachers and parents who are almost inscrutable and alien to the teenaged protagonists. However, the problems of teen romance and alienation are back dropped by a world of wealth and affluence, where to win the heart of the girl one needs only to hand over the keys to a Rolls Royce to a virtual stranger as the Matt Dillon character did to get rid of his current girlfriend to make room for Ringwald. Throughout the film, youth, while alienated in many ways from the adults in the film, are not from their affluence and the privilege it represents.

Hughes returns to the same suburban world in both *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* (1986) and *Weird Science* (1985), where the characters play out their teen dramas in virtually the same Upper Middle Class world of spectacular homes and luxury cars. The adults in this world are largely absent or oblivious as the teens navigate their suburban worlds. The artifacts and status symbols of American wealth and affluence are often central to the plots of the movies. In *Ferris Bueller* it is an expensive Corvette, in *Weird Science* the power of the new personal computer. What is significant is the ways in which this locale of upper middle class white suburbia is normalized as the natural habitat of youth. The Ferris Bueller character speaks directly to the audience attempting to articulate the angst of his generation as one in need of a vacation from their own lives. While the two movies are obvious fantasies, they still normalize a white suburban and affluent version of America that was unchallenging, particularly when one looks at the ways in which the characters are granted their happy ending, finding a peace with both themselves and their world by the end of the movie. Where
poverty did exist within these movies it was seen at best a temporary impediment: the rich, blue-blooded teen princess (Molly Ringwald) and the blue collar bad boy (Judd Nelson) find love in the *Breakfast Club* (1985), and in a reversal Molly Ringwald plays the poor girl who manages to find love with the wealthy Andrew McCarthy in spite of the machinations of his fellow children of privilege in *Pretty in Pink* (1986). McCarthy rejects the negative articulation of wealth and dominance expressed by Spader's character because it is overt and his rejection of him and reconciliation with Ringwald suggests that such class boundaries are not meaningful. However, he is still cast in the role of Prince Charming and she as Cinderella at the ball, and while he was forced to give up the friendship of a thoroughly toxic individual, his wealth and position are never truly at risk.

Ann DeVaney, examining the images of girls in Hughes' film, suggests the female characters perform particular white and neo-conservative gender roles that “reinscribe that domestic ideal of remaining within the ruling confines” (201) of the existing narratives that not only privilege girls in particular, but in fact all youth for their conformity to dominant Suburban Idyll.

This affirmation of dominant suburban values is also clearly evidenced in the adult Annie Potts character finding love and happiness in the arms and uniform of the yuppie after a lifetime of failure in love. Potts’ character, who works at a record store, is an early example of the kind of identity shopping described above, in that she actively engages in identity reinvention through the choice of fashion subcultures. Her identity is still very much fluid and like the still youthful Boomer generation her character represents, she feels first tension with her choice of the yuppie partner and persona, but ultimately puts away the follies of her youth and finds true fulfilment in the role of yuppie, the preferred role of her generation. With a change of uniform it is suggested that all the ideals and idealism bound up in her various personae can be washed away as the shallow youthful exuberances that they were and the serious job of finding a domestic partner and being provided for can commence. By adopting the uniform of the yuppie she embraces the preferred adult image and thus ceases to be youthful and her compliance is rewarded with love and happiness. While never
directly stated in the film, the inference can be made that this is also what will become of Ringwald’s character as well in the arms of her wealthy and upwardly mobile true love that she reconciles with at the dance in the film's final scenes. Ducky’s rejection is softened somewhat by the attentions of a statuesque blonde, her outfit, hair and makeup banally conformist compared to his own sartorial, and therefore cultural, nonconformity. The deep social and cultural issues that underpinned much of the movie, class conflict and the frustrated hopes of the working class and the sixties generation, are rosily swept aside in the vacant and shallow smile of the mute Venus, suggesting that Ducky too will find happiness through love of the conformity she represents. The non-challenging roles are then offered to be shared by the viewer, the suggestion that they too can find love and happiness through similar conformity.

The Hughes movies offer this illusion of credibility and reality by creating an often internally consistent meta-text that runs through the various films, the same and similar suburban locations are used and reused throughout films, creating a body of images that lend the films a consistency not only of context, but look and feel that lends to these suburban locales normalcy and affirmation. In these films youth is placed in their 'natural habitats' of school, home and the mall, and offer a vision of how these spaces were packaged to youth. De V aney suggests that this tactic creates codes of realism that “urge the audience to share rather than feel superior to, what stands for authentic experience” (211). The codes of realism she describes are part of a process where certain ways of being and being seen are privileged, while deviance from these norms is not. As the viewers are encouraged to see the portrayals as authentic representations of themselves on screen they are also being asked to accept the world the characters inhabit as authentic and normal where conformity to the system leads to happiness and love. Henri Giroux in *Disturbing Pleasures* further discusses the ways in which films such as these contribute to a politics of identity that is specifically designed to be uncritical of the privilege bound into race, gender and class. He suggests that they are designed to deliberately manipulate the audience into a form of innocent acceptance of cultural narratives that
reinforce and are uncritical of the existing systems of inequity. This forms a narrative of innocence that disconnects both the youthful audience and the youth presented in the films from the realities of inequity and recreates the past and present in ways that seek to purge reality of all reference to inequity (31). In this way popular culture artifacts of Hollywood can be seen as part of a narrative that propagates an uncritical vision of society that manufactured innocence constructs a particular set of acceptable identities for the audience to interact with and emulate.

This is particularly obvious in *The Breakfast Club* where the movie ends with the characters overtly embracing the shallow archetypal youth identities they represent. The issues and complexities that are presented in the film are ‘solved’ in the course of the movie and the youthful students end the movie happily reconciled with society and themselves. The movie offers an illusion of reality through the representation of abuse, neglect, poverty and privilege through the archetypes the characters represent and how they interact, but the ways in which they are dealt with are far too pert and innocently idealized to offer any kind of deep and real engagement with them. They are present to offer an illusion of authenticity to lend credibility to the narrative that such serious problems can be easily solved through a make-over, dance montage and teen romance. Hughes’ movies are by no means unique in their adoption of an the narrative of innocent idealism of youth; most teen films of the era were engaged in a similar process of creating and packaging to the youth of America a vision of themselves as youth that was a highly romanticized and idealized vision of adult suburban values. In fact, Hughes’ movies are significant because they are arguably the best films of the genre in terms of quality and complexity, and yet they are still actively engaged in a reaffirmation of a cultural narrative that seeks to entrench the particular privileges that shore up actual Suburban exclusivity that the Suburban Idyll renders attractive and normal.

### 2.2.3 Shaved Heads, Celluloid and Racist Violence: The Skinhead in 90's Hollywood.

The ideals that are insinuated by the Suburban Idyll films are directly challenged by a pair of films from the nineteen nineties, *American History X* (1998) and *Higher Learning* (1995) that can be
viewed as a response to the teen cinema of the Eighties by emerging the dominance of Gen X film
makers and Gen X culture, and offer a starkly different construction of both youth and society
through the strategic deployment of subcultural tropes in the specific form of the racist Skinhead.
The racist Skinhead in particular is significant in that they are considered marginal figures yet
articulate a direct manifestation of a particular form of dominant white, masculine, hetero-normative
privilege that was also articulated in the Suburban Idyll of eighties teen films. These later films also
intersect with youth and their world of school, but offer a far darker vision of this habitat, reflecting
changing attitudes not only toward youth, but also of their place in the world. Of significance is that
today both Boomers and Gen Xers are firmly established in education as teachers, administrators
and parents and the ways in which they view youth and school is influenced by how these symbolic
constructs were in turn presented to them. The contrast between the representations can be seen to
mark a shift in attitudes and beliefs that is reflective of the differences between the two generations
seeking to create and reproduce their own privileged narrative of youth and society and to
disseminate it outward.

The engagement of a new generation of filmmakers with the tropes of the coming of age teen
movie can be seen in John Singleton's most seminal work, *Boyz in the Hood* (1991), a coming of
age story set not in the idealized world of the suburban school, but instead the impoverished urban
'Black' neighbourhoods of Los Angeles. The young African American men of the film are in
constant negotiation with the world they inhabit, trying to exist, transcend and embrace their own
identity to survive the dangers of a far more gritty and violent world that intrudes upon the school
and even supplants it. The streets and not school becomes the dominant metaphor for society in the
movie. The urban street corner and sidewalk is the antithesis of the suburb; unlike the contained and
safe spaces of the Suburban Idyll the street is a space decidedly unsafe and open: the potential for
violence is present and issues such as poverty, inequity and race cannot be overcome by faith in the
power of love. The street is intensely subcultural as dominant privilege flees from urban complexity
toward suburban innocence and simplicity where questions of race and poverty are not allowed to intrude.

Singleton’s *Higher Learning*, a film set at university campus also engages in a more serious and mature conversation on issues of race and privilege while also deploying the symbolism of the young male Skinhead. In *Higher Learning* the youth film is taken to a new locale, the university campus, and all the action of the film takes place within the supposedly safe confines of the 'ivory tower' of academia. The movie begins with the deployment of the tropes of youth cinema as we are introduced to the characters as they take up residence at their new school. The teen movies of the eighties are bound to the site and loci of the school and the world that exists after or outside this locale exists outside the narrative. If present at all, the world after High School is far away; the action ends on or before graduation or more specifically with the rites, prom and parties that define the end of the narrative. As in *Boyz in the Hood*, Singleton deploys the tropes of the teen movie while challenging them: we are aware of the archetypes the characters represent, but we find them in unfamiliar surroundings that cast the audience as adrift as the characters themselves. As in his earlier film, serious issues of race, violence and their ubiquity in society soon intrude into the idealized world of the university as another site where youth are congregated and concentrated. In many ways the archetypical jock, pretty girl and awkward geeky white boy tropes are deployed in the movie as the freshmen characters can be seen as the same characters that inhabited so many of the eighties teen movies moving on to the next stage of the American Dream, university. This allows Singleton to challenge many of the established archetypes: the pretty girl archetype steps out of the romantic need for a perfect man and instead explores same sex desire; the jock is African American and is forced to confront the reality of both the privilege he enjoys as an elite athlete as well as the narratives of racial privilege and the geeky white boy character is not merely harmlessly awkward, but ultimately violently anti-social Skinhead as well. While not the only facet of the narrative of race and violence in the film, the image of the racist Skinhead and their symbolic potency are explored as
part of the rumination on race, gender and violence that all the young freshmen characters must confront.

In *American History X* the images of the violent and racist Skinhead and the privilege they represent is more central as the movie begins with an act of intense violence and visual potency by a violent Skinhead. In the opening scene the protagonist -- his shining head shaved, his massively built and naked torso emblazoned with a swastika -- goes from having explicit sexual intercourse with his girlfriend to the equally explicit violent attack of a black man who was attempting to threaten his property and home. He is almost gleeful in his visceral destruction and his potency and virility are made central to imagery of our first visual interactions with the character. This act of overt violence and sexuality is a sharp contrast to the ways in which these topics are expressed in the Suburban Idyll where characters might “speak openly of sex [...] and breaking rules, apparently garnering power for the speakers and their teen spectators [...] but] circulate within fairly safe geographies so that no real derangement is produced” (DeVaney 205). Any romantic innocence we may have brought into the theatre is shattered in the first moments of the film in a visceral display of sex and violence. This initial scene equates sexual power of the white male protagonist to the potential and actualization of violence against black bodies. The catalyst for this violent act was the attempted theft of the property of the white protagonist: they were trying to steal his car, but he crosses the boundary of accepted behaviour in the extreme violence he perpetrates. The police arrive and he is arrested, a smile still on his face, as he has proven his virility and power to himself and his neighbourhood in the destruction of the blackness that his ideology finds aberrant. From the opening scene the safe geographies of the suburban neighbourhood are shattered through the potency and power of actual inclusion of the sex and violence that other teen movies suggest rather than enact. However, his arrest and incarceration demonstrate that in the actualization of the suggestion of sex and violence, the character is punished for transgressing the safe geographies of not only of the physical geography of the suburb, but the safe symbolic and cultural space it occupies as well.
The film then moves backwards into the character’s past and begins to construct a narrative where a smart, sensitive and tolerant youth is shaped into an avatar of hate and white violence, mirroring the descent into racism and violence of the Skinhead character from *Higher Learning*. In the next scene, which is of the family sitting around the dining room table enjoying a meal together; the mother is serving food to the family and the father, a firefighter, sits at the head of the family table in position of leadership and authority. In every way they appear happy and content ideal exemplars of the suburban bliss and privilege that the previous scene had so viscerally shattered. The father asks Edward Norton's character, Derek, about school, and he is doing well in school and is particularly interested in the recent addition of Black History and Literature. As a 'youth' he is both fascinated and excited by the material and in particular the African American teacher whom he seems to both respect and admire. His father instantly responds in a strongly reactionary way, angered that Black Literature would displace canonical classics that are therefore naturally better works. It is strongly implied rather than directly stated that the canonical writers the father champions must be better that any works included in the interests of inclusion of African American content. Furthermore, the father suggests that there is a black agenda at work that the boy must be inherently distrustful of -- the justification of which is the fact that as a white firefighter that he has to put out fires in Black neighbourhoods and that they do not respect themselves and their surroundings to a proper degree. Norton's character seems to understand where his father is coming from and as he loves and respects his father, he takes what he says to heart. His father tells him to think and not just to trust what he has been told by his teachers and society, but instead asks him to accept his own spurious claims regarding the legitimacy of Black Literature in such a way which highlights that Norton's position, while intelligent and clever, is still that of the naively innocent child or youth in need of adult guidance. In the next scene we see a distraught Norton being interviewed on television after the death of his father in a fire, spouting a far more vitriolic version of the sentiments his father had himself expressed, obviously angry and wounded by the fact that his
father died putting out a fire in a 'crack house'. We see that the death of his father, a firefighter, in the line of duty is blamed on those he was attempting to save, poor and disenfranchised African Americans. It is through his father’s death and statements his father said in life about the character of the same community, that they started fires through malice or incompetence, that his grief turns to rage and hate. Through the trauma of his father’s death Norton's character internalizes the narratives of the domination and privilege and begins to accept them uncritically, focusing his intellect and critical capacity toward the goals of domination and white supremacy. Symbolically with the death of the father, Norton is traumatically thrust out of youth and into the position of adult as the new male head of the household and the change in position is accompanied by an extreme embrace of the kind of narratives of dominance that he was exposed to by his father, the previous holder of the same position.

These two scenes near the beginning of the movie are significant in that they both affirm and challenge the tropes of the youth movie form. The tragic death of a parent, especially the father is consistent with much of the genre; Ringwald's mother in *Pretty in Pink* left the family, and her father has been paralysed by the loss, has no job and has descended in to alcoholism and depression, leaving Ringwald to take care of them both. In the more classic form this disadvantage is fodder for the romantic tension of the movie, as Ringwald has to transcend her circumstances to achieve happiness with a romantic partner that signifies all the power and privilege of white advantage. The object of her affection has to also come to terms with his own transgression of class and culture. His best friend, played by James Spader, is filled with indignation that his friend would bring Ringwald into their world of privilege and initially McCarthy's character bows to the peer pressure and dumps her. He later relents when he realizes the shallowness of his social group and the ways in which privilege has twisted his best friend into a narcissist and bigot. Spader's character reflects the same form of thought that finds more fertile ground in the more diverse world of Norton: Spader, an elitist, is not shown to be racist precisely because the world he inhabits is without race insofar as it is
exclusively white. Questions of race are not present in a narrative that focuses only upon the effects of class. Ringwald's transcendence of her low class beginnings and McCarthy's of the shallow values of his upper class allow them to meet in the middle in a more acceptable space of white middle class values, a space where hard work and success are earned and not inherited. The film disavows the overt display and discussion of the privileges of the upper class and minimizes the under-privilege of the lower. In *American History X* issues of class are present, but become racialized as declining lower middle class whites and the underclass represented by Blackness begin to come into tension as the myths of hard work and success begin to unravel and counter narratives based on blame and othering take root.

Later in the film while in prison the Edward Norton character's own white supremacist values put him at odds with the Aryan Nation prison gang, a gang known for their embrace of Neo-Nazi symbolism and ideology of white power that he as a Skinhead naturally tries to affiliate with. He speaks out against his own gang, angered by their association with other ethnic gangs and is critical of the leadership as race traitors. His eventual violent rape by the leadership of the Aryan Nation in the film can be seen to be a symbolic assault by the very violence and hate he espoused, violent white hetero-masculine privilege and power. He is disavowed and nearly killed by the very values he enshrined when he begins to see and question the hypocrisy of the Aryan Nation and then as he recovers from both the physical and psychological wounds from the rape, the whole of his racist ideology. In his isolation and loneliness he begins to open up to the fellow inmate he works in the prison laundry with, a young black man. As he actually gets to know a black person, he begins to see that they are not really all that different and that, far from giving African Americans an advantage over White Americans, society is in fact profoundly more unfair to Blacks than it is to Whites. A cornerstone of his racist beliefs was the sense that whites were the victims of an agenda by non-whites to undermine and destroy their society, one planted by his deceased father and the tragedy of his death. In many ways his violent ideology is bound up with a profound sense of
fairness and justice that has been fixated upon the externalized other.

Norton, who began the film as an intelligent and perceptive young man, is not merely a violent thug, but sees his actions as justified in the protection of his way of life. The murder of the black man who broke into his car was consistent with this insofar as he believed he was justified in protecting his home and family. That is why so much of what he espoused to his fellow Skinheads before he went away to prison, and even what his father taught him are in some ways seemingly rational and even extremely sympathetic ideas. They play upon our moral sense of justice and fairness, and just like other extremist ideologies, our ignorance of the externalized and scapegoated other. His burgeoning friendship with a black inmate and the ways in which he forces Norton to confront his own hypocrisy are also key as is the revelation that the same target of his hate: the black man he works with, ends up the one who protects him from further prison violence. His renunciation of violent white supremacy in prison comes about because the externalized other is no longer external nor other; he is every bit as human as Norton himself and deserving of both his sympathy and his friendship. Further, the black inmate extended the same sympathy and friendship to Norton even when Norton himself was still aligning himself as his enemy.

Furlong, the younger brother of Norton's character, shares his brother's racist ideology and intelligence and has begun to follow in Norton's footsteps, becoming a burgeoning leader in the Skinhead gang. He defends a white student being bullied in the bathroom by a black student, telling him to learn to stand up for himself. The teacher that had once initially inspired Norton about Black literature is now a school administrator and challenges Furlong to justify critically his white supremacist beliefs. This assignment coincides with Norton's release from prison and his quickly evident renunciation of the violence of his past. The last third of the movie is dominated by Furlong’s critical engagement with his own beliefs, as he sees the source, his brother, in deep conflict with his past. Ultimately Furlong too realizes that hate is a waste of time, and hands in a paper that deconstructs his own hate as incorrect. Seemingly the movie will end like so many other
teen movies with the resolution of the crises and an affirmation of the goodness and rightness of American values. However, as he stops in the bathroom he looks up to see a gun at the back of his head and the same black student he had challenged earlier shoots him in the back of the head. The movie ends with a distraught Norton clutching the body of his brother, his blood staining the crisp whiteness of his dress shirt.

Unlike *American History X*, where racism and the Skinhead are the defining conflict of the movie, presented more in the context of family tragedy and trauma, in *Higher Learning* the Skinhead and the kind of white supremacy they represent are only part of a larger conversation around power and privilege. The Skinhead characters are only one form of the kind of oppression experienced in a society that also includes gender and sexual minorities as well. The characters in the movie include a young woman questioning her sexuality and becoming involved with feminist causes in protest of violence against women. More of an ensemble piece than *American History X*, the movie follows several young university students as they negotiate the complexities of a far larger world that the large university campus represents. While both movies end in the death of a Skinhead character, in *Higher Learning* the character takes his own life after a racially motivated act of violence at a peace rally, rather than in a targeted act of retaliation. Yet, in many ways the deaths are similar insofar as the death of the character is the tragic result of their own actions, their own misguided hate and violence. The central characters of the movie are all freshmen and are almost cast adrift within the various ideologies and agendas and counter-narratives that permeate the campus as they do the larger society the university represents. The movie refuses to offer an easy resolution to the situation and in many ways the young freshmen are made to suffer for the ideologies preached to them by their elders in the form of the older students who influence them in various ways. The innocent idealism of the American Dream that the coming of age movies of the eighties portrayed is shattered in the face of issues that cannot be solved within the rosy confines of suburbia. The violence of the movie's end is in stark contrast to the sunny idealism of the opening
scenes where the characters and audience are still held in a state of innocent romanticism, fully engaged with the tropes that define the romanticization of the school and youth.

Both Furlong's and Norton's violent past and their participation in the cycle of violence in their communities cannot merely be erased by their change of heart; they are not allowed to reinvent themselves with so much ease. The consequences of their actions have lasting echoes in their community, and violence is shown to beget more violence. In a nod to the movie codes of classic Hollywood Film Noir, characters who transgress social norms cannot be allowed a happy ending, but must be made to suffer for their transgressions. The interesting and critical crux becomes just what they are in fact being righteously punished for, their overt racist white supremacist violence itself, or their disavowal of it; the rejection of white supremacy or merely the ways in which they expressed it. The key to this is the fact that the murder of Furlong's character is perpetrated by an angry and violent black youth. It is an inverse reflection of the film's opening where a black youth is murdered by an angry and dangerous white youth and can be seen to reflect the cycle of violence that Norton began returning back upon him.

In this interpretation the cycle of violence begun at the beginning of the movie comes full circle and the transgression has been answered in an Old Testament balancing of the scales of justice, an eye for an eye. Yet, the murder of a white youth at the hands of a black youth can also be viewed as an affirmation of the fear of blackness as dangerous and threatening to whiteness that underpins so much white supremacist belief in the movie. In this reading the movie can be viewed as subtly reinforcing these beliefs and that whiteness must be wary of the threat that blackness represents. After so much screen time devoted to unravelling these ideals the film retreats into stereotyped violence. In this interpretation then it is the rejection of fear that leads to a lack of vigilance that then leads to the death. Unlike in Higher Learning where we are expressly told to UNLEARN, the ending of American History X is far more ambiguous and unclear. The task of UNLEARN is far more complex and powerful than the youthful characters can manage. Youthful power - their
optimism and idealism, their potential for change manifested in their power of invention and re-invention; the power of their identity - is inadequate against the potency of a society filled with discrimination and hate. Allegorically the two films demonstrate the dangers that a preoccupation with violence and discrimination has upon society as manifested by the cost borne by the innocent youth both corrupted and victims of violence and hate, a cost that cannot be avoided or deferred.

The two films are interesting in their direct and fundamental intersections with the formal institutions and structures of education, but also in what their Skinhead subjects represent in the larger discussions of the purpose and culture of education. They both take place in around institutions of learning, *American History X* the high school, *Higher Learning* the University campus. Both these sites are rich with symbolic and cultural meanings that are integral to the ways North America envisions youth, rebellion, conformity and individuality. Furthermore, there is a large body of symbolic narrative expressed through film and literature of the school experience and how that relates to the larger expression of youth culture and mainstream popular culture's fascination with youth. From *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Archie* comics, to *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *American Graffiti* (1973) through to *Stand By Me* (1986) and *Dead Poets Society* (1989) amongst many others, the youth culture of America has been fodder for screen and story. Through their role as both subject and audience for the youth industry, it has sought to create and recreate the familiar sites of youth, the schools, malls and other sites where the teenager and youth congregate and are concentrated, as spaces paradoxically both free from parental and societal control while simultaneously under the watchful eye and social constraints of the society that seeks to both comprehend and deny the potential and possibility of a truly autonomous 'culture of youth'.

### 2.2.4 Growing Up On Film: An Evolution of Privilege

While *American History X* and *Higher Learning* can be seen in the spectrum of this genre's maturity as a reflection of the growing maturity and sophistication of its target audience, the movies are not purely teen movies, but also contemporary social commentaries as well. They play with the
tropes of the genre because these tropes are familiar to the audience, but as they seek to challenge the cultural values that these tropes defend the extremity of the violence in the movies acts as a counterpoint and spotlight onto the viciousness of the values of the Suburban Idyll. Other movies of the intervening years could also be seen to be engaged in a more challenging, mature narrative to reflect the Gen Xer's growing sophistication. Both Heathers (1989) and Pump Up the Volume (1990) while teen movies are far more cynical and hard edged than the John Hughesian movies of the 'High Eighties'. They too begin to fracture the unrelenting faith in society to be just and fair even to white suburban teens. Dead Poet's Society (1989) and Swing Kids (1993) also are far more rebellious towards authority and society and begin to paint far more nuanced and slightly less romanticized portrayals of youth and youth culture. Suicide and genuine ennui are articulated rather than merely a campy and romanticized form of teen angst. The films refuse the tropes of the genre insofar as the movies do not end on a high note, but also seem to directly challenge the very concepts that often allowed for the 'happy ending' in teen movies. In many ways the movies are a far more 'mature' narrative; they come much later in the nineties than the previously mentioned eighties teen movies, and could be seen to be the maturation of the form as the teenaged Gen X audience also matured.

The major difference in the two Skinhead movies is that the violence in the films is not stylized or romanticized; it is direct and brutal. Nor is it merely self-directed as in the suicide trope of the intervening movies, but permeates and surrounds the characters and world they inhabit. The Suburban Idyll is propped up upon the vicious rot of the ghetto and its urban decay. However, the two brothers in American History X may have grown individually they are still trapped in the world that they themselves are complicit in making. What the Skinheads articulate in the dominant eye is a direct and negative articulation of privilege that underpins the Suburban Idyll that must be disavowed precisely because it actually speaks to privilege as something that must and should be maintained at all costs rather than implicitly tolerated and accepted. So much of the maintenance of the dominant privilege is through the denial that privilege exists in any form, and that those who
benefit most from its influence do so because they are inherently deserving of its beneficence as evidenced by their own individual and collective success. The illusion of meritocracy must be maintained and the Skinhead makes overt what must be kept opaque. The success of civil and gender rights activists in legitimizing the concepts of fairness and equality, at least in the abstract and ideal sense, is transposed with the counter narrative that for disenfranchised racial minorities, women and other disadvantaged groups to be given their fair share in society it must come at the cost of the established order. Middle Class status is itself an inherited privilege and not something that is earned when it is only derived through the disenfranchisement of others to enter fully into the game of success in a capitalist society.

Norton’s road to a racist and white supremacist ideology begins when, due to his father’s influence, he begins to question the seemingly dominant ideology of racial integration in the school system and in society at large as somehow unfair to the white majority. His father balks at his son studying black literature, suggesting that for every novel by an African American that they study in school that another work of literature must be ignored. This suggests that the books by the African American writers are somehow not on par with the canonical literature produced by white America and that it is only included as some gesture of affirmative action. Resistance to ‘affirmative action’ policies is one of the most prevalent and tolerated forms of public racism as it allows the issue to be turned from one of inequality in access to one of merit. In these types of arguments it is presupposed that anyone granted a seat at the table through affirmative action cannot have the actual merits to be there, but merely gain their position due to a misguided policy that actually discriminates against the dominant majority. In this way then racist and supremacist ideology that seeks dominance over minorities is not merely justified, but a positive moral reaction to injustice and discrimination allowing for righteous indignation. In the name of fairness, paradoxically, oppression and violence are both allowed and encouraged to defend liberty and freedom.

In both *American History X* and *Higher Learning* we see a reaction against the principles of
equity that underpinned the Civil Rights movement. The anxieties and fears of dominant, White America is given form in the shape of rage and violent white extremism. The Skinhead in these constructs was not ideologically opposed to the dominant hegemony, but was rather deployed as an expression of the extreme embrace and defence of the dominant privilege. This does not suggest that the Skinhead was embraced by the very hegemony it seeks to defend; rather, they are renounced and made to carry the burden of the evils of the racist, homophobic and sexist tendencies of the mainstream ideologies. Rather than the externalized 'other' that threatens through rejection or subversion of the perceived normalcy of society, they are threatening because they so obviously inhabit the more viscous aspects of a system that privileges few and oppresses many. However, they do in fact demonstrate the very forces of conservative reaction, and how in fact they work as much through the potential and energy of youth as any other force. The youthful characters of the movie are motivated to acts of profound hate and violence, agents of reactionary conservatism that as much oppresses them as they the targets of their enmity.

This enmity can be understood when the starkness and brutality of the Skinhead films are contrasted to the romanticism and idealization of the Suburban Idylls of the nineteen eighties. The promises made to the youth in these movies was by and large not delivered upon and by the time of the Skinhead films were released the narratives that the Suburban Idylls defended were under pressure. The optimism and self-assurance of the eighties films gave way to a cynicism and anger both in the representations of youth and society on film, but also by society itself. The two Skinhead films were as much products of Hollywood as the Hughes films, crafted, marketed and released through the studio system. As cultural artifacts they are all greatly influenced and mediated through the culture industry, an industry that is ultimately motivated and ruled by the acquisition of wealth and the privilege that wealth provides in terms of legitimacy and prestige. Their intersection with subculture occurs because the subcultural tastes of the primary demographic of the movies, youth, meant that engaging with subculture allowed them to access the legitimacy and cachet that
subculture possessed with their audience. Subcultural style is now part of the larger cultural fabric and is not merely a response to dominant culture, but part of the larger cultural symbolic of our society. Whether it was in the eighties films to sell a vision of youth that was less threatening to the established cultural narratives or the Skinhead films to critique the same narratives, subcultural style becomes assimilated into narrative techniques of the culture industry to sell a particular vision of the world as a product to a paying audience.

That is not say that the films are bereft of artistic merit, but that the art of the films was mediated through the necessities of commerce and commercial gain of industry. As subcultural style becomes integrated into the cultural symbolic of our society it does, however, allow for purely artistic objectification. The films themselves engage in this process to a certain degree as the youthful subculturalists become aesthetically objectified, but as they are characters in film, they cannot be completely objectified. However, the visual potency of subcultural style has moved into the purely visual realm of fine art, in particular through the works of Canadian painter Attila Richard Lukacs who took the marginalized images of youth and subculture to the very heart of privilege, High Art. As a painter of fine art his output was aimed at the very loci of power and privilege, the wealthy fine art market, and provides an interesting case study of both the ways in which power and privilege are encoded in images, but also in how this narrative is consumed. Even more so than in the medium of popular cinema, the Fine Art Skinheads of Lukacs are dislocated symbolic constructs that exist not in the real, but in the imaginary.

### 2.3 Aesthetics of Discipline and Desire: The Skinhead Paintings of Attila Richard Lukacs and the Privilege of the Body.

#### 2.3.1 The Aesthetics of Subculture: The Skinhead as Art.

The Skinhead as an artistic subject further abstracts an already highly aesthetic and symbolic subculture, and the cultural fascination with the Skinhead as a symbolic subject has a wider cultural resonance. In contrast to the earlier sections that examine figures on the margins, subculturalists and
youth, as they have been interpreted constructed and reacted to by those in dominant positions, this section focuses upon images of marginalized Skinhead bodies that are designed to speak directly to the most privileged elites in society, consumers of Art. The Skinhead as both a literal and figurative site of power, sensuality, desire and masculine potency, that was part of the larger narrative of *American History X* and *Higher Learning*, becomes central in the works of Lukacs, and through the medium of painting he is less constrained in its exploration. The art is demanding and visceral in its depiction of the human form and elevates the base, street level world of the Skinheads Lukacs examined, replete with violence and machismo, to the level of the rarefied and refined world of high art. In this milieu Lukacs paints large scale figures of the human form, expressing the body through the context of an unstable world. In a visual world that is filled with images of bodies, Lukacs paints figures in challenging and new ways, creating a canon of work that has continued to be a source of interest and discussion. It constitutes a valuable area of study of the codes of representation and the relationship between power and privilege expressed through an aesthetic of art. The subjects of his work are immersed in a world of relational struggle against the forces of modern life and the symbolic world of his painting is both a beautiful and brutal representation of the condition of decaying privilege and power.

Lukacs’ fascination with of the Skinhead subject paralleled the fascination of a society that was, like Lukacs, both intrigued and repulsed by the Skinhead subculture. The work provides visual ‘texts’ that can be seen within a larger body of visual and literary texts to discuss the larger social phenomenon that manifests in the Skinhead subculture, a subculture that has its beginnings in the 1960s and still exists today. The historical privilege that had been bound into the male form can be understood in this context as a set of assumptions, beliefs and prejudices that culturally sanction, valorise or render appropriate particular forms of desire and action. To satisfy these codes of conduct is to become valorised and sanctioned by society, celebrated rather than demonized. Successful negotiation or appropriation of the codes and roles leads to success and a celebration of inherent
individual strength and superiority in society. Similarly, your failures are also individual and belong to the individual alone. Conversely, when you fall outside the prescribed matrix of codes and roles, in the position of the Other, your success and failure carry the symbolic weight of the entire class, race, gender or group. This kind of determining privilege, the power of prescribing the normal and right is one of the most significant aspects of the working of privilege in our society at large and is particularly significant within the classroom as teachers wield this kind of power on the micro cultures within the also deeply codified and prescribed world of the School. Within the works of Lukacs the power and privilege of sexuality and sexual identity, knowledge, physical power expressed through the act and potential to violence and its constraint, rationality and even humanity are displayed in ways that challenge the historical and contemporary privilege in our society. Through the sustained analysis of his artistic works, works targeted at the wealthy and privileged classes in our society that are the consumers of fine art, insights into the existence of privilege, both viscerally and symbolically, are illuminated. This analysis is therefore significant to how the same forms of privilege can be seen to work in other areas of our society through the same socially sanctioned assumptions, beliefs and 'truths' that shape the ways in which School is constructed and negotiated by teachers, and how this profoundly influences our roles and interactions with the learners who occupy the same symbolic and physical space. The Skinhead reflects, like a carnival mirror, the repressed violence and anger that seethes below the surface of a society in flux and highlights a response to this flux that while brutal and ‘ugly’ was nevertheless at the heart of larger questions of individual and collective identity. It is a conversation that examines the representations of youth as subjects that are constructed largely by forces external to the actual youth themselves: youth culture marketing and advertising, large scale public education systems and bureaucracies and the adults who work with and on youth. Like the artist, the vast industries that are dependent upon youth for their existence earn their livelihood from the construction and manipulation of the image. The often thinly repressed violence of Lukacs Skinheads reflects the frustrations and tension of the
subjects with those that seek to construct their form and through this control determine their potential and identity.

The material that Lukacs studies is in the same cultural spaces that contemporary youth must now negotiate, a space that is ever more focused upon the body and bodies of youth. Lukacs' obsession with flesh and the body reflects Western society’s ever increasing obsession with the same and the ways in which he constructs bodies as sites of power, privilege and erotic potential mirror the ways in which youth must now construct their own identities in the same cultural spaces. Schools and education have traditionally been spaces where these potentials have largely been constrained as sexuality and its connection to youth are often problematic in the construction of the cultural spaces of the school and schooling. However, to fully engage with the student subjects of education and schooling perhaps a new and more thoughtful engagement with the eroticism and sensuality that our society prescribes to the body and its image must be confronted, especially when the simultaneous obsession with youth is taken into account. As educators we cannot fully engage with our subjects unless we are willing to fully engage with the complexities of the culture that they are both subjected to and embody. The subculturalists and the subcultures they create and created are responses to the pressures and expectations that society puts upon youth while also denying youth agency in their consumption and construction; the selfsame forces effect all youth and also the institutions that service them.

2.3.2 Discipline and Constraint: The Privilege of Denial.

The bodies that inhabit Lukacs’ canvases reflect a masculine form that is prescribed by whole traditions of discipline and desire that must be mediated and constrained. This tradition of discipline is a function of the privileging and sanctioning of prescribed and particular forms of behaviour while simultaneously demonizing of others. Historical masculine privilege only existed insofar as it was constrained and contained within a narrow vision of acceptable norms designed to exclude any and all that did not inhabit this narrow symbolic and physical position. As such this
privilege was intensely hierarchical and constantly surveilled both by the individual and society at large to prevent and punish transgressions. The traditions of discipline with their attendant underpinnings of normalcy and deviance are foundational to the classroom where the teacher assumes the role of mediator, discriminator and disseminator of this discipline within the classroom and school. Yet the teacher is also constrained by their own internalized and externalized discipline shaped by the privilege of determination, normalization and deviance.

This fascination with the constraints put on the body is most overtly demonstrated by Lukacs' Military Series in 1990. This series of paintings takes as its unifying theme the image of soldiers and cadets as a way to discuss and describe how masculinity is regulated and controlled by society. The image of the soldier is the ultimate symbol of discipline and docility; raw masculine impulses are channelled to socially appropriate ends. Foucault describes the process as one where discipline dissociates power from the body: on the one hand, it turns it into ‘aptitude’, a ‘capacity’, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (Discipline and Punish 138). The subjugation of the power inherent in the physical body to render it docile and neutered is a point of tension in the series that Lukacs exploits. Unconstrained masculinity, as the site of historical power and privilege in society, must be controlled by society to prevent it from becoming anti-social or dangerous to social order. This is especially significant when one considers the historical privilege of violence and the power this entails that was once the sole domain of the sanctioned masculine privilege. This supremacy is both symbolic through historical privilege and power, and also critically, visceral through the potential to acts of violence. There exists in the work a tension between the new iterations of symbolic power, greatly diminished to the point where the masculine form has become subject and subjectified, and the still visceral power and privilege of violence so bound into the masculine ideal and body. For Arthur Kroker, “Lukacs' military cadets are ultimately portrayed as repressed Skinheads. Not Skinheads in the romantic tradition of […] True North, but something
much more menacing. Normalized Skinheads who operate under the sign of disciplined violence, not defiant challenge, and who operate according to the code of official authority, not transgression” (Kroker). In contrast to the unconstrained violence of the film Skinhead of American History X or Higher Learning, the cadets in the Military Series are rendered acceptable in their acceptance of the social constraints on their bodies and the violence contained therein. The Skinhead subject in Lukacs work embodies this tension as the Skinhead represents resistance to the loss of the symbolic privilege of masculine power and by extension masculinity itself, so bound are the symbolic privileges to the historical formations of masculinity through the hyper application of the intact masculine privilege to acts of sanctioned and unsanctioned violence. He explores the ways in which discipline mediates masculine violence and the results of the privileged repression on the subject male bodies.

In, Where are You Now (1990), the figure of the soldier standing at attention is shown holding the leash of a Bulldog. Against a neutral background, the figure is in the dress uniform, beautifully and realistically rendered, of a United States Marine. The marine symbolizes the power of America and American masculinity and the inherent privilege American military power sanctions and defends. The white gloves and the immaculate uniform are symbolic of the constrained masculine body of the soldier. The uniform shapes and defines the body it contains; the raw masculine power of the body becomes encased in the symbolic representation of socially acceptable discipline. The body stiff and erect is frozen at attention, static, unable to move beyond the constriction of the uniform. It holds the leash of the Bulldog that represents the raw animal nature that has been mastered through the application of discipline. The leash, a metaphor of control and discipline, is held in unquestioned dominance in the figure’s right hand extending down to the dog

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6http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/lukacs/military/images/15.html
7It is also worth noting that the Bulldog is a symbol of Britain, the place where the Skinhead subculture originates and the Marine is an obvious symbol of American power. Lukacs, as a Canadian, would have been keenly aware of the tension in Canada between the forms of British and American power and privilege that Canada exists between.
tightly without slack. The dog itself is also covered by red cloth that further subjects the animal nature it represents to the imposition of the civilizing impulse. Superficially, the painting seems to be making a statement about the power and dominance of human civility over raw nature. The dog, like the male figure, is controlled by the power of civilized discipline, confirming this dominant narrative and enshrining the historical and contemporary privilege bound into it.

This dominant narrative, however, is overtly subverted by Lukacs as the dog has lifted his leg and is urinating on the polished boot of the stiff soldier. The soldier seems unmoved by this as his eyes are focused on a point outside the canvas, his face devoid of all emotion. His face is set in the practised dispassion of the soldier at attention. He has so internalized the discipline he has been subjected to that he is either unaware or unable to move his foot as the urine soaks his carefully polished boot. The repressed animal is unconstrained and rejects the narrative in a base example of defiance. The symbols of masculine constraint and discipline are defiled by the urine, making a mockery of their symbolic power. Alternatively, the dog could be read as marking the soldier as part of his territory, claiming the soldier as his. The dog in its act of urination is active and in motion while the male figure is frozen and inert. It is the dog’s face that stares out at the viewer, not the figure that refuses to engage with the viewer. Even though the dog’s eyes are strangely obscured in darkness, it is the dog that draws the viewer. The privilege of claiming and ownership are enacted by the animal over the disciplined and ineffectual soldier. This seems to suggest that it is the raw unconstrained masculinity that has active potential as the male figure is reduced to a kind of dead and inert symbolic object, like a tree or a fire hydrant. While the dominant narrative of disciplined masculinity is presented as the proper focus for masculine energy and desire, the lack of agency and powerlessness of this role is dramatically illustrated by the actions of the undisciplined Bulldog.

The discipline and repressed sexuality of modern masculinity is further explored in the piece
Dance a Manly Dance (1990) from the same exhibition. In this work, the multiple male forms are all frozen in positions of athletic motion. The figures engaged in the socially sanctioned and privileged masculine pursuit of sports demonstrate the connection between repressed violence and sport. The central figure is a boxer, his gloved hands in the guard position at his chin. The figure seems moments from releasing his fists in a barrage of violent action, the kinetic power of his body tight with potential. This potential is unrealized as the form is posed against a grey backdrop removing the figure from the world of activity and motion. Like the soldier he is standing at attention, demonstrating the discipline and control over the potential to violence. The boxer, like the soldier, is a symbol of animal or natural violence contained by the structures of masculinity. On either side the boxer is flanked by footballers, one in the full uniform of American football, the other in a soccer ready position. These two figures further reinforce the concept of sport as both a masculine activity, a ‘manly dance’, as the title suggests and as locus of repressed violence, or violence sublimated into socially acceptable means of dance. All three gaze out toward the viewer, suggesting their masculine power and prowess through socially focused violence. Behind them a fourth figure, a fencer, stands with sword held erect. The suggestion might be that fencing is more effete and less manly than sports like boxing and football, and therefore stands behind the more socially accepted outlets for masculine energy. It also represents the waning power of the gentile aristocrat that trained in fencing as a symbol of their traditional privilege. The less repressed and overt violence suggested by the boxer, the American footballer and the soccer player are far more contemporary in their resonance as sites of masculine power and privilege, demonstrating the historical tension between contemporary and historical forms of masculine privilege.

2.3.3 Unconstrained Desire: Conspicuous Consumption.

When, in 1983, Lukacs began attending the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver British Columbia, he began to make a name for himself as an artist while still a student.

That same year Lukacs mounted a solo show at the Union Pitt Gallery called *Prime Cut*. The show featured paintings in the ‘Meat Series’, which were depictions of “dripping meat” (Lukacs & Mayor 7). This early show demonstrated Lukacs’ fascination with flesh and physicality. The themes of flesh and its place in the modern world are explored and Lukacs makes a visceral comment about the basic nature of life and human needs. Gilles Delueze, in *The Logic of Sensation*, describes the process where the body is meat as “the body is revealed only when it ceases to cover the bones, when flesh ceases to cover the bones… the flesh as the bodily material of the Figure” (20). Even in the abstracted depiction of meat and flesh, Lukacs was painting bodies and figures. The flesh of the body is reduced to meat that is to be consumed by the viewer. Stripped of even the pretence of identity and form, these bodies have been completely dehumanized, all privilege and power removed. Instead, the viewer must engage with their own privilege as the viewer and consumer of the image, the utter lack of agency of the stripped meat forces the viewer to engage with their own relationship to both their own body and how it interacts in a world of bodies both stripped of power and humanity and those that are the beneficiaries. Consumption and its inherent privilege is highlighted through the medium of images and symbols of meat, and Lukacs makes a comment on the consumerism of society at large. The West has and continues to enjoy the privileged position of the consumer, consuming the resources, knowledge and symbols of the rest of the world, regurgitating them back to the rest of the world in the form of consumer culture.

Lukacs’ subjects are not merely bodies made into inert flesh, constrained and disciplined. Often his subjects are representatives of masculinity freed from social constraint and exist as metaphors for a raw and natural sensuality. A consistent trope in Lukacs’ work is the visual symbol of the monkey. The monkey as a symbol is a complex representation and parody of humanity. It also highlights the superiority of human over animal and our privilege as humanity to control and dominate it. This domination is articulated in the consumption of the resources of the natural world without concern over the impact of this consumption upon the animal and natural worlds. The
monkey as a near animal kin to humanity reminds us of our connection to the natural world, while affirming our superiority over it. Additionally, in an art historical context, the monkey is symbolic of the painter (Lukacs & Mayor 12). Lukacs works both of these symbolic traditions: the monkey as a primitive avatar of humanity and as a symbol of the painter, in *Painters Lie with Fools Mask* (1988)⁹. In the painting, two monkey figures sit at the bottom of the canvas while suspended above them is a Fools Mask, a device that appears to be a medieval or early modern device designed to humiliate and restrain ‘fools’. The restraint so central to disciplined privilege is again referenced and the connotations of the word ‘fool’ are significant, as it is a synonym for both madness and social deviance. It was also, in the medieval context, another name for the court jester, who was able to criticize the ruler and society in his role as an amusing and ‘foolish’ distraction. This aspect suggests an interesting connection between the artist and the fool, as either a distraction to deviance or as the voice of critique, perhaps both. The presence of the mask in the painting suggests that the artist is constrained by his position in society, occupying a liminal space of both deviance and privilege.

The monkeys themselves seem unaware of the device that looms ominously above them, as they are painted in a moment of relaxed rest. They focus on each other, seemingly engaged in idle chatter or reverie. They are at rest - or at least at peace - sitting enjoying themselves. In fact, the monkey figure on the right is perhaps enjoying himself too much, holding his genitals, symbolically referencing forbidden sexual desire. He looks over to the monkey on the left, mouth open in primitive utterance or more subversively sexual gratification. The monkey on the left sits scratching his head and has a look of quizzical amusement at the antics of his partner. He too is seemingly uninhibited and relaxes with abandon. His eyes are focused on his neighbour and he is either engaged in conversation or enjoying the performance of auto-erotic stimulation of his partner, perhaps engaged in both simultaneously. In either reading, the monkeys are enjoying themselves in a sort of sublime freedom from the mask that sits above them. It is a reminder of the constraints of

⁹http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/lukacs/ex03/images/05.html
civility, but in their basic primitive naturalism this mask is unnoticed or ignored. The work offers a fantasy of masculinity, of erotic and intellectual desire unfettered by the constraint of the discipline of society represented by the mask. This suggests a freedom beyond the privilege of the civilized and civilizing influence of discipline. The image captures the monkey in a moment of natural reverie, enjoying the pleasurable potential contained in his flesh. The monkeys may represent humans, but they are not, in this case, bound to the same social constraint represented by the Mask of Fools. However, the mask still exists and its positioning suggests that the constraints of social mores cannot be escaped entirely, only ignored.

In the fantasy Lukacs constructs, the potential freedom and possibility of unrestrained sexuality is symbolic of the desire of the artist. If the monkey forms represent the painter, they represent Lukacs’ desire to be freed from the constraints of society, romanticizing the unfettered freedom represented by the monkey. The two simians represent the erotic and intimate connection that the construction of desire forbids between males. It is interesting to note that the monkey on the left, which represents intellectual desire, is only partially rendered, suggesting that the intellectual is a less solid place of unrestrained desire or that the sensual and sexual supersedes the intellectual as a more visceral experience. The voyeuristic pleasure that the intellect offers is more ephemeral than the raw physicality of direct stimulation. Lukacs seems to be self-consciously aware of the nature of the fantasy, both through the inclusion of the mask and the potential double meaning of the word ‘lie’ in the title. On a first reading it would appear that it is the verb form of the word lie, meaning to sit or lay. This is supported by the reclining figures of the monkeys, which are symbolic representations of the artist as suggested by the title. However, if one uses the noun form of the word, meaning to deceive, the title suggests that the unfettered masculinity described is inherently a fiction or falsehood. The artist cannot escape the reality of the social constraints put upon him even in the unreal world constructed upon the canvas. Ultimately, the artist is still bound into social narrative no matter how much he would wish it to be otherwise. This painting from early in Lukacs’ career
demonstrates the power that restraint put upon the masculine body and male desire.

In works such as Adam and Steve (1991)\(^9\), we see work that more fully represents the unrestricted male desire that Lukacs has suggested, but not directly represented in the works discussed to this point. In the painting, the two male forms are lying beside an ‘Oriental’ pool engaged in erotic play. The figure on the right, naked except for his underwear, is seen licking the boot of the figure on the left who watches with a satisfied smile. As in Painters Lie with Fools Mask, the formal division of right as actively engaged and left as voyeur and observer is maintained. These two human forms go much further than their simian counterparts in their engagement in forbidden pleasure. The two are caught in ritualized pleasure that is consistent with the codes of masculine discipline and repression, but subverts them as a means of pleasure. The licking of the boot is suggestive of sadomasochistic rituals where pleasure is derived from the strict adherence to codes of conduct and clearly defined roles of power and dominance, as well as references the boot of the soldier in the earlier Where Are We Now. The soiled boot is now being ritually cleaned by a body that accepts the constraint of discipline through the rituals of dominance and submission. For bodies constrained by masculine discipline, this form of erotic pleasure allows the participants to express their desire in a fashion that does not completely undermine the most basic codes of Western masculinity and white male power as they enact their pleasures in a codified form of disciplined desire.

While the two figures are white, but they are situated in an ‘Oriental’ style garden and the background is painted to suggest the Japanese rising sun motif. The intersection between East and West in the work is suggestive of the power relationships between the dominant West and submissive East. The submissive partner is situated on the right side of the painting, the right being the position of east in Western cartography. The dominant figure is placed on the left side of the work, confirming the narrative of Western dominance over the East. Additionally the submissive

\(^9\)http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/lukacs/ex96/images/adamandsteve.html
partner is further orientalised by his tattooing that is in the style of Asian flower design that graphically reinforces his association with east. The dominant figure wears a t-shirt that displays the name London on it, situating him as a symbol of Western dominance. In this east and west narrative the orientalised east is imagined as a space that, “oppose[s] the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon [white] race” (Said 39). In this way the Orient is constructed as a place that represents everything that is unlike the West, thus allowing a space where masculinity is not afraid to engage with the taboo subject of homoerotic desire. In this freed space the two white males subvert western masculinity’s fear of homoerotic desire while again not threatening the dominance of the masculine narrative in the West by being placed outside it. The two bodies, subcultural Skinheads, while white are still Orientalised insofar that, as subculturalists, they occupy positions on the boundary between binaries of privileged inside and the subordinated Orient.

In the True North (1995)\(^\text{11}\) installation, Lukacs takes the subject of the Skinhead and uses it to directly question the consumerism of modern society. In the installation piece he hangs four large portraits of Skinheads accompanied by the clothing the models wore neatly displayed in a case in front of them. Lukacs deliberately painted the four portraits in a style that references the historical tradition of portraiture, particularly the work of Gainsborough (“True North”). The backgrounds and highly idealized style bring to mind references to works like The Blue Boy (1770)\(^\text{12}\), Gainsborough’s most famous work (“Blue Boy”). This tradition normally reserves as subjects the most socially and economically privileged elites in society. Skinheads occupied a marginal position in society and the use of them as a subject in this way inverts the rigid class hierarchies. While not overtly sexual in nature, the portraits still confront the viewers’ embedded beliefs about society and the hierarchies of power and privilege that regulate social interaction. The elevation of the working class outsider to the position reserved for the elite and the socially important undermines the construction of the

\(^{11}\) http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/lukacs/truenorth/installation.html

\(^{12}\) http://huntington.org/webassets/templates/general.aspx?id=14392
systems of authority that dictate the accepted subject of portraiture.

The installation further acts a critique of the consumer capitalism of the West. The history of the portrait genre Lukacs references is one that codifies the wealth and status of the subject through opulent detail of the costume worn. Lukacs deliberately takes the uniform of the Skinhead and paints it with the richness and detail that fetishizes the articles of clothing that are the hallmarks of the Skinhead style. The marginal low class figure of the Skinhead becomes elevated through the careful cultivation of an aesthetic style and consumer fashion. Furthermore, the articles of clothing worn by the models are kept and displayed separately in a glass case as important aesthetic items and represent the various middle class brands and fashion labels that grant status. Instead of the gold and rich silk of earlier portraiture, status can be gained by the careful cultivation of consumer brands such as Doc Martens and Fred Perry. The Skinhead becomes a billboard for the consumer fashion as the aesthetic can be copied and the identity appropriated through materialism. It is the clothing and not the model that take on the central significance in pieces which are named after the various styles they exemplify. The overt critique of style over substance in this work discusses how society and Lukacs himself use the Skinhead as an aesthetic fetish. It is the look that is important and becomes a game of costuming where the uniform is more important than the substance of the individual. The Skinhead is appreciated for his aesthetic properties and becomes an inert aesthetic object. This installation mirrors the earlier discussed Military Series that also took the uniform as an aesthetic object to be exploited and shows a consistent fascination in Lukacs’ work with the ways in which identity is inscribed through overt visual displays. The uniform of the Skinhead is available for purchase and consumption at the local shopping centre, diluting the authentic and raw masculinity of the Skinhead subculture into a set of status symbols and the Skinhead becomes an aesthetic fetish available to the masses. The paintings act as billboards for the fetishization of the Skinhead aesthetic.

Skinheads offered to Lukacs a raw and rebellious form of masculine expression. The hyper-masculinity inherent in their aesthetic of shaved heads, jeans, military jackets and Doc Martin or
military boots was inbuilt with confrontational energy. Lukacs, “extracts from that [Skinhead] image an ideal of masculine beauty that is all the more rarified for being found among the completely marginalized” (Watson 86). The Skinhead was an outsider whose status came from their enforced separation from mainstream society. The use of the hyper-masculine Skinhead as part of his dialogue is part of his mediation of modern masculinity and sexuality. The Skinhead straddled both sides of the socio-political debate between socialism and capitalism, communism and fascism; the movement has inherently working class roots and the notions of social collectivism of the mostly Labour backgrounds of the early iterations of the subculture yet Skinheads had by the end of the Thatcher and Reagan eras paradoxically occupied a space that embodied a fascination and often veneration of Nazism and Fascism. This tension and multiple identities allowed the Skinhead to become symbolic of the destabilized postmodern condition. Lukacs was able to lift these subjects out of time and space to inhabit a world of symbolic tension between past and future, agency and inertia, violence and sublime calm. The close cropped hair and deliberate uniform of the Skinhead subculture was a visual symbol of aggressive denial of the norms of Eighties style and culture. In an era of soft feathered hair and gender androgyny in fashion, the Skinhead stood out in his uncompromising masculinity. Furthermore, the Skinhead offered not just a symbol of subversive masculinity, but masculinity with the potential for violence and a historical context of domination. The Skinhead image has a direct association with Fascism and Neo-Nazism in Europe and this association is often exploited to discuss issues of power and domination in Lukacs’ work. For a painter interested in the potential of the male form, the Skinhead offered a body already imbued with a confrontational potential.

2.3.4 The Aesthetics of Privilege.

The human form is one of the most represented images in our society: images on television, the thousands of snapshots on the internet as well as the ‘corpus’ of Western Art and the body as subject often seems like an over-saturated terrain. Lukacs’ work often subverts the established
symbolic 'language' of image, but does so through an intense and thorough understanding of Western Art History and how this canon of images relate to the systems that privilege certain subjects and exclude others. Lukacs paints sensual male forms, and masculine nudes, both of which are rare in comparison to the painting of feminine sensuality and female nudes. Not only does he take as his subject the masculine form, but through his painting engages with both masculinity and its traditional relationship as the centre of power and privilege in both Western Art and Western society. By forcing the aesthetic eye upon the masculine body he challenges its position of centrality, to be the point that looks outward upon the world, and suggests new ways of understanding the body as a site of both power and privilege. Further, he took as his subject Skinhead Street youth who occupied positions on the margins of society, far from the traditional privilege of the culture of fine art and in so doing confronts the boundary between inside and outside, subject and audience, power and privilege. The medium of painting in particular has a long history of visual images as symbolic of abstract concepts and ideals, and Lukacs deploys the language of symbol and abstraction with a fluency that demonstrates his deep knowledge of the history of images and their meaning in the Western corpus of Art. As a primarily figurative painter, one who paints human or anthropomorphic figures, Lukacs can be seen to engage in a kind of semantic play with his figures, constructing or forming their meaning in a kind of language of metaphor and meaning inscribed onto the human form in Art.

In particular, Lukacs tackles the meanings and potency of male bodies and masculine beauty in a contemporary context that over-represents and subjectifies the feminine body and form while largely ignoring masculine ones. In a social context of ubiquitous camera technology that allows for unprecedented levels of images of human forms to be generated, Lukacs' work provides a context of how images of the body relate to narratives of privilege and symbolic meaning. Lukacs' engagement with privilege and power takes as a focus the body and in particular the intersection in masculinity between sensuality and violence. This intersection, explored as part of the portrayal of the Skinhead
of film in the previous chapter, takes a far more central role in the work of Lukacs, as his own privileged position as a successful artist allows him the space to explore the relationship without the constraint of appealing to a mass audience. While images, beautiful and profane, proliferate in our society, the consumption of Art is still largely a privilege of the wealthy and powerful of our society and Lukacs’ work is tailored to the tastes and desires of that market. The relationships between the body and narratives of privilege and power and its lack speaks to the ways in which those with privilege and power embody and engage with their own privilege and power through the consumption of refined images and objects. Lukacs' paintings mirror not just the world of the Skinhead, but more significantly the cultural spaces occupied by his true subjects, the privileged consumers of his work.

As such, his works are often highly sensual and even sexually charged, displaying an eroticism that was traditionally taboo, especially when painting masculine forms. In a pedagogical sense the often uncomfortable images of sensuality laced with violence he paints force the viewer and the academic to confront these taboos and to examine the unexamined. As one of the most significant aspects of privilege is the power to subjectify, to determine cultural narratives and often those in the positions of privilege gain the ability to exempt themselves as subjects to be scrutinized and determined. In the language of images it is the power to gaze outward and to create and determine the subject, to take an image and claim dominion over it. Lukacs does this and illuminates this with the ways in which this power and dominion over both images and objects has been deployed both historically and contemporaneously as an often exclusive masculine privilege. His use of Skinheads as a subject demonstrates the ways in which the subcultural output of youth and marginalized groups is appropriated by these narratives and made to serve the interests and pleasures of the beneficiaries of privilege. His work demonstrates the ways in which privilege creates and recreates itself, inscribing its narratives upon the cultural body, objectifying the subject form.

Significant to this complex world of identity was the radical re-orientation of power and
privilege in Western society; the latter half of the twentieth century saw huge shifts in gender roles and gendered privilege. His work presents a challenge to the accepted norms of subject wherein it is the female form that occupies the space of the subject of the male gaze. Lukacs presents the male body in all its beauty and ugliness and challenges the viewer to digest an unfamiliar eroticized male form. His depictions of masculine beauty discuss deep issues of identity in modern society. By challenging the privilege inherent in the established codes in Western Art he challenges the same codes of sanction and privilege in the society that supports it. His subjects, young and virile males, depict a generation that had to negotiate an ever more complex world of identity, a space wherein the historical foundations of social privilege that had for centuries been dominated and bound into notions of male and masculine privilege had been challenged and undermined by the feminist movements of the nineteen sixties and seventies. Skinheads, positioned as members of a hyper-masculine and often violent subculture, held particular fascination for Lukacs as avatars of the dynamic of power and privilege encoded into the male form. He creates worlds where the predominantly male bodies he paints can explore the narrative of the body as a site of power and privilege and construct and deconstruct the symbolic codes that regulate and discipline the privilege bound to the flesh -- a place fraught with violence, disciplined desire and fetishization of the body.

While issues of masculinity and dominance in historically male spaces are central to the works of Lukacs, they offer deeper insights to the shifts in attitudes and understanding of sexuality and gender in more general terms as well. I have to this point deliberately ignored Lukacs’ own homosexuality as it becomes too easy a way of contextualizing his work. The homoerotic and homosexual overtones of his work are obvious, but Lukacs’ own sexuality should not become the determining factor in positioning his art in the Canadian and Western canons. His fascination with the male body and the male form transcends simple homosexual desire, exploring deeper aspects of masculinity and the male condition. Homosexuality is itself a social construct that is part of the narrative of masculinity. Foucault describes this narrative as one where the homosexual: “Became a
personage […] with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him […] less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature” (History of Sexuality 43). In the modern context the homosexual is a prescribed body unable to stand outside the constructed and constrained role devised for them by society. Foucault discusses the relationships of power and how those relationships are inscribed on the subject body. The body is not merely neutral physical flesh, but also a site of social and political construction, the manifestation of a language of symbolism and social signs that both define and constrain the human body. Both the individual and society perceive the human body through the complex language of symbolic meaning, and this narrative of the body, like all cultural narratives, is a dynamic dialogue where the ideas about morality, sexuality and social norms are repeated and reaffirmed to maintain social control and cohesion. This social disciplining of the body is internalized and becomes reified as a reproducible ‘fact’ and truth. This realm of symbolic meaning represents a complex terrain of the modern symbolic realities wherein privilege is codified into the very flesh of Lukacs' subjects and by extension examines the privilege in their symbolic meaning.

Lukacs consistently challenges the social disciplining of the body in his work by taking the images of safe and untroubled masculinity and eroticizing them to the point that they transgress the boundaries of sanctioned desire. In this way the work of Lukacs is consistent with the larger examination of both the boundary between privileged and sanctioned ways of being and knowing and those that are not. His bodies are not the typical and accepted images of the homosexual as effeminate and un-masculine; rather, white masculine bodies exude the historical and contemporary privilege inscribed into the white male form and yet are troubling insofar as they deliberately inhabit and embody the forbidden and taboo. They are bodies and identities bifurcated, existing inside and outside of privilege and yet also in neither. The challenge they present is that their deviation from the accepted forms of masculinity is not immediately inherent in their form; except in their adoption
of the subcultural style of the Skinhead, they are the preferred form, white and male and hyper-masculine. His figures are the erotic potential in masculinity - not homosexual bodies - and his use of the Skinhead as a symbol illustrates extreme masculinity. Lukacs, in his work, problematizes the social construct of homosexuality and explores the boundaries between masculinity and desire in a way that challenges the notions of same sex desire that construct and constrain homo-erotic desire into particular forms and spaces that exclude this desire from the privileged sphere. While his painted forms often engage in homo-erotic acts they do not present the accepted appearance of the bodies that engage in them, troubling both the privilege we place on outward appearance and inward value, but also the privilege that created and constructed a notion of the homosexual as singularly defined by their desire into particular shapes.

When Lukacs first painted these pieces the use of the hyper-sexualized male form was far more risqué than it would be today. The hyper-sexualisation of the body, both male and female, is far more ubiquitous in the internet era as sex and sexuality are available for free download. The difficult questions that Lukacs' images demand of the viewer are the same questions and difficult terrain that contemporary youth have experienced their entire lives. The school itself could be seen as a sight of the same kind of restrained and disciplined sexuality and sensuality as any other cultural space. Youth are constantly negotiating between their desires and the restraints and discipline that they learn through the school system to function in its institutional setting. As they age into adolescence ever younger, questions of desire, gender, sexuality and identity are as central to their development as any other. The truly difficult question then is one of how overt should the School intervene in this process as stewards of youth. However, this intervention should and could play out in future iterations of the School; it seems that we cannot merely avoid the issue and that critical and frank examinations of the body in all its potential must be explored critically. The hyper-sexualized body cannot be an elephant in the room, nor can we completely neuter the body within the confines of the classroom and hallway. Subcultural style is one of the ways in which the body
as both a physical and social construct is formed. The overt visual displays that are part of style subcultures both frame and display the body, strategically revealing and obscuring it. As an active force it is ultimately a creative expression of the plasticity of the body to be shaped as part of the shaping of identity. Schools have evolved into complex social institutions that, for youth, serve as far more than merely sites of knowledge acquisition and learning, but act as the sites of their own hidden kingdoms of youth culture. It is a site of social creation, experimentation and evaluation as children transition to youth and begin to engage with the larger adult culture that permeates their lives. Yet often the socio-cultural aspects of education are obscured as questions of curriculum, test scores and learning outcomes are privileged.

2.4 The Future Unwritten: Critical Pedagogy and the Potential of Change.

2.4.1 Critical Pedagogy: Critique and Possibility.

Much of the material so far has focused on youth and sought to construct a vision of how the formulations of youth have been constructed. The connections provide insights into the ways in which representations of youth and youth culture, power and privilege impact upon the institutions that house and shape youth. The conclusion of the previous section began the shift toward a more pedagogical analysis and the following section seeks to frame the discussion within a context of pedagogical theory. This understanding seeks to integrate the insights gleaned from the research and to place them within a tradition of pedagogical theory that situates pedagogy within a larger social and cultural critique. An understanding of the body of Critical Pedagogy as it has developed helps to situate my own contribution to the field, and the ways in which my own work both conforms to and challenges the traditions of pedagogical critique opens up a path toward new modes of enquiry that offer new sites and modalities for further research.

The pedagogy presented in this paper is highly influenced by earlier work done by theorists and thinkers of education and culture that loosely are defined under the term Critical Pedagogy. Critical Pedagogy is pedagogical theory that directly examines the social, political and cultural
aspects of teaching and education and frames the work of teaching in a broader context of social critique and activism. This discipline can be seen to begin with the work of Paulo Freire whose seminal work forms the framework for much of the discipline. However, other more recent pedagogists have also been profoundly influential to the development of this work, Henry Giroux, Eric J Weiner, Joe Kincheloe, Peter McLaren and Linda T Smith have also been significant as they expand upon the earlier works of Freire in framing questions of education within larger critiques of society and culture. As influential as these thinkers have been on the formation of the emerging pedagogy of privilege, it is not merely an amalgam of what has gone before, but in many ways its own critique and expansion of the concepts they formulated.

Freire championed and articulated many of the key concepts of what would become Critical Pedagogy when he began to examine the social ramifications of his own teaching practice with underprivileged and dispossessed groups of indigenous peoples in Brazil in the middle part of the twentieth century. His work led him to formulate several of the foundational concepts of both the discipline and this analysis. For Freire, education was not a neutral endeavour, but was intensely political:

Whether it is done ingeniously or astutely, separating education from politics is not only artificial but dangerous. To think of education independent from the power that constitutes it, divorced from the concrete world where it is forged, leads us either to reducing it to a world of abstract value and ideals [....] or to converting it to a repertoire of behavioural techniques, or to perceiving it as a spring board for changing reality. (The Politics of Education 160)

For Freire the education system, controlled by the privileged classes of society, was and could be used as a tool of social and political control and to divorce education from the political and social realities of the students and communities that education purports to serve that was not only false, but dangerous. The danger for Freire was in the fact that the standards of education often supported and
reinforced established hierarchies of privilege and powerlessness, that “in fact it is not education that molds society to certain standards, but society that forms itself by its own standards and molds education to conform with the values that sustain it” (170). In this way education was not independent of culture, but part of larger systems of privilege that sought to use education as means of establishing and controlling the populace through the perceived sacredness of the established order (116). This sacredness was established through narratives of privilege that imbed themselves within the curriculum and practise of teachers who themselves are indoctrinated into the same narratives, whether inadvertently or deliberately, and pass these narratives forward to the students as part of the educational package or curriculum, evaluation and classroom management.

To combat what he perceived as an intensely elitist and privileged orientation of education and teaching in his own experiences he suggested two key concepts, conscientization and praxis, that allowed the educator to perceive the inequities built into the system and to then begin a process of unravelling them within their own personal practice and pedagogy. He believed that through the critical engagement with theory and society that the educator could positively impact their practise toward more equitable ends. Friere believed that “all educational practise implies a theoretical stance on the educator's part. This stance in turn implies - sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly - an interpretation of [hu]man[kind] and the world” (43). This stance and its interpretation were the points at which Friere believed that most impactful change could occur. Conscientization was a way to describe a process wherein human beings have the ability to both exist in the world and reflect upon our existence and its consequences (68). Praxis, then, was a particular form of conscientization that allowed the educator to critically reflect on their teaching and practise. As Friere envisioned it, praxis was a kind of dialogue first with the self and then the learner and finally the world around them. It was only possible “where the objective-subjective dialectic is maintained” (69). For Friere, praxis was possible through a commitment to understanding the relational nature of teaching and education as both a subjective and objective experience, and that the teacher, the school
system and the students exist within a matrix of objective and subjective experiences and positions that framed their relationship to the teacher, education, and the world around them. Teachers themselves were as immersed in the process as anyone else and praxis allowed the teacher the ability and potential to better frame themselves and ultimately their teaching within this understanding. Further, by being conscious of one's own subjective and objective experiences, positions and theoretical (or ideological) stances they could be better positioned to understand the positions of their students, education and society as they acted upon all the players within and without. Consciousness was conditioned by reality and through critical self-reflection one had the ability to shake off the conditioning and promote the same in their own teaching and practise (89). Later thinkers took up the torch of this kind of critical self-reflection or praxis and added their own subjective and objective experience of reality to the growing body of educational literature that sought to examine and construct pedagogy through a commitment to a critical engagement with both theory and practise.

Perhaps most influential upon my own theory and practise is the more contemporary educational thinker Henry Giroux. Giroux shares my interest and belief that youth are a significant site of identity construction and enclosure, distinct, but related to other more easily recognized and often more interrogated loci like race, gender, and ethnicity. In researching the works of other critical pedagogists in the writing of this thesis, his often controversial work and stances often aligned with my own emerging pedagogy. Throughout his own interests and conclusions he brings a similar shared interest in contemporary popular culture as a means of both analysis and curriculum. Further, he articulates what he calls a “border pedagogy of postmodern resistance” ("Border Pedagogy" 50) that articulates a similar vision of subjective and cultural plasticity in which one's position is not predetermined, but is an ever evolving process based on particular subjective and objective experience: “One's class, racial, gender, or ethnic position may influence but does not irrevocably predetermine how one takes up a particular ideology, reads a particular text, or responds
to particular forms of oppression” (53). The borders he speaks of are cultural borders where one's experiences of cultural referents such as race, gender and ethnicity shape one's position and identity construction, but need not determine them. Through these porous cultural borders one gains the ability to shift one's position and therefore destabilize the borders that are meant to enclose and separate through understanding and reading the codes and narratives that help to construct these invisible, but culturally significant boundaries. This mirrors the intuitive sense of boundaries and borders of my own multi-ethnic and not always apparent bifurcated identity that began my own interest in the research. My own attempts to transcend and re-imagine my own position based on my own ability to reflect upon the forces and codes that acted upon me as I crossed between the expectations and codes of multiple cultural expectations and backgrounds that I embody and perform seemed consistent with Giroux's Border Pedagogy. In fact, I came to the work of Giroux late in my research and realized that what he proposed was how I already related to the world and his own articulation of theory and pedagogy helped to give voice to my own.

2.4.2 Pedagogy and Oppression: Moving Toward New Articulations of Critical Pedagogy

Critical Pedagogy has always focused upon the ways in which education and the school system are part of larger social systems that deny particular individuals and groups access to 'banks' of social and cultural capital. This oppression is often subtle and difficult to both accept and perceive by those who are not subject to it. This is because while certain groups are systematically denied access, other groups are favoured with not only access, but exclusive access to the 'banks' of social capital. One of the most pernicious aspects of this combination of denial (oppression) and advantage (privilege), is those that gain in this formula are often the least willing or able to see the existence of systematic oppression. Furthermore, when confronted with situations wherein they lose the favoured position (as in a classroom guided by Critical Pedagogical principles) often those who are culturally and socially privileged react with hostility and resentment, positioning themselves as in fact disadvantaged and victims of oppression under the regime 'fairness and equality'. A look at
most comment boards for news stories that discuss disadvantaged groups such as racial minorities, women of colour or any other historically and contemporaneously oppressed group evidences the sheer vitriol of the responses when invisibility of privilege is challenged.

While the works of other thinkers obviously were influential on the development of my own emerging pedagogy, my own pedagogy is not merely a synthesis, but also a critical response to them as well. In particular my own emerging pedagogy seeks to re-frame and redress some of the issues that lead forward to a pedagogy of privilege. Friere entitled his first book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his focus upon oppression and the experience of oppression was at the time quite radical and ground-breaking. However, his own pedagogy was founded on his own personal experiences in working with the underprivileged within Brazil, and his own position and the cultural and social circumstances of the middle years of the twentieth century are central to his own analyses. In particular, he was writing at a time and from a perspective where the effects of colonialism and racial and class segregation were far more deeply entrenched in the society he worked in than perhaps they are today. Furthermore, much of the gains of the Civil Rights movement had yet to impact upon his society. In many ways while he anticipates the social changes and theoretical realignments of post-modernity, he is still firmly entrenched within the ideologies and epistemology of modernity. That does not mean that his work is not still useful; arguably educational policy is itself still mired in similar ideological and epistemological frames as the ones that Friere seeks to critique and examine, and in that way his work is still as potent a critique as when it was written. Yet as much as Friere wrote about oppression, he was still an outsider to the groups he wrote about. He was aware of this and a great deal of his work looks at the ways in which he could mediate this reality through praxis and a commitment to critical engagement with his chosen constituency, especially in the context of the curriculum he presented to them. He speaks of education mediated through the realities of the capitalist economy wherein education is an extension of the capitalist urge to create and manage capital: “In banking education an educator replaces self-expression with a 'deposit' that
a student is expected to 'capitalize'. The more efficiently he does this, the better educated he is considered” (“Peasants and Their Reading” 21). He understood how the dispossessed, who are also shut out of the economy, are also similarly marginalized in an education system that seeks to exploit their labour and capitalize them. Their own self-expression is silenced in favour of a model that entrenches the values of a system that they are often not allowed to fully participate within. He was aware that his own experience was significantly different from that of his learners; he felt that texts should “present the challenge of reality that the learners confront everyday” (22).

Through dialogue Friere felt that he could begin to intuit the differences between the reality of the oppressed and the reality of their privileged masters and that the critical educator could also begin to understand this reality as well through critical self-reflection. However, in many ways Friere still speaks for his constituency, and even though he comes at it from a position of deep reflection upon his own spaces and positions he is still the outsider looking in. He highlights and frames most of his discussions in metrics of oppression, oppression that acts upon the oppressed from the outside and then is internalized. His pedagogy seeks to arrest the process of this internalization of oppression, so that the oppressed first become aware of oppression and then can actively resist it. Oppression is something that is enacted upon others, that are taught, and praxis becomes a way to bring self-awareness in the teacher in the ways in which they have historically participated in that process. In Decolonizing Methodologies, Smith examines the ways in which western scholarship and research, however well intentioned, often aided and was integral to the colonial agenda. Particularly she speaks of the ways in which Western scholarship appropriates the knowledge of others as its own and in the process robs the colonized of the ability to speak for themselves. Friere's pedagogy was of the oppressed not for the oppressed, and still speaks within the realities of colonial rule wherein the dispossessed could not speak for themselves. His work was still a work of western scholarship that examined its subject from the position of knowledge and authority. This was in many ways the necessity of the time; while Friere wrote at length of ways to
empower the oppressed to speak in their own voices and to resist the silencing of their realities and narratives, the narratives of the day still did not allow for this to happen within his own society. For them to be heard at all it had to be translated by the privileged voice of authority that Friere occupies. Friere, aware of the inequity of this arrangement, begins to shift this dynamic within his work through the commitment for the authority to examine themselves as well, to treat themselves as subject, to better understand and empathize with the position of those that are rendered as subjects partly through his own complicity, a complicity he acknowledges and begins to undermine in his own work and especially in its influence upon others.

At the crux of the critique is the question of position and how this position affects subjective experience. Friere perhaps understood all too well his own privileged position and how in his own context this position was in many ways fixed within certain confines. The boundaries for Friere were far less permeable than the more porous boundaries that Giroux articulates in his own pedagogy of boundaries and crossing borders. Giroux's pedagogy reflects the cultural changes of the intervening decades and how contemporary society is far more complex in the context that identity categories are not as absolute and that identity is an amalgam of many often interconnected and conditional positions. Following Giroux, in my analyses, multiple perspectives were deployed to help to demonstrate the ways in which the same subjects, youth and subculturalists, often exist within multiple points of reference, using the stylistic and semiotics of the CCCS, the codes and narratives of commercial film and the rarefied narratives of Fine Art and painting. Throughout this analysis the function and existence of privilege has remained constant and is also key in the formulation of my own pedagogy. However, like Friere, Giroux and other contemporary pedagogists often still frame their understandings and insights in the context of oppression, a term that is loaded with cultural and symbolic meaning. My own use of privilege rather than oppression is not merely a semantic one, but demonstrates a major point of critique of both the term oppression and especially how oppression is increasingly deployed with our own culture.
A case in point is *Translation of General Misogyny to Uncomfortable Truth*. This link was posted to my Facebook wall by someone on my friends list and captures a precise snapshot of the reactionary response when privilege is challenged. The blogger who posted this provides an excellent translation of the statements made by another blogger into a language of privilege and oppression, decoding the reactionary language and revealing the biases and perspectives, based on internalized and naturalized advantage. What is interesting here is that the original response uses the language and postionality of the oppressed to defend and deny that privilege exists. For my purposes I have also chosen to examine the use of language in greater depth to demonstrate the ways specific language with connotations of oppression are deployed to defend privilege. In particular, note the use of language here:

I am **not saying** that women aren’t good at speaking, I’m saying that *[if] someone is good at speaking then it **doesn’t matter what gender they are**. Putting someone in a favourable position based on their gender or ethnicity is **just as bad** as putting someone in an unfavourable position based on their gender or ethnicity (original emphasis).

In this case the issue at the heart of the discussion was whether or not female speakers should be given some priority in selection as a conference speaker, when all the speakers chosen were in fact male. The author's (male in this case) response seeks to first deny that gender bias exists at all in our society, and then goes on to say that by allowing women access to the privileged position now occupied solely by men is in fact as great a crime as the original denial of access to women. "Equal rights means just that - EQUAL. Not “favourable” or “better”, but **equal**" (original emphasis). So in effect in the name of gender equality, and ending oppression, the ascendancy of male superiority is upheld. Not only is there a denial of the existence of privilege, but any challenge to the status-quo becomes an act of oppression and privilege. Rather than examine the barriers that may exist to

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exclude women from positions of authority such as 'expert', the conversation looks instead at ability, naturalizing male privilege in terms of inherent genetic (natural) skill and talent: "Sometimes as a result of genetic makeup (as in all of the former examples) and sometimes as a result of education, experience and skill (for something like, say, design). Different people will always be good at different things, and everyone is NOT naturally equal". *Equality* as a social and legal concept is here equated with genetics and a quasi-scientific language around *diversity* in ability and talent. In this way the socially constructed mechanisms that privilege males in our society are 'naturalized' as inherent, thus denying their social (and therefore arbitrary and subject to change) construction. Furthermore, as a society we do not exist in a 'natural' state; our laws, customs, culture and economic system are all artificial constructs, designed and executed by human societies in an attempt to gain an advantage over the natural world.

This advantage over 'nature' is also used to gain advantage over other human beings, both individually and collectively; that the advantage is not shared equally by all individuals and groups is not only denied, but rather the advantage of some over others is justified as inborn skill, and that skill is self-evident in their own superior position. Denial of this is then an oppression against nature and to believe otherwise is to frustrate nature:

Hypothetical scenario: I’m putting on a conference. I’m trying to fill my keynote slot and I have to choose between two people. One is a white, middle aged man, who is a fantastic speaker and a highly talented individual. He’s spoken at conferences all over the world and has a great track record. The other, is a black, lesbian female who’s just come out of college and is doing an internship for an advertising agency. *(Ates n.p)*

Beyond the fact that the hypothetical situation is logically a false dilemma in that the options provided do not provide a neutral deduction but bias one to the position of the speaker, the implicit connotation here is that the young black lesbian intern is inherently inferior, but will be chosen because they meet a criteria of social advantage in terms of race, gender and age. We can only
assume that if the white middle-aged speaker is an accomplished speaker then she must naturally not be. By implication the black lesbian intern is therefore assumed to be only allowed to enter the conversation as key note speaker because of her perceived privileges of being black, female and a lesbian. Perhaps she is in fact a superior speaker; in which case the argument about equality is moot as she would be the natural choice.

Depending on the conference and its criteria the young intern may be an ideal speaker in terms of new techniques and technology. Furthermore, perhaps she offers new perspectives on the field based on her position and that the conference chooses to highlight this. However, from the tone and implication of the passage it appears that in fact our society privileges blacks, women and gender minorities, both signally and in combination, and that white middle-aged males therefore face unfair discrimination. In this way the argument moves from the original position wherein only males were selected and this needed to be defended as equal and fair, to a position where any challenge of this position is evidence of the existence of discrimination against the privileged group of heterosexual white males. In this way the originally disadvantaged group are repositioned in the privileged position and the privileged as the oppressed: the advantaged have occupied the intellectual position of the disenfranchised, colonizing their position of weakness to justify their own position of strength. Rhetorically, the existence of privilege is first denied, then justified as natural and right and lastly repositioned in its corollary as evidence of disadvantage. Therefore, not only can it continue to exist unchecked, but morally those who are advantaged have the duty to in fact increase their advantage and actively deny and block any attempt of the newly 'advantaged oppressed' from using their newly minted 'oppressive advantage'. I can attest to this type rhetoric personally, as I experienced it personally and professionally as an aboriginal person and educator. As such, my thesis is an attempt to address this by creating a pedagogy that firmly places the focus on privilege rather than focusing upon oppression, a term that is increasingly deployed to defend the privileged against the oppressed. The work of this thesis is itself the articulation of both a Pedagogy
of Privilege and a primer on a critical literacy of privilege designed to highlight a theoretical engagement with the forces and effects of privilege. To demonstrate my own commitment to the principles of Critical Pedagogy and to provide an articulation of the pedagogy of privilege that I have developed throughout this work, it seems only fair that I examine my own experience of privilege and my own critical self-reflections upon those experiences.

3.1 Whispers on the Wind: The Potential for Change.

Arguably, there is much about the current system of education in this province and indeed the rest of North America that perhaps may seem far more pressing and significant than my analysis of effects of privilege on both teachers and students, and perhaps this is correct; however, in my own experience it is all too easy to focus on the minutiae of teaching: curriculum changes, school literacy rates, grade to grade transitions, graduation rates and exam results and to forget the big picture of what we as educators do: namely teach. The role of the teacher is in my own indigenous culture one of the most revered positions, that of elder, and the concept of elder is not so linked to mere chronological age, but rather in the wisdom that age often affords one through accumulated life experiences and the ability to transfer it to the next generations. Yet, increasingly it seems that the role of the teacher has become one wherein the teacher is a mere distributor of ever increasingly prescribed curriculum. In BC the very professional autonomy of the teacher has been stripped, the power of professional judgement and prerogative removed to the school boards. It is with a keen understanding of these pressures on education that my own faith in the analysis herein described is so significant, as the effects of privilege while complex and often subtle at its more reductive is a limiting and dimming of vision, the vision to see new possibilities for both us and our students, a failure of perspective in that privilege more than any other force other than dogmatic ideology limits one's perspective, and determines our relationship with the system, our students, our colleagues, and perhaps saddest ourselves as teachers: knowledge givers in the most venerable sense. If we as teachers are to continue to be agents of more than data and facts, transmitters of both knowledge and wisdom, we must look both at ourselves and at our students, the system as a whole and the discreet curriculum we teach. It is to be ever mindful of all these things not because it is easy, but precisely because it is hard.

In some ways I have become increasingly cynical of the possibility that the type of change I
am hoping to promote can actually happen. The current situation I face as an educator in the British Columbia public system leads me toward the belief that perhaps this battle is already lost. The current situation is one wherein the system is increasingly dis-empowering teachers as professionals, removing their own agency within the schools. However, this movement to limit teachers perhaps gives teachers themselves the historical moment to re-evaluate their role and affords the opportunity for meaningful change. The ennui that teachers feel is perhaps a niggling bit of conciseness that is pushing the individual and the collective teacher toward change. My own sense of wrongness when I became a teacher has crystallized into a belief that the mere implementation of curriculum, the measurement of success and failure as an educator in one's ability to get them through the ever increasingly complex course material, is not enough. Knowledge without the ability to critically evaluate its veracity, its implications and impacts on the individual and society handicaps our learners’ ability to navigate a society that is increasingly abstract and symbolic, found online and increasingly virtual and malleable. In a knowledge-based economy information alone is inadequate. Perhaps more so than any other time it will be the wisdom of integration, the ability to construct meaning out of the data, that will be important - a skill that teachers have always employed and deployed and the one aspect of our profession that is most under siege in the current moment in history. For our profession to survive we must be enlightened agents for both ourselves and, through us, the potential for the future that is our stock and trade.

3.2 Reflections of an Aboriginal Teacher: A Personal Praxis of Privilege.

My own experiences of privilege both personally and professionally are rooted in the experience of my personal identity. I am of mixed ethnicity, both European and First Nations. Outwardly I present as 'white'; I have fair skin and fair hair, but I am also a Status Indian who grew up on his home reserve. As a Treaty Indian I am the subject of centuries of bureaucratic and colonial experiences that have been enacted upon the indigenous populations of North America by settler and colonial governments while somewhat paradoxically sharing the same history of colonial privilege.
and advantage of my European heritage. The fact that I appear outwardly to be European means that in many circumstances I am allowed the privilege of being a 'white male'. However, this is ever a conditional privilege contingent upon my own willingness and ability to 'pass' as white. The privilege I receive is directly related to how well I have assimilated the colonial narratives and in many ways how well I hide or deny my own indigenous narratives. Based on the mask of whiteness that I can more or less manage I can transgress invisible boundaries and borders into closer proximity to nodes of privilege. Yet, legally and culturally I remain indigenous and aboriginal; my cultural values, while informed by both colonial and settler culture and my First Nations culture and history, is in fact a hybrid of both and manifests aspects of Giroux's border pedagogy in the fact that I can and do deploy multiple identity categories that are somewhat fluid. In addition to my mixed ethnicity, I am also left handed, a vegetarian, a teacher, married and in my third decade. I am Canadian and Cascadian, enjoying the benefits of both in terms of travel and general affluence in comparison to the majority of the world's population. However, the fluidity of my own self-identity categories become moot when my aboriginal status becomes contested and a point of contention. Simply put, often it trumps any other meaningful category and I am denied the privilege of self-identification, having instead my identity determined for me. This position has been particularly true in the context of my experience of education and my teaching career, as my status as First Nations has both opened and then closed doors of opportunity. I was granted admittance into my teacher training in part because of my ethnic background; I received special admittance by the Dean of Education because I self-identified as First Nations on the application. While this was part of the reason I was granted special entry, my own academic reputation as an undergraduate at the institution was also significant as my name was familiar to the Dean based on the letters of reference I received from professors at the school. While my First Nations background allowed me access based on policies that sought to encourage aboriginal participation in Post-Secondary education, I was informed by the Dean that it was my personal history as a successful undergraduate that was the
deciding factor.

I have always done extremely well academically in school while simultaneously struggling with the other aspects of formal schooling. In primary school I was often the subject of discipline, being suspended on multiple occasions and yet I was usually at the top of my class academically and received enrichment education to help challenge my intellectual capacity. Without the interventions of my elementary librarian who was often tasked with 'dealing' with me, rather than my classroom teachers, I would have most likely been expelled or medicated before I left primary grades. When I reached high school I was called to the office along with my cousins and relatives from the reserve near the beginning of my time there for the Vice Principal to make sure we knew the 'score'. While I excelled academically in High School I continued to struggle socially. By the end of Grade Nine most of the friends I had from elementary school had been expelled and I existed between the borders of the large First Nations population at the school and the 'white' population at the school. My high level of academic success meant that often I was the only member of the community in a given class as most of the First Nations populations were filtered into the non-academic stream while I was in the university stream. So I went to university because it was expected, studied Creative Writing, Philosophy, Literature and History, spent six years finishing my undergraduate degree at two institutions with very little sense of why I was there beyond that it was something I was good at and I was expected to get an education. I had hoped that at some point I would have the grand revelation of why I was there and what my purpose was, but instead I became bored and disenchanted. After university I drifted for years working jobs I could find at low wages, living a kind of Bohemian intellectual existence in coffee shops and basement suites.

When I finally became a teacher it was with some reluctance. I had always thought that I would become a teacher, but in a far off way, out past the immediate into the indeterminate future, like becoming a grown up some day or getting married. It was something I saw for myself, but just not right now. Fate conspired to make this happen in the form of my spouse who through her own
initiative got the ball rolling by sending in my application to the education department. I have ever since wondered why I was so reluctantly pushed into a profession, that since my own days as a primary student I had been told that I would become part of one day. Perhaps it was this constant reminder of my eventual fate, that in some grand Romantic gesture I tried so hard to resist. However, I think it goes deeper than that and in many ways still informs my every action and thought about the profession, that while good at the actual job of teaching, that I simply did not belong as a teacher, that the uniform was two sizes too small and the hat two sizes too large to fit me. In fact, I still often feel that way when face to face with groups of other teachers. I mean no disrespect to my colleagues, but I often feel as if we speak with different meaning to our words, the same denotation, but a wide ocean apart in the symbolic realm of connotative meaning. We may use the same words, but speak in separate languages, languages separated by lifetimes of divergent experiences and privileges. It was a deep-rooted feeling that either there was something wrong with me, or more accurately something wrong with me as a teacher.

I was recruited to by the school district; I was asked to apply for a particular position that I was uniquely qualified for; I was both a teacher and a member of the local First Nations community and so perfect to teach in the aboriginal education department. I was the first actual aboriginal teacher who had ever served in the role of academic support at the local high school. I was thrilled with the job offer and looked forward to my first teaching position. However, the optimism was short lived and I was soon filled with a feeling of my outsider status at the school. I was the only teacher at a school of over fifteen hundred students that was non-white and most likely the first teacher of an aboriginal background at the school. I knew that it would be challenging when I took the job, that aboriginal persons are woefully underrepresented in the teaching profession, but the situation soon became increasingly toxic for me. I cultivated relationships with the community, I supported and even offered a unique perspective to the approximately one third of my aboriginal clientele that were also fair skinned like myself, who also struggled at times with their identity.
However, I felt increasingly marginalized by the culture of the school. I simply felt like an outsider and this feeling was often reinforced in my day to day interactions. My colleagues were wonderful people and kind, but I was always aware that I was not like them. I often had to explain to colleagues who I was and what I did at the school. Unlike other new hires I was never assigned a mentor teacher to help me with managing the difficulties of a new career, I was never given professional performance-based targets to be reviewed so I could pass my probationary period, I was never even added to the school email list until well into my second year, missing out on vital information that often left me out of the loop. I did not receive a Christmas card from the administration one year and generally existed on the margins of the school. I found it difficult to make friends with colleagues that usually only interacted with me when they were complaining about a student who was on my case load. The sad thing is that for me all of these experiences were 'normal' or at least not unusual, through years of experience both in school and society, standing on the edges becomes normalized, and even though I enjoyed tremendous success in the system I had still internalized many of the metrics of privilege that were meant to prevent and hinder my success.

I returned back to the university, the ivory tower of academia, to escape what I felt was an oppressive culture of teaching in the public school system. At the heart of that feeling was that I did not fit into the identity roles of a traditional ‘teacher’. I constantly felt like a ‘square peg’, that I did not fit into a system that heavily constructed for me the expectations of who I was supposed to be. My feelings of alienation were compounded by several factors that related to other essentialized aspects of the identity that was constructed for me, rather than by me. I was initially hired not solely for my qualifications as a teacher, but specifically because I was both indigenous and Okanagan. The employer was looking for a local aboriginal teacher to work in their aboriginal program. It was not, to be clear, as an aboriginal person that I was hired, but as an aboriginal teacher. These two

\[14\] I had been previously employed as strictly a teacher and while I had moments of conflict between the two identities the conflict was far less severe. I could construct myself as a teacher and in some ways bracket off and perform that
aspects might not seem mutually exclusive on the surface and perhaps for others it is possible to reconcile the two; however, my own experiences proved that the two can be manipulated to undermine the other and I often felt the two identity categories were therefore in constant conflict. The conflict between the two identity categories was extremely difficult at first to recognize, I was familiar with many of the discourses surrounding the question of identity from both my experiences in formal post-secondary education, and no less significantly from within the aboriginal identity politics of my own community. As a non-visible aboriginal person, one who doesn’t fit into the racialized categories of dark skin and hair, I am often in a position where my indigineity needs to be defended. My subject position is by no means ‘essentialized’ by external physical characteristics that would therefore validate my ‘authenticity’. Instead the less visible, but no less significant, aspects of my enculturation and socialization within my culture on the reserve I grew up on was often my own ‘proof’ of my authentic identity category. The discourses of post-identity and post-colonialism were familiar to me and they provided some measure of justification to my identity that allowed for a more or less coherent sense of ‘self’. In this way I thought that I would be able to get myself up and running and after an initial period of adjustment and experimentation I would find my stride. Any doubt that I had about my ‘selves’ and my efficacy would be transient. I had faith in my abilities and in my understanding of how to deploy my ‘selves’ negotiated after a lifetime experience in the negotiation.

When I was hired it was told that my job allowed flexibility in how I deployed myself within the school. I was told I was an independent and semi-autonomous professional and that I had a certain leeway in constructing my day to day program based on my professional judgment. This seemed an ideal place for someone like me who had some reservations about the role of teacher; in

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identity. In this way I could strategically deploy my teacher identity and take it off at the end of the day. It is precisely that I was hired as an aboriginal teacher that forced me to create a kind of hybrid identity that would somehow satisfy both.
this way I could create a role, an identity that allowed me to reconcile my hybrid identity of aboriginal teacher. Yet within the structural hierarchy of the school my role and my program were conceived as something akin to the ‘Special Ed’ department or Learning Assistance. From the organizational perspective a defined aboriginal student meant the school received additional funding on a per student basis just as with defined ‘special needs’, or ‘learning disability’. This creates a situation that discursively equates being aboriginal with being special needs which is in turn defined as disability or barriers to learning that require special treatment. I was constantly heartbroken to see in my students and the professionals who worked with them the internalization of this expectation of ‘specialness’. To deal with this I came to the compromise that the historical injustices perpetuated upon indigenous peoples had placed them collectively, but not necessarily individually, in a position of educational and social deficit that I could help alleviate through my efforts. While this allowed me to sleep at night I am still haunted by my own complicity in a system that still perpetuates that there is one set of expectations and rules for the ‘natives’ and one for the rest of the students. While post-colonial theory discusses and identifies the mechanisms of colonization and their effects, allowing for strategies of resistance that may have been impactful, it did not ease the moral and ethical dilemmas I was confronted with daily. The expectations and roles of teacher, both constructed by myself, and those that were constructed socially by the expectations and culture of the profession and the school were not compatible with the demands of my indigenous identity.

Working within the school system in this new role soon became extremely problematic and difficult to deploy. I was constantly made to defend my identity to both my students and my colleagues and this constant rearticulating of it soon led to fissures in the supposed certainty to which I had constructed my ‘self’. Outside this institutional structure my indigeneity was a mostly personal thing, something that, while not a secret, was part of my personal not public sphere. I had achieved a kind of stability wherein I passed easily through both mainstream and indigenous society. I had a status card and enough authentic ‘rez’ experience that I could deploy my indigeneity and my
white skin and academic credentials allowed my access to the mainstream. While this equilibrium was far from perfect\textsuperscript{15}, I had believed that I had achieved the goal of de-essentialization as a post-modern person. At school, however, my identity was a matter of public performance wherein I was constantly in a position where I had to enact and re-enact it. I had to prove and reprove myself to my fellow teachers, my students and sometimes to even myself. The clear sense I had of who I was and what that meant became murky and fraught as I found myself entangled into a system where the determination of indigineity had been institutionalized. The symbolic importance of what these somewhat arbitrary categories meant and their defined boundaries in the practical negotiation of my own and my students’ identities was constantly articulated to us by the institutional structures we were immersed within. While conceptually I could doubt the validity of identity categories, the institutional structures I worked within manifested themselves as real and determinate and effectively made so within their own structures of power. It dictated who I worked with, why I ‘existed’ in the school, and more significantly, when I did not. The two identity categories of teacher and aboriginal could be applied to me interchangeably and arbitrarily at the whims of the system to its own strategic ends. This strategic essentialization was deployed upon me in such a way that overrode and ultimately undermined any agency I felt I had in my own professional identity.

This sense of identity dysfunction was also reinforced structurally in that my position was not attached to a particular class and classroom and meant that I existed outside the organizational framework of the School that conceives of teachers in terms of classrooms and all other staff who are not in a ‘classroom’ in the traditional sense in a kind of subordinate role. In fact, even though I worked at the school for over two years and had taught several classroom courses I had colleagues who even into my last month of working there assumed I was only a teaching assistant rather than a teacher. This misconception was reinforced by my chief administrator who told me when I

\textsuperscript{15} No performance is ever truly perfect; there were times when my I felt the gaze of otherness as both too white and too aboriginal.
complained that I was not being treated like a teacher that while I might technically be a teacher, I was just an aboriginal support tutor. We may have had our own physical classroom to provide an aboriginal friendly space, but that space was constantly undermined or shown to be less important than ‘real’ classrooms and ‘real’ teachers. This lack of respect and appreciation, while deeply insulting to me, was far more problematic in what it communicated to the students I worked with who were well aware of these institutional realities that were of greater concern for me. The end result is that the structural position of the Aboriginal Program, and the students it represented, both conceptually and spatially were marginalized within the school community.

All of this I could live with and even view as part and parcel of the business of education in a climate of diminishing funding and budget constraints; however, it was the charge of accusing the school of racism by my administrator and her response to this perceived transgression that my agency in the construction of my identity as an aboriginal teacher was effectively nullified by the exercise of institutional power to undermine my efforts and to erase me from the institution. I left the meeting utterly shattered, both personally and professionally. This critical moment of erasure of my position demonstrated to me viscerally that whether or not I believed in my power of identity construction, I was not in the position wherein I had the actual power to enforce it in this setting. I was able to with some effort reintegrate my selves, but in the year that followed my identity as a teacher was consistently undermined externally by the system I worked in and at the same time I was still constantly made to defend my indigeneity in my day to day work. In the end my administrator received a promotion and I received emails from my former students who missed me and felt betrayed that I am not at the school.

I have come to terms in some way with the experience; however, because of this experience I am now more than a little suspicious that the space between theoretical realities and embodied practical experience is a space where the spectres of essentialism, colonialism and all the great ‘Otherings’ wait and bide their time. It is the agency one enjoys to enforce their positionality that is
more significant, as without the power to effectively defend and make visible one's subject position they really do not have one, and are made invisible and marginalized. A constructed identity can be used to oppress and demean as easily as an essentialized one. The hope that postmodernity offers for growth and dynamic change is not false hope only if one truly has the agency to determine and not be determined. I had internalized a sense of victimization, not in my aboriginal identity construction, but in my identity as a teacher. I had been trained in and joined a culture that was built upon an almost religious zeal towards sacrifice. It was expected that teachers work late, come in early and put their own health and happiness second ‘for the good of the students’. Ironic, perhaps, is that in some ways it is from the strength I derived from my sense of indigineity, one that itself was a hard won negotiation, that helped me ‘keep it together’ in the face of my eroding ability to render comprehensible my identity within the institutional constraints. While the teacher within could be disciplined and rendered safe by a mixture of internalized soft controls and hard discipline in classic Foucaultian sense, the aboriginal, already a marginalized non-subject, was then the point of resistance. As a non-subject in the discourse my indigineity became also not subject to discourse’s internalized soft control; neither could it be effectively disciplined for it would render it visible and validate its existence and therefore my position.

I am uncertain that I may not be leading myself back into a kind of modernist essentialism, that, for instance, my sense of indigineity is in fact in some way essential. A result of my experience as an ‘aboriginal teacher’ is that I can no longer effectively strategically separate myself from my indigineity, nor would I want to. The constant (re)performance of the role has somehow made it reflexive. While this does not make this ‘essential’ in the way essential is often deployed in postmodern discourse, as a kind of permanent and discursively determined thing, it does perhaps suggest that there is a point where even identity constructions become integral, part of a holistic core of being and being in the world. Some positions perhaps demand a permanent fealty, that they cannot in fact be both temporary and authentically held. Even my core values and ethics, still mostly
postmodern, are no longer something I believe I can actually strategically deploy. I feel as if in the
winnowing I have experienced I lost the ability or the desire to perform multiple identities. It might
be that the scarring of the experience makes this somewhat difficult at this time as the evidence is
plainly visible upon my body, or conversely that the various discursive bodies loosely aligned have
been forged into a single being. Perhaps this is true hybridity, when the constituent parts can no
longer be separated out, the process by which the multiple and the conditional are rendered
comprehensible and intelligible.

As the system tried to convince me that I was in fact wrong and a bad teacher the more and
more determined that I became that the actual reason was outside of myself, rooted deep into the
constructed realities of the education system, and by extension the society that supports it. The work
of critical pedagogists such as Paulo Friere and others have attempted to shine a light on the effects
of these unconscious assumptions, but have focused on the ways in which they oppress students and
classes of students, making the critical teacher aware of the ways in which the system is designed to
establish and reinforce a particular social reality outside the classroom by the kinds of knowledge
we privilege inside the classroom. However, it is my belief that to truly shine a light into the dark
corners of the education system we must turn the analysis back onto itself and look instead to the
ways in which the system enables certain groups rather than the ways in which disables others. I
experienced firsthand how the discourse of oppression has been severely co-opted by those who
benefit most from privilege in our society, and those who are the most vulnerable to the effects of a
lack of privilege are often the least able to act as positive agents for change and must rely on the
good will and best intentions of those with the power to effect change. This dependence on those
with power to effect positive change for the less powerful is fraught with a myriad of conditions and
assumptions that rather than empower often reinforce the privilege of those in the power position to
have agency.
3.3 Crossing Borders: Disturbing Boundaries and Forging Pathways Through Privilege.

A central thread of this discussion has been looking at how as privilege insinuates itself in our individual and collective lives it creates boundaries between itself and those that it excludes. In the framing of the discussion so far boundaries between the various threads of research: subcultural style, film and Fine Art might lend the impression of a similar kind of privileging of knowledge that is itself bound into separate spheres or disciplines. The thesis seeks to blur the boundaries between the three discussions and to incorporate and contextualize them with a shift in focus away from youth toward education and pedagogy. Concepts of youth and youth development are central to education and the practice of teaching and without a clear understanding of how youth itself has been positioned by narratives of privilege it seems impossible to create meaningful pedagogy; moreover, the influence of privilege on the theory and practice of teaching must also be accounted for. This section seeks to provide a coherent reading of the texts presented above to model a kind of inter-textual literacy that critically examines how questions of youth and privilege have been framed. To forge the kinds of inter-textual connections that the thesis seeks to model, the ways in which the material and, in particular, how it has been examined must be looked at as integral to the process of the thesis as the analysis itself. This section provides an inter-textual analysis of my own work to provide critical reflections of how the texts and analyses are framed and re-framed when they are examined as part of not merely discreet analyses, but a larger project of analysis and critical engagement with culture and cultural artifacts.

Privilege is not a static thing: it changes, evolves and adapts to the cultural and social conditions of the societies it exists within. The historical privilege of fashion and the evolution of style are prime examples of the ways in which the codes of the privileged found their way into the cultural lexicon of the previously dispossessed. The underprivileged of the society, who had been subjected to the narratives of privilege of the aristocratic and colonial systems for centuries, could still read and comprehend them so inserted their own understanding of these narratives for their own
purposes. This led to the development of style subcultures as the disenfranchised sought to navigate and regulate their status and identity in the gaps left by the collapse of aristocratic and colonial systems by the strategic appropriation of the codes of the formerly dominant. The early Teddy Boys demonstrate this in their working class roots and their adoption of the upper class fashion cues of the Edwardian era. The Teddy Boys aped the elaborate styles of the prewar aristocrats in the immediate post war era of British austerity to create an identity that was in some ways a response to the failure of the upper classes to circumvent the Second World War and the severe consequences upon the population and economy of Britain. They refused to renounce fashion as a part of the austerity of the reconstruction and instead claimed the cast offs of the former glory of empire as their own. In the same way that colonialism appropriates the material and cultural resources of the colonized, so too did the under classes have the ability to absorb and re-appropriate from the dominant classes and colonial masters. These new subcultural groups emerge especially in the culture of Post War Britain precisely because the dominant systems and narratives that had bound their society into clearly divided ranks of privilege began to erode in the devastation and social reconstruction after the War. The postwar British Teddy Boys and later Skinheads highlight the ways in which the very interest and application of fashion was seen as transgressive to the dominant symbolic order in that their consumption is conspicuous: it can be seen; it is visible to the dominant order. It denies the cultural myths that only the upper class and women engage in fashion as part of their identity construction. In the case of working class subculture it also demonstrates the increase in economic potential of their class. However, rather than trying to transcend their working class status and aspire toward the middle class the subculture engages in a kind of upper class dandyism (Mercer 309). The Dandy, a ‘foppish’ and aristocratic male interested primarily in aesthetic concerns, was seen to subvert the masculine fashion renunciation that in many ways tried to subvert the visual existence of overt class distinctions. In the embrace of fashion as symbolically significant, subcultural fashion highlights the presence of class that is often symbolically denied, and subverts its hierarchies of power.
In Lukacs' work style is also central, such as in his *True North* Series, as the clothing and fashion of the Skinhead subjects are displayed as part of the presentation of the portraits and occupy a key part of the artistic statement of the works. The Skinhead style that was central to his aesthetic becomes part of his larger Aesthetic of Privilege as the Skinhead form and the symbolism of the Skinhead street style are appropriated for his own purposes as the artist. His use of the codes of fashion in his work is part of the larger process of his engagement and subversion of the codes of Western Art that permeate his work. Lukacs' work often demonstrates a deep knowledge and understanding of the canon of Western Art, particularly the history and codes of figurative art and he uses this knowledge of the symbolic codes that were established and developed over centuries to inscribe codes and meanings upon the subcultural body. The codes he deploys speak in the language of symbolism of aristocratic privilege that supported and consumed art for centuries. The power of aristocracy waned, but the society was still keenly aware of the codes of privilege that they had enacted while they occupied their position of cultural and social dominance. These codes while no longer deployed in the same way were however still available.

Perhaps of more interest is the reaction by the existing power structures to the emergence of counter-narratives in the culture that on one had found them profoundly threatening while simultaneously trying to dismiss their threat as primarily symbolic. This resistance is expressed more through semiotic symbolic play rather than actual political resistance. The subculture resists through nonconformity to the codes of fashion and social decorum rather than through direct political action. When direct conflict with the dominant social order through violence is described it is expressed in the context of reactions by the dominant order rather than actual political resistance. Hebdige, in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* expresses the ways in which this symbolic defiance is appropriated by the mainstream through its adoption of the fashion and style of the subculture, rendering the symbolic defiance in many ways inert as it becomes part of the larger symbolic narratives of the dominant society (130). If subcultural resistance is mainly symbolic, then it loses
its potency when it loses the ability to be a spectacle. This type of structural analysis can be viewed as somewhat detached from the subject described, the Marxist and semiotic theoretical positions justifying insights to the deeper structural nature of the resistance that is expressed via street level experience that is divorced to a large degree from the actual lived experience of subculture members. Furthermore, the structural gaze allows for the eventual incorporation of the subculture into the symbolic mainstream. While this might be seen as a positive end, it is often mediated through a process that re-marginalizes the subject and undermines their supposed resistance. The subculturalists become incorporated into the dominant culture in a process akin to colonization.

To return to Lukacs, his Skinheads often gaze defiantly outward toward their viewer; they stare directly at privilege and the elite audience that are conversant in the codes of the Western Canon. While their bodies might be colonized by privilege, their culture and society subverted to will of the artist and desires of his audience, they retain their humanity in their ability to look upon us as we look upon them. They seem aware of the audience and perform their rituals of power and privilege with full knowledge that we are in fact looking upon them. In capturing the essence of his Skinhead models he captures their awareness of the artist who inscribes their image upon canvas not to represent them as they are, but rather as a representation of their form that seeks to represent the abstract aims and desires of the artist. Even frozen forever in pigment and paint they are like performers upon a stage and their performance is designed to be seen. Unlike the films where actors pretend that the camera, and therefore the audience, does not exist in the service of rendering the script, costumes and performances as 'real' or at least a potential reality, the artifice of the artist and in fact art itself is ever present in the paintings. The figures on board and canvas retain and reclaim their humanity precisely because the performance slips, the figures cannot help but pose themselves and the artist cannot resist revealing their own self-consciousness. Even when his figures do not break character, in subtle ways the art itself reveals its artifice through its own deliberate use of the symbolic codes of Western Art, the intellect and the awareness of the artist intruding upon the work.
Lukacs' work is often overtly academic in its deployment of traditional and historical forms: the large scale portraiture of his *True North* and *Military Series* suggests traditions of aristocratic portraiture while works like *Adam and Steve* reference historical images of Indian eroticism.

In both cases the viewer is forced to confront their own involvement in the process of viewing and consuming. Not only has Lukacs deployed style directly in that his subjects are subculturalists recognizable through their artifacts of style, but he also deploys the fashions and movements of art. Like the Skinhead who was his subject, Lukacs appropriates the forms and fashions of privilege and art and subverts them for his own ends; not only does he depict subculturalists, he is in fact engaged in his own form of subcultural symbolic re-appropriation of the artistic fashions of the past, the privileged images and forms of a Western history steeped in privilege and domination. Like other subculturalists he takes the past and its rich codes and symbols and re-deploys them to create something new that attempts to redress and re-balance, to transgress and transcend boundaries, to speak and be rendered comprehensible, to become visible and in becoming visible to assert a position and stake a claim to a cultural space that is self-determined. This ability for self-determination in both identity and culture for youth is key in the critique of the existing narratives of privilege and privilege in general and in the context of education is one of the ways in which both education and those engaged in youth work as teachers have the opportunity to positively impact upon the youth that the system is engaged with.

Style is again significant to this process as it is deployed both in the films and in the paintings precisely because of the visual nature of both fashion and the image-centric mediums of film and art. In the films of Hughes, clothing and style are part of the presentation of the Suburban Idyll; the characters are immersed in codes of style that were part of the cultural and symbolic fabric of youth culture in the era to lend to them a sense of authenticity and reality to their audience. Fashion, of intense interest to the intended audience, is integral to the ways in which the films package a particular vision of youth that is consistent with the existing codes of privilege and creates
their own distinct aesthetic style. Fashion and style are deployed to lend authenticity to the characters presented, as in *The Breakfast Club*, where the five archetypes of teenaged identity are delineated by their specific styles: rich princess, Jock, Goth outsider, Geek, and bad boy Headbanger. They are instantly recognizable because they conform to the codes of style already present in authentic youth society, or are consistent with how youth have been presented in previous youth centred media. Furthermore, in *Pretty in Pink*, fashion becomes central to the generation of the satisfying happy and romantic ending. Annie Potts' character only finds happiness when she abandons her subcultural style and deliberately adopts the style of the sanctioned and socially rewarded yuppie. Her acceptance of the style is key to her finding happiness through the love and affection of a man. Her journey to happiness is one of the embrace of conformity and the casting away of identity and style cues associated with youth throughout the films, making her essentially an adult youth, and transitioning to the symbolic costume of adulthood. Moreover, in the film the female heroine also finds her happiness and identity in her own interest in fashion. She designs and makes her gown for the film's final scene and the montage of her designing the dress is symbolic of her growing sense of independence and self-reliance. Fashion becomes her way out of her own poverty and situation and she is rewarded for her embrace of fashion's power in the film and ultimately, like her own female mentor and surrogate mother figure, Potts, is rewarded with the object of her romantic interest. Even the failed suitor finds his happiness through fashion; his own tuxedo, an overt expression of style and fashion, catches the interest of a statuesque blonde in a matching blue cocktail dress.

In the two Skinhead films fashion and subcultural style are also central to the narrative. Norton's racism and violent white supremacy are instantly recognizable to the viewer from the opening scene because the aesthetic of the racist Skinhead was already firmly established in the cultural imaginary when the film was released - partly due to the earlier *Higher Learning* wherein one of the main characters of the movie himself is transformed into a racist Skinhead through his
alienation from his African American roommate and eventual association with a white power group on campus. The style of the racist Skinhead was itself appropriated from earlier iterations of Skinhead subcultural identity as it emerged in Postwar Britain, that by the time of the nineteen nineties had become almost exclusively associated in popular culture with its violent white power offshoot. The much more contemporary British film *This is England* (2006) examines the historical period of the Falklands War in Britain and examines a group of non-racist and racially integrated Skinheads that struggle with the shift in their own culture toward extremism and racism when a respected member of their community is released from prison and returns to the group as a violent and racist supporter of the National Front, an ultra-Nationalist political group that in the era did attract to its banner many Skinheads, who had also become increasingly radicalized. As the National Front gained increasing media attention in Britain and internationally, and other extremist elements within the subculture did so in North America and abroad through acts of violence and extremism, the racist Skinhead emerged as the dominant expression of youthful white supremacist identity and the more traditional and non-racist form was rendered invisible in the popular eye. In both *Higher Learning* and *American History X* the cultural associations of the violent racist Skinhead archetype are central to the narrative development of the two films that examine not just racism in American society, but also seek to examine the privileged and powered relations that underpin them.

Privilege functions only if it first establishes around itself boundaries and borders that create the relationship between inside and outside spaces. Inside is the privileged position that only has meaning as long as it is clearly delineated from the spaces outside its boundaries. In America, race has been dominant in establishing those boundaries insofar as the cultural myths of America seek to deny divisions based on class, or at least allow through hard work and determination the ability to transcend them. The foundational myths of the pilgrims, the settler and later of the American Dream were intensely socially mobile within the carefully delineated boundary of white European
immigration and colonization. Indigenous peoples were exempt from this myth and were seen as a barrier and obstacle to overcome; they were non-white and non-American. Whether these indigenous peoples were the First Nations who already occupied the lands that Manifest Destiny promised, the Latin inhabitants of former Spanish and Mexican colonial territories in the South West and Florida, or the black African descendants of former slaves, race became a central border between inside and outside, dominant and sub-ordinate. By the time of the Skinhead films this boundary became less clearly defined and more porous as especially African Americans began to successfully challenge racialized privilege and began to actively seek to breach the border between whiteness and blackness. Furthermore, as this fundamental border began to be eroded other boundaries of privilege, such as gender, began to simultaneously erode in the decade leading up to the nineties.

The economic decline and recession experienced in the nineties opened up fractures in the fabric of American affluence and the American Dream as winners and losers emerged from the excess and economic exuberance of the eighties. As the Middle Classes began to feel strained they lacked a means of understanding this except through the established narratives of racialized privilege. Class struggle was filtered through narratives of race and racism that are present in both the films. Within the two films the decline of white and male privilege is expressed through the youthful male Skinheads who actively seek to arrest their declining status by striking out at the historically recognized outsider and threat, the black man. The erosion of the middle class suburban ideal in American History X is blamed on communities of African Americans who are ruining society by the firefighter father, and Remy's struggles to adjust to the world of academia is blamed on first his roommate and then upon blackness in general. The aspirational and upward focused nature of the American Dream is replaced instead with a downward focus upon the enemy at the gates: if they can no longer rise they can prevent those below them from supplanting them. In this way the Skinhead archetype in the films occupies a border position that has externalized their focus
away from the centre and toward the outside. They act both as gatekeepers focused on the perceived enemy without rather than looking to the emerging boundaries of class that are being erected around them from an ever more compact privileged centre and as a buffer between privilege and the outside space of blackness. Rather than allies in the struggle for economic equality they are distracted into fighting each other rather than on storming the castle of privilege that they are both now denied. In this way, though young and white in many ways the Skinhead characters are rendered black in the restrictive binary of racial and class conflation of America. Their faces rendered black masks by the light of privilege, they now face away from shadowing their features; however, their militant embrace of the whiteness of their Skinhead identities is an attempt, however futile, to reclaim their whiteness. This reclamation is doomed to failure in the narratives of the films; there is no return to whiteness as they have transgressed the boundary between insider and outsider and cannot be allowed to return. It is here that the UNLEARN of the end of *Higher Learning* comes into focus. Only by unlearning the restrictive and ultimately false racialized matrix of American privilege can there be true growth and enlightenment: by focusing on what separates us we do the work of dominating privilege by creating and maintaining the boundaries that separate us rather than focusing on the universal humanity that binds us together. It is interesting that the holders of this wisdom in movie, the teachers, are black, Avery Brooks and Laurence Fishburne, wise academics that have achieved success within (and one presumes without) the educational system.

In “Disposable Youth and the Politics of Domestic Militarization”, Henry Giroux discusses the ways in which youth are increasingly examined and marginalized in contemporary culture, with the metrics of oppression felt more severally by youth of colour and lower class backgrounds. He examines how this impacts upon the school and education through zero-tolerance policies that he describes as based on models of punishment and intolerance founded by fears of an ultra-violent youth that needs to be contained (163-164). The Skinhead films, with their portrayals of hyper-violent youth across the boundaries of race, fit into this analysis as the violence of youth erupts
within and surrounding the environs of the school, which implicitly suggests the need for such zero-tolerance policies to regulate the dangerous potential of youth. The violence is perpetrated by youth on youth who are out of the control of adults. They are cut off from adult guidance: Derek takes on the role of the lost father and shapes his brother's beliefs, Remy falls under the sway of Skinhead youth that fill the void of the family he is separated from at the university. The Skinheads of Lukacs' work are often painted in the midst of violent acts, both perpetrators and victims of violence. The problem of youth identified by Hebdige in his analyses of subcultural style is that they are often present in the cultural discourse only when they are perceived to be a problem, when they go outside the accepted bounds of behaviour (*Hiding in the Light* 17-18). Thus, the subculturalist both articulates but also creates the 'problem' insofar as youth become visible and are made visible through their non-conformity. This non-conformity, as evidenced in the Skinhead images, is one where narratives and deviance and danger can be encoded upon bodies that are youthful and therefore dangerous. The less problematic youth of the Suburban Idyll are therefore safe because they are rendered within safely established boundaries of youth as interpreted and articulated by adults who create and manage their identities for them.

It can be easily missed in the analysis that the school is itself not separate, but part of a larger society where violence, particularly gun violence, is present and often glorified when engaged in by adults. The action movie genre celebrates the ability of usually masculine protagonists using violence and gun violence to overcome and deal with social problems. In this highly lucrative film genre guns, explosions and violence parade across the screen and so long as the protagonists are adult and male they are rewarded for their violent behaviour. Skott-Myhre describes this process, where adults stand in judgement over the actions of youth, but remain uncritical of their own collective behaviour, as a “lack of self-reflexivity. To stand at the centre of the world as an adult and look out upon the world of youth provides a singular view in which youth can be seen but adults become invisible” (173). The suggestion is then that violence is only threatening when it is youthful.
rather than adult bodies that engage in the violence because adult violence remains outside notice insofar as it becomes invisible to us as a source of concern as it is easier to externalize the danger and threat of violence and sexuality onto the Other, in this case expressed not only through race, but metrics of youth and youth as intrinsically threatening and transgressive to adults. The two Skinhead films engage this trope even while critiquing it. While the movies ask to the audience to reflect upon the violence on screen this ability to reflect upon the deeper implications is contingent upon the ability of the audience to critically evaluate the films, to be conversant in the codes and of their meanings. In particular while the two films engage with youth and the codes of youth cinema they are intended for an adult audience, who then stand in object judgement over youth. The privilege of analysis and judgement is adult rather than youthful as the Hughes eighties movies exist in an almost wilful naivety, that seemingly precludes serious critical analysis and engagement by their intended audience who are tasked only with the consumption of the text and the assimilation of its values.

The opening act of brutal violence in American History X, one that ends in a brutal murder, is both celebrated and vilified. Celebrated in the visual potency of the images of violence to protect one's property, Norton's character is vilified by its excess when he curb stomps the assailant, killing him after he was subdued. His Skinhead persona exceeds the acceptable boundaries of the social narrative in its extremity and in its deliberateness; the attempted theft of property becomes an excuse to exercise his desire for violence not against an intruder, but against blackness and black bodies his extreme and racist ideology demands. It is the overtness and extremity of his violent reaction that is so deviant; his power is undisciplined and potentially threatening not only to his black target, but to the dominant narratives that, while privileging whiteness over blackness, do so less overtly and openly. His defence of the dominant forms of privilege is overzealous and must be contained; he is dangerous not in his rejection of dominant narratives of privilege, but rather in his extreme articulation of them -- an articulation that is ultimately unpalatable to the existing narrative, because
it does not conform to its more subtle forms of social control. Like the Skinheads of Lukacs' work, the Skinhead body on display in the opening scene of the film is transgressive in that he is unconstrained both physically and sexually, and is therefore threatening to the existing fabric of privilege that embodies violence and unconstrained sexuality in darker bodies. Violence when needed to enforce privilege is sanctioned through proxies such as police and military who maintain order. In Lukacs' work this is also present in his military series where violence and sexuality is sublimated to more socially acceptable ends where discipline and constraint equate with both power and privilege. His violence is reactionary and chaotic, threatening to the illusion of order and safety of the suburb, suggesting that the agents of the state cannot maintain order. Further, it also threatens the narratives wherein violence and anti-social behaviour are located outside white bodies and his militant whiteness and violent behaviour mark him as deviant and threatening. His Skinhead identity, one that literally embodies whiteness, is necessary to also disavow him from the undifferentiated whiteness of dominance. Yet, as noted above, youth is another category where similar kinds of narratives have been increasingly deployed to portray youth, regardless of their skin colour, as increasingly violent, hyper-sexual and out of control.

To work with the concept and ramifications of privilege is to recognize how deeply and widely it has permeated into our contemporary world. As diverse as the texts that are to be explored are, they are merely a tiny sampling of the possible ways in which privilege insinuates itself into our everyday lives. Yet, this is not to say that it cannot be examined in meaningful ways; in fact its very omnipresence in our culture makes creating a through line of connection from disparate elements such as Fine Art, Youth Cinema, Urban Street Style and historic privilege of High Fashion possible. Not only are there common themes, but a common intent or purpose behind the analyses, namely to create a text that can be viewed from a pedagogical perspective as a kind of primer of a pedagogy or curriculum of privilege. This pedagogy of privilege is significant in that it not only seeks to examine privilege within a body of texts that are themselves non-traditional for school curriculum, but does
so with the intent of providing not just a curriculum of privilege but also a way of looking at the concept of privilege that suggests a sort of critical hybrid literacy - the sort of literacy of the language and texts of privilege that focuses upon not just what the texts reveal, but why they speak and to whom. This literacy builds upon the critical literacies of earlier critical pedagogists, but suggests new ways of applying their core concepts and beliefs to offer new interpretations and iterations of critical pedagogy and practice.

If our learners engage in a world of hyper-linked texts and not just books then we need to help them cultivate a better faculty for the interpretation of these texts. In my own work I have sought out alternative forms of literature such as art, movies in a deliberate attempt to show the kind of Cultural Studies style reading that might better serve the needs of the learner. In this context traditional literature such as Shakespeare need not go the wayside, but can be recognized in a broader way as both cultural artifacts in and out of their own time, and literature insofar as they provide a springboard to greater connection and understanding of our own world of texts. The internet with its density of data is one of the places where this new kind of literacy would be found. As the students we teach today spend ever more time on the internet and its endless fascinations, we as teachers need to better understand our students' connection to this medium.

This issue of course presents a myriad of challenges, not least of which is the conditioning placed upon the learners by the system to expect that the teacher makes these kinds of executive decisions and imposes literature and literacy upon the students through the curriculum. Moreover, for the teacher and the resource-strapped institutions it becomes a question of organization; the modes of instruction for imposed literacy are long established. The class reads the text, the teacher helps to interpret or directs interpretation and the students absorb the understanding of the text as presented. In my own practice I have done this when I chose a difficult text for the students to read and presented them a 'reading' of the text based upon my own faculty of interpretive skill. This is a significant first step, but rarely does this extend to the next logical step in question, allowing the
students to apply this to their own definitions of literature. It would seem then that as we present
texts to the students we should in turn open it up to them to then take our modeled reading, our
literacy, and challenge them to apply it. If done correctly the teacher does not even need to read the
works in question, instead relying and trusting the students to present a reading to us. Reluctant
readers encouraged by their ability to choose their own desired texts might be inspired. The ultimate
question is then what is the intent behind the process of education in the context of literacy, and
significantly what it could be.

3.4 Creative Re-Imaginings: New Directions.

The final exam question of my Educational Theory course in my teacher training was one
single question: What is your personal philosophy of education. I answered that it was not to have
one. We need to be able to be multi-focal, multi-lingual, multi-focused. Our value as teachers is not
in simply delivering curriculum, what Friere called the banking model of education, but rather in our
ability to create and be creative agents for new visions and manifestations in both ourselves, and
through us, others. Eric J Weiner in discussing the crisis of imagination in our culture marks
teachers and in particular Critical Pedagogy as a crucial point in redressing this lack of vision:

Theoretically, Critical Pedagogy should place most of its intellectual resources into
developing new ways of thinking and seeing, new ways of imagining what is possible.
This positions critical pedagogy as a place and space where art and imagination mix
with political and sociological concerns in an attempt to provoke inventive ways of
perceiving what is as well as imagining those things that have yet to be seen. (75)

My own contributions to this challenge have attempted to expand upon the earlier work of critical
pedagogists and to take up the challenge Weiner offered. In my own re-imagining of Critical
Pedagogy and in the materials I presented I attempted to mix art and imagination, sometimes
literally as in the case of the specific cultural artifacts I examined and other times figuratively in my
own critique and challenge of other critical pedagogies. I chose to focus on privilege in my own
arguments for a variety of reasons, but perhaps most telling is that in many ways I embody the pedagogy of the oppressed that Friere first began to speak of. I come from a marginalized indigenous culture and like the learners he encountered, I have my own readings and literacies of the texts - readings that are based on my own subjected and objected experiences of a colonial culture that I am also a part of.

Yet, as I learned to speak for myself and understand how I saw the world I found that while I understood oppression and how it had worked upon me my whole life, I made the choice to not allow it to define me as oppressed as a perpetual victim. From my own position on the boundary oppression was something that simply was and is, like the sky and the air. I live with it every day; it shapes who I am and how I interact with the world, but I can choose to not allow it to define my identity, to be forever its victim. Instead privilege was what stood out to me so markedly when I looked out from my own position, especially as through my intellect and hard work I ventured ever deeper into spheres of privilege and further from the positions of the excluded. Even as I often still skulk in the shadows, I have travelled deep into the heart of privilege. As the outsider and newcomer I observe how privilege perpetuates and insinuates itself outward from its own positions. Like a spy in the house of whiteness, I act to undermine and arrest this through my own act of sabotage. For me the trail I blaze into privilege becomes a pathway for others to follow. Even now I still teach in the public system and I take the opportunity when it presents itself to speak about privilege to the privileged students I often encounter. It is for them and all the other youth that ultimately will supplant us that I penetrate deeper and deeper into privilege.

In the writing of my own pedagogy of privilege and the praxis I have built up in the effort I am more aware not only of privilege, but how to undermine it. I am a better spy; I have learned to better hone my craft. Yet the path I take is not necessarily the path of others. When I speak about privilege I speak about it in a highly embodied and personal way from my own experiences that are shaped by my own position. As someone who has a bifurcated identity based on a trick of
pigmentation and cultural expectations, identity and how they are shaped and determined by outward appearances is intensely interesting to me because it is so deeply personal. I look at the ways in which Skinheads have been represented because they represent youth and masculinity, something I understand in an embodied way. I reject narratives of resistance because my personal practise is subversive rather than confrontational. I examine style and subcultures and how they have been positioned because I see the same narratives of privilege and exclusion being enacted upon teachers in often similar ways. Teachers who work with youth are in close proximity to them on the symbolic level and increasingly I see that we are also being subjected to the same cultural anxiety about our place and purpose. It is because privilege and the privileged are aware of the potential that teachers have to undermine them. The transformative power that exists as potential in our youth and learners is shared by those that have the opportunity to mentor, shape and share their journey into the undiscovered future. Teachers, like youth, therefore occupy the symbolic position of intermediaries, standing between the known world and the undiscovered country beyond. Those in positions of power and privilege are deeply invested in the current cultural and social iterations and defend their position and privilege through manipulation of not only the youth that will eventually succeed them, but those that are tasked with the education and shaping of youth.

The new direction that this work offers is that in discussing my own journey and praxis I offer the challenge for others to do the same. This is not the end, but the beginning of the next journey wherein new questions and answers come into being if they can but be imagined. Most significant is the desire to come up with new answers and new questions, to create new pedagogies, to believe in possibility, to resist the narratives of privilege that would limit not only the horizons and visions of our learners, but their teachers as well. Every new vision is a new beginning, a new chance for us to see into the future, to envision new kinds and forms of narratives and new literacies to understand them, to replace the ones we have received with ones of our own choosing, to pass this ability onto our students so they can in turn do the same, to honour our grandfathers and
grandmothers and all our ancestors by not forgetting the legacy they passed down to us to create the future they envisioned, but never had the chance to see.
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