PRODUCING PEDAGOGY:

EXPLORING MASCULINITIES, FEMININITIES AND SEXUALITIES IN/THROUGH VISUAL DIGITAL MEDIA

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the methodological, theoretical and pedagogical tensions of an eight-month ethnographic study within a Film classroom. Drawing on participant observation, group film discussions, and participant produced films, the chapters that follow consider the ways in which youth inhabit and make sense of masculinities/femininities and sexualities as conveyed in visual digital media, and how the very categories of youth, gender and media are constructed and disrupted in the process of video production—and through the process of research. This project challenges the notion that research captures 'reality' through meticulous data collection and analysis, and instead considers the way that ethnography produces the very materiality it attempts to represent (Britzman, 1995).

Although methodologically encouraged by theories that promote "getting lost" (Lather, 2007), there were many moments in which modernist assumptions, institutional and discursive expectations, regulated the process of conducting and representing the research. Following a lineage of theorists who challenge the assumptions and expectations that burden empirical research (Britzman, 1995; Lather, 2006; Talburt, 2004; Youdell, 2005; 2006; 2009) and who trouble the notion of 'what counts as data' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003), the methodological tensions and theoretical incongruencies that arose through this project informed, and became, data. The articulation and analysis of these tensions, idiosyncrasies, and 'failings' as data, contributes to conversations about enacting troubling, and troubled research.

Further to methodological failings, this project invites discussions of uncertainty, loss, and unknowability in order to provoke the pervasive 'cultural myths' of teacher (Britzman, 2003), and to contribute to larger theoretical discussions of pedagogy. Drawing on popular media and digital video production in/through/as pedagogy, this research considers the ways each might

be reconceptualized. In particular, the ways in which popular media and digital video production practices invite the body and senses in/as pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005). However, like the regulatory process of research, pervasive modernist discourses of teacher (Britzman, 2003), education (Popkewitz, 1997), knowledge, teaching and learning (Ellsworth, 2005) may restrict the pedagogical possibilities of popular media and digital video production within educational contexts. This regulatory parallel is indicative of the tangles of methodology and pedagogy amidst these chapters.

Preface

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Acknowledgments

I extend my sincerest gratitude to the teacher and student participants who welcomed me into their classroom environment, and without whom this research would not have been possible. This was a tremendously inspiring community of learners. In particular, I am deeply indebted to the classroom teacher, who not only opened his teaching space to me, but who thoughtfully engaged in pedagogical discussions with me throughout the project. The student participants who shared their time with me, and invited me to be a participant in the video production process, continue to inspire me over a year after the completion of this research. They have forever changed the way that I view youth—and pedagogy. In those moments when I wanted to abandon writing this dissertation, thoughts of this group of people, motivated me to continue.

Dr. Lisa Loutzenheiser, Dr. Donal O Donoghue, and Dr. Stuart Poyntz, my supervisory committee, have continually challenged me to recognize myself as a theorist and academic, while granting me space to hold on to my teacher identity. They constantly encouraged me to re-theorize and re-imagine—and in turn, to see my own potential.

Beyond my committee, there are many professors from The Faculty of Education whose pedagogical provocations are riddled throughout these pages, and to whom I am tremendously grateful. My initial journey toward this dissertation began in *The Social Justice and Humanities Cohort*, where questions of power and pedagogy first emerged.

Melanie Janzen and Kal Heer, dear friends and academic inspirations, talked me through all of the *stuck places* (Lather, 2006). To my friends, Grania and Sean, who sat beside me for countless hours in coffee shops, you helped me feel I had people beside me in the lonely, often futile, moments of writing. To Ashley House, who made the right choice a long time ago, and who has a quote for every occasion. To my partner, Che, who looks at me in a way that makes

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me believe. As Elizabeth St. Pierre (1997) asserts, the notion of the 'lone scholar' is a myth; these pages are filled with the voices of my friends.

CHAPTER 1: PRESS PLAY PLEASE

We have these words, that's all we can think of. I guess, I'd say my mom is masculine, but I

wouldn't say she's manly.

--Moore, 2008, p.94

I don't know maybe it's the fact that um, words we would like to use to describe ourselves could

be considered too feminine and we don't want to come across as being feminine, we need to stay

with the macho, the manliness, but then that doesn't really apply to us. . so we just don't say

anything.

--Moore, 2008, p.101

Because I don't know, at the same time, they're like, I want to say metrosexual, but then that's

not the right word that I'm looking for, it's the only thing I can think of. Like, like [Gordy's] not

feminine, like at all, he's actually really masculine. Like I'd say that's a form of masculinity,

ya…still act, like pretty manly, you would say, but in a different way.

--Moore, 2008, p.101-2

Within my previous interview based study surrounding masculinities and student

resistance (Moore, 2008), I argued that there were many instances in which the language of

gender failed to represent the participants' complex understandings. By which I mean, the

inability to find language to describe gender performances, the avoidance of feminized terms for

male bodies, or the incongruence between the fixity of gendered terms and the fluidity of

participant performances and understandings. In these instances, I found that the participants

often drew on content and characters from popular media to verbalize diverse, contextual

understandings of gender. Through these popular culture references, the participants and I were

able to identify and interrogate some of the normative understandings of masculinities and

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femininities, in a way that the trappings of binaried gender terms had otherwise not permitted. This provoked me to consider the ways in which popular media might be used within formal classroom spaces to ground conversations about the normative constructions of gender. Beyond this, I wondered about the confines of talk, and subsequently the ways in which visual digital media production might provide a useful, tangible, medium to express emergent, contingent, and contradictory understandings of gender. Yet, I was also curious about the ways in which visual digital media would also regulate understandings and limit expression—or fall into the same normative traps as talk.

Prompted by these pedagogical and methodological queries, I conducted an eight-month ethnographic study that sought to explore the ways in which digital video production might provide an outlet for complex, varied, unique representations and readings of masculinities and femininities that are representative of the current youth context—similarly complex, varied and unique.

In this chapter, I outline the original purpose and questions that grounded this study, and the ways in which these questions evolved throughout the research process. While I briefly outline the particulars of the study, the specifics of the research process are detailed in a far more fulsome manner in the subsequent methodology chapter. I also situate this research within the context of the literature on gender, youth and media education, and indicate how this research might contribute to these theoretical conversations. In addition, I position this project within the field of educational research, particularly in relation the significance of this project.

Purpose

The original purpose of this study was to explore youth understandings of gender and sexualities within visual digital media. Specifically, the questions that grounded this study were:

1. Within educational settings, how do youth inhabit and make sense of

masculinities/femininities and sexualities as conveyed in visual digital media.

2. How are the very categories of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' constructed and

disrupted in the process of dialogue, and in the processes of participatory media

production? In what ways might these understandings suggest the emergence of fluid,

critical understandings of youth, gender and media?

However, these initial questions and narrow articulation of purpose ignore the theoretical,

pedagogical and methodological intentions that coincide. In the sections below, I explicate these

broader, emerging intentions of this project[1].

Miss.ing The Point

This research is informed by gender theorists (Butler, 1990; 1993; 2004; Connell,

1995/2005; Francis; 2010; Halberstam, 1998) who: challenge the binaried labels of male and

female that regulate bodies and limit intelligibility; provoke the conflation gendered terms to the

already sexed body; contest the alignment of fixed terms to fluid, contingent, recursive

performances of gender. Following these theorists, this research struggles to explore complex,

contingent understandings of gender and sexuality in a way that does not presume an alignment

with the 'sexed' body. Lyng (2009) and Francis (2010) suggest that many researchers who

similarly theorize gender, often reinforce the theories they seek to contest through the research

process[2]. Recognizing the ways in which the research process constitutes and disrupts

subjectivities, this project attempts to contend with the moments of theoretical incongruence that

emerge in research, and the in/capacity for otherwise, as data. By that I mean, those moments in

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[1] In the writing that follows, I present the theory, methodology and pedagogy as separable
spheres, however, these discussions are fused and fold into one another.
[2] I articulate the discussion of research on masculinities and the male body and femininities and
the female body further in my review of the literature.

which I remain caught by the trappings of gender, and in which I am faced with the constant insufficiencies surrounding pronouns and fixed identity terms. These methodological dilemmas (Gallagher, 2008), and the moments of in/decision that follow, become data.

Video Not A Research Star

As the importance of media in the youth context is well established with empirical research, there are pleas for new approaches, that go beyond the verbal and written, incorporate audiovisual methods, and consider the ways in which youth interpret digital media (Buckingham, Niesyto & Fisherkeller, 2003; Fisherkeller, Butler & Zaslow, 2001). Grandiose claims about the use of video production in research with youth have preceded (Jameson, 1992) and followed these pleas (Buckingham, 2009; Buckingham, Niesyto & Fisherkeller, 2003; Thomson, 2008; Renold & Ross, 2008)[3]. Such claims make media production seem an obvious choice in research with youth; however, I am interested in the way that digital video production, like any method employed in research, is riddled with issues of power, representation, and authenticity. As such, a purpose of this study is to place the assumptions underlying the method of digital video production in conversation with poststructural troublings of research (Britzman, 200; Lather, 1992; Pitt & Britzman, 2006; Talburt, 2004; Youdell, 2009). First of which is the problematic assumptions of an essentialized understanding of 'youth' that often grounds the rationale for engaging video production. Further, the underlying humanist assumptions of a sovereign self (Kvale, 1996), notions of agency and voice (Britzman, 2000), and claims of 'authenticity' and

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[3] Specifically, some of the assertions within discussions of research, youth and video production include: it is a tool in which youth will be more interested (Thomson, 2008); that it is a better method for gaining insight (Renold & Ross, 2008); that image is a medium with which youth are more ready to express their beliefs and emotions; that it prompts variable readings and challenges the formulaic (Buckingham, Niesyto & Fisherkeller, 2003); that it allows for communication in a different way than words, eliciting aesthetic and emotional responses (Jameson, 1992); and that media based methods overcome rationalistic or logocentric tendencies, and allow for more authentic forms of expression (Buckingham, 2009).

'preference' often extolled upon digital video production. Instead, this project considers the way video productions parallel the utterances offered in an interview, and in turn are plagued by the same challenges of authenticity and voice.

Screening Production

Like the methodological discussions referenced above, similar assertions about youths' relationships to digital video production permeate media education literature (Buckingham, 2003a; 2003b; Hoechsmann, & Poyntz, 2012; Stack & Kelly, 2006). In particular, digital video production is presented as a means of interacting, developing self-expression, promoting critical understandings and motivating students (Hoechsmann, & Poyntz, 2012). Production practices are seen to unveil the mystique of media productions, place youth in conversation with their social worlds (Hoechsmann, & Poyntz, 2012), and provide a concrete way of exploring issues related to representation, institution and audience (Buckingham, 2003a). The resulting push in media education, therefore, is toward production. While I agree that production is an essential element of media literacy, I also recognize that the nuances and complexities of engaging production practices in formal educational spaces should follow in the literature. As such, this research explores the implementation of production in formal educational spaces, looking specifically at the way youth act as producers, and engage in the production process. That is, through the process of planning, filming, and viewing productions with youth participants, 'youth' and 'media production' might be understood in more complex ways.

As will be elucidated in the chapters that follow, pedagogy permeates this dissertation. Although the research questions that ground this project are not explicitly pedagogical, they are rooted in discussions of youth, gender and media within the educational context, and they are derived from my practice as a researcher and an as an educator. As both a classroom teacher and

an educational researcher, pedagogical dilemmas, observations and insights resonated throughout this project. Certainly, this pre-occupation may be a result of my teacher identity; however, it also emanates from the sparse discussions of the particularities of practice, and subsequently pedagogy, within theories of media education. As Lusted (1986) long ago pointed out, pedagogy is an under-theorized field that is always an abstraction. Recognizing these absences in the literature, throughout this study I fixate on the particularities of practice in hopes of understanding theories of media education—and pedagogy more generally.

This is by no means meant to fuel what Weaver-Hightower (2003) refers to as 'antagonism' between theory and practice. Theory is not in opposition to practice, it is an element of practice, just as practice is of theory. Not only is the division between the two a fallacy, the 'rivalry' is futile. Constantly engaging the complexities and nuances of practice in/as/alongside theory, discredits the unproductive divide, and 're-unites' the concepts. Turning toward the particularities of practice, then, is not meant to discipline theory for negating the 'realities' of the classroom (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). On the contrary, it is meant to recognize the necessary relationship between theory and practice. That is, theory is misunderstood, flattened, deadened, when it is falsely untethered from practice. Theories risk being misunderstood as simple, sweeping, and grandiose. For example, without practice, theories in media education that encourage production and play might be misunderstood to dismiss criticality and invite harm. Whereas engagement with theories of play in practice better articulate the complexities of the concept.

The title of this dissertation, initially *Producing Gender*, was changed to reflect the prevalence of pedagogy as a theme in this dissertation. Aside from the obvious reference to the use of production practices in this research project, this title to reflects my understandings of

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pedagogy as a production, one that is orchestrated, and in turn produces particular knowledge. Further, it highlights the way in which practical examples are engaged throughout this dissertation to produce new understandings of pedagogy—for myself at least. Finally, *Producing Pedagogy,* is a reference to the focus on the finished product throughout the research process, and I posit larger educational discourses.

Practice Makes Pedagogy[4]

Faced with numerous claims about the 'shoulds' of education, those surrounding youth and the current media rich context, and necessary discussions of gender, heteronormativity, race, privilege and multiculturalism, practitioners are often abandoned within the complexities of the classroom. In my role as a high school teacher in the Social Studies and Humanities, I have found lessons and classroom discussions related to race, whiteness, privilege, gender and sexualities often impossible and overwhelming. As referenced in my previous research (Moore, 2008), I often deemed students uncomfortable in conversations about LGBTQ identities, suspicious of my 'feminist agenda', and skeptical about the relevance of discussing gender and sexualities in a classroom context (Moore, 2008). Literature on gender, pedagogy and resistance, particularly discussions of loss, frustration and failure in practice (Eyre, 1993; Lewis, 1992; Luke and Gore, 1992; Moore, 1997), diminished the constant pedagogical insecurity and abandon I felt as a classroom teacher in these moments. This literary relief also provoked my understandings of pedagogy. Subsequently, theories of crisis, messiness, unknowability, and conflict in/as pedagogy (Britzman; 1998; 2000; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Felman, 1992; Kumashiro; 2004; Loutzenheisier; 2001) challenged me to re-imagine how/what I initially viewed as student resistance, and confronted my desire for a straightforward method for teaching gender and

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[4] Knowing play on Dr. Britzman's seminal text, *Practice Makes Practice* (2003).

sexualities.

This research seeks to be reciprocal, and contribute to discussions of 'failure', loss, and unknowability often ignored in sweeping theoretical discussions of pedagogy—or silenced and shamed in many discussions of teaching due to the pervasive 'cultural myths' of teacher, that celebrate control, expertise, and intuition (Britzman, 2003). Instead, I ask, how the messes, uncertainties and inconsistencies within the research space, unsilence the constant unknowns of teaching and learning.

As an example, through this dissertation, I share multiple moments in which the participants and I speak with popular media texts. These offerings are not intended as a pedagogical formula for engaging popular media to ground conversations of gender, sexualities, and race, rather they invite the uncertainties, nuances and complexities of these conversations as pedagogy—and as further provocation of theories of pedagogy. As a practitioner becoming researcher, Buckingham (2003b; 2006), Grace & Tobin (2002) Kumashiro (2004), and Loutzenheiser's (2001), articulations of the complexities and uncertainties of practice were pedagogical for me, in that they placed practice in conversation with theory, and in the ways they further provoked understandings of pedagogy as messy and unknowable. Similarly, I hope to invite more discussions of the impossibilities of practice into pedagogy.

Pedagogical theories of crisis, messiness and unknowability might also contribute to conversations in media education surrounding youth engagement with and practices of media production. Within this space, there exists a tension between encouraging youth productions and interpretations and the role of ideology in media education (Poyntz, 2006). On the one hand, youth are knowing, and educators should trust their pleasure and engagement with the media (Buckingham, 2003a). Alternately, youth are not free floating agents able to make whatever

sense they want of media—and digital video production practices do not ensure criticality (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). Who, then, gets to decide when a youth production is subversive, reifies normative understandings of gender, or does harm? Where is the space for pleasure in youth engagement with video production? How do pleasure and criticality intersect? The way in which these questions still riddle much of the theory in media education rationalizes the need for it to be taken up in research. In a context that promotes play, production, multiple readings, and asserts the participatory relationship between youth and media, how might we critically engage with discussions of youth, gender, sexualities, race and media with youth while simultaneously troubling the simplicity of all those terms.

As is evident above, beyond a pervasive theme, my engagement with pedagogy throughout is often as a struggle. Following Ellsworth (2005)[5] and Britzman (2003), I wonder how media practices might inform pedagogy otherwise, particularly through the experience of learning and the senses (Ellsworth, 2005). As Ellsworth (2005) states, when pedagogy is defined as "a signifying gesture that participates in the social construction of meaning and knowledge, educators approach teaching and learning as the making and unmaking of sense" (p.120). Media practices might engage pedagogy as separate from content and knowledge, and instead "as the

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[5] As this research looks to/at popular media as pedagogy, the work of Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997; 2005) has been particularly resonant. Ellsworth theorizes pedagogy outside of the institution amidst varied (unexpected) places of learning. Theorizing pedagogy in relation to architecture, museums, and nuclear stations, as she does, may provoke modernist discourses of education and help to reconceptualize pedagogy. Ellsworth does not discuss lesson objectives, classroom activities, or assessment strategies, and this refreshing absence has helped to undo my own thinking about teaching and learning. Writing/theorizing anchored to schools may be constrained by the pervasive discourses of schools (Britzman, 2003). Instead, Ellsworth (1997) draws on discourses 'outside' of education, like film studies, to re-theorize pedagogy. Her engagement with film studies and address are particularly relevant to my own engagement with popular media in/as pedagogy. Further, her discussion of the senses helped me to understand notions of the body throughout my data. In turn, I engaged these pieces of data to inform theories of media education and pedagogy more broadly.

force through which we come to have the surprising, incomplete knowings, ideas and sensations that undo us and set us in motion toward an open future" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.18-19). And still, the modernist notions of teaching and learning, and the pervasive cultural myths of teacher (Britzman, 2003), may also school media practices.

Project Overview

The study was conducted over an eight-month period in a Film 11/12 classroom, within a public school in a large urban center in Canada. Film 11/12 is an elective course in which students work within peer groups to produce a minimum of three digital video productions, representative of the three school terms. The digital videos include documentaries, film exercises, fiction, and public service announcements. Throughout the production of these films, students are taught film language, camera operation and editing. Using the ethnographic methods[6] of participant observation, group discussions, and artifact collection, this study unfolded in two phases. In phase one of the research, participants consented to be observed within the classroom context. In this phase, I acted as participant-observer in the video production process, the dynamics within production groups, the decisions surrounding representation in the films, and the many conversations surrounding student responses to popular and student produced pieces. This phase ran throughout the eight-month period, and included nineteen of the twenty-six students in the class.

For phase two of the research, participants consented to participate in film discussion groups outside of class time. Within these lunch-time discussion groups, the participants and I engaged in conversations about their interest in Film, representations in popular culture, the

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[6] In the subsequent methodology chapter, I discuss my hesitation to label this an ethnography. In particular, the way that research methodologies and methods are already burdened with modernist research assumptions that regulate the research process.

process of producing films, and the films produced within this context. With eighteen participants I created four groups, with whom I met two to four times each depending on their availability. In total, I conducted fourteen discussion groups.

As a result of both phases, the data sources for this research include observation notes, lesson plans and materials, transcripts from the film discussion groups, and the student produced digital video productions.

Theoretical Context

Early provocations reframing knowledge, truth, neutrality and validity began in response to the hegemony of positivism (Giroux, 1981). Alongside a proliferation of paradigms, new understandings of social science and research emerged; the linguistic turn (Rorty, 1967)[7], neo-Marxist[8], feminist [9], and critical race theorists[10], invited researchers and theorists to explore the processes of research and methodologies (Bernstein, 1976; Fay, 1975; Feinberg, 1983; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Ogbu, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1983; Weskott, 1979; Willis, 1977). Specifically, theorists began to consider the methodological implications of their understandings of society and knowledge in relation to forms of research, and the role of the researcher. The reinvention of social science is emblematic of the larger crisis of authority in scientific thought.

In their discussion of the key moments in qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) elucidate the relationship between epistemological shifts and research. They specifically mark Geertz's (1973) writings, which recognized social life as negotiated meanings, and research as

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[7] The linguistic turn is a term that was popularized by Rorty, but is associated with the works of Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Lacan and Lyotard.
[8] To name a few: Theodor Adorno, Louis Althusser, Michael Apple, Stanley Aronowitz, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, Antonio Gramsci, Henry Giroux and Max Horkheimer.
[9] To name a few: Simone deBeauvoir, Betty Friedan, Sandra Harding, Nancy Harstock, Alison Jagger, Angela McRobbie and Gloria Steinem.
[10] To name a few: W.E.B. Du Bois, Patricia Hill Collins, Bel hooks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Toni Morrison, Michael Omi & Howard Winant, Cornel West, Carter Woodson.

interpretations of interpretations, as the beginning of the third moment. What followed was the explosion of interpretive, phenomenological, hermeneutic, naturalist, critical, feminist, neo-marxist, and constructivist approaches. Whereas interpretivists focused on specifics of action and meaning, and emphasized the phenomenological perspective (Gage, 1989), critical researchers attempted to elucidate meanings (Comstock, 1982) and change the social conditions that they describe (Fay, 1975). For example, the work of Willis (1977), McRobbie (1978) and Anyon (1980) pointed to the social conditions that produced inequality.

The period following the initial questioning of positivism was characterized by a crisis of representation (Marcus & Fischer, 1986) and legitimation that called into question issues of gender, race and class, and the ways in which research and writing might be more reflexive (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). What emerged is a critical reflexivity, that invites discussions of: the relationship between theory and data, the impact of the researcher on data, the structural forces that inform research, and the role of the reader (as outlined in Anderson, 1989).

Jones' (1989) ethnography surrounding the role of race, class and gender in the schooling experiences of girls in New Zealand is indicative of critical, emancipatory research; she later re-engages her data (Jones, 1992) using a Foucauldian lens to expose the constructedness of her initial account. The juxtaposition of these two accounts is representative of the emerging role of reflexivity in research, the relationship between paradigms and research process and representation, and the simultanaeity of these moments. The theorists on which I draw emerged through and within the lineage these moments. These moments have not ended, rather they fill the current methodological provocations and fractures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in which my own work is situated.

Theoretical Framework

Possessed by modernist assumptions of identity, truth, data, and validity, research is burdened with trouble before it begins (Lather, 1992). Yet, research is only ever a contingent offering of the ways in which "individuals—including the researcher—make knowledge in and of the world" (Pitt & Britzman, 2006, p. 380). Following the work of feminist poststructural theorists (Britzman, 1992; 2000; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Lather, 1991; 1992; St. Pierre, 2000; Talburt, 2004; Youdell, 2006; 2009), I challenge the notion that research captures 'reality' through meticulous data collection and analysis. The epistemological, methodological, and analytical foundations of this study are recursive and contingent; identity, research, and data are profoundly contextual, fragmentary, and constantly in process (Lesko, 2001; Vagle, 2012; Pitt & Britzman, 2006)—so fragmentary and in process, that it is difficult to speak of identity, research and data as separate entities, as they fall into one another. This severance, and subsequent concretization, of supposedly whole categories is indicative of what is often required of the researcher as we fumble to communicate our partial, contingent, ever-changing understandings. Beneath the concrete categorical terms, *identities, representation and data*, I will attempt to refuse and articulate the way in which this research is informed and framed.

Imagined Identities

Within this dissertation I approach identity as contingent, fluid and partial (Butler, 1990; 1993), continually in the making (Youdell, 2009), produced in interaction (Connell, 1995/2005) through a series of repetitious acts that produce the very bodies they govern (Butler, 1993). That is, there is neither an identity category, such as masculinity, singular, nor one that can be fixed to a body; in the case of gender, one can perform both masculinities and femininities, is constantly in the process of becoming gendered, and is vulnerable to the gender regulation of others. Like

the questions that ground this study, which consider the construction and disruption of 'youth' 'gender' and 'media', this approach might invite emergent, fluid, critical understandings of the supposedly concrete categories that regulate and produce identities.

Breaking From Bodies

Following Butler (1990; 1993), the very materiality of the body is produced, an effect of power that limits our capacity to see the body outside of regulatory norms, with no 'pure body' to which we have access or can return (Butler, 1993). This is not a denial of the relevance of the body, rather a challenge to the illusion that there is a 'true' body beyond the law (Butler, 1990). The body feels pleasure and desire, suffers and enjoys, and is not merely inscribed by social phenomenon (Butler, 2005). And yet, there is no way to decipher the emanations from the biological body, as originating from the body or as expressions of norms (Butler, 1990). It is not that there is nothing left of the body, it is that these distinctions are futile. As Ellsworth declares (2005), there has been damage left in the wake of binaried thinking and there is "a sense of urgency in the search for new mindsets capable of moving away from the strict binary discourses of self/other, real/virtual, reason/emotion, mind/body, natural/artificial, inside/outside, thinking/feeling, irony/humour" (p.3). If we fixate on the distinctions between nature/nurture, or body/society, the larger conversation is lost.

Instead, I am arguing that, there is no subject/I that confronts its world/object. The subject/object dichotomy is a strange and contingent if not violent, philosophical imposition (Butler, 1990, p. 197); our personhood is dependent on social norms (Buter, 2004). Subjects and discourses are indivisible, mutually constitutive, "simultaneously interpellated" (Pinar, 2009). The subject is 'activated' by discourse; therefore, there is no 'I' before (Butler, 1990; 1993; 1997). However, this does not negate the power of the subject, or align with theories who have

been accused of linguistic idealism and somatophobia (Butler, 1993): "Language is not an *exterior medium or instrument* into which I pour a self and from which I glean a reflection of that self" (Butler, 1990, p. 196). That is, while discourses of identity exist before the subject, the subject is not already constituted (Butler, 1990). The culturally enmired subject negotiates its constructions, even when those constructions are the predicates of the subject's identity. Entering into the terrain of subjectification is not a choice; however, as identity is dependent on reiteration, the iteration can become a space of rupture and destabilization (Butler, 1990). This paradox does not negate the possibility of agency, it simply provides the conditions within which agency is possible (Butler, 2004). Construction is not opposed to agency, there is simply no agency outside of discursive practice (Butler, 1990; 1993). There is no understanding of the subject that is not already filtered through discourse. As such, agency is located in reiterative practice, immanent to power, not separate from power. Butler (1997) emphasizes this point: "[t]he subject is itself a site of this ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibility* for a radically conditioned form of agency" (p. 14-15). There is instability in the very constructions of identity. The categories of identity "are produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration" (Butler, 1993, p. 10). This suggests a necessary relationship between the subject and discourse, but also the possibility for interruption.

Recognizing these discussions of the body, subjects, and identities, there are epistemological and ethical questions of doing research centered on an identity, like *youth*. Identities are pertinent, dismissive fictions. Research projects founded on identity categories have the potential to: nullify intricacies, make claims about and on behalf of identities, obscure diverse experiences, approach the subject as already constituted, and in turn reveal nothing of the workings of categories (Cairns, 2009). I concur with all of these critiques, and refute the

essentialized category of youth; yet, I remain convinced of the worthiness of working with this constructed 'group'. Though "imagined boundaries" (Talburt, 2004), identity categories, such as youth, male or female, influence the partiality of our observations (Lather, 2006), are constantly at play on the body (Loutzenheiser, 2005), and construct contingently embodied identities or groups that are similarly impacted by discourses (Loutzenheiser, 2005). Disregarding categories invalidates and dismisses the ways in which they acts they act as monitors, observers, and regulators.

Within this project I attempt to explore a particular identity, *youth*, while simultaneously refuting the category. Lather (2007) refers to this as a project that works within and against identity categories. Youdell (2005; 2006; 2009) describes this as research that rejects a unitary, abiding subject while attempting to understand the processes through which the illusion of the subject is created—researching with *youth* while recognizing the discursive fantasy of the category. This attempt to both use and refute categories, of youth, gender, media, and methodologies, rings throughout this dissertation.

As such, this research is not an attempt to capture 'youth voices' or 'authentic youth understandings', of masculinities, femininities and sexualities in order to make grand statements or claims about youth, rather to unlayer how the categories of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' are produced within the research context—and how they might be complicated. Calls for 'voice' within research are tainted, as they pre-suppose static subject positions, assume authenticity, and imagine the capacity to narrate experience from/for these essentialized subject positions. Voice is not "audible, conscious, and 'out there' wholly formed, waiting to be revealed" (Loutzenheiser 2007, p. 113), rather, "like subjectivity, is constituted within relations of power" (Cairns, 2009, p. 325). One's voice is at best tentative and temporary given the changing, contradictory

relations of power (Orner, 1992). Therefore, rhetoric praising 'voice' cannot acknowledge the complexities of individuals' subjectivities, of context, and of relations of power and domination (Cook-Sather, 2006; 2007). When the coherent subject is challenged, there can be no authentic youth voice.

Re-presentation

Representation cannot deliver the real (Britzman, 2000). Research is a fiction, not "pure invention, lies or imaginings…it has a grounding in 'real' events and 'real' lives, but learning about and representing events and lives is a process of constructing others' constructions of the constructions of the world" (Talburt, 2004, p.81). Much like the research process, "we are always 'in' our data" (Youdell, 2009, p.93). The illustrations we put forth in our research are only ever partial, of a moment that may have been constructed otherwise at a different time, with different participants, or a different researcher. As St. Pierre (1997) discusses in her refutation of the 'lone scholar', there are always many others present, but often ignored within our data:

> Yet our members and peers do provide us with data that are often critical and that may even prompt us to significantly reconstruct our interpretation as we proceed. These data surely influence the production of knowledge, yet we hardly ever acknowledge them (p. 184).

The conversations I had with peers through the research process, the media I engaged alongside data, the methods through which I analyzed the data, the theories from which I draw, and the fragments of data I chose to emphasize, all construct different truths (Kaufmann, 2011). These interpretations can only ever be thought of as incomplete (Talburt, 2004).

This is not a complete dismissal of a participant's understandings, rather an emphasis of the impossibility of capturing the 'truth' of an experience, as that very notion is a fallacy.

Language can never fully represent, so these tellings are always illusions, never "verifiable as faithful copies of a 'real' " (Talburt, 2004, p. 81). Any attempt to present the 'real' "elides the ways in which subjectivity, experience, and the meanings of actions and events are contradictorily constructed in ways often not accessible to researchers, or to participants themselves" (Talburt, 2004, p. 82). The pursuit of reality in research limits the potential to break with predictability (Talburt, 2004). In relation to research with youth, this manifests as a reiteration of the category through presentations of 'youth understandings'. Instead, how might research tend to particularities, complexities, and contradictions in order to rupture humanist understandings of the fixed self and modernist notions of identity and truth?

Dis-miss-ing Data

Perpetual unknowings in research provoke the very notion of data (Britzman, 2000). Recognizing the inability of language to capture experience, and that the force of an event can be felt before it is understood, Pitt & Britzman (2003), point to the perpetual gap between an experience and the recounting: "Where does one situate the event that is experience? In the past that is narrated or in the presence of its interpretation?" (p.759). Troubling the situatedness of experience (Pitt & Britzman, 2003), and the capacity to capture an understanding of that experience in language, further challenges the impossibility of the 'real' in qualitative inquiry. There is a failure of knowledge, and an impossibility to ever know with certainty (Britzman, 1998). Such questions about narrative, knowledge, and the ability to represent experience, trouble the very notion of what counts as data, and what data counts as (Pitt & Britzman, 2003).

Further to the questions of truth, validity, representation and identity that riddle data generally, the interpretations of popular culture that become data in this study further elucidate the speculative 'nature' of data. That is, while data itself is suspect, so too are the interpretations

of visual culture that become data in this context. Interpretations of visual culture are encompassed by questions of power, ideology, representation, seduction and gaze (Duncum, 2010). Further, like visual culture, there is an intertextuality (Duncum, 2010; Rogoff, 2002), a layering to the data. In the same way "images, sounds, and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another, lending ever-accruing layers of meaning and of subjective responses to each other" (Rogoff, 2002, p.14), research data is read against/through the context in which it is derived, the subjects who construct the data, and the surrounding pieces of data, 'lending ever-accruing layers of meaning and subjective responses'.

This should not translate to a complete letting go of 'rigor', or the attempt to say something with our research; instead researchers need to "be attentive to the vicissitudes of fieldwork, concerned with consistencies and inconsistencies within and across forms of data, and mindful of the implications of researcher perspectives and relations with participants…all of which constitute the 'facts' and meanings" (Talburt, 2004, p. 81). Therefore the focus rests on the process of constructing and analyzing the data, rather than on acquiring data 'on youth'. In other words: how does the context frame and construct the data; how does the method frame how and what we see; and how does what is produced reflect or challenge discourses. Britzman (2000) places narrative as a potential space to theorize how "subjects spring from the discourses that incite them, and question the belief in representation even as one must practice representation as a way to intervene critically in the constitutive constraints of discourses" (p. 38). Research then is an intellectual problem of theorizing why things are the way they are, and how they might become different; if there is a failure to interpret, or to simply allow 'data' to speak for itself, then everything is left as it was (St.Pierre, 2011).

The above epistemological, theoretical and methodological understandings frame this research project. However, in the chapters that follow, the data is also placed in conversation particular theories of gender, race and whiteness, and media/education. Below, I outline some of the major definitions, concepts and debates relevant to the literature that informs this study. This is not intended to offer a fulsome account of the literature engaged throughout this dissertation. Within the findings chapters, I continue to place relevant literature in conversation with the data.

Initial Conversations With The Literature

As this research is grounded in questions about the ways in which 'youth', and 'gender' are constructed and disrupted in the process of research, this literature review looks at the theories that inform these terms and points to the contentious spaces in the literature, particularly in relation to 'gender'. Further, as the research questions engage notions of media, media production and media literacies, this review looks at the current theories of media education, the intersection of youth and media, and the debates within the field.

Let's Talk About Gender[11]

Normative conditions, such as the necessary binary of sex and the ensuing assumption of heterosexuality, frame the conditions under which the materiality of gender emerges (Butler, 1990; 1993).

According to Butler (1993), the body is actively sexed; there is nothing "left of 'sex' once it has assumed its social character as gender" (p. 5). Thus, speaking of sex is always a referent to gender. In other words, "the category of 'sex' is itself a gendered category, fully politically invested, naturalized but not natural" (Wittig, 1981, as cited in Butler, 1990, p.153). The terms 'woman' and 'man' allude to a system of understandings that have amassed and

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[11] A reference to Salt-N-Pepa's (1991) song *Let's Talk About Sex*, meant to highlight discussion of the conflation of sex/gender in the literature that follows.

multiplied to have the appearance of something real. The 'reality' of gender is motivated and constrained by a heteronormative agenda which requires a society divided into men and women. The notion of an essential sex is an attempt to hide the performative character of gender, and the possibilities for proliferating gender outside of these restrictive binaries (Butler, 1990).

For many students, normative understandings of gender make them unintelligible; the matter of increasing the possibilities for gender "is not a luxury, it is as crucial as bread" (Butler, 2004). Binaried understandings of 'sex' and subsequent heteronormativity, result in constant, violent regulations of gender and acts of homophobia (Kehler, 2007; Kehler and Martino, 2007; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). As such, the chapters that follow seek to contribute to the methodological and pedagogical[12] provocations of gender. Attempts are made to unsettle normative discourses of gender, refute the binary, and resist the conflation of male/masculinity or female/femininity through the very research process. That is, through conversations with the participants, and the data, about the expectations and operation of gender. And, in the efforts made to recognize the fluidity of performances of gender.

Beyond The Body

As Francis (2010) eloquently states: "If the concept of 'gender' is to be maintained as a credible phenomenon for analysis, and essentialist reductionism is to be avoided in this endeavour, it is vital that means are found to 'see' gender beyond the body" (p.478). I recognize that normative gender discourses are those through which all subjects are understood (Youdell, 2005), and subsequently regulate the performances that one is willing to see; however, the alignment of masculinities and the male body and femininities and the female body should not be presumed. Equating masculinities to the male body leaves the sex-gender distinction untouched,

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[12] I recognize that these categories are not discrete. In the chapters that follow, I engage with entanglements of methodology and pedagogy, particularly in relation to representation.

solidifying the link between biology and the sex/gender construction, making it appear real (Alsop, Fitzsimmons & Lennon, 2002, p.159). Focus on the 'biological' male results in masculinity becoming a synonym for men and maleness (Halberstam, 1998a).

Despite the theoretical warnings, within "research on student masculinities and femininities, the explicit theoretical intention of multiplicity is not yet consistently followed up in empirical and analytical practice" (Lyng, 2009, p.463). Considering masculinities in particular, with the exception of C.J. Pascoe's (2007) ethnographic study and Judith Halberstam's (1998a; 1998b) work on female masculinity, the majority of the research in/on masculinities has focused on the male body, male understandings and the male experience, particularly in the educational context. This point can be elucidated through a superficial overview of a *few* works in masculinities.

As a first example, Willis' (1977) seminal work on class and masculinities focused on bodies of the lads. McRobbie's (1978) attempts to counter Willis with a discussion of class and femininities similarly fell on the female body. Although Mac an Ghaill (1994) includes female participants in his ethnographic study, his discussions with female participants are largely about men and masculinities and do not consider female performances of masculinities. Epstein's (1997) introduction of the relationship between heterosexism, homophobia and masculinity relied again on boys' stories. In their attempts to challenge the inflammatory discussions of the supposed 'boy crisis' in schools, Kehler and Martino's (2007) negotiations of masculinities rest with male participants. My own interview-based project (Moore, 2008), in which I engaged with male youth in discussions of masculinities, is yet another of many examples.

This is not a matter of vilifying researchers in masculinities, many of whom I drew heavily on in my study; however, to point to the ways in which the gender binary might be

reified by researchers and theorists whose intentions are to provoke normative understandings of gender. If discussions of masculinities remain fixed on the male body: sex is re-inscribed as natural, a limited, essentialized understanding of masculinity is produced, and the role of the female body in the production and performance of masculinities is dismissed. As Sedgwick (1995) states, women are not only complicit in the production of masculinities, they perform masculinities.

Halberstam (1998a) claims that the very the existence of masculine females challenges us to question the basic assumptions of masculinity. Equally optimistic, Pascoe (2007) suggests that "looking at masculinity as discourses and practices that can be mobilized by female bodies undermines the conflation of masculinity with an embodied state of maleness" (p.12). Certainly there is temptation in the simplicity of such arguments. However, unsettling the gender binary is not merely a matter of fixing masculinity to the female body. Rather, there is variance, fluidity and simultaneity surrounding gender performances

Terms like 'female masculinity' (Halberstam, 1998a) continue to adhere to and validate the gender binary. According to Nayak and Kehily (2003), female masculinity also proposes that there is an original masculinity to be copied, rather than gender just being a copy of a copy. Further, Halberstam's (1998a) suggestion that masculinity is constituted through a set of performative acts, and can be achieved by individuals regardless of their sex, also teeters dangerously close to suggesting gender is a 'choice'.

Instead, gender involves a complex process of regulation and intelligibility. While there is no body to which masculinity belongs, all bodies are impacted by the limits of intelligibility gendered discourses assert. The concept of 'female masculinity' does not negate the relevance of the body as the border of our gender, and that through which our performances are understood

and limited. Halberstam (1998a) himself recognizes that females who perform masculinity, and can 'pass' as males, are those deemed intelligible (Halberstam, 1998a).

The theoretical discussions instigated by the concept of female masculinity, remind of the limits of intelligibility. Whereas, it is necessary to see gender beyond the body (Francis, 2010), both the constraints of the body and regulating discourses complicate the capacity to recognize or represent variance. In the chapter that follows, I continue to explore this theoretical conundrum amidst methodological struggles that arose surrounding participant pronouns, and the in/capacity to recognize fluid, multiple performances of gender by participants.

All of My Relations

In addition to the warnings against conflating gender and the body, Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), propose that "the cure lies in taking a consistently relational approach to gender—not in abandoning the concepts of gender or masculinity" (p. 837). Through this dissertation, I present gender as a relational concept. I draw on the term relational in three denotations: as the constant interplay between/within masculinities and femininities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), as intersubjective regulation (Connell, 2009), and as Butler (1997) asserts, as the constant negotiation between the subject and discourse.

Relational Identities

Following Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) "patterns of masculinity are socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imaginary) of femininity" (p.848). In order to exist and be understood, masculinities needs its counterpart, femininities. As such, when one category is named, the other is also constituted (Youdell, 2005). There is a constellation of sex, gender and sexualities (Youdell, 2005), in which any discussion of gender is always a discussion of masculinities and femininities, and this binary makes gender automatically a

discussion of sexualities, heteronormativity in particular. In this way, by divorcing masculinities from femininities, or masculinities from sexualities, research fixed on masculinities and male bodies, may also be challenged for ignoring the relational. However, this is not an issue remedied by consistently engaging the relational.

Situating the relational within a simple dichotomy of masculinities and femininities, or a constellation sex, gender and sexualities, may validate the binary. That is, the notion that femininities always requires and constructs its opposite, places understanding, regulation and possibility within this constraint—one is either masculinities or femininities, or is measured against these terms. Connell & Messerschmidt's (2005) dichotomous presentation of the relational also dismisses the way masculinities and femininities constantly circulate in relation to racialized, classed and heteronormative discourses simultaneously. This omission is not resolved, as is often attempted, through the practice of cataloguing types of difference and drawing on intersections to speak to the multiplicity of masculinities (Pascoe, 2007). These approaches "risk diminution of gender analysis to simplistic typologies of different 'sorts' of masculinity or femininity" (Francis, 2010, p.477). Hearn and Collinson (1994) attempt to tend to this in their discussion of the proliferations of categories, stating that all categories are deconstructable; white masculinities may be simultaneously Jewish, Irish, or English, and 'heterosexual' masculinities may be celibate, narcissistic, gay, or bisexual (p. 112). However, Butler (1990) refers to this as the embarrassing 'etc' that is used when discussing intersections of identity : "This is a sign of exhaustion as well as of the illimitable process of signification itself" (p.196). Instead, the question for researchers is how do we consider the relational as the *blizzard* that surrounds identities (Lesko. 2001).

An element of this blizzard is the inconstancy of the very categories. Positioning masculinity as an entity that only becomes multiple at the intersection fails to encapsulate the fluidity and multiplicity *of masculinities*. There is no singular 'masculinity' that intersects with 'blackness' to produce plurality. Masculinity and blackness are already plural and fluid before its contact with other discourses; further, as is discussed below, these discourses are in constant negotiation with the subject. This is the core problem with theorists of masculinities/femininities that assert that the plurality of masculinities/femininities rests in the profusion of intersections: "Identity politics assumes first there is an identity" (Butler, 1990). Rather, the identities that are asserted behind these intersections, or *as* these intersections, are themselves unstable (Butler, 1993). If the subject itself is a site of ambivalence (Butler, 1997), there is no fixed identity once and for all. In the subsequent chapters, I *attempt* to engage this blizzard in discussions of the relationship between race, gender and sexualities.

Intersubjective

The relational also involves recognition, intelligibility and vulnerability in relation to other subjects. As Butler (2004) declares, one does not do their gender alone. Alsop, Fitzsimmons and Lennon (2002) declare that our gendered identities are formed through our own performances, and of others towards us. One is always only how they are seen by the other, *and there are a multitude of others*. Butler (2004) explains this dependence on the other as vulnerability, a notion that precedes the 'I' and embeds our dependence on the other. In Butler's (2004) words, we are "given over from the start to the world of others, bearing their imprint" (p.21). Pascoe (2007) states this simply, people hold other people accountable for 'doing gender' correctly. A form of normative policing is achieved through peer interactions (Connell, 1995/2005; Martino, 2007). In relation to masculinities, homophobia, name-calling, competition,

and separation from female students are just some elements of this regulation (Dalley-Trim, 2007).

While the policing and regulation of gender between subjects may be recognizable within research, the intricate fiction of gender involves "a lot more than one-to-one relationships between bodies; it involves a vast and complicated cultural order" (Connell, 2009, p.56). Gender performances are interpreted through normative discourses of gender; that is, it is not simply an exchange between two subjects, always present in these interactions are the dominant understandings related to the body/sex/gender. In her discussion of the discursive limits of intelligibility, Butler (2005) reveals the ways in which we are intersubjectively regulated through these normative discourses. That is, one's femininities is regulated by others according to normative understandings of gender:

> the very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and others, are not of our making. They are social in character, and they establish social norms, a domain of unfreedom and "substitutability" within which our singular stories are told. (Butler, 2005, p.21)

The difficulty in relation to the research is to consider the limits through which not only the participants themselves regulate one another, but also the normative discourses of regulation within the context of the research space—of which the research itself becomes a further regulating force.

Interdiscursive

The simultaneous interpellation (Pinar, 2009) of subject and discourse is also an aspect of the relational. That is the pervasive discourses of femininities that regulate the female body, also require enactment by that subject: "to say that there is a matrix of gender relations that institutes

and sustains the subject is not to claim that there is a singular matrix that acts in a singular and deterministic way to produce a subject as its effect" (Butler, 1993, p. 8). Within this 'theatre of constraint', the gendered subject constantly negotiates its constructions (Butler, 1997). As this reiterative space can become a space of rupture and destabilization (Butler, 1990), I assert that it needs become centered in discussions of the relational. Yet, as in the previous discussion of 'seeing' gender beyond the body, the subtle, often undetectable negotiations between subjects and normative discourses confront similar challenges of witness and recognition. Rather than 'see' this negotiation, then, this process might be found through re-presentations of participant's varied performances. It is in this way, that the intersubjective is engaged in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. There, I attempt to capture elements of interplay with normative discourses of teacher, through re-presentations of my performance of teacher in the research space.

Theories of Media Education

Like gender, 'youth' is also a category that is discursively produced (Lesko, 1996; 2001; 2002; 2005). In the same way theories of gender are constantly challenged by pervasive discourses of nature and biology, theories suggesting the construction of youth are faced with the rein/s of developmentalism. Youth are assumed to have a distinctive nature, to be coming of age, to be controlled by hormones, and to be peer oriented (Lesko, 1996; 2002; 2005). Understandings of 'youth' as a social construction are pushed to the periphery of educational discourses due to the prevailing acceptance of youth as a developmental stage (Vagle, 2012). This acceptance fuels fixed, naturalized understandings about how/what youth can/should learn. Although not necessarily informed by developmental understandings, discussions about the relationship between 'youth' and media in some of the literature, produce the same effect—a

generalizable youth.

Youth and Media

Is there any experience that is as yet unmediated by media influences? Growing up living a

partially simulated life of screens, earbuds, and joysticks is now a normal experience, so much

so in fact that there is an increasingly fuzzy line that divides what one knows from where one has

learned it, or what one has experienced from where it actually happened.

--Hoechsmann & Poytnz, 2012, p. 17

In an age when technologies are rapidly developing, and many youth are in constant

engagement with these technologies, media creates mediated spaces, relationships and realities

(Hoechsman & Poyntz, 2012, p.ix). Media[13] forms are so embedded in our daily lives that their

power has become 'naturalized' (Stack. 2010).

In the second half of the twentieth century we have witnessed the global expansion of

communications, media, and visual culture, which have radically altered the way information is

obtained (Goldfarb, 2002). This, Silverstone (2004) posits, has resulted the emergence of a

digital media environment that is more intense as a result of its speed and convergence. As

Buckingham (2003b) points out, "the proliferation of media technologies, the commercialization

and globalization of media markets, the fragmentation of mass audiences and the rise of

'interactivity' are all fundamentally transforming young people's everyday experiences of

media" (p.15). Further, the development of new media creates a more heterogeneous

environment that blurs the boundaries between producers and consumers, adult and youth, mass

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[13] The word media encompasses both the means of communication, such as film, and the product or text, movies (Stack, 2009). Media is both the text and the technology (Hoechsman & Poyntz, 2012). While all art forms could be considered media (Sefton-Green & Soep, 2007), this project focuses on "the contemporary use of the term, referring to mass media, namely film, television, radio, the Internet and other technologically supported forms of communication" (Sefton-Green & Soep, 2007, p.836).

and interpersonal communication (Buckinghmam, 2003a; 2003b). Some researchers and theorists argue that the culmination of increased access and convergence is 'schooling' youth in and by media, inside and outside of institutional spaces (Buckingham, 1992; 2003a; 2003b; Jenkins. 2006; Stack & Kelly, 2006).

In the current context, youth[14] spend more time with media than with any other institution (Stack & Kelly, 2006). While there has been a decline in viewing of traditional forms of television, youth engagement with media has continually increased over the decades (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). With handheld devices that allow youth to network, game, search the internet, and view multiple forms of media, they have unprecedented access to media (Buckingham, 2007). Youth spend over fifty hours a week with media, texting over ninety minutes a day, and often consuming 11 hours of content in 7 hours through continual multi-tasking (Hoechsmann & Poytnz, 2012, p. 19-24). In a screen-rich bedroom culture (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p.24) youth can view the popular culture figures they adore, or despise, within the intimate spaces of their homes. This increased use and dependence on technology provides access to boundless content; children can gain access to 'adult' media much easier (Buckingham, 2003b). Buckingham (2007) posits that this media rich context has contributed to a 'new digital divide' between formal educational spaces and out of school experiences. Two pedagogical misunderstandings arise from this media rich context.

First, that youth are already media literate—a fixed understanding of literacy that is hinged to technological acuity. A prevalent theme in the literature is that youth are 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001) who are simultaneously producing and consuming (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Jenkins, 1997), competent and empowered (Buckingham, 2007). Such

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[14] Throughout this paragraph I draw on the essentialized use of the term 'youth' to outline some of the assertions made about the relationship between youth and media in the literature.

celebrations drastically overestimate, confusing technological use for media literacy. If we think of food as a form of media, one might argue that being able to cook and eat food is an element of literacies. And yet, one could produce and consume food and have no understandings of: the environmental impact of the foods we eat, the way it is grown, or the way it is distributed. Further, they could produce and consume food without confronting: the social questions surrounding one's responsibility to those who have no food, or to the farmers who grew the food; the economic questions related to the pricing of food; or the philosophical questions related to what we consume. These are all integral elements and forms of literacies; yet a person could eat food every day, and never consider any of these questions—and many do. Similarly, one could be technological adept, which certainly involves literacy, but not have considered the multitude of critical literacies related to the production and consumption of media.

Following a singular understanding of literacy, educators often rely on misguided instrumental approaches (Buckingham, 2007) that fumblingly introduce new technologies to the classroom at the expense of considering broader questions of literacies:

> Education *about* the media should be seen as an indispensable prerequisite for education *with* or *through* the media…The meaningful and effective use of media in education therefore depends upon students developing a form of critical media literacy that goes well beyond a training in how to operate the hardware or software. (Buckingham, 2007, p. 112)

Media literacies involve both the reading and writing of media (Buckingham 2003a; 2003b; Bragg, 2001; Funge, 1998; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Stack, 2009), constant criticality, and the recognition that literacies are not achieved once and for all (Buckingham, 2003b; Hoechsmann and Poyntz, 2012). The complex ways in which youths' lives are "inescapably

intertwined with the images, sounds, and words of consumer-mediated culture" impels

pedagogical conversations surrounding media education and literacy (Hoechsmann & Poytnz, p.

18). Within subsequent chapters, I attempt to draw on multiple understandings of media

literacies and approach media literacy as constantly incomplete. I also consider the way in which

traditional literacy is placed on media literacy.

Media Education

Although, the relevance of media in the lives of youth seems to be a given in media

education, the ways in which educators and students can and should engage with that media is of

greater debate. The pervasiveness of media is either used as proof of youth engagement and

technological acuity (Buckingham, 2003; Jenkins, 2006), or as a warning to the way in which

youth are subjectified/mediatized (Friesen & Hug, 2009; Stack, 2010).

Protection

The latter belief inspires protectionist models of media education, which view the child as

innocent and unknowing, and the media as a separate entity that children are not productive in.

Protectionist models are highly suspicious of the intentions of the media, and doubt the capacity

of youth audiences to engage with and make meaning from media (Lewis & Jhally, 1998;

Masterman, 1985; Stack & Kelly, 2006). While the underlying critiques surrounding

representation and consumerism within the protectionist model are still relevant, the crusade

manner in which it is often implemented is not—if it ever as. Protectionist models of media

education patronize 'the child', undermine the complex ways in which youth are already reading

and producing media, and imagine an adult who is immune to the powerful influences of media

(Buckingham 2003a; 2003b; Jenkins, 1997). As such, recent theories of media education seek to

challenge protectionist, moralistic models that undermine youth, and instead recognize the level

at which youth audiences are already participating with the media (Buckingham 2003a; 2003b; Jenkins, 2006).

Jenkins (1997) refutes false notions of protectionism, declaring that, "we cannot teach children how to engage in critical thought by denying them access to challenging information or provocative images" (p.33), particularly as this denial of access is a fallacy—as is the notion that all youth need to be taught how to engage in critical thought. As is evidenced by Pepper's data fragment, many youth are already critically participating with their mediated worlds:

> P: it's okay to kill people, and do all this horrible violence, but you can't, you know, show sex or swear….Ya, or like the movies, if you have like a healthy loving sexual scene in a movie, its automatically NC Seventeen. But if people are brutally murdered—its PG 13."(Pepper, Group Two, March 8, lines 1109-1120)

Through an eloquent paradox, Pepper denounces the random, hypocritical way that the current ratings system deems certain material objectionable. Homophobic lyrics in music, brutal, graphic murders on television, and sexually provocative advertisements are freely accessed, while swearing and loving sexual scenes are oddly restricted. Like the ratings system Pepper discredits, protectionist models of media education: project an essentialized notion of an innocent youth, ignore the current media rich context in which access has blurred the line between adult and youth content, and disregard youths' capacities to critically engage with their mediated worlds. With that said, critical media literacy is not obtained once and for all, and youth, like any other audience, do not freely interpret popular culture; the relationship between structure and agency is far more complex than that (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012).

Pleasure & Play

In this view, "the media can no longer be seen—as they often are by media educators—as

consciousness industries inexorably imposing false ideologies or cultural values on passive

audiences." (Buckinghmam, 2003a, p. 310). Instead, educators need to recognize youth as

knowing, and begin to trust their pleasure and engagement with the media (Buckingham, 2003a).

In response to the modernist assumptions of rationality and distanced criticality privileged in

educational discourses, many current media education theorists invite pleasure into the

conversation (Bragg, 2001; Buckingham, 2003b; Duncum, 2009; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012).

Buckingham (2003b) asserts a new playful approach to unsettle rationalist and realist

conceptions of representations. This translates to encouraging multiple readings and ambivalent

reactions to media texts, rather than the imposition of a singular 'appropriate' response favoured

in protectionist models (Funge, 1998). In this context, fixed meanings and totalizing discourses

are refused (Buckingham, 2003b). Drawing on Bakhtinian notions of the carnivalesque,

Buckingham (2003b) encourages pleasure, emotional investment, laughter, parody, the

unspeakable, irony, bodily functions, violence, transgressions—'play' in formal education

spaces. Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) describe this as bringing the forbidden, the body and

pleasure, into educational spaces. Duncum (2009) plainly describes this as fun, but not fun with

purpose, or regulated fun.

A major element of play, is production (Buckingham 2003a; 2003b; Bragg, 2001; Funge,

1998; Stack, 2009; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2010). Drawing on Grace and Tobin (2002),

Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) suggest that the pleasure, taboo, parody, irony, and transgression

evident in youth productions is a form of agency. However, Hoechsmann & Poyntz also critique

media education theorists who present youth as free floating agents able to make whatever sense

they want of media (also see Soep, 2006 for discussion). Considering the critiques of 'voice'

presented in my theoretical framework, throughout this dissertation I challenge the lofty claims

of transgression and agency presented in some of the media education literature. Specifically, through my discussions of criticality and teacher intervention in *Chapter Five*, I consider the ways in which the pervasive discourses in education might regulate youth productions and stifle the possibilities of subversion in production.

My Media Education

Multiple interpretations, complexity, play, and production, are all central to my own understanding of media education; however, as is evident throughout this dissertation, there are still many places that I struggle with an overemphasis on play and production at the expense of provocations of dominant narratives and representations. The concerns put forth by critical media educators (Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Masterman, 1985; Stack & Kelly, 2006), that of consumerism and fixed racialized and gendered constructions, have not been evacuated from media and are still necessary aspects of media education. While they promote pleasure and play, Buckingham (2003a; 2003b), Duncum (2009), Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) and Poyntz (2006) all assert criticality, ideology and teacher intervention. And yet, the very use of these terms is grounded in normative discourses that oppose the transgressive elements of play. Further, this constant tension, between play and criticality, ignores the anxieties and complexities of practice. This is not a matter that is nullified by a more specific use of terms, although I think that media education theorists who use terms like *morality, citizenship, criticality,* and *ideology*, should wrestle with the nuances of these concepts. Rather, amidst questions about where educators draw the line between pleasure and harm, and what these educators are to do when the line itself is ambiguous, theorists are responsible for engaging complex practical examples to articulate this tension. I posit that not only will this constantly disturb terms like criticality, but it will recognize

practice as a space of theory and pedagogy, unshame the constant unknowns of practice, and provoke pedagogy.

About What Follows

This dissertation is divided in six main chapters. *Chapter Two: Methodological Film,* details the methodology and methods of this study. In addition to outlining the particularities of the project, I place the methods engaged in conversation with the literature that informs this study. Further, I interrupt the chapter several times to explore methodological tensions that arose throughout the research; these interruptions serve as a refutation to the linearity required in reporting research and to the divisibility of methodology from the analysis and findings of research. In *Chapter Three: Pop Pedagogy,* I draw on moments from the data in which the participants and I speak with/through popular media, to continue this provocation of divisibility. That is, I consider these moments as both methodological and pedagogical. The majority of this chapter places popular culture in conversation with pedagogy. *Chapter Four: Getting Intimate*, considers the relationship between youth and media/production. Drawing on moments that suggest an intimate connection between the youth and media, I wonder how this might invite a sensory pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005). Alternately, in *Chapter Five: Mrs. Mimesis*, I consider the way that pervasive modernist discourses in education, and the cultural myths of teacher (Britzman, 2003), might interfere with the pedagogical possibilities of digital video production. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I consider the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications of this study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL FILM

This chapter outlines the methodological underpinnings, particularities and processes of

an eight-month educational study in a Film classroom. In particular, I outline the specific details

of the study, including all of the requirements of conducting the research, the methods employed,

and the data sources and analysis. In detailing the process of the project, my objective is to create

a context for the subsequent findings chapters by introducing the research space and participants,

and my relationship as the researcher to both of these. However, as our methodological processes

do not happen absent of theory or analysis, this chapter pauses to explore the many moments in

the research where the framework of the study was challenged by the process of doing research.

Drawing on a lineage of theorists who have challenged the assumptions and expectations

that burden empirical research (Britzman, 1995; Lather, 2006; Talburt, 2004; Youdell, 2005;

2006; 2009), I speak to the methodological tensions and theoretical idiosyncrasies that arose

throughout the process of data collection and analysis. In order to this, I interrupt the linearity of

outlining the unfolding of the research project through four analytical pauses. In the first, I

struggle with the theoretical incongruence of relying on gendered terms to describe the

participants. In a second analytical pause, I consider the impossibilities of building 'ethical'

research spaces within a classroom where not all students in the room have consented to

participate. Pausing again, I interrogate my focus on the digital video productions as text.

Finally, I pause to question how researchers might engage research data to represent contingent,

recursive moments.

Analytical Pause One: Pro/no/noun

Heeding the warnings about essentialist reductionism (Francis, 2010) and theoretical

idiosyncrasies in empirical and analytical research on gender (Lyng, 2009), I struggled to align

the theories of gender that inform this research with the processes of the study. In particular, labeling participants, with static, binaried, gendered terms does not align with the theories of gender, the body, fluidity and relationality that inform this study. I worry about the ways in which the attachment of restrained terms, like 'male' and 'female' conflates the body with normative understandings of gender, in turn producing sexed bodies. This act of labeling reinscribes sex as natural, produces limited understanding of masculinities and femininities, and ignores the role that the 'opposing' body plays in the production and performance of the other (Halberstam, 1998a; Pascoe, 2007; Sedgwick, 1995). How is it that I use static gendered terms to label the participants[15]?

This loaded terminology, alludes to a system of understandings that, once used, actively produces the participants within these constraints. This system of understandings regulates how the participants can be understood and most problematically nullifies the particularities of the participants' identities. The participants were never fully male or female in their performances; this 'authenticity' is not possible. The performances were much more varied than the limitations of these binaried, fixed term would suggest. Specifically, a label, such as 'male', fails to capture the diverse performances of masculinities within the research space, even when applied to the female body. Categorizing these differences may recognize the plurality of femininities and masculinities, and the failure of the binary; however, this also fails to encapsulate the fluidity of performances by a single subject. Subjects do not consistently perform within any category. This industry of cataloguing types of difference is static and reifies simplistic typologies of sorts of masculinity and femininity (Francis, 2010; Pascoe, 2007). Proliferate pronouns misrepresent identities in their failure to encapsulate the fluidity and multiplicity of subjects' performances.

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[15] Although, I recognize the importance of having the participants self identify, as I outline in the section below, entitled *Oh Boy,* I do not think these concerns are appeased through this process.

For example, there were no two 'female' participants who performed their gender consistently throughout the research, or identical to any of the other female participants.

This methodological conundrum arises in the tension between recognizing the fluidities and particularities of the participants' performances and recognizing the discursive weight of gender that undeniably subjectifies the participants. Gender is relevant, it regulates how the participants are understood and how they understand themselves. Ponyboy, a female participant whose very pseudonym interrogates the alignment of gendered terms to biological bodies, exemplifies this methodological tension.

Oh Boy

Ponyboy's choice of pseudonym was explained within a conversation a few of the female participants and I were having about the lack of complex female characters in popular culture. After declaring that there are few female characters that resonate with her, she said, *Ponyboy Curtis, that's me* (Research Journal, p.20). I hesitate to say that her choice of pseudonym was an attempt to align herself with masculinity; certainly, I observed performances of masculinities from her, but these performances were neither consistent nor 'objectively' masculine.

This is not a matter of choosing the appropriate side of the binary to represent Ponyboy's identity; rather, it is a matter of questioning the binary and the way gendered terms fix her identity—the incongruity of my continued use of the pronoun 'her' throughout this analytical pause is not lost on me. Each use of the term she/female to speak about Ponyboy within the research, enacts Ponyboy as female, and regulates the way in which all of her actions and utterances are understood. In turn, the data fragments related to Ponyboy may be falsely associated with a 'generalizable female', where none exists. And still, it is not possible to write from a 'gender neutral' perspective. Such writing ignores the relevance and operation of gender

in the research context. Certainly, it says something about the pertinence and pervasiveness of the binary that none of the participants drew on terms other than male or female to describe themselves.

Ponyboy's definitive, 'that's me' may be an attempt to fix an identity; however, gender is never done, once and for all (Butler, 1990). This is not to say that my understanding is more valid than Ponyboy's, rather that this methodological conundrum is not appeasable through a simple turn to participant understandings of their own identities, as male or female. Recognizing that our gender is not done alone (Butler, 2004), neither the researcher nor the participant has a more authentic understanding of participant identity. Particularly, as like their identities, participant understandings are movable. For example, after using the definitive 'that's me' to declare herself *Ponyboy*, she uses the same phrase, 'that's me' (Feb. 29, line 496), to align herself with a parodic representation of a typical girl in *Shit Girls Say*. The representation of gender in *Shit Girls Say* is incompatible with that of *Ponyboy Curtis* from the novel, *The Outsiders*; yet, in different moments she recognizes and/or defines herself differently.

As such, this theoretical incongruence, is not satisfied by cataloguing types of femininities, or finding more appropriate labels, as participant performances are not static. The terms do not suffice. This insufficiency is articulated in a data fragment uttered by another participant, Bison: "I do that all the time. I swear. I don't consider myself a huge girly, girl, like a normal girl or whatever, but a lot of those things related to me, and I'm like [breathes in]…" (Feb. 29, lines 540-542). Bison finds herself at a loss for an appropriate gendered characterization for herself, relying on girl as adjective and noun. She is at once both a girl and not. Neither Bison or Ponyboy adhere to a static representation of 'girl'. Although their bodies, style, mannerisms, and dress made them intelligible as females, their own performances varied,

and varied from one another. Like Bison's vacillations in speech, throughout the study, Ponyboy performed in complex, inconstant, varied ways; any definitive term would suppress the complexities and particularities of her performances. She critiqued stereotypical representations of females in popular culture, while contradictorily praising the parody *Shit Girls Say* as a 'true' representation of females. She spoke of assumptions about feminists in society, schooled a male classmate on his homophobic attitudes, and critiqued girls for making model faces on Facebook, while simultaneously speaking about the trials of keeping her hair straight, sharing her own modeling photos, and discussing her outfit for prom. Is it that her denunciation of female characters aligns her with masculinity, or her recognition of herself in the parody of typical females re-aligns her with femininities? Are these acts either masculine or feminine, or do the acts only become gendered in relation to the body that performs them? Rather, is the understanding of the performance, as masculine or feminine, dependent on the viewer? As identities are riddled with these questions, neither male or female, encapsulates the complexities and contradictions of Ponyboy's gender. She, like all of the participants, gets lost in a gendered term.

I remain unsettled as to the use of pronouns in relation to my participants. This seems an appropriate conundrum for a project with a recursive, contingent frame. Understanding recursive, as occurring over and over again, my thinking on this matter is still undone, happening over and over again. I am currently stuck between the notion that identities matter, and the desire to trouble the matter. Although these writings require that I make a decision either way, I do not feign to have satisfactorily contended with this tension. It is from this undecided space that I write, and continue to use pronouns—for the moment.

Reel Ethnography

Drawing on Britzman's (1995) understanding of ethnography, and Gonick's (2000) discussion of ethnographic methods and ethnographic space, this study employs the methods of observation, video production, and group film discussions to explore the ways in which youth inhabit and make sense of masculinities/femininities and sexualities, and how youth are constructed and disrupted in the process. Within this frame, it is understood that " 'the real' of ethnography is taken as an effect of the discourses of the real; ethnography may construct the very materiality it attempts to represent" (Britzman, 1995, p. 28). That is, the participant, author and reader are all contextualized identities and ethnography can only ever summarize partial truths. In turn, this research considers the research context, processes and relationships a major element of the 'data'. This shifts the focus of analysis to the relationships constructed within the research, and to the discourses of youth, gender and sexuality. Research that is about the 'complications of constitution' (Talburt, 2004). This translates to a research project that questions the authority of empiricism, of language, and of reading and understanding (Brtizman, 1995).

This project aligns with ethnography in that I engaged with a group of youth, over an extended period of time, within an institutional space, in order explore their performances and understandings of gender. To use the language of ethnography, I employed the methods of: observation and field notes, to explore how the youth engage with media within classroom, production and discussion spaces; group discussion, to explore the ways that youth inhabit and make sense of masculinities/femininities and sexualities as conveyed in visual digital media; video production, to produce an artifact. Despite the use of ethnographic methods, I am hesitant to use the term ethnography. As with any term, there is a lineage of authors that overwhelm the

way in which this research method is understood. Certainly understandings of ethnography can alter through varied enactments; however, the weight of the term may also prescribe the process of the study, and dismiss the particular objectives of this research project, and the research questions[16] that inform this study. Instead, I wanted the research methods to tend to the epistemological underpinnings of the project, to the particularities of the context, and to the participants.

As outlined below, the combination of observation, group film discussions and digital video production follows the theories that inform this study, tends to the research questions, and aligns with methodological and pedagogical goals of this particular project.

The Way I See It

The method of participant observation tends to the focus on *process* in the questions that ground this project, the methodological claims made about youth and digital video production, and the pedagogical conundrums related to conversations of gender and sexualities in the classroom context.

Participant observation allows a researcher to immerse themselves in the daily routines within a research space, develop relationships, and observe practices and people through this process (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). Continued involvement in the research invites complex, fluid, critical understandings of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' that align with the contingent recursive frame of this study. By that I mean, participation observation in this space over an extended period time allowed me to see the profoundly contextual and dependent manner in

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[16] **Question 1:** Within educational settings, how do youth inhabit and make sense of masculinities/femininities and sexualities as conveyed in visual digital media?
Question 2: How are the very categories of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' constructed and disrupted in the process of dialogue, and in the processes of participatory media production? In what ways might these understandings suggest the emergence of fluid, critical understandings of youth, gender and media?

which identities, like youth, perform (Lesko, 2001). Youth are at once mature and immature, masculine and feminine, teachers and learners, political and apathetic (Lesko, 2001; Vagle, 2012). As this study approaches identities as 'imagined boundaries' (Talburt, 2004), prolonged immersion with youth allowed me to see the ways in which this 'group' are implicated in this boundary.

As one of the main purposes of this project was to look at the way that digital video production might provide an outlet for complex, varied, unique representations, negotiations and readings of masculinities and femininities, participant observation invited me to take part in the processes of making these productions, particularly the conversations and decisions the youth made about representation, filming choices, and interpretations of one another's work. Additionally, prolonged engagement with this group allowed an interrogation of some of the claims made in the media education literature about the relationship between youth and digital video production (Buckingham, 2009; Buckingham, Niesyto & Fisherkeller, 2003; Renold & Ross, 2008; Thomson, 2008). Further, over the eight-month period, I was able to consider the tensions in media education surrounding the role of ideology. For example, as is articulated in the following chapters, I was able to struggle through questions of drag, parody and subversion with one group, the relevance of feminism with another group, difficult conversations of privilege and whiteness with another, and an exploration of nature and nurture in relation to gender and sexualities with many members of the class. This struggle, manifested over time, through debate, resistance, and emergent understandings.

In Conversation

Rather than the pursuit for 'members' meanings' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995), the focus of this research is on the discourses that operate within/on groups, and the diversity and

inconsistencies amidst the process of dialogue. Group discussion aligns with the epistemological understandings of identities, research and data underlying this focus.

Group discussions are not consumed with individual biographies, instead focus on interaction (Kitzinger, 1994; 1995), consider the way that subjects regulate one another, and make visible the moments in which subjects engage in identity work (Allen, 2005). Gill, Henwood & McLean (2005) and Phillips (2001) declare that both the regulation and performances of gender can become heightened within a group setting. In this way, the group interaction becomes part of research data (Kitzinger, 1994; 1995).

Collective interaction characterizes group discussions and creates data that reflect the public production of discourse and the constitution of knowledge—another epistemological parallel. As the focus is on communication between participants, group discussions unsettle the notion that there is a truth, a *real* understanding on a particular issue (Kitzinger, 1994; 1995). Instead, the focus then is on the formation of understandings within a particular context. An element of this context is the research process; the research itself has a discourse and brings into being the discourses being observed. As the researcher, I do not stand outside of the discourses. In turn, this becomes another element that contributes to the consistent partiality of my observations.

Beyond theoretical consonance, film discussion groups parallel the collaborative practices of the Film classroom. The group discussions became vibrant, interactive, pedagogical spaces. Further, the group environment provided an audience for the student productions, and a space to share varying understanding of representations within one another's work. Some theorists assert that audiences are crucial motivators for youth media production (Buckingham, 2003b; Sefton-Green & Buckingham, 1998; Peppler & Kafai, 2007). In particular, Buckingham

and Harvey (2001) posit that audiences encourage producers to think about the consequences of their work, and the dis/connect between intentions and interpretations.

On a final note, I felt that the group discussions helped to balance, not equalize, the researcher-participant power dynamic. This was evident in the many moments in which the participants guided the direction of the discussions. The pieces of popular culture engaged in our lunch discussions, and discussed in *Chapter Three*, are evidence of the role the participants played in steering our discussions. Several of these pieces were unknown to me prior to these conversations.

Verified in Video

Buckingham (2009) warns against the tremendous claims being made about the use of 'creative' visual methods in research. That is, the turn to digital video production does not enable participants to express themselves in a more 'authentic' way, or grant researchers access to "what people 'really' think or feel" (Buckingham, 2009, p.645). Visual representations are always constructed. Although, media researchers recognize that media does not reflect the world, and that communication is contingent on social context, these insights are not always applied in media research (Buckingham, 2009, p. 639). Recognizing these warnings, the method of video production was chosen for the ways it aligned with the research questions, particularly the focus on process and pedagogy.

The methodological questions that arose from a previous interview based study (Moore, 2008), and the pedagogical questions that persisted surrounding discussions of gender and sexualities in the classroom context, provoked me to consider the possibilities for digital video production with youth. In focusing on process, the method of digital video production, like group film discussions, discerns the conditions within which understandings come to be. Further, the

method of digital video production takes time (Buckingham, 2009); this prolonged engagement grants space to the way emergent, fluid, critical understandings of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' are constructed through this process. The final rationale for this method is pedagogical. As many media education theorists necessitate the role of production, this project explores the role of production with youth in the classroom context.

<div align="center">**Particulars**</div>

Within this section, I outline the particulars of this eight-month research project. The difficulty in writing the research process is the linearity that it requires, considering the entanglement of the process. This section provides a description of the ethical foundations, the research site, the participants, and the two phases of the research. Within the descriptions of each phase, I outline the process of ethics and recruitment, the participants, and the methods of data collection and analysis. Yet, as stated above, these phases occurred simultaneously. Raised, and razed, throughout this ordered discussion of the particulars of the study are three additional analytical pauses that reveal the methodological conundrums that riddle this project.

<div align="center">**Ethics**</div>

I received ethical approval to conduct this research from the school board in September 2011, and from the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board the following month. After receiving both, I also sought consent from the school administrator and classroom teacher. For this, the administration and classroom teacher received letters that outlined the purpose, procedure, rationale, and projected timeline of the study. After both were signed, I made initial contact with the students in November 2011, and soon after gave them consent/assent forms for phase one of the research process.

Research Site

The study was conducted over an eight-month period within a Film 11/12 classroom. The school in which the class is located is in a community with a mixture of apartment buildings, single family homes, and lower socio-economic housing. Much like the community in which it is located, the school has an ethnically diverse population of over 1700 students. Information distributed by the school board[17], boasts that there are over 50 languages spoken in the students' homes, and that they have the second largest Aboriginal student population in the district. The school offers several enriched academic programs, a range of athletics, and a variety of electives in Art, Drama, Music, Business Education and Technical Studies. One of these electives, Film and Television, is the specific space in which my research was conducted.

Film, as the course is commonly known, attracts students in senior grades that are interested in film and video production. Students within these classes are taught production skills, have access to filming equipment, and create productions as part of the class requirements. The specific objectives, assignments, and projects for this class are outlined in a more fulsome way in the description of phase one of the research project. This class is open to grade 11 and 12 students, so can potentially be taken two years in a row. While there were a few grade 12 students who were taking the course for the first time, one third of the class were grade 12 students who optioned to continue the class a second year because of their interest in Film. As it is a multi-grade class, students are encouraged to work independently to complete film projects that represent their level of understanding.

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[17] In order to protect the anonymity of the school, I cannot give the specific reference for this information. It is included on the official school board link for this school, and in all printed material about the school.

The Film teacher, Thomas[18], also teaches within an enriched program in the school. As a result, many of the students in the Film class are students who had previously been taught by Thomas as part of this program, and specifically named him as their motivation for taking Film. In turn, the class, in general, was made up of students who are academically focused. Only a small contingent of the class was made up of students who have attendance problems and are not academically oriented. Further, as many of the students enrolled in this specific enriched program are white, and/or Canadian born, the demographic of the Film class does not align with the larger demographic of the school.

As a result of the connections made through the enriched program, the varying grade levels, and the differing enthusiasm and connection to Film, distinct groupings emerged within the classroom context. Although these groupings were not crystallized, the class was generally organized into seven groups: grade twelve students who had optioned to take the course for a second time formed two independent groups that were generally divided by gender—aside from one female in the male group; grade twelve students who were taking the course for the first time; male students who had issues with attendance; a mixed gender group of grade elevens exclusively from the enriched class; a mixed gender group from two different enriched programs; a group with two females and one male from the enriched program, and two females who had issues with attendance[19]. Throughout the year, habitual patterns emerged and the students often physically situated themselves around the room within these groups. These grouping were certainly not fixed, as there were opportunities for the students to work across

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[18] Pseudonym

[19] Again, even in my attempts to decenter gender, I fall toward binaried terms to explain the groupings within the research context. Stuck again in the tension: gender is relevant to the formation of these groups and/or gender becomes relevant in my labeling.

groups, and merge with other groups; however, students generally gravitated to the same area of the room at the beginning of each class, and in most cases worked with the same people.

The Space

The classroom is a large, open, rectangular space, located in a separate wing of the school along with the gymnasium, drama studio and cafeteria. The high ceilings, short staircase leading to the drama offices, video equipment room, absence of desks, and two 'household' pink recliner chairs, lessen the rigid, formal structure of the typical high school classroom. This is heightened by the lack of a teacher's desk, or identifiable teacher space. Within the middle area of the class, chairs are messily scattered about, rarely tucked neatly into the bench style tables that run along three walls of the classroom. Nine computers sit atop the bench tables along the three walls. The classroom door, equipment room door, a large green screen, and a TV run along the wall that is absent of desks. When Thomas is leading a class discussion or showing film clips, the students move to the scattering of chairs in the middle of the room, otherwise the students end up sitting directly on the bench style tables or in a chair near the computer that their group is using. Aside from the routine places that the groupings migrate toward, the students move freely in and out of the room.

Phase One

Phase one of the research project involved participant observation and film production throughout Term Two. For this first phase, the participants' commitment did not extend beyond the regular requirements of the class. Those who consented to participate were informed that they would be observed in the classroom context throughout the process of making their films, and that I would be participating with them throughout this process.

Phase One: Ethics & Recruitment

I made initial contact with the students in the classroom context. Prior to explaining the specifics of the study, I spent several classes participating in the class so that I could become familiar with the classroom culture, and learn the ways in which the students and teacher operated in this space. After two weeks, the teacher, Thomas, granted me time at the beginning of the class to explain the specifics of my research and the necessary process of consent. In the initial contact letter, I outlined my interests in the theme of gender and sexualities, and the digital production process. Also in this letter, the students were informed that I wished to work with their class in order to observe, discuss and produce films. I explicitly stated that the films for this research project would be produced as part of the requirements for Film 11/12 and did not translate to additional work beyond the class. The initial contact also outlined the two phases of the research process and consent, the first granting permission to be observed in this production process and the second granting permission to participate in film discussions outside of class time.

Following initial contact, each student was given a video assent/consent form to allow for participation in phase one. This first letter would grant me permission to act as a participant observer in the film production process, and released their films for use in my study. Due to the fact that the videos produced in class would be used for both a course project and for the study, I reiterated that: consent was voluntary and participants could withdraw from the study at any point; that the comments made about the students' videos within the research would not be shared with the teacher; and that participation in the research project was in no way tied to assessment for the course. The option of using the video as an assignment ensured participation in this research project was not overly cumbersome for the youth. Students who did not wish to

participate were assured that they would not be observed or referenced in my research notes. Further, I outlined that their choice to participate would remain confidential, and that pseudonyms would be used to help protect the privacy of the participants.

In an attempt to protect confidentiality, and to lessen pressure the students may have felt to hand in their consent forms, I gave the students addressed envelopes with the option to hand the envelopes to me, to their classroom teacher, or to their counselor's school mailbox. The grade counselors were informed of this process, and told they could pass along the addressed envelopes to me. As the envelopes were sealed, grade counselors would not be made aware of who had agreed to participate. Informing the counselors of the study also alerted them to the process of the study, in case any students wished to speak to them about anything that arose throughout the research process. In addition to being invited to speak to the classroom teacher, the counselor, or myself, students were given the number of the principal investigator.

Phase One: Participants

Of the twenty-six students in the class, nineteen consented to be observed in the classroom space. Of this nineteen, ten of the participants self-identified as male, nine as female. All of the males that consented to participate in the group are white, culturally 'Canadian', and speak English fluently. Their fluency with culture was also evident in the ways that they constantly drew on popular cultural references, engaged in discussions about political, historical, Canadian popular culture, and bonded in relation to their extra-curricular activities—evidence of their shared cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/1990). Of the nine females who consented to be observed, seven are white, one is of mixed race, and one is Asian; all possess a similar degree of capital and understanding of Canadian popular culture as the males.

Pseudonyms

Throughout this research I use pseudonyms in an attempt to preserve the confidentiality of the participants. Many of the participants chose their own pseudonyms. However, in the cases in which the participant's allowed me to choose a pseudonym, or neglected to choose one, I have simply chosen to represent them with a single letter. As such, these participants are referred to as 'Participant B', 'Participant Y', 'Participant H', 'Participant W' and 'Participant Z'. As a researcher, I felt very uncomfortable assigning pseudonyms to the participants who neglected to do so; I do not mean to refer to them through letter assignation as an act of distancing or making impersonal, rather that choosing a pseudonym feels incredibly personal. The letters used have no connection to the youths' given names, and were chosen at random. In the case of 'Subject X', this pseudonym was specifically chosen by the participant, including the use of the word 'subject'. A list of participants for phase one [Appendix A] and phase two [Appendix B] have been included as an appendix.

Phase One: Methods and Process

In my role as a participant observer, I attended Film class for eight months of the school year. The class ran every other day for seventy-five minutes, and I attended each class from November through June.

Phase One: Struggling Student

As a high school teacher and a graduate student, I initially found my role as an educator and a researcher in this context quite blurred. Although none of the students in this particular class or school knew me as a teacher, there were moments in my time as a participant observer where I felt as though I was acting in the role of teacher in order to help the students complete their films. The participants did not address me as a teacher; rather, I felt my 'teacher self'

encouraging students to 'finish their work', a discussion I take up further in *Chapter Five: Mrs. Mimesis*. My 'teacher self' also surfaced in the moments when students gossiped in front of me, swore, spoke about their personal lives, or inquired about mine—these interactions were unfamiliar to my normal role in a classroom setting. Although, I did not feel compelled to act as 'teacher' in these slippages of informal language and behavior, I was troubled by some of the choices the students were making in their films in relation to gender and sexualities. This struggle elucidates pervasive understandings of teacher, researcher, and research, as well as provokes the divisibility of methodology and pedagogy. Research spaces are pedagogical and methodological conundrums parallel those within educational spaces.

On one of my initial visits, a group spoke about having a character in their film dress in drag. I was very concerned about the way this was being done in the film; yet, I was tentative about interrogating their ideas, and about my place to critique. I raised these concerns with a committee member (S. Poyntz, personal communication, November 16, 2011), and as soon as I verbalized my hesitations I wished I could recant. On a theoretical level, I knew that remaining an 'uncritical observer' was naive, as my very presence changed the space. Despite my critiques of 'authentic youth voice' and 'data' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003), in these tentative moments I had embarrassingly abandoned my theoretical understandings. That is, research is already contrived, and data is always produced. My interrogations would not have diminished the authenticity of these moments, as none exists. While this recognition of theoretical incongruence placated my discomfort surrounding the right to challenge the participant's productions, I still remain uncertain about the line between critique and overwhelming 'youth understandings'. Although 'understandings' are never authentic, researchers and research can fill the space with expected responses that discourage participation. This parallels the way in which educators can dictate

expected criticality and discourage disparate interpretations. Questions remain about the role of ideology, censorship, and subversion in discussions with youth about media/production, all of which I explore in the chapters that follow.

My relationship with the classroom teacher, Thomas, also complicated my role in the classroom. Thomas and I often spoke to one another as teaching colleagues. That is, in these conversations we spoke about motivating the groups, particular student challenges, technological frustrations and pedagogical challenges. As we noticed issues arising in the class with group collaboration, discussions, and the filming process, Thomas and I collaborated to create activities and facilitate discussions that might encourage the students to think about their films in different ways. Initially I was concerned that my pedagogical discussions with Thomas might impact the way the participants saw me, and the relationships that I was forming with them. Oppositely, as a classroom teacher, I was concerned about the youth's engagement in the course and their commitment to their film projects. These competing roles and concerns riddled my research journal throughout the study and became the catalyst for *Chapter Five*.

Phase One: Back to Class

The class was structured around the creation of three main projects: documentaries, fiction pieces, and public service announcements; for each school term, the students had one project to complete. Threaded throughout the completion of these projects were film exercises, led by Thomas and myself, that encouraged students to think about representation, camera angles, framing of shots, locations, and use of dialogue. In addition, Thomas shared student, popular and classic films, in order to anchor some of the discussions about working with a camera. The majority of the time, however, the students worked collaboratively in their groups

through the preparation, filming and editing process. Although all of the groups worked toward a class deadline, the groups were frequently at different phases in this process.

For the first few months of this research project, I worked with the participants to complete their Documentary Projects. As I was often involved with the projects, or in conversation with the youth, I consistently wrote in my research journal *after* each day's class. Within the classroom, I always had a notebook with me to record any moments that I did not want to forget, but as I was usually engaged in discussion, preparation, or filming, with the members of the class, I did not want to constantly record throughout class. This act would impact my ability to participate with the students as they worked. For the most part, I used the notebook to record reminders and themes that emerged in class; however, the majority of my observations were thoroughly outlined in an electronic research journal immediately following class. The students knew that I had a notebook, and would sometimes flip through it as it sat on the tables. I left the notebook within the shared space of the classroom, as I did not want the participants to think that what I was writing was a secret. Their curiousity in the contents of the book often provoked conversations about the themes surrounding group work, gender representation, film, and popular culture. In addition, the journal acted as a springboard for pedagogical conversations with Thomas surrounding how we might re-think our objectives for the class.

Phase One: Project & Lessons

In my initial research proposal, I stated that the participants would create a film for Term Two that expressed their 'understandings of gender'. However, as the class normally creates fiction pieces for Term Two, Thomas and I decided that we would proceed with this expected project. The objective of the fiction assignment is to: encourage collective decision making;

engage in all elements of writing a story, such as plot, dialogue, character, setting and theme; and consider the ways in which sound, lighting, camera angles and shots help communicate the story. My initial objective, to mandate the theme of gender, felt naïve after having spent months in the classroom space. All projects would inevitably engage with understandings and representations of gender regardless of explicit intentions of my research projects. I came to see this intention as a forced activity for something that is always in process. Instead, Thomas and I decided that I would facilitate a class in which we looked at representations of gender in popular culture. For this particular lesson on representation, the class looked at the way in which masculinities, femininities, and sexualities are re-presented in popular media; this has much to do with how we read and make meaning of these representations. To be specific, we viewed movie trailers for *The Hangover* (2009), *Bridesmaids* (2011), and a clip from the popular television show *Glee*. This lesson was used to frame discussions about gender representation in the fiction assignments, and to encourage the participants to think about the choices they were making in relation to gender and sexualities in their films.

The lesson on representation was the second of three classes that I facilitated. The first class addressed the notion of media as a larger concept: defining media, exploring the role it plays in their lives, and considering the influences it has on our thinking. The third was a review of camera angles anchored to a film race activity. The film race was a collaborative, forty-minute exercise in which all of the groups were given the same short piece of script, absent of stage direction and character names. Groups were required to record and explain the choices they made in regards to filming location and camera movement. Thomas and I had noticed that a lot of the students in the class were familiar with film language, that of angles, shots, lighting and sound, but that they could not explain the choices that they made in relation to these elements.

Our concern was that the students were not using the camera with intention. As such, the objective of the film race was to encourage the students to be thoughtful about the way the camera communicates. Again, as this relates to my larger discussion of the pervasive discourses of teacher, I contemplate the underlying assumptions and objective of this lesson in *Chapter Five.*

Phase One: Take Two

In Term Two, I became more involved with the process of making the films. At this point, the participants knew me better and would approach me to work with their groups. In the previous term, I regularly had to ask permission to join groups. Also, as the research project was framed around the Term Two project, I was more involved in setting up the class, and more comfortable with my role in the room. Through this Term, I worked on several on-line documents with the students to plan and script their films. I also communicated with the class through e-mail to further discussions we began in class, or to send out reminders about costuming, props and meeting times for their films. These tasks helped me to build relationships with the participants, and made the research process seem more reciprocal.

On an average day, students would come into the class, sit around one of the nine computers in the classroom, and begin working on their film projects. Days when students were filming, they would check in with the teacher, get a camera, and leave for their location. The majority of the time was spent in the planning and editing phases, collaborating around a computer in their groups. Within this process, I worked with the class to generate ideas for their films, plan, storyboard, write scripts, film, and debrief the process. To use a specific example, as the students began the Term Two Fiction projects, I worked with the group who produced the film *Aftershock* to brainstorm ideas for their project. From the idea phase, I helped the group

create an on-line document for the script, including the dialogue and direction. This allowed the

participants and I to communicate about the direction of their film as it continued to progress.

Beyond the script, I suggested the group make a three-column document that outlined the

dialogue and directions, the location choices, and the actors and costuming needed. Further to the

planning phase, I worked with the group as they filmed, and was used as an actor in one of the

scenes. Within the editing phase, I continually viewed the films at different phases and gave my

initial thoughts. I use this as one example of a group that I participated with consistently. With

the three other groups of participants, I played larger roles at different phases: with *Parallel,* I

largely helped with organization, with *After She Left* I was heavily involved in the script writing

process, and with *Miss Perception* I was heavily involved in the conceptual phases of the

planning. I was, and remain completely ignorant of how to use the editing program that the

participants used, so when they were editing I often sat with them and talked about their films,

the choices they were making, popular culture, school, their classes, and their lives outside of

school.

Phase One: Data Sources

As outlined above, the data sources for this phase include observation notes, lesson plans

and materials, and student produced digital video productions. Although the class completed

documentaries, film exercises, and public service announcements, as a matter of ethics and

consent, I will only be drawing on the fiction pieces completed in Term Two as artifacts. By that

I mean, the consent and assent forms specifically state that the videos produced for Term Two

will be used as part of the study. Within this term, the participants completed four pieces of

fiction for the Film Showcase[20]. In order to introduce the films, I will use the write ups that the filmmakers wrote for the Showcase program:

After She Left: How two sisters cope with their mother's abandonment. Their separate struggles are shown throughout the film, as well as the strains put on their relationship due to their situation.

Aftershock: When Mark Collins, mercenary, returns from his tour of duty he is still recovering from the shock of combat and must come to terms with what he has done and adjust to life back home.

Parallel: A poor man is given a chance to explore his life in a different dimension. His false reality begins to fall apart—the man is forced to fight for his sanity. Inspired by "It's A Wonderful Life", the film demonstrates how we take our life and our sanity for granted.

Miss-Perception: We follow a seemingly blank canvas of a girl as she spends an ordinary day, unknowingly exposing the insecurities, prejudices, thoughts, and memories of the people she encounters.

There were three other films completed by groups in which not all members were participants, and one group of participants did not complete their fiction piece. While I separate these four films, this untethering is a fallacy that points to larger misunderstandings of process, time, and classroom observation on which this study is founded.

Analytical Pause Two: Spaces in Time

The Behavioral Research Ethics process demands that the specifics of a study are

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[20] The Film Showcase is a school board event in which students from all of the high schools share their pieces with one another. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing teacher dispute in which teachers were not participating in extra-curricular activities, the Film Showcase was cancelled. Despite its cancellation, the class showcased their films in the school auditorium.

articulated in the research application and subsequent consent forms. The requirement to

meticulously account the details of a study are understandable, and integral for protecting the

participants and spaces in which research is conducted. For this particular study, this required

detailing the time period of the study, the specific requirements of the participants, and the

resulting data that would be utilized. Yet, the concretization of a study within the application

and participant consent process ignores the abstract concepts of time, space and process within

educational environments.

Time And Time Again

The definitive timeline suggested in the consent process ignores the fluidity of school

terms. Film is a project-based class, structured around the process of making a series of

collaborative digital video productions. With this model, the due dates for the projects were

continually in flux, as Thomas responded to the specific needs of the students rather than a pre-

determined date that dictates how the learning process will unfold. In addition to the

uncertainties of the learning processes, the completion of these projects was dependent on factors

out of the students' control. For example, one group lost their entire project when a computer in

the room failed. Another group spent days filming only to discover a perpetual ticking noise

riddled their film. At the school board level, dates for the Term Two Showcase changed before

it was finally cancelled. All of these external factors, in addition to the unpredictable process of

learning, challenge the arbitrary deadlines beginning and ending Term Two. Some films from

Term One were not completed until the second Term, some of the Term Two films ran into third,

and others were never finished at all. Certainly, Thomas was expected to submit grades for the

class according to the school term deadlines; however, even the policies of the school board

surrounding incomplete work ruptures the rigidity of terms outlined in the application and

consent forms. As per school board policy, students are allowed to submit any incomplete work until the end of the year; the philosophy is that a 'mark' of incomplete is given instead of a zero. With that, students have the right to hand in work until the end of the year. This is not simply a matter of hindsight that could be alleviated by using consent forms that named Term Two and Term Three. Although that may have alleviated some of the issues raised above, the constraints of time necessitated by research protocols imagine a predictable, linear process that follows a calendar. Much like the creation of artwork, teaching and learning are messy, unpredictable and unknowable (Britzman 1998; 2000; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Kumashiro, 2004; Loutzenheisier, 2001). Arbitrary deadlines cannot prescribe the process of learning; yet, the process of conducting a study demands that we specify time and space, as though we have reins on the space in which learning occurs.

Another Hole In The Wall[21]

The dictation of space, the research site, is another requirement of a research project that ignores the permeability of educational spaces. Not only did planning, filming and editing occur outside of the research site, the participants brought in popular culture references, conversations with parents, observations, and references to other classes, into the classroom. As one of many examples, a participant, Subject X, entered class one day announcing that she had spoken to her friend about the class's previous conversation about nature, nurture, and sexualities. She wanted to inform us about his thinking. Not only did the pedagogical moments of the research site escape the classroom walls, she brought his theories into our space. Is it ethical then to use her account of his understandings? While I am not expecting an answer, I raise this question as a philosophical provocation of research space, participation and participant. Much like the

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[21] Thanks to *Pink Floyd*

critiques of time, this challenges the confines of a research site, and the possibility of keeping research bound to the time and space of those specified on an ethics application and consent form.

This issue of space is further troubled by the requirements for a researcher to enter the classroom setting. First, the school board, school principal, and teacher must consent to the researcher's presence. Further, the school board requires that individual students within the class consent to be observed. I agree with the premise of this requirement; however, it is unrealistic to imagine that all students will consent to participate in a study. In turn, researchers are left with sites in which only a portion of the students are consenting participants; yet, the non-participants undeniably impact the space. That is, the very presence of the 'non-participants' influences how the participants engage in the space. They are part of the space, the participant's utterances, and the culture of the classroom. Any reference in my research to group dynamic or group discussion undeniably includes all of the members of the class. It is impossible to untether the participants from that of the non-participants, regardless of the literal omission of their actions and speech. This presence extends to the process of making the films; the non-participants were 'in' all of the films produced in the class regardless of whether or not they physically held a camera or played a role in the film. By that I mean, larger classroom discussions, peer feedback, in addition to casual comments and mockery between groups, certainly inform the productions of the consenting participants. While the data does not explicitly reference the non-participants, this falsely extracts them from the discussions, productions, classroom community, research process, and data analysis. Although this may simply be another comment on data, authenticity and representation, it also further provokes the possibility of doing ethical research (Loutzenheiser, 2007). The 'ethical' bounds placed on time, space and film dismisses the movability of data and

falsely places materiality onto abstract concepts.

Phase One: Data Analysis

The interrogations of data, as speculative, interpretive, profoundly contextual, fragmentary, and constantly in process (Pitt & Britzman, 2006), might encourage a less methodical approach to data analysis and coding. Despite this, I chose to follow the ethnographic methods of open coding, writing memos, analytic notes, and thematic coding outlined below. Other than granting a system for approaching an otherwise unwieldy process, I struggle to rationalize the meticulous, sometimes mathematical processes of coding data in the face of these interrogations. Beyond manageability, I also did not want my initial responses to the data to overwhelm and limit my capacity to see otherwise. Throughout the research process, I made extensive observations in my research journal, a document I view as my initial analysis. I also kept a preliminary document of themes that arose throughout phase one. Each of these analytical steps is certainly important; however, I did not want these initial themes to become the entirety of my observations and analysis. Though the process of coding is also interpretive, it provoked me to re-interpret the data. I recognize that this process is one of many possible ways to approach data, and that different processes/contexts/researchers produce various analysis. Although coding may suggest a methical distance, each aspect of the coding process is riddled with my subjective manipulations.

Open 'About' Coding

As the research journal was used to record my observations in/on the classroom context, the video production process, and the group discussions, I coded this document first. Using a process of open coding (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995), I created as many codes as possible

without any attempt to link to the themes that had already arisen. I chose this process of coding as it 'opens up' the possibility of finding something unexpected in the data. Through the process of coding, I identified over thirty repeating codes, and an abundance of sub-codes under each of the thirty main codes. I made a chart with these thirty codes, and placed the resonant codes from my research journal into the appropriate boxes. As many of these codes were connected to one another, and due to the unmanageable amount of codes, I began to collapse codes before coding the document again. From this process of merging codes, I was left with fourteen codes. I created a document for each and began making initial analytic memos under each code. Through the process of creating analytic memos, I challenged myself to articulate my understandings of these codes. Further, I was able to see which codes created the most analytical excitement.

Taking the initial analytical memos, the resonant codes, and the fourteen codes that emerged through open coding, I decided on themes. These themes were constructed through the alignment of 'complimentary' codes. As a result, I ended up with nine themes. As these thematic codes were often broad concepts, I took time away from the process of coding to articulate my understandings of each theme, particularly in relation to the literature that informs this study. After which, I followed a process of focused coding (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995) using these thematic codes. By that I mean, I recoded the research journal using these nine codes. Subsequently, I pulled out data fragments related to each theme and organized them into nine separate thematic documents.

Analytical Pause Three: A Film On The Data

Throughout the process of collecting data, and in the initial turn to analysis, I became fixated on the finished product of the films regardless of the reference in my research questions to the ways in which youth, gender and media are constructed and disrupted in the *process* of

participatory media production. In particular, in the classroom context, I often pushed groups to finish their films. Throughout my research journal, I continually speak about getting the groups back on task, concerns about work ethic, and unproductive groups; this was a theme I had not noticed while conducting the research, but that emerged in my coding of my research journal. These references epitomize a focus on product over process. Also through coding, and as a result of a conversation with Dr. Poyntz about the analysis of digital videos, I started to interrogate my initial fetishization of the text, the finished videos. Yet, if I only focused on the text of the productions, the extensive observations in my research journal about the ways in which the participant's productions unfolded would be lost. As an example, one group of participants did not complete a Term Two project, yet the group had many theoretical discussions, wrote a script, and made a storyboard for two different film ideas. While there was no completed film project, there is still an integral process related to the incomplete film/text. Another group started a parody of *The Bachelor*; however, after initial excitement for the project, many theoretical conversations about character types, and discussions about the purpose of the production, the idea was abandoned. The group then turned to a production about the way people are perceived differently by different individuals. This idea evolved into a three-part film, *Miss-Perception,* in which the same character is viewed by three different people. Even one of these three parts was completely changed part way through the filming process. Regardless, the abandoned *Bachelor* idea and original third narrative are part of the finished products; I argue that these conversations about the production are an inseparable part of the project that are more important than the finality of the film/text. A third group began a script about a homeless man, but after two classes of planning, the group split and created two film projects, *After She Left* and *Parallel.* This initial film idea, although unrecognizable in either finished product, is part of

both. Any focus on the finished product ignores the complex, layered endeavor of creating these films.

These interrogations amplified when I turned to analysis, as I became overwhelmed by the echoes of 'youth voice' and 'authenticity' that inform this study. Moreover, the epistemological underpinnings of this study reject norms of individuality, recognize the fallacy of unmediated voices, and refute the essentialist positioning of youth often associated with youth participatory projects (Bragg, 2007; Fielding, 2007; Orner, 1992). Drawing on Piper and Frankham, Buckingham (2009) speaks to the way that fixating on a finished product, like a video or photograph, encourages the production of single truths, whereas "all research data need to be analysed in terms of the context in which they were gathered, the social relationships among the participants, and the 'expressive' resources (whether linguistic or visual) that are employed" (Buckingham, 2009, p. 648). Considering the films/texts representations of 'youth understandings' is guilty of the same celebrations as 'youth voice' rhetoric (Chin, 2007; Grover, 2004) that I critique.

As is evidenced in the faltering, abandon, and fractures of the participant projects outlined above, the finality of the text falsely suggests a coherent, whole 'youth understanding' where neither exists. This textual pre-occupation also ignores the premise of my research question, which asks, "how are the very categories of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' constructed and disrupted in the *process* of dialogue, and in the *processes* of participatory media production?" A focus on the process rather than the text, might trouble the tendency to make claims on behalf of identities, as the emphasis moves from the finality of the text to the complexity of the process. Drawing data throughout the production process invites emerging, fluid, critical understandings of youth, gender and media, as is the intention of the research

questions that grounds this study.

These epistemological discussions rationalize my turn toward the articulations of the production process in my data, that is those articulated in my research journal and group discussions; however, they do not account for the near negation of the visual in/through my analysis that followed. My initial fixation on the videos may have been as much about the insecurities I felt in regards to the analysis/coding of the visual as it was about the incongruities raised above. I return to this visual vulnerability again in the conclusion of this dissertation.

This methodological conversation about the fetishization of the text, as product, is tethered to a pedagogical one. In *Chapter Five*, I align the privileging of text to the privileging of product in education. It is in this chapter that I also further challenge the methodological assumptions made about digital video production and youth.

Phase Two

Students who elected to do so also participated in the second phase of the research. For this phase, eighteen students agreed to participate in the film discussions outside of class time. As such, beyond eight months of classroom observation, I conducted fourteen film discussion groups.

Phase Two: Ethics & Recruitment

In January, as the students were engaged in the process of creating their video projects for second term, I outlined phase two of the research and made assent and consent forms for the discussion groups available to any interested students. I explained that this would involve participating in discussion groups outside of class time, with the possibility of participating in an individual interview. The focus of these discussion groups would be the student produced films

from Term Two, particularly the representations of gender, the medium of video, and the way in which youth understand the filming process, representation, and audience. Again students were reminded that participation was completely voluntary, and that their choice would have no effect on their academic standing. Through this consent process, thirteen students initially gave consent to participate in the film discussion groups, and five more consented after the first round of discussion groups [Appendix B].

Phase Two: Participants

Not all of the participants who agreed to participate in phase one of the research agreed to further participation in the group discussions. Although I cannot say with certainty, this may have been the result of a second consent/assent process and/or the requirement of giving up time outside of class. The eight male participants, and the six female participants who agreed to participate in these group discussions were those that I had worked with more often in the classroom context. The relationships that I built with them through these projects may have made them feel more comfortable speaking with me outside of class. In addition to the fourteen phase one participants, four male participants agreed to participate in the phase two film discussions. One of the additional participants identified as Moroccan, the other three as white, one of which is a recent immigrant from France. Again, all four were adept at speaking with and through many current popular culture references. These four new participants may have seen this as a second opportunity to get involved in the study, as they were students who worked closely with many of the participants who were part of phase one. In these informal lunch meetings we discussed student films and popular culture, which also may have been more appealing than research connected to classroom based work.

Phase Two: Reel Rattle

The fourteen focus groups were completed with four small groups, each of whom I met with on more than one occasion. My first group discussion consisted of eight participants, which proved to be too large (Group 1 and 2 combined); therefore, all subsequent group discussions consisted of no more than six participants. The groupings of participants and pseudonyms are included as an appendix (Appendix B). After the initial meeting, I met with group one and three a total of four times each, and group two on three occasions. I only conducted two discussion groups with group four. The groupings, number of meetings, and location of meetings were largely predicated on participant availability and preference. Due to many after school commitments, all of the participant groups chose to meet in the film classroom where I hosted pizza lunches over their forty-minute lunch.

In these informal meetings, the participants and I usually sat around two long tables facing one another. The meetings commonly began with informal discussions about pizza preferences or recent events in the school, as we waited for everyone to arrive. I always ensured that the food, beverages, napkins, plates and cutlery were set around the table with copies of the questions that I had prepared. I did this to encourage participation, help the participants feel welcome and appreciated, and so that we could get started more quickly. The audio recorder was placed in the middle of the table, and the participants were informed when I was turning it on. On the days that I brought video clips to provoke discussion, my laptop would play at the end of the table. When the participants brought clips for discussion, we sat around a classroom computer.

In our initial meetings, we spoke about the participants' choice to take the Film course, the ways they understood the term 'gender', and how they had seen it engaged in their course

and/or in popular media. As these were semi-structured discussions, although I prepared questions, the participants and I also explored questions and comments that arose throughout the interviews. In our second meeting, I used points from our previous discussions as a starting point, and then took up issues related to film and popular culture inspired from our previous for the remaining time. In our third and fourth meetings we spoke about the student-produced films and engaged media clips brought in by the participants and myself.

Phase Two: Data

The resulting data from phase two was fourteen audio recordings and subsequent transcriptions. These transcripts outlined the words spoken in the discussions and some references to pauses and tone. As I transcribed the interviews myself, I also created resonant memos throughout the transcription process. These were simply my connections to other places in the data, initial analysis, and commentary on the research process.

Phase Two: Analysis

Following the process of thematic coding in phase one, I coded each of the interview transcripts. After thematically colour coding each transcript, I pulled out data fragments from the transcripts and placed each into thematic documents.

Analytical Pause Four: Data Discussions

Within this research I draw on data fragments to illustrate research as recursive and contingent (Lesko, 2001; Vagle, 2012). I present data excerpts as fragments, as data is only ever a wisp of an entangled web. Fragment, also alludes to an active breaking apart—data ruptures in interpretation, upon reflection, and in new contexts. As is evidenced in the fragment below, the contingent, recursive composition of the data is evident in the uncertainty of speech, in its echoes in other contexts, and in its challenges to identity.

Broken Piece

During a classroom observation in which I was speaking to a group of students about 'dude flicks'[22], a genre of film often aligned with young male audiences, Participant B, in a faltering, uncertain way, spoke up and said, "I don't know if you'll get what I'm saying, but I will try to get it out" (Research Journal, January 17, 2012). The participant continued, by critiquing the label 'boy film' and 'girl film', declaring that there is not just one type of guy. In this moment, the vacillations of Participant B's speech, and the doubt surrounding whether he could get his point across, typifies the recursive, contingent 'nature' of data. Participant B's thoughts were not cemented, fully expressed, or wholly understood. As researchers then, how is it that we draw on these moments to represent identities? This fragment is tethered to moments *before* its utterance. Soep (2006), drawing on Bakhtin (1981), challenges the fallacy of the solitary speaker; "speaker's utterances are 'filled to overflowing' with other people's words, through quotes, indirect references and paraphrases, accents, and allusions" (p. 198). Participant B's words do not represent a singular identity. This moment was only ever an utterance, representing a splintered expression of a fluid understanding; it began before and may become otherwise beyond this moment. Apart from the multiple interpretations of those present for Participant B's expression about 'boy films', Participant B will also most certainly reinterpret both the moment and the sentiment expressed in the utterance.

I had the chance to return to this fleeting moment in our next class. Participant B and I, and eventually a few other students, spoke about his previous comments, about gender and sexuality, and of the fluidity of these terms. As a result, a nature/nurture debate surrounding sexuality ensued. Within our discussion about the 'causes of sexuality' another participant,

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[22] See Alilunas's (2008) piece, *Male masculinity as the celebration of failure: The frat pack, women, and the trauma of victimization in the 'dude flick'*, for a discussion of this film genre.

Participant Z asked, "what does it matter the reason [someone is gay]?"

I turn to this moment in order to reiterate the challenges of data, and the problematic way it can be fixed to a static, authentic, representative of an identity. As in those offered by Participant B, this participant's utterance is fragmentary. It was understood disparately, it was only ever a fraction of a lineage of thought, it broke apart, and the pieces were taken beyond that moment. As listeners we will never know the crowd of voices that were imbued in the Participant Z's utterance. The question, 'what does it matter', may have been 'crowded' with Participant B's challenge of boy films made on the previous day, or by echoes of popular culture, or of parents. Further, we will never know the reverberations beyond this moment; this question of 'matter', may continue to echo in subsequent utterances. As a researcher then, how might we be open to recognizing the way in which data moves in a community?

Broken Pieces

The next day, one of participants who had been involved in the nature/nurture debate, came up to me and indicated that they had spoken to a friend outside of class about our discussion. This is the fragmentary disposition of data. It cannot be pinned to a moment, and it never was whole within a group of people who all took it up differently. Further, it moved beyond the context of the classroom space, in conversations, and in thinking, and re-thinking. As such, these moments cannot be used to make sweeping statements about youth, or the gender of the speaker. What would it mean to recognize the contingent, recursive aspects of our research moments? How would this research inform otherwise if looked at this way?

Pieces of A Broken Piece

Both aforementioned data fragments, provoke confined identity categories, such as youth. As a researcher, do I engage these utterances made by 'youth' as representations of youth

understandings of gender and sexuality? That is, from these, do I conclude that 'youth' are beginning to question fixed, binaried understandings of sexuality and identity? Such an act of analysis and declaration would unduly simplify youth identities, fix them to this moment, and dismiss the utterance of another youth participant in the debate. For example, within this discussion 'Subject X' also spoke in opposition to her peers about the role of biology in relation to sexual preference. Yet, even those claims to 'nature' and 'biology' cannot be used to represent Subject X's thinking as she randomly ended one of our group discussions months later with a statement about countries with free sex change operations—stating that she was curious why everyone couldn't choose their sex. These moment(ary) fragments are not indicative of 'youth understandings' writ large, in the same way they are not representative of *a* youth's understandings. They are representative of a momentary, fleeting grasp. These data fragments do not exemplify a generalizable youth, nor do they represent a 'participant's thinking', as this thinking is always in process.

Picking Up The Pieces

In what follows, I draw on data fragments in an attempt to say something with my research. However, throughout, I continually point to the ways in which the fragments on which I draw are contingent and recursive.

METHODOLGICAL INTERMISSION: TAUT TANGLES

As explicated in the analytical pause that suspended the previous chapter, data fragments are neither representative of a particular nor a generalizable youth. And still, through the process of analysis and writing, data risks being employed in ways that construct essentialist identities and/or categories. Assignation of data is one of the many ways in which discourses of youth/race/gender are constructed in/through research. The process, methods, analysis and representation of research, always result in construction. Within this methodological intermission, I re/engage several data fragments to elucidate the ways in which discourses are operationalized and constructed through the research process, in this case discourses of race[23] within the group discussions. Analytical approaches that tend to the construction of data/discourses within these groups may unsettle youth/understandings. Instead, the data fragments that follow reveal disparate, varied, conflicting constructions that may contribute to emergent, fluid and/or critical understandings of youth (singular and plural). The resulting challenge as a writer/researcher is to uncover the way in which discourses of race are constructed through group discussions without assigning fixed interpretations, or drawing inferences about groups that risk being representational.

The plurality of possibilities, the *and/or* that I am inviting, is indicative of a second purpose of this methodological intermission. Acknowledging that race was constructed in the group discussions does not necessitate an interpretation of *how* race was constructed. As such, I attempt to follow a process of polyvocal analysis to invite varied interpretations. The

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[23] My focus on race in this section serves two purposes: first, it recognizes the ways in which discourses of race are untetherable from the categories of youth and gender specified in the research questions; further, it recognizes the ways in which questions cannot predict or limit the themes that will emerge in research.

indeterminable *and/or* of interpretation impedes the alignment of data and identities, as there is no singular interpretation of data to assign.

This intermission may have been included as an analytical pause within the previous methodology chapter, or it may have been included in the subsequent pedagogical chapter. The pre-supposition that it should fit within either may emanate from the requirement for structure, categorization and order demanded by the conventions of writing and representing research—another comment on the way research constructs particular discourses. And so, like the interpretation of the data fragments that follow, the placement of this intermission *between* is a further enactment of *and/or*.

I end this intermission with the suggestion that the pieces of data within could have also produced a pedagogical intermission. This is a comment on the way varied lenses produce data differently, and on the tetherings of methodology and pedagogy. While the data fragments below contribute to methodological complications of representation, data, truth and identity in research, they also parallel many of pedagogical discussions that follow in the subsequent chapter. Although I have separated these methodological and pedagogical discussions, evidenced in the constant tangles of writing and analysis that follow, any such distinction is impossible.

Off The Rack

Throughout the research process, the video and lyrics for Tyga's song *Rack City* provided multiple opportunities for discussions about the use of language, about parody, about the rap genre, and about representations of gender. While many of the conversations that emerged were hinged to discussions of gender and sexualities, particularly representations of the female body, the participants and I were also having a conversation *in* race; that is to say about *and* actively

constructing race. These conversations were hinted at, ignored, or framed in relation to particular bodies. And still, neither the discursive strategies (Augoustinos & Every, 2007), or the utterances offered, are representative of fixed understandings of gender, sexuality or race—or representations of youth.

Racked with Guilt

> CB:Yeah, like the last video I saw was that uh, Rack City?
>
> SM: What's that?
>
> J: Oh yeah, you'll love it; you'll have a field day. R-a, yeah, city [telling me as I write it]
>
> CB: So bad, oh god.
>
> --Group One, Feb. 14, lines 556-562

In our February 14th group discussion, Calvin Broadus introduced Tyga's song *Rack City*. While this was the first time the song was discussed, it is raised in almost every group discussion that follows—ten in total. Repetitive references to this song became a source of comedy in our group meetings. So much so, that Steve French from Group Four began one of our lunch meetings by announcing that he was going to open a barbeque restaurant and call it *Rack City* (Group Four, March 26, lines 5-7). The music video was initially mentioned after a 'lesson-filled question' (Ellsworth, 2005) about representations of gender in rap videos. The group and I had been discussing the ways in which the positioning of bodies in media often reifies gender norms. In reference to this, I brought up Sut Jhally's work for the Media Education Foundation:

> SM: Um, Sut Jhally, he's a guy that does…some great things on masculinity and black
> masculinity in rap videos and the way that women are portrayed in rap videos, and he
> shows, like/
>
> F: [jumping in] yeah that's really awful

SM: What do you think?

F: Well, they're especially in like black [slight pause], where black people are

J: [jumping in] Or white guys trying to be black

F: Yeah, yeah, and there the women totally have almost like nothing on them, like always

sitting like [gives group a demonstration of the way women provocatively sit in rap

videos]

[laughter from group] (Group One, February 14, lines 540-555).

The wording of my question makes this discussion about a particular genre of music, rap, and

names this an issue of masculinity, black masculinity specifically. I probe the terms used in this

question to do more than speak to my own guilt, and re-center the conversation towards me.

Rather to speak to the way my positioning of rap and race in this question framed all the

discussions that followed; the question then, is part of the 'milieu' (Mazzei, 2013) of voices that

emerge.

Regardless of the false and misleading suggestion in my question, in The Media

Education Foundation's *Dream Worlds 3* (2007), Jhally does not focus specifically on rap or

black masculinity; rather, he speaks to the way that rock videos were the first to present women

dancing in bikinis in music videos. In addition, he outlines the way women have been presented

in country, pop and rock videos: chained to walls, tied to chairs, as background, washing cars,

dancing, exposing 'themselves', or flanking men (Dream Worlds 3, 2007). Certainly misogyny

can be found in some rap videos, however, this is not a problem of black masculinity or rap

exclusively. Yet, my omission of these elaborations in this group discussion, and the way I

framed the question, may have led to discussions that made the objectification of women an issue

related to black culture and rap[24].

While I engage the data fragments above to speak to the way that my questions may have framed the milieu of voices in this particular instance, there is no formula to this concept. By that I mean, power is undeniably relevant in all research contexts; yet, there is no single voice, researcher/teacher/student, that dictates the tone of the conversation necessarily. Considering previous provocations of the solitary speaker (Bakhtin, 1981), and discussions of the 'interpellated I' (Pinar, 2009), who would this single voice be anyway?

Voice, according to Mazzei (2013), is always part of the milieu; "it cannot be thought as emanating 'from' an individual person. There is no separate, individual person, no participant in an interview study to which a single voice can be linked – all are entangled" (p.734). These fragments are representative of all members of the group (Phillips & Larson, 2013), the larger context of the classroom, the institution in which they were uttered, and the larger cultural contexts. For example, Farmer's (F) immediate admonishment of the way that 'black people' present women in their videos is symptomatic of the larger cultural context from which the fragment emanates[25]. Due to the readiness of her response, I suspect that Farmer had already thought about black masculinity and rap as misogynistic. The result of a context that often labels rap and hip hop misogynistic and homophobic, and in turn racializes black bodies as such, while simultaneously constructing a relational narrative of a white, dominant culture that is absent of harmful gender regulation (D. Kirkland, personal communication, July, 2012).

And/or Farmer's pause after naming 'black' may have been recognition of a supposedly

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[24] I am using these singular, essentialist terms as representative of the conversation. I recognize there is no 'black masculinity', 'black culture' or 'rap culture'.

[25] I continue to relate the data fragment to Farmer as a matter of coherence. Yet, the disassociation from the individual is a major point of this section. It is not Farmer, rather Group One, and/or the larger context, and/or.

multicultural context in which speaking of race is deemed impolite (Morrison, 1992). And/or, this pause may have been a request for permission from the group in order to proceed. And/or Josephine's immediate statement, 'or white guys trying to be black', may have been an attempt to rescue Farmer from the taboo of naming race. And/still when white is named by Josephine (J), it is to state that white men who participate in the 'awful' that has been named are trying to be black; a conflation that again vilifies black masculinity. And/yet, 'trying to be black' may also be about a perceived inauthenticity and illegitimacy in 'acting' other. And/or, Farmer's naming could also be tethered to the normative practice of naming race only in relation to non-white bodies, in turn neutralizing whiteness and privilege (Frankenberg, 1993). The uncertainty evident through constantly shifting analysis emanates from the multiplicity of, and within, contexts.

Recognizing a context of multiculturalism which deems discussions of race impolite *and* a context that neutralizes whiteness and privilege by naming race only as non-white (Frankenberg, 1993) elucidates this plurality. Although these contexts are not necessarily contradictory, as the pervasive discourse of multiculturalism could contribute to ig-norances (Ellsworth, 1997) of both the practice of unmarking whiteness and the resulting privilege (Morrison, 1992). These varied interpretations of context, to which the reader will likely have more, further trouble singular interpretations of voice.

Within another group discussion, Farmer presented the group with a critique of the way that black bodies are presented in *Invisible Children's* 'Kony 2012' video:

F: I think they just did this black and white, I just mean, like with black and white they're

showing it so easy and uncomplicated (Group One, March 28, lines 527-529).

The juxtaposition of 'theoretically dissimilar' fragments from 'a particular voice' could be used as further evidence of milieu. By that I mean, Farmer's previous essentializing of black

masculinity (Group One, February 14) against her refusal of essentialist representations that follow in this discussion (Group One, March 28) could be used to reveal how discourses are operationalized differently in different contexts. If interpreted as such, the 'difference' in these two fragments resists essentialized understanding of Group One/Farmer. Voices, and in turn identities, are recursive and contingent. Farmer/Group One did not hold particular views of race at one point, and then alter their views once and for all—it is more so all at once.

And/so what?

Other than warning against narrow engagements with data, the continued suggestion of and/or might invite complex, fluid understandings of voice that trouble 'youth' and 'authenticity'. Rather than limiting research, this increases the possibilities for: engagement with data, the implications of research, and for understanding the relationships between subjects and discourses. Further, if voice is recognized as/in context, research may create spaces for provocation. That is, instead of creating understandings with voice, research might create understandings of voice.

Getting a Bad Rap

The conversations about *Rack City* continued to persecute. Not only were Tyga's lyrical talents questioned, the video was presented as laughable. While some of the youth spoke about the 'catchiness' of the tune, most mocked it:

J: the fact that the title's *Rack City*, and that's all you hear in the whole movie

R: yaa

J: or, video

R: and it doesn't seem like music, I don't know, it seems like music, but it's a bit flat [he then sings 'rack city, rack rack city' in a monotone voice] it's always like this all the time

81

[laughing] (Group One, February 27, lines 109-119).

I am not attempting to redeem this song; however, I wonder why as a group we had more 'critical' conversations about gender and sexuality in relation to this genre of music, and this video in particular. Further, I continue to wonder about the continuous ridicule and positioning of this video in relation to race; that is, the way in which the ridicule is an act of racialization. The data fragment below contributes to all of these questions, beginning again with my framing of the discussion. I have included a large portion of this conversation in order to reveal the ways in which discussions of race are imbued in our discussion of gender in the video for *Rack City*:

SM:…so, any thoughts on gender or race, or class

J: well this is like classic woman, like, objectified

F: ya

SM: so what do you mean when you say classic, pretend that I am somebody that is not from this culture and you say classic

J: okay, when you think of rapper music video, you think of some girl with huge tits and like a huge ass

SM: ya

J: getting, like, abused in some way

SM: ya

J: or, just like, standing there, being kind of attractive

SM: ya

[CB starts talking, but lets F continue]

F: it totally fits into the stereotype

SM: ya

CB: like in the old, when it started, like with Tupac, and like the first gangster rap came

out, and it was like, people were saying like, 'bitch', calling women bitches and stuff,

like, when that really took off, it was like they'd do it/

J:/it wasn't to this

CB: it wasn't all, this song, the entire song, the same like/

J: /most of the original rap doesn't even talk about that

CB: Tupac, like he says it sometimes, but then he had other songs, like *Keep Your Head*

Up and stuff

J: more political, so, ya, or any WuTang, it's like no

CB: like the lyrics and stuff, and the words he used were still vulgar, but there's still like

content there (Group One, Feb. 27, lines 185-229).

Unlike our previous naming of black masculinity on February 14th, throughout this fragment the

group has repeatedly been discussing black masculinity without making explicit mention of it.

Instead the conversation is couched in a discussion of rap. The objectification and violation of

the female body is presented as a 'classic' element of rapper music. While I engaged with the

fragments in the last section to speak to the way that the naming of race conflated violent,

misogyny with black masculinity (Yousman, 2003), in this section I would like to consider the

way this may also be achieved through an un-naming of race.

Holding the critique of naming simultaneously in mind, un-named discussions of black

masculinities under the guise of other themes, like rap, allow for racialized/ing statements to be

made in a way that might limit the space for critique, as these are "extremely difficult to pin

down" (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p.134). Drawing on a twenty year lineage of literature,

Augoustinos & Every outline the discursive strategies that have developed to speak negatively

about 'minority' groups in a context that has declared openly racist statements taboo; this they describe as the replacement of 'old fashioned racism' with a subtle and covert variety (p. 124). In particular, these covert strategies include: denying prejudice, positioning one's views as representative of the current context, positive declarations about one's own group, the elimination of racial terms, and arguments for equality. Augoustinos & Every's focus on patterns of talk, and systemic factors that encourage the use of discursive strategies, align with my discussion of milieu in the previous section; that is the discursive strategies used within the group discussions are representative of the covert subtle ways that race is discussed in the larger context. Another necessary nod to Augoustinos & Every's paper is their recognition that there are ambiguities about what accounts for racism. Can we necessarily consider Farmer's discussion of rap videos racist, or the videos themselves misogynistic? Is Josephine's discussion of rap decidedly racist? Are the questions that I raised about rap and black masculinity to translate to a labeling of my identity? This is not a matter of assigning labels to any individual or moment, rather to consider the complexities of the milieu.

Just as Farmer's 'dissimlar' fragments resist any labeling of her identity, these possibly 'contradictory' conversations involving the naming and un-naming of race within the same group of participants, resist fixing 'youth' to either fragment.

Pedagogical Tangles

The methodological discussions of data and representation above could be re-written in relation to pedagogy. Ellsworth's (2005) notion of 'lesson filled questions' is both methodology and pedagogy. That is, lesson filled questions (Ellsworth, 2005) may produce particular pieces of data in the same way they may construct, and instruct, the knowledge produced. Further, the provocations of voice offered above refute notions of youth, and subsequently fixed ideas of

'student'. Moreover, Farmer's contradictory fragments position learning as contingent and recursive (Vagle, 2012) in the same way they trouble fixed notions of understanding. Throughout this intermission, the indecision of interpretation evinces the messiness of pedagogy; naming race can reify privilege, just as not naming race can reify privilege—and/or both can provoke normative understandings. In what follows, I attempt to engage data fragments pedagogically, but continue to trip upon methodological knots.

CHAPTER 3: POP PEDAGOGY

You couldn't have a lesbian woman in the Hangover, but you could put a gay male in

Bridesmaids….What 18 year old girl doesn't want a gay best friend?

--Participant B, Research Journal[26], January 17, 2012

As in my previous research (Moore, 2008), throughout this study there were countless moments in which the participants called upon references to popular television shows, movies, characters and celebrities in order to articulate understandings, draw parallels with incidents in the classroom context, or articulate nuanced concepts. In the data fragment above, for example, Participant B engages two blockbuster films, *The Hangover* (2009) and *Bridesmaids* (2011), to speak through/with discourses of gender and sexualities. However, due to the content of these films, and their parental ratings, neither of these films would be granted space in the official curricula. Obviously Participant B has already seen these films, and as is evidenced in the data fragment, is engaging with these pieces of popular culture despite institutional barriers that falsely propagate the divisibility between the classroom and larger society.

Popular culture[27] is of the language that we use to communicate. These references are so imbedded in our everyday speech, that they are often undetectable. Despite this, popular culture

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[26] As these comments were recorded in my research journal, Participant B's comments are paraphrased. With that said, I did clarify the comments with him the following day.

[27] Following Fiske (1989/2011) I recognize that the term *popular culture* is 'contradictory to its core' both: industrialized and of the people, domination and subordination, power and resistance, consumption and production, practice and text (p.19). As Storey (2001) asserts, it is an empty concept that is filled in a myriad of, often conflicting ways, dependent on the context (p.1). Both definitions, or lack thereof, assert that culture is an active process (Sefton-Green & Soep, 2007). While the media industry is certainly part of popular culture (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012), audiences negotiate and circulate meanings (Sefton-Green & Soep, 2007). Further, they produce their own texts, either as creative media consumption such as textual poaching (Jenkins, 1992) or through their own productions. Certainly these productions can be subversive (Duncum, 2009); however, this is not a guarantee, particularly as all media involves negotiations with a reader. While the term popular culture is often mobilized in relation to texts and practices that are

is often ignored in formal curricular demands and educational settings, dismissed as 'just entertainment', lacking in pedagogical or theoretical relevance. This is compounded by modernist understandings of school, pre-conceptions of knowledge, and protectionist barriers erected against particular, 'objectionable' forms of popular culture in educational spaces. "Education and the media", Buckingham (2003b) declares, "have frequently been defined in opposition to one another" (p. 157). However, media and popular culture are already curricula, which is to say, popular culture is an 'educational site' (Giroux, 2004a).

Although I hesitate to align myself with either the ambiguity, or the "the deceptive clarity" (Savage, 2009, p.105) of such an assertion, it necessarily recognizes the notion of 'school' and 'pedagogy' beyond the institution (Goldfarb, 2002). Specifically useful for this study, are articulations of pedagogy in relation to popular culture and dominant cultural discourses (Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011).

Prologue

Do you feel you have articulated your understandings of pedagogy?

--D. O Donoghue, Personal Communication, September 26, 2013

Certain questions provoke the foundational assumptions that underlie research; in this case, that popular media is pedagogy, has pedagogical relevance and suggests pedagogic possibilities. Further, that the data fragments assembled in the group discussions are pedagogical moments, and inform theories of pedagogy. All of these presumptions rely on an articulable notion of pedagogy, however messy, uncertain and unknowable (Britzman 1998; 2000; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; Kumashiro, 2004; Loutzenheisier, 2001). This theoretical incoherence pointed

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attractive to large numbers, it can also be used in relation to local groups (Marsh, 2005). Keeping these contradictions in mind, I use this term throughout to refer to media practices and texts popular to the larger context, and to this particular group of youth.

to a recurrent tension within the analysis and writing of this chapter. One cannot engage data pedagogically without articulating how something is/becomes pedagogic. If as suggested in the introduction, I want to contribute to the theorization of pedagogy, I need to resist the tendency to engage the concept as an abstraction, as is the tendency Lusted (1986) points to.

As the intersection of popular media and pedagogy incited and encompassed this research, I begin this chapter in conversation with the literature, specifically surrounding the relationship between popular culture and pedagogy. Through a critical impression of the underlying concepts in the literature, understandings of pedagogy, more generally, are elucidated. Which is to say, in the same way the participants drew on popular media to articulate nuanced concepts, I engage the literature on popular media to clarify my understanding of pedagogy as messy, uncertain and unknowable. And still, as evidenced within this conversation, there is an unwillingness to let go of some of the tidiness suggested in the literature on popular culture and pedagogy.

The contingent recursive readings of the data that follow this 'elucidation' are intended to be an enactment of pedagogy. Amidst this enactment, there are tugs of tidiness.

Pedagogical Prologue

While notions of the popular, or the public as pedagogy, are often associated with Henry Giroux[28], Sandlin, O'Malley, and Burdick (2011) trace the first use of the term to 1894. Savage (2009) similarly contests the ownership of the term and the originality of the concept. Title aside, the assertion that everything is potentially pedagogic may also present theories of pedagogy as vacuous. That is, if everything is understood as pedagogy, the term is emptied of meaning: "In taking an almost transcendent view of pedagogy into research, one may risk opening the

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[28] In a contestation of both terms, Pinar (2009) refers to Giroux as the "father" or "public pedagogy".

analytical aperture so wide as to let the whole spectrum of blinding light rush in, the result being

obscured visions through an overdose of pedagogical possibility" (Savage, 2009, p. 108). And

yet, what might be gained if we recognized the pedagogical possibility of/in everything?

Recognition that pedagogy exists beyond the institution, at the very least, might

contribute to "reconceptualizing what pedagogy means in contemporary times" (Savage, 2009, p.

104). In particular, contemplating the ways in which the current media rich context informs

pedagogy. Considering the time, access, and prevalence of media in children and youth's lives,

popular culture may serve as a more influential pedagogue than official curricula or teachers

(Goldfarb, 2002; Stack & Kelly, 2006). The products of media culture, Kellner (2011) asserts, are

those on which "we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be

male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of 'us' and

'them'" (p.7). They are, he continues, a "profound and often misperceived source of cultural

pedagogy" (p.7). Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) echo this, declaring that "media plays a central

role in the socialization, acculturation, and intellectual formation of young people. It is a

pedagogical force to be reckoned with, and we ignore it at our peril" (Hoechsmann & Poyntz,

2012, p.59). As theories of public pedagogy interrogate the "increased mediatization of society"

(Hjarvard, 2013, p.141) and the corporatization of publics (Giroux, 2004a; 2004b), they demand

consideration of the pedagogical 'consequences' that may result from, "four major transnational

media companies (Disney, News Corp., Time Warner, and Viacom) dominat[ing] children's

media and entertainment markets" (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p.28-29). Without falling

victim to theories of mass culture, certainly these theories are worth some pedagogical time.

What might be lost if we ignore the pedagogical weight of these assertions? And yet, there are

many pieces of this concept, even those that I have stated above, that I cannot reconcile with my

larger theoretical understandings. This theoretical and analytical tension is evident in the subsequent discussion of the literature, the pedagogical engagement with popular culture within the research, and the analytic 'conclusions' that follow.

Popular Prescription

Amidst a denouncement of schools as places of education, Pinar (2009) places pedagogy in/on the streets, television, video games, movies, the internet, music, poetry, visual arts, museum, bodies and zoos (p. xv). While I resist Pinar's suggestion that education occurs "everywhere but inside the schools" (p.xv), I applaud his specific articulations of popular culture to rein in the ambiguity of public pedagogy. Giroux (2001) has engaged specific pieces of popular culture in his theorizing of public pedagogy. His discussion of masculinity in the film *Fight Club* is one such example. However, more often his discussions of public pedagogy (2004a; 2004b) get lost in grandiose notions of popular culture.

Assigning the term pedagogy to broad notions of culture negates the relevance of pedagogical address (Ellsworth, 1997; 2005). Drawing on notions of address in film studies, Ellsworth (1997) explains this as the way in which "curricula and pedagogies invite their users to take up particular positions within relations of knowledge, power and desire" (p.2). As such, discussions of pedagogy include the way a particular piece of popular culture is addressing 'you'; and subsequently, the way this address relates to how that piece is received (Ellsworth, 2005). In this way, media text and technology are always an element of pedagogical address; the address of a film is tethered to the language of film (Ellsworth, 1997). Assertions of popular culture, writ large, ignore the complexities and particularities of *pieces* of popular culture.

Popular Public Broadcasting

In presuming *a* public, the concept of public pedagogy negates the multiplicity of publics, and the presence of counter publics. Any monolithic view of a public risks pessimistic slippage into theories that doubt the capacity of the masses to engage with culture (Benjamin, 1936/1968), and warn of a culture infected with sameness (Horkheimer, Adorno & Noerr, 1944/2002). Such assertions dismiss the necessary, divergent, complex interplay between the public and culture, and refuse the role of the public in cultural production. In a convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006), in which people act as producers and consumers, however, there is neither a monolithic public nor consistent responses to popular culture. Instead, popular culture is best understood as a site of reproduction and resistance (Hall, 1980), learning and contestation (not necessarily discrete categories).

As a further contestation of terms, Savage (2009) points to the irony of the use of the term *public*, particularly within the increasingly privatized context that Giroux himself is attempting to critique. Savage's critique of the term does not contest privatization, rather it is framed through a recognition of the increasing corporatization of space, culture and discourse. Certainly, Giroux (2001; 2004a; 2004b) also recognizes the corporatization of 'public' life; indeed, he argues that: "Under such circumstances, pedagogy both within and outside of schools increasingly becomes a powerful force for creating the ideological and affective regimes central to reproducing neo-liberalism" (Giroux, 2004b, p.494). Giroux's determination of the negative pedagogical consequences of this corporatization relies on the notion of a singular receptive public.

Evident in Giroux's (2004b) reference to public pedagogy as a "powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested

individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain" (p. 74), is a distrust of popular

culture and the public. Savage (2009) refers to this as an 'enveloping negativity' that presents

popular culture as something we need to fight against. Again, this negates the disparate ways in

which publics negotiate popular culture, and the transgressive behaviours often involved in the

production of popular culture (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012); a piece of popular media that may

be determined (negatively) heteronormative, may be interpreted otherwise, and/or creatively

consumed or remixed (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012) into a further piece of popular culture.

Pedagogical Prescription

The uninterrupted absorption of neo-liberal ideals through popular culture prescribes

ideological interpretations of popular culture and implies uniform reception. Yet, we cannot

know how publics will engage with pieces of culture, or that they will even be pedagogic in the

way theories of public pedagogy assume—or at all.

Following Ellsworth (2005), things are not only pedagogic one way, nor do they ensure

learning. Acting as "the pedagogical pivot between movement/sensation and thought"

(Elllsworth, 2005, p. 8), pieces of popular culture create an environment for learning and become

potentially pedagogic. Learning involves two moving systems, pedagogy's address and the

student's mind/brain/body (Ellsworth, 2005). Our engagements with popular culture do not

necessitate learning; rather, "an individual's *use* of an object, experience, person or event is what

turns it into a transitional object[29]" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.77). And still, these *uses* are influenced

by address and tangled within fields of intelligibility (Butler, 2005). It is a result of these tangles

that I am unwilling to dismiss the ways in which the ideological and affective regimes of neo-

liberalism, might be, and are already, pedagogic. Rather than an endorsement of Giroux's

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[29] Ellsworth is drawing on Winnicott's (1989) articulation of the transitional object in *Playing and Reality.*

interpretation of the public, this unwillingness is meant to complicate, and elucidate, notions of interpretation within my own understandings of pedagogy.

Addressing Interpretation

Although viewers negotiate meaning (Duncum, 2010), this "interpretation does not emerge as the spontaneous act of a single mind, but as a consequence of a certain field of intelligibility that helps to form and frame our responsiveness to the impinging world" (Butler, 2009, p.34). Butler (2009) notes, however, that interpretation is not restrictively a subjective act. Although who we are influences how we look, the camera also suggests we look in certain ways (Duncum, 2010; Mulvey, 1989). This is to say, photographs may act on us (Butler, 2009). As an example, Butler (2009) refers to the way the visual perspective of war is actively structured, in turn constructing the field of perception (p. 66). Like the way the visual perspective of war in mainstream media may actively structure our apprehension of war, the visual perspective of gender and sexuality in mainstream media may similarly structure our apprehension of these concepts.

This does not mean that the regulation of perspective necessarily translates or transitions into a particular learning of what these concepts and their associated practices mean. But it does mean that the regulation of perspective "can conduct certain kinds of interpretation" (Butler, 2009, p. 66). It is in this sense that interpretation may happen 'in spite of oneself' (Butler, 2009, p. 67). As such, interpretations of popular media involve the complex interplay of the address of the medium, the frame of perception, the fields of intelligibility and the negotiations of a culturally enmired subject (Butler, 1990).

If the field of intelligibility is a consequence of popular media, how does that complicate the interpretation of popular media? If the field is filled with particular discourses, of gender,

race and sexuality, how do these mediate interpretation/learning? These unanswered/able

questions of interpretation, and in turn pedagogy, are evident in the engagement with the data

that follows this conversation with the literature.

Rewarding/Rewording Pedagogy

Giroux's notion of public pedagogy creates an answer for both sides of the pedagogical

coin—in the way popular culture is assumed pedagogical, and in the way the pedagogue should

interpret and teach. The *Methodological Intermission* that precedes this chapter*,* is illustrative of

the prescriptive pitfalls of public pedagogy, in that the representations of women in *Rack City* are

determined negative and that the pedagogical intervention involves pointing out and

admonishing such representations. This is the *teacherly reward* (S. Poyntz, personal

communication, October 10, 2013) of such pedagogy, in that it assigns both the problem and the

solution. Although pedagogical address does not determine learning, within this rewards system,

'lesson-filled questions' (Ellsworth, 2005 p. 76) may burden the learner with the *pre-occupations*

and desires of the teacher (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 75). Ellsworth (2005) describes this as a

breakdown in play: "If we know exactly where play is leading or how it will end up, it is no

longer play (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 73). The potential for a transitional experience arises when

neither the play nor the answer is dictated (Ellsworth, 2005). And still, this pedagogical play

occurs amidst the tangles of intelligibility, address, perception and subjection.

Chapter Overview

In what follows, I draw on various data fragments from the research context to

demonstrate the pedagogical im/possibilities that arose from conversations hinged to particular

pieces of popular culture. Throughout, there is a constant tension of address, context,

intelligibility, perception and interpretation. These fragments un/do discussions of race/ialization,

whiteness, privilege, gender and sexualities. Through the space granted the difficulties, nuances, tangles and knots that arise within these discussions, I present this writing as a performance of the messiness of pedagogy. In this way, I am attempting to enact the unanswerability of pedagogy. The hope is that in drawing on data fragments as potentially disruptive of normative discourses of race/gender/sexuality *and/or* simultaneously reifying racialized, gendered and heteronormative discourses, pedagogy might be read as a constant undoing—as play without an end in mind (Ellsworth, 2005). However, within the mess, modernist moments of reward continually emerge through the research, writing and analysis. The inability to resist this reward, through the research process, analysis and writing, is a testament to the need for the discussion that follows in the *Chapter Five*, *Mrs. Mimesis.*

While this chapter works from the premise that popular media regulates perspective, should be engaged in formal educational contexts, and becomes different within formal educational contexts through pedagogical address, I attempt to resist any further declarations about 'how' popular media 'should' be used. The temptation to propose a list of 'shoulds' is emblematic of the teacherly rewards of education and educational research. Instead, I attempt to reside/write/theorize within the space of *and/or* in hopes of provoking popular understandings of pedagogy.

Pedagogical Method[30]

Through the *Methodological Intermission* that precedes this chapter, I engaged several data fragments to elucidate participant understandings as contingent and recursive. To review, Group One/Farmer aligned black masculinity with violence and misogyny in one discussion,

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[30] The use of the term *method* in this subtitle is meant to point to the expectation of/for methods in pedagogy. The derisive use of the term is also meant to taunt the practice of polyvocality, the indeterminable and/or, that follows in my writing; positioning this is an enactment of pedagogy risks the same certainty associated with modernist notions of best practice.

while in a separate discussion the black/white binary in media is critiqued. In one context the group 'politely' avoids naming race instead using rap to discuss black masculinity, while in another context race is overtly named in relation to non-white bodies. While I present these 'theoretically dissimilar' or 'contradictory' fragments to provoke essentialist understandings of youth (singular and plural), through the intermission I also engage in a process of polyvocal analysis to invite varied interpretations—even those that may provoke the notion that the fragments referenced above are contradictory. Rather than endorsing any particular interpretation, polyvocal analysis places the fragments in conversation with varied contexts and normative discourses in order to recognize *and* disrupt any predictive assumption tied to youth/male/female understandings. That is, white youth *may* speak about rap in a particular way as a result of their own racialized identities. Or, the way female youth negotiate with a piece of media *may* be informed by normative discourses of gender. However, neither whiteness nor femininities necessitates negotiations; moreover, constructing 'you'th through a particular marker can limit the invitation to engage and in turn instruct again identity (Ellsworth, 1997). While identity and context matter, they do not automate interpretations. Rather, as articulated above[31], interpretation involves a complex interplay between: fields of intelligibility, regulation of perspective, address, and the culturally enmired subject (Butler, 1990; 2009). The pedagogical residue of/in this 'practice' is the recognition and resistance of identities alongside uncertain negotiations that emerge.

Polyvocal analysis recognizes that a single piece of data could be interpreted as upholding *and/or* provoking normative discourses. For example, the fragments offered in the intermission might be the result of the larger multicultural context that upholds whiteness and

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[31] See *Addressing Interpretation* for a discussion of the complex interplay between fields of intelligibility, regulation of perspective, address, and the culturally enmired subject.

privilege through a polite avoidance of race (Morrison, 1992) *or* they might be a violent

racialization of black masculinity (Yousman, 2003) *or* they might be attempts to provoke

normative understanding of race *and* they might be all of these simultaneously. This 'practice' of

and/or, which I continue throughout my subsequent engagement with the data, informs/is

pedagogy as it: invites varied, disparate, competing interpretations; places interpretations in

conversation with context, visual perception, intelligibility, and address; recognizes

reading/learning as contingent and recursive; and resists fixing participant/student identities.

Dick Flick

I watch a lot of TV and I can't think of any.

--Mordecai, Group Three, March 8, line 117

One day during class, a few of the participants and I began a conversation about the

abundance of complicated, fallible male characters in popular television and film; characters who

are repugnant in many ways but who still elicit a certain empathy. The participants and I

referenced Don Draper from *Mad Men*, Hank Moody from *Californication*, the protagonists in

Superbad (2007), and the male leads in *Entourage*—interestingly all white male characters.

Although we thought of male characters with relative ease, we struggled to think of complex,

flawed female characters that remained 'likeable'[32].

Following this initial discussion, Ponyboy raised Lisbeth Salander from *The Girl with*

The Dragon Tattoo (2011) as a complex, imperfect female character. Ponyboy spoke of

Salander's fluid sexuality, her depth, her denial of the typical damsel in distress, and her

masculinity that does not evade femininity (Research Journal, December 15, 2011). Salander's

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[32] While none of us agreed upon the use of this term, we failed to come up with a more fitting
term to describe female characters who people continue to 'root' for and empathize with despite
being complex and flawed.

representation may provoke the alignment of gender and the body, and recognize the fluidity of gender performance. However, I also wonder if her intelligibililty as female is what granted her Ponyboy's praise. That is, would a character whose performance of gender rendered her unintelligible derive the same praise? Further, might Ponyboy's praise of Salander belittle femininities, as a complex female character needs to elicit masculine characteristics to be empathetic/likeable? Neither the interpretations of Salander, nor the subsequent interpretations of these fragments, can be made certain. Additionally, no particular interpretation suggests a pedagogical end. And still, how are provocations of gender norms, the body, and intelligibility necessary amidst these uncertainties? This incomplete conversation, filled with unknowns, echoed in subsequent discussions.

 Participant Jason Bourne cited Meryl Streep in *Devil Wears Prada* (2006) as another example of a complex female character who elicits empathy. However, the group challenged him, as she, in their definition, was not likeable. Although Pepper resisted the idea of what it means to be likable, the conversation continued. In refutation, Farmer pointed out that Streep's character only becomes 'likeable' once she shows emotion and aligns with femininity:

> F: but that's the thing though, right, when she gets emotional, you sympathize more for
>
> her. But when a man would do that, it wouldn't be like, a man could still be [likeable]
>
> (Group Three, March 8, lines 331-335).

Recognizing that the body acts as a border of gender performances, Farmer states that in order to be likable or intelligible, Streep's character requires a 'resurrection' of femininities. Farmer suggests that a man could 'do all of that', referring to Streep's actions as a powerful magazine editor, and remain likeable. Streep only becomes relatable, once she aligns with femininity, and shows emotion. The inability to like her may emanate from the 'mis-alignment' of gender and

the body. And/or the address of the film may construct her as unlikeable due to her performances of masculinities. And/or Farmer's recognition of Streep's necessary femininity may provoke and reify normative understandings of gender.

Likeable Ladies

The fragments above recognize that masculinities can be mobilized by female bodies (Pascoe, 2007; Halberstam, 1998a) *and* that normative conditions frame performances and possibilities of gender (Butler, 1990; 1993). And yet, the ways in which these discourses influence interpretation, or the ways in which address suggests likeability, or the ways in which the field of perception is regulated, are untended.

Likeability is tethered to normative discourses of gender. That is, likeability is an interpretation that is framed within a field of intelligibility (Butler, 2009). A female character may not be likeable as a result of her performance of gender, in the case of Streep, her performance of masculinities. This supposed 'misalignment' may contribute to the way Streep is regarded. And/or her portrayal of a successful magazine editor may contribute to the supposed victimization of masculinity (Alilunas, 2008). Whereas complex, fallible male characters may elicit empathy as a result of the larger discourses of failed and failing masculinity (Alilunas, 2008). Both interpretations suggest the ways in which discourses of gender suffuse likeability; however, this is neither prescriptive nor uniform.

Further, assignations of likeability are informed by the address of these films that suggest character, and gender, be looked upon in certain ways. As Duncum (2010) recognizes, the sensory lures of an image can seduce. With that, filmic representations may attract you to particular characters. Further, the presentation of sensitive, loving, generous (Jeffords, 1992), vulnerable (Haddington, 1998), insecure (Spicer, 2004), nerdy and awkward (Alilunas, 2008)

male characters within cinematic stories may elicit empathy alongside discourses of the victimization of masculinity. And so, how do we invite multiple interpretations while simultaneously considering the ways in which interpretations are regulated through address and perception? And still, how do we consider these regulations without privileging particular interpretations?

The Mystery of Gender

Beyond our discussions of female characters, within one of our lunch discussions Pepper spoke excitedly about the BBC series *Sherlock,* particularly the way in which the two protagonists play with their gender and sexuality—both, she suggests, are left vague. From this conversation, another discussion developed about the way in which gay characters are presented on television. Jason Bourne (J) stated that he thought that more gay characters should be included in storylines, in ways that their sexuality is not the main aspect of their plotline.

J: it's like, they don't even treat it as an important part of the plot and that's kind of a step forward too/

….

J: like Queer characters in media sometimes, it seems like/

P: /their whole identity is that they're gay

SM: yes

J: no, it's not that we need to have more characters, it's that being gay has to be less of a big deal (Group Three, Feb. 23, lines 934-1125).

As this happened at the end of one of our discussion groups, I returned to it in our following meeting. I asked of the group:

SM: Last time a few of you stated that there needs to be more gay characters on TV

whose storylines do not need to be fixated on their sexuality. I have been thinking a lot about this. On the one hand, I thought, 'wow', that is extremely insightful, as it complicates characters and makes it so that 'gay characters' get to be about more than one thing. On the other hand, I wondered how it could be read as not wanting to see or hear about same sex relationships. You can be gay, but we don't need to see it. I am undecided on this, what do you all think?

To which the participants responded:

P: well if you can think about the way heterosexual couples are portrayed, or heterosexual characters are portrayed, like, it's not, maybe the storyline is about their sexuality, maybe some of the storyline is about their sexuality, but, it's not like 'I'm straight' all the time

SM: mhmm

P: like, 'I'm straight-o, that's my name'

[laughter]

….

P: but that kind of happens with the gay characters, because they're like, you know, 'I'm Gaybo', like [inaudible]. You got to admit, that's what's happening in their life, is they're gay, and if you just had like a normal...if gayness was like, sort of, normal, in society, thought of as normal, then it wouldn't, it would come up, it would be talked about, but it wouldn't be the focus of that character. Like you'd have some other purpose, other than being the gay guy

SM: ya

P: You'd be like the gay doctor, or the gay/

M:/it's true (March 8, lines 405-453).

As always, there are many ambiguities left in these fragments. Jason Bourne's suggestion "that

being gay has to be less of a big deal" (Group Three, February 23, lines 1124-25) could be seen

as a request to cover (Yoshino, 2007) one's sexuality, and/or it could provoke the need to do so.

Making sexuality 'less of a big deal' may necessitate palatable heteronormative performances

and relationships that require impotence and invisibility (Shugart, 2003). And/or, Group Three

may be requesting that LGBTQ characters be 'normalized' through access to complex storylines.

Which is to say, the group's expectation that a gay character's storyline should involve more

than their sexuality might be resistance to the essentialized representations of LGBTQ characters

in media (Dow, 2001; Gross, 1994). However, the suggestion upon which this critique is

founded, that the sexuality of LGBTQ characters is constantly referenced, may also emanate

from the Othering of gay characters. That is, a 'gay' character's sexuality is not necessarily

referenced more often, rather it is *recognized* more often. As a result, every action of a 'gay'

character is assigned to their sexuality. Moreover, as discourses of gender and sexuality are

constant, 'heterosexual' character's storylines are also always about their sexuality; yet, they are

not recognized in this way. The conflation of everything to gender and sexuality in relation to a

gay character produces them as Other; conversely, the ig-norance (Ellsworth, 1997) of the ever-

presence of gender and sexuality in relation to all characters upholds heteronormativity.

While this discussion with the data recognizes the intersection of heteronormativity and

interpretation, the participants' responses are not 'fixed' by this. Like the previous discussion

surrounding *likeability*, this reveals the pedagogic challenge of interpretation. Heteronormative

discourses may influence what one is willing to see, the way in which an action is seen, and/or

the way the action is understood. That is, meaning, "when we force it on things, can also blind us,

causing us to see only what we expect to see or distracting us from seeing very much at all"
(MacDougall, 2006, p.1). This may result in the un/willingness to recognize gender and
sexuality. The way the visual perspective of gender and sexualities is constructed in/through
mainstream media further entangles our apprehension of these concepts (Butler, 2009). The
resulting tension surrounds recognition of the ways in which interpretations are filled and fueled
by normative discourses of gender and sexuality—alongside/amidst the regulation of
perspective.

Although Group Three suggests that gay characters storylines are too hinged to their
'gayness', theorists, like Aviila-Savedra (2009) and Shugart (2003), alternately suggest that
queer characters reify heternormative practices through the centering of male/female friendships
or normative male/female relationships. The disparity between the group's understandings and
Aviila-Savedra and Shugart's may open up conversations about the ways in which normative
discourse and the regulation of visual perspective weigh on interpretation; however, in raising
particular contradictory interpretations there is also the risk of instructing responses and/or
doubting participant negotiations.

Shit 'They' Say

Within one of our lunch discussion groups, Ponyboy suggests that Group Four watch the
YouTube parody *Shit Girls Say*[33] (2011)*.* The conversations that followed this suggestion grant
space to expand the pedagogical puzzlings of interpretation raised above. Through these
particular fragments, I also extend the conversation to consider, and provoke, the relationship
between identity, group discussion, and interpretation.

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[33] As the participants were encouraged to suggest media to view in our group discussions,
Ponyboy brought this clip for our group to discuss.

Throughout our viewing of *Shit Girls Say*, the all female group laughed and exclaimed 'I do that', after several stereotypical femininities are enacted by the female character, who in this case is played by a male. In our post-viewing discussion, Ponyboy and Bison celebrated the parody for its accurate portrayal of typical feminine characteristics:

> B: hilarious, and so true
>
> P: obviously it's kind of making fun of girls, but I feel like its not supposed to be offensive or anything
>
> B: it's so true [laughs]
>
> [multiple voices repeating a bunch of the things from the clip that they do] (Group Two, February 29, lines 510-517)

Ponyboy and Bison's responses may emanate from a gender order that consistently values masculinity over femininity (Connell, 1987), and/or from psychological hold that the patriarchal system can achieve (Lewis, 1992) and/or from the common practice of ridiculing femininity (Serano 2009). And/or, their delight may be in response to the centering of femininities, and/or the parodic representation of femininities that in turn reveals the performativity of gender (Butler, 1990). And/or a fear of being identified as a humourless feminists may have contributed to the laughter and defense of this video. And/or the willingness to celebrate the parody may be due to the gendered construction of the participants in the group. That is, the group of females may have felt comfortable laughing about performances of femininities in the absence of the male body.

While each of the interpretations above begins a conversation about the ways in which normative discourses imbue interpretation, the concern is the way in which they may also produce essentialist understandings of female participants. Although Ponyboy, Bison and Joon

are all constructed as girls, they do not perform their gender similarly or consistently. As such, marking the gender of the group risks both: assumptive interpretations based on fixed understandings of identity ('females' interpret media in this way), and a subsequent reinforcement of fixed identities through these assumptive interpretations (these interpretations support essentialized understandings of 'females').

Any assumption that this 'all girl group' constructed a particular milieu, and gen(d)erated[34] a particular response, chances the same essentialist slippage raised above. While the females in this group may be similarly impacted by discourses of gender (Loutzenheiser, 2005), this neither necessitates performance, dynamic or interpretation. As everywhere, gender operates in group discussions (Allen, 2005; Gonick, 2000); however, as female bodies perform masculinities (Halberstam, 1998a; 1998b; Pascoe, 2007; Sedgwick, 1995), and gender performances are fluid, the construction of the group does not ensure the performance of femininities.

Moreover, the gendered construction of the group does not make any of the interpretations above more fitting—femininities can be used to explain laughter as ridicule and/or as celebration. For example, the fragments above could be used to suggest that the females in the group are participating in the vilification and subordination of femininities— which I, Lewis (1992), Luke & Gore (1992), recognize is certainly a possibility. Bison's subsequent distancing from femininities, "I don't consider myself a huge girly, girl, like a normal girl or whatever" (Group Two, February 29, lines 541-542), could be used to fuel this claim. Further, Ponyboy's use of a male pseudonym could further substantiate the notion that females participate in the belittling of femininities. However, if the reader remembers, Bison and

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[34] Apologies, I couldn't resist.

Ponyboy are also the two participants whose contradictory, fluid, recursive, contingent performances and understandings are used to provoke essentialist representations of identity in *Chapter Two*. Throughout the research process, Ponyboy and Bison participated in a multitude of complex, competing, diverse conversations about femininities, masculinities, and patriarchy. As one example, their video production, *Miss Perception,* critically engages with the constant regulation of female bodies through pervasive discourses of femininities.

Although the group laughed and celebrated the film throughout our viewing, the responses were not uniform. Ponyboy and Bison's praise of the video does not instruct Joon's negotiation with gender. Instead, Joon challenges the assumption that these representations are feminine, or should only be attached to the female body:

J: but don't boys do that too? (Group Two, February 29, line 518)

In response to Joon, Bison seemingly defends the accuracy of the representations by saying:

B: but I definitely think there's like, I don't know for sure, I'm not like generalizing or whatever, but I'm pretty sure every single girl does at least one of those things

[agreement from group]

B: especially like, 'oh can I ask you something' [repeating quote from the film]

[agreement from group]

B: 'can you help me with this' [repeating quote from the film]

[agreement from group]

B: I do that all the time, I swear, I don't consider myself a huge girly, girl, like a normal girl or whatever, but a lot of those things related to me, and I'm like….[breathes in] [agreement/laughter]. (Group Two, February 29, lines 531-543)

The laughter and agreement elicited throughout this fragment may contribute to the ridicule of femininities and negate Joon's question. Alternately, Bison's suggestions that she is not a 'normal girl', alongside the recognition and celebration of femininities performed by a male body, may parallel Joon's challenge. Which is to say, both unsettle the alignment of femininities to the female body and provoke the gender binary.

The male performance of femininities in Shit Girls Say may have contributed to the group's reception. That is, the male body may legitimize the parody and suggest humour, as the performance of femininities by a male body may reveal "the imitative structure of gender" (Butler, 1990, p.186). The address of the film and the un/intelligible portrayal of femininities by a male body may have invited and/or instructed laughter. By that I mean, the comedic portrayal of typical femininities by a male body encourages laughter as the performance is not fully recognizable as female. And yet, the male body and the comedic address of the film may contribute to the alignment of sex/gender and the male body and masculinities. If, as Serano (2009) suggests is often the case, the comedy is derived from a male body transgressing gender norms and embracing femininities.

Same Shit Different Say

Notions of address, normative discourse, and intelligibility, echoed throughout our subsequent discussion of *Shit Guys Don't Say* (2012). However, in this case, the group refused the comedy, the portrayal of femininities by a male body, and the construction of an essentialist masculinity:

> P: this one, I think is a little bit different, even though I think it's funny, it's like, it's
>
> kind of, like, because it's *Shit Guys Don't Say*, they say a lot about like sex, and like ya, 'I
>
> really don't want to take advantage of you when you're drunk' [repeating quote from clip]

[laughter]

P: not all guys are like, 'ya, like sex is kind of a big deal to me'. Like, ya, it's, I like it, but I think there could be a little bit of an offensive thing for some guys in this thing.

SM: what do you guys think?

B: I think it's also 'cus he's saying it in a way that guys wouldn't say it at all. Like, I don't know any guys that would really [inaudible], he says it like, really feminine like.

SM: ya

B: and just like, 'I really don't want to take advantage of you right now' [repeating quote from clip]

SM: ya

B: If a guy would say that, they'd be like, 'I'm sorry, I'm not down. I don't want to take advantage of you'

SM: ya

B: They wouldn't say it like he's saying it, so it's also like different from the other one

(Group Two, February 29, lines 531-539)

Unlike their praise of *Shit Girls Say*, Ponyboy and Bison reject *Shit Guys Don't Say*, suggesting it could be offensive to males. Similar concerns about offending females were not raised in our previous discussion of *Shit Girls Say*. Like the applause for *Shit Girls Say*, these responses could be read as a physiological hold of patriarchal power (Lewis, 1992), and/or as resistance to 'male bashing' (Luke and Gore, 1992), and/or as a defense of the gender binary, and/or as the regulation of masculinity (Sedgwick, 1995) and or/as a representation of the context, and/or as a rejection of the humour of the video.

Within *Shit Guys Don't Say* the intended humour is derived from a male body performing a sensitive, loving, vulnerable masculinity. In many ways this video parallels its parodic predecessor, as both involve a male body performing femininities (narrowly understood). However, in this instance, the male protagonist performing femininities may not be recognizable—as either humorous, or male. Whereas femininities is made a comedic spectacle on the male body in *Shit Girls Say*, the latter lacks the pageantry that invites laughter and instead may suggest mockery of gender 'non-conforming' males. Further, as this video outlines what guys don't say, an essentialist, sexist, tough, masculinity is achieved that may contribute to the group's critical response. The current pervasive discourse of masculinities in popular media celebrates the nerdy, awkward male (Alilunas, 2008). As such, this particular representation of masculinity may not align with their contextual understandings.

The group rejects the authenticity of the representations of masculinity; specifically, Bison critiques the way the male character speaks, in a 'feminine manner', and instead re-phrases 'I don't want to take advantage of you' in a more 'masculine' voice. This could be read as a further vilification of femininities (the female voice) and/or the reification of an essentialist masculinity—one in which a male body cannot speak in a certain way, and the binary of gender is upheld.

While I remain invested in unraveling the ways in which pervasive understandings of gender and/or a patriarchal hold may have encouraged the critical response to essentialist representations of masculinities and not of femininities, I am also left to wonder if the refusal of masculinity in *Shit Guys Don't Say* emanates from the harm of these representations (S. Poyntz, personal communication, September 26, 2013). By that I mean, the suggestion that a male would not say, "'I don't want to take advantage of you" may be more damaging than the

mundane, stereotypical representation of femininities presented in *Shit Girls Say.* The suggestion

of rape embedded in this comment, and the subsequent alignment of masculinities with sexual

violence and misogyny may have encouraged the participant's critical engagement with *Shit*

Guys Don't Say.

The conflation of masculinity/the male body with violence, misogyny and rape should be

interrogated. However, essentialist representations of 'female', the constant vilification of

femininities, and the mockery of male bodies performing femininities should also. The constancy

of deriving comedy from the spectacle of femininities, alongside the assumption that such

humour is harmless, may once again subordinate femininities.

That's Ludacris

The fragments above suggest the possible pedagogies, and the pedagogical possibilities

connected to pieces of popular culture, specifically in relation to gender and sexuality. Amidst

shifting interpretations of both the pieces of popular culture and the data fragments, the

impossibilities and unknowability of pedagogy emerge. Beyond knowing what is learned,

uncertainty remains about engaging pieces of popular culture in ways that invite criticality

without instructing a particular criticality. As in the discussion of likeable characters, how do we

consider the way affinity is informed by normative discourses of gender without projecting *a*

receptive public? Further, as in the discussion of LGBTQ characters, how do we suggest the field

of perception and heteronormative context impacts recognition without assigning an

interpretation? Finally, how do we consider the way the gender order may encourage particular

criticalities while also inviting varied negotiations? These tensions echoed throughout my

discussions with Group Four.

In our February 21st discussion group, after praising Ludacris for being 'funny' and a 'good rapper', participant Phil Collins recommends that we watch the video for Ludacris's song *Area Codes* in our next lunch discussion. The lyrics of the song *Area Codes* boast of women Ludacris has had sex with all over the globe. Utilizing the term 'hos', he makes countless puns. The video visually represents the lyrics, with a parade of women wearing bikinis, cropped shirts, and short shorts, all labeled with various area codes. Black women ascend the stairs of airplanes, dance on the tarmac, are run through the security belt for ex-ray, and are dropped down the baggage claim with the rest of the luggage. If we follow Kellner (2011) and consider the way that popular culture is already schooling, the lesson of this video might be that black women are objects that are willingly used and discarded by a hypersexual black man. However, this mandates a particular interpretation and dismisses the varied ways in which participants negotiate with/through normative discourses of gender, race and sexuality and the address of the video.

When asked about the presentation of females in the video, Group Four responded:

SM: but what do you think the effect of this film is…how do you think girls are being presented in this clip?

SL: probably pretty bad, pretty terrible

SM: okay, so how?

SF: just as material objects that you can order in, and they'll show up like a suitcase

SL: ya

[laughter]

SM: okay, like a suitcase

PC: [laughing] going through customs

[laughter]

PC: just check your girl in the ex-ray machine

SM: so, is he mocking rap videos that do this, or is he doing this?

SL: I think he's/ [inaudible]

PC: /a little bit of both

J: /I can't really tell

[laughter]

PC: ya, you can't tell, that's the best part. (Group Four, March 26, lines 443-473).

As a possible mockery of the question, or of my interpretation, or in response to the expectation, or as a sign of discomfort, or as an assertion of pleasure, throughout the fragment, the participants' laughter acts in lieu of silence.

Prior to my asking, no critical discussions of the representation of females had been made within the group; this does not suggest they would not have, nor does it determine the participants' engagement with the topic. However, there is an imagined 'you' in the address of my question that infers the male participants have not already critically engaged with this video, and that they should. While lesson-filled questions can burden responses, we can never really know what is learned (Ellsworth, 1997).

In response to the question, the group and I have a perfunctory discussion of the misogynistic representations of femininities. Sir Lancelot suggests that the representation of women is 'probably pretty bad, pretty terrible' while Steve French recognizes that women are presented as 'material objects' (Group Four, March 26, lines 443-473). The ability to recognize the negative representations of the female body does not determine criticality or learning. Rather, as Buckingham (2003a) suggests, critical responses offered by youth in formal educational

spaces often reflect proficiency in the language of schooling, rather than an investment in criticality. These references may have been offered to fulfill the question, or respond to my perceived desire, as the group referred to me as a 'women's rights activist' (Group Four Feb. 21). Youth can learn how to read the codes and emulate the expected criticality of school. Although recognizing how to negotiate the normative discourses of school is undoubtedly a literacy, compliance is not learning (Ellsworth, 2005). These possibly conciliatory offers do not dismiss the relevance of criticality; instead, they point to a further tangle of pedagogy.

With this in mind, I note that I consider this particular video offensive and harmful. Yet, it is not up to the teacher/researcher to mandate morality and decide the ideological basis for the entire class (Bragg, 2001). Recognizing that teacher neutrality is an irresponsible fallacy (Bigelow and Peterson, 2002) requires that the questions we ask, the words we use, the texts we draw on, the activities we engage, are all recognized as ideologically imbued. The tension arises in making this overt, without overwhelming the space with expected criticality, or becoming an overly-dogmatic playmate (Ellsworth, 2005). This may inspire parroting, rather than learning. Further, it may nullify the various ways in which media can be understood. For example, participant, Phil Collins suggested *Area Codes* is a parody; the use of women as luggage, women with numbers on their body, women going through the ex-ray machine, could be understood to be exaggerations intended to speak back to similar videos—an interpretation that may refuse my pedagogical assumption of misogyny. Rather than suggesting a 'correct' reading, Phil Collins delights in the ambiguity of the video, "ya, you can't tell, that's the best part" (March 26, line 473).

Until Phil Collins presented this video as a possible parody, I had never considered that. Further, in a discussion with Group Two, Ponyboy suggested that representations of women in music videos could be a form of appreciation:

> P: but in a way I feel like these music videos are in some way like, it depends on the music video, obviously, but are kind of like, appreciating the female figure? (Group Two, February 16, lines 457-59).

Ponyboy's suggestion could be read as naïve, as internalized patriarchy, as reifying sexualization and commodification of the female body. The loss in these readings, though, is the fixing of interpretation, denial of the way Ponyboy negotiates with the address, and negation of the possibility that the representations of femininity in the video may be a powerful expression of sexuality (Funge, 1998). If youth are instructed through pedagogical address to mimic expected criticality, variant readings are not granted space; in turn, the opportunity to place these interpretations in conversation with normative discourses would be lost.

And yet, despite these celebrations of ambiguity, and warnings against dogmatic teaching, there are lesson-filled questions that I am uncertain of letting go. The pedagogical irony rests in my refutation of protectionist models of media education that negate the criticality of youth, alongside my own protectionist assumptions about what youth are learning from media and the need for particular interpretations and interruptions. Representations of gender, even if parody or appreciation, may contribute to misogyny, and/or the construction of black femininities against both masculinities and whiteness, and/or essentialized representations of black masculinity that fuel blackophilia (Yousman, 2003). Britzman (2000) describes this as simultaneously believing in the knowledge and doubting the knowledge on offer. I believe in

provoking normative representations of gender, race and sexuality in popular media *and* I am

uncertain of my interpretations and the pedagogical address that follows.

Super/bad Pedagogy

While many of the mainly white participants were willing to interrogate the

representations of gender in the video *Rack City*, particularly in relation to the female body, they

did not approach the film Superbad (2007) with the same critical lens. When explicitly asked

about their willingness to interrogate representations of gender and sexuality in Tyga's lyrics and

video in a way that they were not willing to do in relation to Superbad, the group explained it as

'different', rather than as an issue of race.

The majority of our discussion surrounding the film Superbad was anchored to a scene in

which the protagonists are talking about a woman's 'dick taking' abilities. The participants in

Group One framed the scene as representative of how guys might talk. In particular, echoing

Josephine, Calvin Broadus (CB) declared it a 'realistic' conversation. Josephine (J) furthered this

defense, stating that is not 'as offensive' as the lyrics in Rack City:

J: Um, that's more realistic than Rack City

[laughter]

CB: That's like a pretty realistic, like random teenager conversation

J: Ya, the fact that you look at them and they're like not the most handsome guys,

[ya, ya, ya]

J: but it's just conversation. I don't know, I wouldn't say calling, saying, a girl 'could take

dick well', that's not as offensive as like, '10s or 20s on your titties' [reference to Rack

City lyrics]

SM: right

[laughter]

J: Well, it's like, I don't know. The way they're using it, it's not as, I don't know

CB: and they're not, I don't know,

J: it's not like he's/

CB: /they're doing it in a different way too,

J: ya. (Group One, Feb. 27, lines 555-579)

Josephine and Calvin stumble to define what it is about the film they do not find as offensive as Rack City. Amidst their suggestions of 'different' and 'not as', I suspect the difference they are not naming is race— the black body who is talking about 'titties' verses the white body that is talking about 'dick taking'. Yet, race again, is 'politely' not named. In this case, we did not challenge ourselves to consider that the protagonists in Superbad look like us. Yet, these seemingly 'polite' omissions could be seen as an aggressive defense of our identities, our whiteness, our privilege.

The 'politeness' of such talk allows whiteness to function as a "pseudo-universal category that hides its specific values, epistemology, and other attributes under the guise of a non-racialized, supposedly colorless, 'human nature' " (Keating, 1995, p.904). Colour-blind rhetoric maintains the notion of white as the norm, fails to recognize dominant privilege, and ignores the social construction of all race, including whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993a; Lopez, 2003). As Cooks (2003), and other critical race and whiteness scholars point out (Frankenberg, 1993a; 1993b; Giroux, 1997; Keating, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Morrison, 1992) the recognition of race and privilege are a radical move for most people who are constructed as white: "To construct for ourselves how Whiteness comes to hold meaning or power in specific contexts, how we have gained status and privilege, is to unravel the tightly held promise of blankness, of

normalcy" (p.248). As a result, one has to be able to make visible a process which fights to remain unseen.

The pervasive myth of colour-blindness not only relates to the reading of media, but was also evident during the early stages of production process. During one of our in-class filming activities, a group of all white student producers chose four students from a grade eight class to be interviewed for their film. The four student interviewees they chose were all white. Noticing this, I poked my head into the class from which they had chosen their interviewees. Looking around, it seemed as though the students had selected the only four white bodies from the class to use in their film. When I asked if they noticed anything about the four students they had interviewed for their film, one recognized that each interviewee was white. The other members of the group explained that they knew these four students through their older siblings, so had felt most comfortable asking them. The Group suggested it was a matter of familiarity rather than race.

Pre-Packaged Pedagogy

Relying on a single interpretation of *Superbad*, and of the youth's responses, I fail to enact pedagogical uncertainty. Instead, the question of un/willingness that framed the discussion above is loaded with presumption and certainty. This is followed by my desire as a researcher to present the reader with a *teacherly reward* through a singular interpretation of the data—white youth are more willing to critique rap, which in turn contributes to violent, misogynistic constructions of black masculinity, and maintains the invisibility of whiteness and privilege. As the literature above suggests, the practice of not naming race may privilege whiteness. While this is certainly a possible reading of these fragments, there is also the 'and/or' of negotiation, of interpretation, and of pedagogical address.

Further, a fixed interpretation methodologically betrays my earlier complications of milieu, voice and fixed identity. Moreover, it ignores the moments in which the participants confront whiteness. In one such example, Dr. Greenthumb, articulates an understanding of whiteness and privilege through the TV Series *Boondocks*.

> G: um, going back to what you were saying earlier about how, maybe, uh, just us being white would affect our decision with racism or whatever, and also relating to the whole satire in the show, if you look up a clip from *Boondocks* [Lots of laughter, as they all discuss watching it] (Group Four, March 26, 605-608).

In lieu of a verbal response, Greenthumb shares a piece of the animated series. In the clip two black males use racist and sexist terms, become violent, and turn guns on one another, before being shot by the police. The scene is then duplicated with one white male and one black male; the white male, drinking his coffee, announces his privilege by laughing and walking away, declaring in a carefree tone, 'I'm white'. Beyond refuting the assumption of my address in his response, Dr. Greenthumb recognizes racialization, whiteness and privilege.

Super/bad The Sequel

Group One continues their discussion of the protagonists in Superbad, positioning them as anti-heroes with whom the audience is meant to empathize and relate to:

> J: well they're like anti, they're like the heroes, but they're not in the movie, but they're like, a chubby guy, and like a really socially awkward white guy, with a weird shirt
>
> SM: so why do you think the directors are picking guys like that
>
> J: easier like to relate to
>
> ….
>
> SM: do you feel sorry for these guys

[multiple voices]

….

CB: /but there's some movies, like this, where it's like two awkward guys like this, and one gets their heart broken by some really attractive girl who they're into, and then you feel bad for them (Feb. 27, lines 635-686).

Josephine (J) and Calvin (CB) note the metalanguage of the film, through their discussions of casting, codes of the character's clothing, and the formulaic plot lines; however, they do not interrogate the representations of gender or sexuality. Although I did not grant the participants much space to respond, I did inquire about this omission, particularly the participants' willingness to see a black male rapper as sexist, and two white protagonists as simply goofing around:

SM: Ya, the other thing is like I've read a few articles about Superbad, I know that sounds hilarious, but there's like theoretical articles that have been written about this movie, and one of the things speaks about the directors picking ugly, sort of nerdy boys, because then you feel sympathy for them

J: ya

SM: but they actually say totally racist, sexist and homophobic things in the movie, but because you feel sorry for them, you don't notice them in the same way you would a rapper doing it (Group One, Feb. 27, lines 777-788)

In response, there was a chorus of 'ya, ya' from the group, and 'ya, that's true' (Farmer, Group One, Feb. 27, line 816). Admittedly, I originally viewed the representations of 'sensitive' masculinity in *Superbad* positively; however, reading Alilunas (2008) provoked me to consider the way in which the nerdy, awkward male that is gaining popularity in teenage comedy is

simply hegemonic masculinity performing as a shape-shifter, in order to elude detection and maintain its position of privilege. This is not to say that Alilunas' reading replaces the pleasure that some youth might derive from these screen stories. These filmic representations of masculinity could be viewed simultaneously as exclusion, as patriarchy, as enlightened, as deprivation. The frail physical body and unassuming, soft demeanour of one of the male protagonists and the overweight, unathletic build of the other, could serve as a challenge to the physicality hegemonic masculinities (Gutterman, 2001). Or, these bodies could be seen as a distraction to guise the homophobic, racist and sexist discourse of these films.

Pre-Packaged Pedagogy II

Aside from the tokenistic recognition of simultaneity, the way in which I present Alilunas's theorization of *Superbad* to the discussion group negates the complexities of the representations of gender, race and sexualities in this film. My theoretical offering is filled with expectation that may encourage compliance rather than nuanced conversation. This film may contribute to new understanding of gender performance and emergent sexualities, and/or it may simply be a form of nostalgia for a time of overt, white, displays of masculinity (Greven, 2002).

Alongside Alilunas's critiques, films within the 'dude flick' genre may reveal the shifting representations of masculinities in mainstream media, from the Ramboesque masculinity of the 1980s (Jeffords, 1992), to the introduction in the mid 1990s of "vulnerable, destroyed and losing men" (Haddington, 1998, p. 4), to the nerdy, awkward male that is currently gaining popularity (Alilunas, 2008). The suggestion that the protagonists in *Superbad* guise hegemonic discourse through their awkward bodies (Alilunas, 2008) may ignore the way that these representations present a counter-hegemonic cinematic trend in which the nerd is celebrated. Whereas nerds

were previously expected to change or perish (Shary 2002), now the strong, popular, hyper masculine body often becomes the site of mockery in these films.

Bulman and McCants (2008) suggest that *Superbad* presents an "enlightened version of teenage masculinity—a masculinity that isn't afraid to express vulnerability and tenderness" (p. 68). Shifting representations may provoke naturalized understandings of masculinity and evoke "sympathy for sexual transgression" (Greven, 2002, p.14). And still, although the men in these films do not reject characteristics associated with femininity (Alilunas 2008), females are often kept in the margins of these narratives, in the role of conquest, object, weight, or judge. Even from the periphery, women in these films perpetuate the supposed victimization of the male (Greven 2002), and in turn solidify the need for homosocial bonding. And yet, Wyatt (2001) suggests that the potential of the homosocial relationship that is part of the formula of these films, is the suggestion that if unconstrained by social conventions, a queer relationship could be fostered. As an example, in *Superbad* the male protagonists are shown lying beside one another in their sleeping bags expressing their love for one another. And still, although it may present the possibility Wyatt speaks of, it may also mock the intersection of the male body and tender emotions. More so, the scene could be a homophobic and violent reiteration (Butler 1993) of gender norms.

Just as the presentation of the nerd as cool can be simultaneously read as hegemony shape-shifting to avoid detection, and/or as a fissure to the dominant narrative of masculinity, the male friendships in the dude flick can be read as a further exclusion of women and the mockery of queer relationships, and/or as the acceptance of emotional connections that would formerly have been associated with femininity. These filmic representations of masculinity could be viewed simultaneously as exclusion, as patriarchy, as enlightened, as deprivation.

Super/bad Returns

After making the inquiry about the disparity in our critique of *Superbad* and *Rack City*, I moved on in the group discussion. I was worried about overwhelming the moment, undermining their understandings, and projecting my viewpoint of the film. I was pedagogically stuck between calls for criticality and encouraging ambiguous readings. More accurately, in that moment, I did not know how to engage with the disparities in criticality between rap and the dude flick, particularly in relation to privilege and whiteness. Specifically, I did not know how to proceed in a way: that did not fix their identities (to either the fragments spoken, or to privilege); that recognized the context of each conversation (my initial framing, and the use of discursive strategies); and that recognized the larger Canadian context (understandings of genres, and theories of whiteness). I would like to pause here in these unknowings, so that they might bump up against the cultural myths of teacher as expert (Britzman, 2003) and ask how they invite messiness in pedagogy.

Pre-Packaged Pedagogy III

Although the above section recognizes the uncertainties of pedagogy, it is also indicative of the *teacherly reward*. While it does not determine a particular pedagogical path, it declares mess and nuance mandatory—in turn suggesting how to enact 'good' pedagogy. Further, it suggests that I was concerned about overwhelming the space with my own critical reading of the film, after I had already aired my interpretation. In this way, it attempts to redeem a façade of my own 'good' messy pedagogy. Left out of the mess, is the possibility that privilege played a role in my unwillingness to challenge the white participants to reflect on their privilege.

Pedagogical Epilogue

Although theories of media education assert the necessary space for popular media in schools, more time needs to be dedicated to the messiness and unknowability of these moments in practice. There are pedagogical, and methodological, implications left in the ruins (St. Pierre & Pillow, 1999) of these moments. That is, in our attempts to critically engage with media, we also perpetuate privilege. That is, in our attempts to be critical, our interrogations also overwhelm variant understandings. That is, in our attempts to promote multiple viewpoints, we also cause harm. As much as this chapter invites the mess, there is still pedagogical worry about celebrating ambiguity in a way that promotes the idea that we are always in relation to other things, people and ideas (Ellsworth, 2005).

CHAPTER 4: GETTING INTIMATE

It is the feeling itself, the bodily sensation, that I would like to settle on; "the thinking-feeling, the

embodied sensation of making sense, the lived experience of our learning selves that make the

thing we call knowledge".

--Ellsworth, 2005, p.1

Through education we invite one another to risk "living at the edge of our skin," where we find

the greatest hope of revisioning ourselves.

--Boler, 1999, p.200

How, I wonder, might those bodily sensations, those somatic summons, be pedagogical?

While I was in the process of analyzing the data produced through this project, a friend mentioned the series, *Dream On,* which aired on HBO in the 1990s. As I watched the show, I was struck by the way in which the protagonist's reflections, sentiments, emotions, and memories are represented through black and white television and film clips from his childhood. As an example, while in a conversation with his estranged wife, a film clip, meant to reveal the protagonist's imaginings of how this conversation will proceed, interrupts. This cinematic suspension shows a woman professing her love to a man; unfortunately for the protagonist, unlike the clip playing in his head, his wife asks for a divorce. In viewing this program, my own thoughts and feelings about the intersection of popular media and data fragments from this study were elucidated.

Prior to viewing this, I had been struggling to articulate my understanding of those moments in the data when participants engaged with and through media. While coding, I had used the term 'intimacy' to refer to these moments; however, I could not fully express what I

meant by this term. In a previous study (Moore, 2008), I spoke of the way that participants drew upon popular culture references to communicate complex understanding; in the moments when the binaried traps of gendered talk failed, the participants referenced musicians, characters from movies and television, and celebrities[35] in order to express their fluid, emergent understandings of gender and sexualities. As in the previous study, many of the participants spoke through popular media; however, in this study they also spoke with familiarity about celebrities or characters they 'know' through media, expressed connections they have with personalities in popular media, and illustrated their emotional investments in popular media. In addition to the ways in which participants engaged with and through the texts of popular media, some of the youth also revealed relationships with the practice of digital video production. By that I mean, some of the youth expressed both childhood connections and trust in the practice. It was these moments in the data that I labeled, intimate.

I initially understood intimacy in various denotations: intimacy as knowledge and familiarity, intimacy as closeness and connection, intimacy as care and affinity, intimacy as personal, and intimacy as sexual, as pleasure. Fittingly, *Dream On,* a piece of popular media, helped me theorize intimacy. In *Dream On*, the act of replacing the main character's thoughts and feelings, particularly the way in which popular media is imbued in the protagonist's body, illuminated my elusive use of the term intimacy—those moments in which popular media is corporeal, emotive, sensory.

Beyond this moment of clarity, I remained troubled still by the slippage between the body, emotion, and senses within the code, intimacy. Ellsworth's (2005) conflation of mind/brain/body grasped the seeming wanderings of this code. Ellsworth draws on Kennedy

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[35] Michael Cera, Clint Eastwood, Freddy Mercury and Homer Simpson are a few examples.

(2003) and Massumi (2002) to demand a more imaginative way of thinking of embodiment, as, in her words, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between reason and sensation, or the im/materiality of the body. Not only provoking the binary between real/virtual, reason/emotion, mind/body, thinking/feeling, Ellsworth melds the mind/brain/body with objects, time and space. Speaking specifically of viewing a film, Ellsworth melds the mind/brain/body with the matter of film (p.4). Our experiences viewing a film exceed reading the codes, it is an event of the body. Pedagogy, Ellsworth suggests, is the experience of the learning self through this assemblage of mind/brain/body/media.

Context

Who we are, what we know, and how we act in the world are all experiences now lived out as electronic and digitally mediated life.

--Hoechsmann & Poytnz, 2012, p. 18

Media theorists have long since recognized that relationships with the media involve the body (Bragg, 2000; Buckingham, 2003a; 2003b; 2006; Duncum, 2009; Grace & Tobin, 2002; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Poyntz, 2006). Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) specifically state that "media relationships are always embodied and involved with questions of desire, pleasure, and play. These dimensions filter through the affective intensities we all feel toward certain media texts and production practices" (p. 135). Not only are there deep investments in media texts, relationships with media are heightened through the connection of technology to bodies. What we view is often literally on our bodies; "we have adopted cyberskins" (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p.ix). Media is literally in our faces, at/on our fingertips, making the visceral an ever-present part of any conversation surrounding media and video production. In addition, within a convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006) youth are also producers of their own media.

Recognizing themselves as producers, youth may feel more connected to film and television (Duncum, 2011).

Despite 'pleasure and play' being central aspects of our relationships with media,"the nonrational, the bodily, and the erotic are fundamental dimensions of social experience that are often disavowed" (Silverstone, 1999, p.317). In her discussion of pedagogy, Ellsworth (2005) points to a similar repudiation of the senses in pedagogy. Ellsworth (2005) admonishes pedagogies that approach knowledge as "a de-composed by-product of something that has already happened to us" (p.1) and instead calls for a *sensory pedagogy* that not only invites the body, but approaches pedagogy and the self as in process.

Overview

This chapter augments theoretical acknowledgments of the intimate relationship between the mind/brain/body and media/production. That is, through data fragments, I will explore what might be meant by the theoretical claims that youth derive pleasure, are invested in, and corporeally connected to media. Although many theorists of media education claim that youth are connected to media/production, this chapter explores these connections. Meaning, those moments in the data where media texts are drawn into the body, and those in which media technology acts as an extension of the body—simultaneously arousing the divisibility which suggests this interior and exterior. Subsequently, I will consider the pedagogical relevance of this corporeal connection. Drawing on Ellsworth's (2005) *meld* of mind/brain/body/media, as the space in which experience of the learning self takes place. By that I mean, how might recognition of this relationship to media be pedagogical, become pedagogy, always be in the process of becoming pedagogy?

<center>**(In)timate Moments**</center>

Throughout this study, there were many moments that I would hear participants speaking about figures from popular media in such detail and with such passion that I thought they were speaking about classmates or good friends. They spread rumours about, showed investment in, defended, and made claims to know a variety of personalities from popular media. While these examples do not articulate the experiences of the mind/brain/body/media meld, they represent the ways in which the relationship to media are imbued in the mind/brain/body.

'Gossip Girl'[36]

> SL: Seacrest, that guy's dumb as nails. Fuckin stupid.
>
> DG: ya
>
> PC: 'Ryan Seacrest Out' [imitating Seacrest] (Group Four, March 26, lines 262-266).

Certainly I could draw on the fragment above to exemplify the many moments in which I heard the participants speak about figures from popular culture, to speak to the ways in which classroom spaces are riddled with these references, and subsequently these influences. However I would like to draw on this fragment, and the pseudonyms chosen by the speakers, to consider the way that 'popular culture' is suffused in 'youth voices' (Soep, 2006).

Group Four's mocking comments about Ryan Seacrest included both a comment on his intellect, with a parodic imitation of his catch phrase. In this moment Phil Collins (PC) is speaking with Ryan Seacrest's voice, by making an imitative, mocking comment, but he is also speaking *with* Ryan Seacrest's voice . Soep (2006) suggests that in these moments of parody, the speaker is acting as themselves and someone else at the same time; the act itself a rupture of the

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[36] To emulate the point I am making in this section, I will be weaving popular culture references throughout this section for my section titles. This particular title is a reference to the TV show of the same name.

possibility of 'I' and instead a referent to Goffman's (1983) observation that a speaker's voice is always 'we'. This 'we' includes pieces of media. To a listener unfamiliar with the celebrity status of Seacrest, neither his identity nor the phrase is distinguishable as a piece of popular culture. Rather, they have become part of Phil Collins's (PC) 'voice'.

Sir Lancelot (SL), Dr. Greenthumb (DG) and Phil Collins' (PC), choices of pseudonyms also speak to this meld, as each is a reference to a piece of popular culture. What does it say about the ways in which popular culture is woven through our 'everyday' understandings that a youth who is not a fan of Collins' music chose to use his name as a pseudonym? Whether or not Phil chose this pseudonym as a compliment to the artist, because of DMXs remix of Collins' song *In The Air Tonight*, or as an act of satire, this choice reveals the way that Phil Collins as a cultural icon is engrained in current cultural understandings. Echoes of artists from previous generations, lines from films we have never seen, references to film characters from before we were born, and the humming of advertisement jingles we have only heard through others, are all indicative of the inculcation of popular culture. I use quotes from the movie *Office Space*, although I have never seen the film, shout 'Stella' at a student of that name even though my familiarity with *A Streetcar Named Desire* comes from *Seinfeld*, and utter countless other examples of jargon I unknowingly use from books I have never read and films I have never seen. Our words are always "filled to overflowing" (Soep, 2006a) with the words of others. With that, how do we distinguish between popular culture and other conceptual categories? How does this speak to the way that popular culture is something indelible and within our culture, rather than as a separate sphere as it is commonly referenced? That is, how are popular and personal culture in/distinguishable?

In another example, Pepper 'gossiped', her term, about Dumbledore from *Harry Potter:*

P: ya, i know, I really respected her [JK Rowling] for doing that though. It's like, ya, he's gay, whatever, right. It's like whatever. It does not change the plot, if he was gay or straight, it wouldn't have changed anything.

SM: Ya, ya, ya

P: Maybe he wouldn't have been so agonizing over having to do, like deal with Grindelwald, or something, right.

SM: Ya

P: Which is what, like that was a bit of his like personal sacrifice, because then they were a couple, I think. He never came out and confirmed it, but I'm fairly certain that's what happened, ya

[pause]

….

P: Harry Potter gossip [laughs] (Group Three, March 8, 638-658).

In the fragment above Pepper speaks of her respect for the author, JK Rowling, about Dumbledore's sexuality, agony, personal sacrifice, and relationship. While Pepper references 'the plot', there is very little else in her discussion that would reveal that this is a conversation about characters in a book. Despite being fictitious characters, these conversations were indistinguishable from those spoken about people with celebrity status, teachers or classmates, —although, the argument could be made that Ryan Seacrest is also a fictitious character.

Pepper's discussion not only suggests intimate knowledge and familiarity with the characters in Harry Potter, her discussion reveals interest and care. JK Rowling has earned Pepper's respect and her characters have earned her attention. Her discussion of Dumbledore's agony and personal sacrifice suggests an investment in characters from popular culture; she has

come to know them, care about them. Her knowledge and investment in storybook characters

blurs the lines between fiction and reality, personal and popular culture.

'Take It Personal'[37]

In a conversation with Group One, Watson, Calvin Broadus, and Josephine, spoke bluntly

about Lady Gaga's mental health with assertive familiarity:

W: Lady Gaga's insane

CB: Isn't Lady Gaga over now? I thought that ended

W: She's insane

….

J: I think she takes herself too seriously, but that's okay

….

W: She's insane. She is like, insane. I read this thing and she was writing it and she was like,

'My grandma lives inside me,' and like 'I have two hearts', and like, 'I have a heart of a lion'

and like 'I'm invincible', and like, she's insane.

J: And like 'I'm the reincarnation of good music' or something like that. (Group One, Feb.

14, lines 305-332)

Playing on the word intimate, not only are Calvin Broadus (CB), Josephine (J) and Watson (W)

speaking with familiarity about a person they know only through media constructions, they are

speaking of the personal matter of mental health. Beyond the topic of discussion, I engage with

this data fragment as a further demonstration of the meld between mind/body/brain/media. That

is, taking the attacks somewhat personally, Farmer defends Lady Gaga:

F: I think she has talent, Lady Gaga

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[37] A line from rap artist Ice-T's song *Personal*.

J: A little

W: More talent than me, less than Madonna

J: It's not that she's lame, but

F: Like you have to see the videos where she like plays piano and sings, like

SM: I'm gonna look that up, when I get home

F: Yeah, like Paparazzi live, where it's all piano (Group One, Feb. 14, 391-404).

Farmer is asking the group to re-consider their opinion of Lady Gaga, requesting that they 'have to see' the video. What is it about the group's critique of Gaga that has caused Farmer to come to her defense? If we consider that Farmer derives pleasure from her experiences of Lady Gaga's music, the critiques of Lady Gaga may have been read as an attack on her pleasure. While I cannot speak with certainty about Farmer's rationale for defending Lady Gaga in this particular instance, throughout this study there were other moments when participants became defensive when brands, musicians, actors, or media they felt an affinity for were critiqued.

In the first lesson I facilitated with the class, we viewed a portion of The Media Education Foundation's film*, Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood* (2008). This film is extremely critical of consumerism, and the ways in which children and youth are targeted through unregulated marketing strategies. After viewing the film, a few of the participants articulated and defended their pleasure in the media and consumerism:

"What is so bad about a girl liking my little pony, or a boy liking hot wheels?"

"Coca Cola makes me happy".

"I want an iPhone" (Anonymous Participant Response Sheets, November 29, 2011).

In the classroom conversation that ensued, particularly after the inquiry about the harm of *My Little Pony* was raised, several participants responded with statements about the way gendered

toys produce masculinities and femininities and limit the possibilities for gender expression. Two members of the class verbally refuted this suggestion. This incited a discussion about 'choice', and 'free will'. Some members of the class spoke about the ways in which our 'choices' are formed in relation to the media. A few people in the class grew angry and defensive at the suggestion that their choices were not their own; their refutations were steeped in individualistic neo-liberal notions of choice. In particular, one participant demanded that he likes wearing *Adidas*, that this was a choice that he made based on the quality of the garments and not due to marketing. Several members of the class challenged him on this. At this point, the participant turned the conversation toward my name brand jeans.

What might it have been about these participants' attachments to Lady Gaga, toys from their childhood, or brands that they wear, that made them resistant to interrogations? If we consider the meld of mind/brain/body/media, these interrogations may have been perceived as a 'personal' attack.

'Blurred Lines'[38]

But when I think of this example as an educator who is interested in the question of pedagogy, I feel my body/mind/brain falling into education's theoretical "no-body's land".

--Ellsworth, 2005, p.120

To take this discussion of intimacy toward its sexual denotation, Pepper spoke of the way that she learned about love and sexuality from the shows and films that she watched. Not only was she taught about sex from television, she felt betrayed by these lessons:

P: I mean, like, kids aren't taught, you know, how to behave in a relationship, how to like behave in intimate situations, that's not on the curriculum. We have no models for that,

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[38] Reference to Robin Thicke's hit single of the same name

except for, like the only way you can know about that stuff is either your parents tell you

about it, which is really unlikely, or you see it on TV.

…

P: [in] sexual situations, the only models you have are media, because that's the only

way you can get that close to something that's happening like that

…

P: because that, it's on film, you're not there. You're just watching and observing, right,

so it's the only model you have. It's like totally fucked, so, when it actually happens, it's

totally different and you are thrown off…

…

P: and it definitely affects you, and it definitely affects how you think you are supposed

to be to like get a mate [inaudible] We don't have a lot of models for that type of thing,

besides media (Group Three, Feb. 23, 878-923).

As a researcher and an educator, the pedagogical residue of this fragment is its comment on the

invalidation of the body, sex and pleasure within formal educational spaces. Pepper, very

candidly, rebukes the way that conversations of sex and intimacy are neglected by both parents

and educators. With youth left to their own devices, some might say literally, Pepper declares

that youth learn about love, sex and pleasure from the media. Pepper's declaration is echoed in

Buckingham and Bragg's (2004) research, as they similarly report that for many young people

media is a "key source of information and ideas about love, sex and relationships" (p. 59).

Protectionist models do not ensure these topics are kept from youth, rather they establish the

contexts in which youth will learn about them—through the media. Even when the topic of sex is

invited into the curriculum, the discussions are often physical rather than emotional

(Buckingham and Bragg, 2004). Pepper's fragment serves as a salient statement on pedagogical loss; however, it is also speaks to an emotional connection with media.

Pepper first speaks to the way that popular media acted as a role model to her in relation to love and sex. These lessons then become part of her own understandings and expectations about relationships and sex; she takes them into her mind/body/brain. This fragment engages all of the tangles of media and the body, in that she is being parented by media text, in the expectation that it creates in her body of how relationships and sex are supposed to make you feel, and in the emotional response she has towards the media for letting her down. Not only did popular culture teach her about a personal, intimate topic, she felt personally slighted by it.

'We Can't Stop'[39]

As in the conversation about Lady Gaga, the participants made claims to know personal details about celebrities. In both of my interviews with Group Four they spoke of rap artist, Ludacris with presumptive familiarity. Speaking about Ludacris's video *Area codes*, participant Phil Collins noted:

> PC: this basically could happen to him, he could just be like, call a bunch of girls and
>
> then fly and hang out with them. (March 26, lines 440-41).

Collins claims to know Ludacris, his lifestyle, his sexuality, and his relationships with women. Despite having never spoken with the artist, and only knowing his character through media, Phil Collins imagines that he knows Ludacris personally. Considering the increased time youth spend with popular media and technology (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012), and the prevalence of networked devices literally attached to bodies, it is no surprise that Phil Collins speaks with such authority about Ludacris; within these constructs, they have 'hung out' together. However, the

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[39] Reference to Miley Cyrus song, for which the video is critiqued for its appropriation of 'black culture'

images in the video, those of wealth, travel, black women dancing in revealing clothes, and black male artists, do not parallel those in Collins school or the community. Yet, he asserts the authenticity of these representations. As a result of his engagement with rap music, Collins assumes it as a piece of his own culture. Not only is he making it part of his own identity, he then uses that as 'authority' to speak about the identity of an Other, in this case black male rapper, Ludacris. Through his investment in these images, he subsequently takes over the culture of an imagined Other.

Yousman (2003) refers to 'white youth's'[40] consumption and identification with rap music as a form of blackophilia, behind which rests blackophobia. Yousman draws on hook's (1992) conception of 'eating the other', Watt's formulation of 'spectacular consumption' and Said's (1998) notion of 'Orientalism' to speak to the way that the consumption of rap music by white youth audiences leads to the commodification of *a* black masculinity, one that is violent, misogynist and homophobic. Considering my own relationship to rap music, I would extend Yousman's argument to white audiences that fetishize 'political' rappers and in turn commodify a different black masculinity. The connection of white youth to rap music, Yousman asserts, is not to black culture or black people, rather to other white youth who listen to rap. Not only does this fail to reduce racial mis/understandings, instead Yousman (2003) argues that this fascination fuels blackophobia and white supremacy, in that, white masculinities are formed in opposition to the homophobic, violent, misogynist representations of black masculinity. This is a construction from which Phil Collins gains privilege. As a result, Collins' perception of familiarity, and the pleasure he derives from rap music, may interfere with criticality in regards to representations of black masculinity in rap. Similarly, it may impede interrogations of the ways in which his

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[40] While making this argument, Yousman does trouble the essentialist categories, such as 'white youth' and 'black culture'.

pleasure produces privilege.

Pleasure may dismiss criticality, or it may become a possible space of undoing. For example, Farmer's vindication of Lady Gaga, the participant's defense of 'choice' in our class discussion, or Collins' delight in his familiarity with rap culture, may emanate from pleasure. In turn, pleasure may interfere with critical interrogations of race, gender, privilege and sexualities in the *Area Codes*. However, I wonder how the pleasure itself, the feeling, might also become the space of pedagogy. If we consider the meld, the experience of media may cause the mind/brain/body to catalyze "new forms of corporeality, new embodiments, new ways of knowing, and being human" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.126). More specifically, if one had to critically interrogate how their pleasure contributes to a harmful narrative of a racialized Other, and in turn privileges their own identity, how might this sensation be pedagogical. Might this then become the sensation that sets in motion, or that undoes (Ellsworth, 2005)? Tending to this possibly uncomfortable sensation, translates to pedagogy as becoming oneself—the learning self in the making: "Thinking and feeling our selves as they make sense is more than merely the sensation of knowledge in the making. It is a sensing of our selves in the making, and is that not the root of what we call learning?" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.1). This focus on the experience of learning, recognizes that the 'I' does not precede an experience, rather emerges from it (Ellsworth, 2005). Pedagogy then becomes, not how Collins sees the video differently after, but how he sees himself differently, or rather is made different.

Bodyrock[41]

While video production is likened to an externalizing of one's insides[42], the act of viewing digital video productions is often referenced as getting inside of something. That may

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[41] Reference to Moby song of the same name

mean the way one sees themselves reflected in a piece of media, or the way the piece of media is internalized. As an example, in Pepper's discussion of learning about sex from the media, one could describe these as lessons that she internalized. Whereas Pepper's suggestion that: "almost everything you watch, you're, you're in there" (Group Two, February 2, lines 80-83) references the way we are in media. Pepper's discussion of her experience viewing the participant produced film, *Miss Perception*, articulates both these understandings of internal.

Miss Perception re-presents one character through three different viewpoints. By way of these variant perspectives, the audience engages with the intersection of perception and identities; who we are is dependent on others' views. In one scene, the protagonist is scrutinized by another female character in regards to her nails, make-up and footwear. The audience is granted access to the inner thoughts and critiques of the on-looker through a voice over in the film. The voice over is rapid and disjointed and weaves critiques of the protagonist, *Miss,* with the on-looker's own insecurities and repetition of the self-deprecating phrase, *be better, be perfect.* Pepper initially describes the film as 'powerful' (Group Two, May 17, line 490). When asked to further explain what she meant by 'powerful', Pepper focused on one scene in particular:

> P: …and then slowly, like half way through, when she was really harshly judging [Miss], like looking at her mascara that was applied improperly, you could hear coming up from her head, her thoughts, 'be better, be perfect, be better, be perfect', and it just kept getting louder. And it was really, interesting to like, it's like the way they portrayed the way people think was really, really strong in this movie. That was really cool and really weird to see on the screen 'cus it's what happens in your head

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[42] This concept is articulated further in the next section.

SM: ya

P: I think they like got that onto film really well (Group Two, Pepper, May 17, lines 497-
510).

Pepper, speaking universally, suggests that the film represents what happens in *your* head. She

recognizes herself in the media. Pepper also speaks to the experience of viewing the film,

focusing on the senses she had while viewing the film, those she terms 'cool' and 'weird'.

Considering Ellsworth's (2005) suggestion that the experience of viewing films is an event of the

body, the sensations that Pepper recognizes might be understood pedagogically. That is, her

delight and discomfort may emanate from gendered discourses. Recognizing this, she may

consider the ways that gendered discourses inform her interpretation of and engagement with

media. Or, this event may provoke understandings of gender.

My understandings of Pepper's description of the film, as powerful, were filtered through

my own experiences. I understood her use of the term powerful in relation to the sensations the

film aroused in me. As I watched the film, it gripped my body, caused it to tense up, and shrink

in response. For me, the feeling was as difficult to avoid as the repetitive hammering of the

narrative, and it was this feeling that resonated. It is my lasting memory of the film; the *thinking-*

feeling of anxiety, unease and shame. This corporeal experience incited reflective interrogations

in regards to my complicity in the regulation of femininities.

These sensations invited me to consider the ways in which I, like the on-looker in the

film, participate in similar acts of gender regulation and violence (what Mulvey long ago

described as the male gaze, 1975). As in the Collins/Ludacris example, the feeling derived from

this viewing might become a pedagogical impetus, as tending to these feelings could stimulate a

re-thinking of beauty and femininities. Yet, if education shrinks from discussions of the body, this sensation, the experience of the film, might be kept private, considered irrelevant and taboo.

Drawing on two moments from the research that engage with bodily sensations, I consider the pedagogical possibilities of the senses. More specifically, I dwell in what might be possible if we recognized these moments as pedagogy.

Oh-No Bruno.

Because people didn't sit through it and be like that was funny or a good movie. And later thought about what they watched--they were just like what the fuck he was waving his dick in our faces.

--Phil Collins, Feb. 21, lines 1070-72

In our discussion of the mockumentary *Bruno* (2009), Mr. Castle labeled the film, 'borderline gay porn' (Group Four, Feb. 21, line 1009) and Sir Lancelot spoke of his intense discomfort in viewing the film:

SL: *Bruno* scarred me for life. We are not going to talk about *Bruno*. No. I hate that

movie with a burning, fiery passion (Group Four, Feb 21, lines 994-995).

While Sir Lancelot gives his review of the film, he is visibly agitated, repulsed. Despite his refusal to discuss the film, the other members of Group Four continue the discussion and he continues to participate:

PC: It wasn't interesting. It wasn't funny, it was just like painful to watch a little

bit. (Group Four, Feb 21, lines 1017-1018)

….

SF: or at least I/ it was just too much

SL: /no, it took me like four times to try and watch the whole damn thing straight through/

SF: I had to skip some scenes/ (Feb 21, lines 1046-1050)

Phil Collins, Steve French and Sir Lancelot all express a visceral refusal of the images in the film. Collins specifically refers to the experience of the film as painful, while French and Lancelot suggest that it caused such discomfort that they had to stop or skip particular scenes. Alternately, members of the group spoke more positively about Cohen's other film, *The Dictator* (2012) declaring that it 'has an underlying message' (Group Four, Phil Collins, February 21, line 1036) and 'highlights and makes fun of corruption' (Group Four, Steve French, March 26, lines 173-74). Drawing on the same comedic tools, of parody and satire, *The Dictator* does not elicit similar responses from the group. This, in and of itself, points to the need to pause with the Group's feelings, their visceral and emotional response while viewing *Bruno*.

As in my own visceral response to *Miss Perception*, the discomfort the film generated for the members of Group Four may provoke understandings of masculinities, the body, and sexualities. By that, I mean, how the normative discourses of masculinities and sexualities may have contributed to Sir Lancelot's visceral response to viewing Bruno 'waving his dick'. How is it that the male body, particularly the penis, being overtly made spectacle caused discomfort? How did not only sexuality as a referent, but the constant centering of Bruno's sex acts, cause anxiety, discomfort, anger, confusion? If the experience of the film is engaged, this grants space for questions surrounding: portrayals of the female body in relation to the male body in media; the ways in which particular sex acts are made taboo; and for a discussion of why particular images generate discomfort.

In his initial refusal to discuss the film, Sir Lancelot speaks of the way that it has scarred him—a term that suggests the media left a mark on his body and articulates the meld of mind/body/brain/media. It is these resins, these media marks, that invite discussions of subjectivities and normative discourses in society. When we ignore movement and sensation, "when we overlook *this* dimension of the reality of teaching and learning, we not only impoverish our understandings of what we do as teachers and students, but we also open ourselves, as teachers, to doing harm" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.35). As in this example, or in our discussion of Ludacris, a refusal to engage with sensations translates to normative discourses of gender remaining uninterrogated; this equates to harm of those who are considered unintelligible by such discourses. That is, the possible harm the viewing of this film may have done to Sir Lancelot, or the harm his refusal of this film does to some performances of masculinities, or the harm held in the lack of screen time granted to particular performances of masculinities, or the harm that is done to female bodies. If only education might take a moment to scrape away at this resin—and then continue to pick the scab, we may provoke these dominant discourses.

Beyond feelings of discomfort, there are those bodily sensations that are as of yet unnamed. Those events that we recognize as feelings, but are unable to decipher in language. In Participant L's discussion of viewing the peer produced film, *After She Left*, he focuses on the feeling in his body.

Left-Over.

After She Left is a participant produced film that takes up themes of mental health, family, and abandonment. Through the use of sound and visual image—absent of any dialogue— the film tells the story of two sisters who were abandoned by their mother. Within the film, there is one point where two shadows are dancing on the wall, and one literally stops and looks at the

other. In response to viewing this film, Participant L spoke of the way he felt, particularly, the bodily sensations that arose:

> L: I remember watching while you guys were editing, the one scene where she's dancing [excited many voices talking] and the shadows are dancing together, and one shadow stops and looks at the other one, at that point my brain is almost like thumping, like what, what does that mean…[Group One, Participant L, May 15, lines 525-530]

It is the feeling that Participant L focused on, particularly the *feeling* in his brain. He is not referencing his brain as a severed intellectual tool, rather he is focusing on the sensation in his body/mind/brain/media. I draw on this moment in relation to Ellsworth's (2005) notion of sensory pedagogy; pedagogy as "the impetus behind particular movements, sensations, and affects of bodies/minds/brains in the midst of learning" (p.2). Part of this midst, being the interaction with media. I wonder how this moment, and the near thumping of Participant L's brain might act as a metaphor for sensory pedagogy, in that it centers the experience of learning, engages the body/mind/brain/media, and is unfinished.

As the end of the fragment reveals, Participant L has still not declared what this feeling means, to the film or himself. Ellsworth (2005) refers to these moments as the time of the learning self, in which a bodily sensation is turned into a 'jumble of thoughts' (p.8). Participant L was yet to make sense of his own *thinking-feeling*, yet it was his lasting memory of the film. The sensation, a 'thumping' feeling, was neither complete nor intelligible. This speaks to the unfinished element of learning; it is not learned once and for all, it resonates, rings, echoes, morphs.

As I increasingly began to hear referents to the visceral within the research context, I considered my own dismissal of the body in my experiences as a classroom teacher and a teacher

educator—and subsequently in educational discourses writ large. I am unable to recall a moment in which I have asked students in my classes to express their visceral responses to curricula, or to account for their experience of learning; often, the focus is on 'what' is learned. While this could be theorized in relation to the refusal of the senses within dominant educational discourses, I wonder about the ways in which the context of Film Class, or the process of making and viewing digital video productions, invites somatic responses. By that I mean, how is it that students might approach digital video productions as open to interpretation and to discussions of the senses, in ways that they might not the official curricula. In what follows, I consider what it might have been about the medium of digital video production and the research process that engendered sensory responses.

(Out)side In/(In)side Out

In addition to the ways in which the texts of popular media melded with the mind/body/brains of the participants in the research space, the participant's relationships with video production could be described similarly. As McLuhan long ago recognized that all mediums are extensions of the body, this chapter may already be written: Digital video production acts as an extension of the body. Recognizing that theoretical premise, this section explores *the ways* in which youth are connected to the medium, *the way* it engages with the body, the senses, the mind, and how this might be pedagogically relevant.

Corporeal Curricula

Throughout the research process, I noted the participants' references to their bodies in relation to the production of digital video. I preface this conversation by recognizing that sensory responses are certainly not exclusive to video production; yet, I wonder if there are particular

elements surrounding this medium that provoke and invite sensory responses in formal educational spaces, and/or heighten the connection between youth and digital video production.

In one of my first film discussion groups, Joon spoke of her attachment with video production, particularly the coherence she felt that it offered her expression:

> J: The most interesting thing for me was when I watched something on the screen and went, wow. That's exactly what I saw in my head. It's like I'm looking at an idea I had in my head on the screen…it was like actually taking my brain and putting it on the screen. That was probably one of the coolest moments for a film we did last year, that's what made me want to continue. (Group One, Joon, Jan. 31, lines 23-33)

In this fragment, Joon echoes McLuhan and makes a direct connection between her brain and the screen. Further, she suggests that digital video production has granted her a medium through which to share her mind/brain/body, in a way that she considers accurate. Ponyboy makes a similar claim of accuracy:

> P: I also really like, like, yeah, not having to talk everything out. Like yeah, I do like having discussions with people and stuff like that but it's just like another way of self expression that's… yeah, you can completely, like, show people what's going on in your mind, and it's, it's cool.(Group One, Ponyboy, Jan. 31, lines 87-91).

Interestingly, both Ponyoy and Joon describe the medium of digital production as a way of revealing their minds, their brains. While this cerebral referent may be interpreted as a separation of mind and body, I understood it as a result of the traps of talk and the pervasive discourses that suggest this separation. Simply because Joon and Ponyboy refer to their mind/brain does not suggest they are severing the body; rather, this is representative of the mind/body/brain. After all, Ponyboy later describes video production as 'putting herself out there':

P: Yeah, and then like, when it's a film it's almost like more humiliating because it's like, yeah I just showed you guys what I can do, maybe, like, you might not even like it that much. But to just kind of put yourself out there that way and to have people….(Group One, Ponyboy, Jan. 31, lines 418-22).

In these fragments, and possibly as a result of this medium, the taboo topic of the body is invited into formal educational spaces. Agreeing with Ponyboy, Participant L interrupts her to parallel video production to an offering of his insides, 'Like I poured my guts out for you" (Group One, Jan, 31, line 426). For these participants, the productions were seen as offerings. The medium granted them a way to share their brains, their minds, their guts, (mind/brain/body) in formal educational spaces. Inviting the body into the educational environments is both necessary, and peculiar, since "learning never takes place in the absence of bodies, emotions, place, time, sound, image, self-experience, history. It always detours through memory, forgetting, desire, fear, pleasure, surprise, rewriting" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.55). As most young people engage with digital video production outside of school (Sefton-Green & Soep, 2007) there is little research on how this practice might provoke educational spaces and pervasive educational discourses. If, as is evidenced in the fragments above, youth producers invite the relationship between the body and the media, this may invite the senses into education's "no-body's land" (Ellsworth, 2005).

In the data fragment that began this section[43], Joon speaks of the way that she felt film offered her a way to communicate her thoughts and feelings precisely; yet, when she was asked about the particularities of the film, she couldn't remember the film itself. For her, it was not the

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[43] J: The most interesting thing for me was when I watched something on the screen and went, wow. That's exactly what I saw in my head. It's like I'm looking at an idea I had in my head on the screen…it was like actually taking my brain and putting it on the screen. That was probably one of the coolest moments for a film we did last year, that's what made me want to continue (Group One, Joon, Jan. 31, lines 23-33).

text, the film, that she remembered, it was the feeling of sharing the film, of seeing her mind/body/brain on the screen, of the experience. In other words, it is not the video production, but the moments, the processes of creating and sharing, that resonate for Joon. The meaningfulness of video production, and subsequently the pedagogical potential might reside in these sensations, processes and relations.

In addition to the way that digital video production is presented as an extension of the body, the participants also spoke of their emotional connection to the practice of production, as for many of them it played a large role in their childhoods.

Nostalgia

Without slipping into essentialist assumptions about youth and digital video production, the affinity and/or connection to childhood memories that emanate from the fragments below suggests a connection between the youth within this research site and the medium. This connection may make it a medium through which they prefer to express themselves; Bison said as much when she was comparing video production to writing:

> B: okay, yes you can put a lot of effort into writing and stuff, but at the end of the day you didn't like, produce something that took you hours and hours and hours on end to put together (Group One, Jan. 31, Bison, lines 408-412).

However, in keeping with the theoretical frame of this research, particularly the troublings of narrative and data, I don't think a data fragment explicitly declaring this connection is any more reliable than those below that show how the relationships and memories surrounding the medium seemed to intensify the connection to the medium. For some youth, media and video production have become nostalgic—after all, it was the way that some youth played as children. As a classroom teacher, this moment was particularly epiphanic for me. Never before had I

considered the way that video production might have been a form of play for my students.

As part of our first discussion group, the participants were asked about their choice to take the elective course, Film 11/12. In response, many of the students spoke about their beginnings as filmmakers:

> J: We used to make like huge series, it was really involved. We'd get together, like
>
> family dinners, and like all the kids, we'd decide to make movies, and we'd always end
>
> up fighting cause everyone would want to direct it, but, I still have them and they are
>
> hilarious (Group One, Joon, Jan. 31, lines 138-141).

Like Joon's fragment above, surrounding her early experiences producing and directing video, many of the participants spoke about video production as a form of play in their childhoods. Their discussions of filmmaking through childhood often drifted into moments of nostalgia, and became a point of connection between the participants, and a disparity between them and me. In these moments, the group grew animated, and spoke excitedly with one another when the conversation turned to their early years making films:

> P:….for Christmas, me and my cousins used to make Christmas plays, cause my
>
> grandma, she like, loves film, and like loves acting and all that stuff. So, one year we
>
> were like, 'oh my god, we should make a movie, it'll be so awesome'. And watching, it's
>
> like, it's good, like I think it's pretty cool. But it's hilarious too, cause it's just like, yeah,
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> we had a little digital camera, we actually worked on Final Cut, like I didn't know what it
>
> was then, but now, now I do. But um, yeah, I'm playing an old lady, my like six year old,
>
> then six year old cousin, is like a fisherman, and we had to do like this whole like epic
>
> underwater scene so we got a fish tank that was filled with rainwater and like put this
>
> bought fish, like in it, and swam it around, and it was really fun. Like it's almost more

fun having less resources cause you have to be more creative. Yeah, it was super

awesome (Group One, Ponyboy, January 31, lines 159-171).

At other points in the conversation, Ponyboy spoke about learning to operate the VCR as a

toddler to aid in her sleepless nights (Jan. 31, lines 227-32) and imagining the characters she

might cast in adaptations of the books she read (Jan. 31, lines 47-44). Each of these examples—

the childhood productions, the nighttime lullaby, and the early imaginings of a filmmaker—

speak to a connection with the medium of video production. Further, the way in which Joon and

Ponyboy relate the practice to fond moments in their childhood, to family, and to play, may

heighten their connection to the practice, and to one another.

Joon and Ponyboys' stories, and the enthusiasm that emanated from their tellings, were

echoed by other members of the group. Calvin Broadus referenced producing films in his

childhood as a form of play:

CB: I just really like making, ever since I was like ten, or like nine, I really liked making

movies, I used to do that all the time with my friends (Group One, Calvin Broadus,

January 31, lines 70-75).

Through sharing these experiences, and reminiscing about their beginnings as film-makers,

members of this discussion group, who had previously not worked together, and were in different

grades and social circles, momentarily bonded. These responses were not exclusive to this group,

as Pepper and Mordecai also spoke fondly of video production in their early years:

P: Mhmm. Yeah, I used to make stop film animations, like, I had Play-Doh, and a

camera, and I just/

M: /yeah, I did that as well

P: Yeah, all the time

M: So much fun. (Group One, Feb. 2, lines 41-48).

Joon, Ponyboy, Calvin, Pepper and Mordecai's responses were all steeped in enjoyment, passion and fondness. The fragments are imbued with the personal, tales of family, home life, childhood. Whereas some youth may feel they do not have capital in relation to official curricula and traditional literacies, the invitation of childhood play and the personal into the classroom may contribute to a sense of capital. Excitement emerged in these discussions, and sharing similar childhood practices connected the participants to one another and separate from the adult research, a factor that challenges the teacher as knower (Britzman, 2003). In addition, each of the fragments above focuses on the experience of making the films, the feelings, rather than the product of what was produced; this may also provoke education's focus on the finished product (Ellsworth, 2005).

Warning Label

Whereas the above points to some of the positive elements of engaging digital video production with youth, there are some pedagogical/methodological concerns that arise as a result of this connection. Much theory in media education is grounded on the assumption that digital video production is a practice that youth feel more connected to; however, there is little discussion of the possible traps of digital video production due to this connection. One such trap being a trust in the medium, or an assumption of authenticity.

As is evidenced above, both Ponyboy and Joon were participants who fondly reminisced about the role video production played in their childhoods, and this connection, in their case, seems to have resulted in a trust in the medium. Ponyboy suggests that film moves beyond *representing* moments:

P: I think the film actually like, instead of being a representation of a moment, it actually

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captures a moment in time of exactly what, like, everything felt like at the moment. So

like, even if it's just a circle around this room, you see these people's faces and how, like,

how they move, like the muscles in their faces and stuff like that. Like it captures, it can

capture so much more in a way shorter amount of time (Group One, Jan. 31, Ponyboy,

lines 316-321).

In this, Ponyboy is feeding notions of a static self and of authentic youth voice. Within her

praise is also the belief that one can represent themselves. While the practice of video

production may provoke some of the pervasive discourses in education, these provocations are

not automatic, nor do they include the necessary criticality surrounding the medium. Like

pleasure, this trust, may render an unwillingness to critique the medium, and its capacity to re-

present. Joon echoes Ponyboys' trust in video production to be more 'realistic':

J: Yeah, it's pretty amazing because with photography you have, it's the same idea,

where you're not using words and you're still getting a message across to somebody, but

it's only one angle, and I was thinking about how you could take a photo of somebody

and it might not even look like them at all, it just looks like, one angle at one split second,

that's what the would have looked like, but with film, it really is like real life, because it's

the same time, it's the, like you have so many different angles but then you can take that

and you can make it whatever you want (Group One, Joon, Jan. 31, lines 93-100).

While this may foster an enthusiasm for the medium, and subsequently its use in school, this

trust could contribute 'youth voice' rhetoric and negate the need for necessary critiques of

representation, authenticity and identity associated with any medium. The expectation that youth

produce their own stories, suggests that these narrations are possible and perpetuates notions of

individualism (Bragg, 2007).

In their attempts to engage 'youth culture' in schools, educators and educational researchers could fall into a similar celebratory trap. As Orner (1992), and subsequently Soep (2006) and Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) have warned, celebrations of 'youth voice' do not take into account the power structures that constrict voices—or the impossibility of voice. Bragg (2007) and Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) also suggest that calls for youth voice in education can act as a tool of regulation that manages the supposed agency. Moreover, as Pitt (2000) points out, calls for the personal in education, that is the constant demand to narrate oneself, is not necessarily pedagogic. Through this, she asserts, students learn that they have the capacity to narrate themselves rather than considering the way that "the personal is constituted within a web of relations of time (how the past works on the present) and relations with others, knowledge and authority" (Pitt, 2000, p.69). A further issue being the way these narrations are taken as authentic and subsequently left unengaged. Rather than using these narrations to 'make good our lives', Pitt argues, we should engage with the personal "as a method for observing how we experience ourselves in the world" (p.69). As she points out in her article, our narrations often advance idealized representations of the self, and dismiss criticality that may expose how these narrations serve one's own interest. Digital video productions might be confronted similarly, and used as a method for observing how we re-present 'ourselves' and the other.

'Looking' at you/th

Although the preceding sections spoke to a connection between youth and video production, youth were not all connected to the medium similarly. Any assumption surrounding connection negates the diverse ways in which youth engage with the medium; the effect of which is a fixed, essentialist view of the medium and of youth. As the fragments below will reveal, some of the youth within the research context connected to the visual elements of production,

while others focused on storylines. Again, this could be seen as far too simple, in addition to

suggesting the elements of story and visual are distinguishable. However, I posit that this

essentialist rupture is necessary considering some of the grand claims that are made about the

relationship between youth and production.

Although the visual and narrative elements of film are tethered, in explaining their

understanding of the medium, some youth presented them as separate entities. After explaining

his role as a filmmaker in childhood, Calvin explained that the storytelling aspect of producing

videos was what attracted him to the practice:

> CB: just like, I never really thought about the actual photography aspect of it, like the
>
> framing and stuff, I just like telling the stories and like the fun part like that, so, but now
>
> I'm starting to think more about the visual part. (Group One, Calvin Broadus, January 31,
>
> lines 70-75).

Alternately, Farmer suggested that the framing, and the visual, ignited her connection to the

medium (Group One, Jan. 31, lines 77-79). Resisting an either/or response, while explaining her

attraction to film, Bison references both a love of reading and of photography (Group One, Jan.

31, lines 83-85). Similarly, Ponyboy speaks of the visual imaginings that emanated from the

textual world of the books she read. In the mind/body/brain/media meld, the media is inconstant

in relation to the mind/body/brain. These variances impacted how the youth approached the

production process.

In Calvin Broadus' group production, the group began the process with a pen and paper,

creating a storyline and subsequently a storyboard.   The fragment below represents the

brainstorming session between Watson, Calvin Broadus, Josephine and I, for what eventually

became a Term Two production. The parentheses represent my questions of the youth as they

generate ideas:

> Man pulls coins out of his pocket, and then looks at it.
>
> Then looks in garbage, reluctantly, shuffles feet, waffling on the idea of putting hand in.
>
> Then a guy walks by, nicely dressed and this stops him from going in garbage.
>
> Nicely dressed man (will he say anything)
>
> Possible eye contact, or greeting between them (question, does the nicely dressed man look away as we don't like to look at social ills; or is there a nod?) (Research Journal, February 16, 2012).

The session continued much like this, and while there were discussions of aesthetic, surrounding character and setting, the storyline was largely the focus of these initial sessions. In this initial session the group spent a large portion of the class discussing the way the man rooting through the garbage had become impoverished, how the well-dressed, wealthy man would relate to the man, and what they wanted their overall message to be. Ideas ranged from the well-dressed man being related to the man looking in the garbage, to the wealthy man giving the other man a letter with instructions. This session occurred without any camera equipment in hand, and very little discussion went into the way the film would be shot, other than discussions of location and costume, elements of the setting and character of the story. This particular group wrote the script and drew a simple storyboard before any filming occurred.

Although this group did not articulate their visual plan through the planning process, the group still engaged heavily with the visual in their film. As an example, they were the only group to utilize the green screen, and added several post-production visual effects. In one particular scene, their characters fade into one another so that the audience understands that the man in the suit and the impoverished man are the same person. That is, they engaged these visual

'tricks' to help the audience understand the duality of the protagonist's parallel lives, hence the name of the film, *Parallel*. This visual play was imperative to the story and the larger philosophical question of the film. However, the initial idea for the production was negotiated without overt discussions of the camera. As discussed in the next chapter, this echoed many of the productions, in which intentional choices about the visuals were not made until the editing process.

Alternately, in Farmer and Josephine's[44] film, the visual was granted primacy. Before filming, Farmer approached me with an idea for a film that she could not articulate. She was unconvinced by the film ideas that her original group had suggested and approached me about an idea for her own film. In this initial discussion, unable to fully communicate a story idea, she spoke mostly about what she wanted the film to look like. Her main ideas circulated around images from nature. Although her eventual production changed direction, the image remained central. I noted this visual focus in my research journal as I observed Farmer and Josephine in their newly formed group: "I like that they are thinking of angles and colour/editing to do now. So far, they seem to have the strongest sense of their story and how they will use the camera ahead of time" (February 27, 2012). Partially a result of technological difficulties, the end result of their production is a silent film that combines their visual production with music.

Starting with their understanding of, and relationship to the medium, Calvin and Farmer approach the medium very differently. Neither is an example of being more literate, rather an example of the multiple literacies involved in video production. As was iterated previously, one is never fully media literate (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). I draw on the examples in this section as a pedagogical and methodological warning; the connection between youth and video

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[44] After the brainstorming phase, Josephine left Calvin and Watson's group in order to collaborate with Farmer.

production is not certain or alike—and neither are the literacies obtained or required.

'Youth' are not all connected to the medium, and as Farmer, Calvin, Bison and Ponyboy iterate, for those that are, the connection is varied. The complexities surrounding the connections to/between youth and video production, resist any thoughtless celebration of video production as 'the answer' for media/education. Further, the disparate ways in which youth relate to the medium alter the way they utilize the medium to express themselves. That is, those that connect to the medium as a storytelling device, may begin the process in this very place. In turn the media literacies required are different depending on the relationships to/with media.

It Makes Sense

There are valuable and useful states of mind other than that of knowing.

--Ellsworth, 1997, p. 171

What will we allow anomalous, sensational pedagogies to make of us, as educators?

--Ellsworth, 2005, p.36

There were many moments in the research context when the participants referenced their own sensory responses to the process of filming and viewing digital video productions. They referred to pouring their guts out, being immersed in a film, and getting shivers, to name a few somatic reactions. Our language is riddled with references to sensory responses, 'gut feelings', 'weak knees', 'goose bumps', 'sweaty palms'; however, educational objectives or assessment strategies rarely raise visceral responses. Rather, the experience *of* learning is excluded from pedagogical discussions (Ellsworth, 2005)

In the face of these refusals, Ellsworth (2005) asks, "What might be possible and thinkable if we were to take pedagogy to be sensational? (p.24). With that in mind, how might the senses and bodily responses that emerged in this particular research site, or as a result of this

medium, teach us something more generally about education. While some scholars of media

education may assert the necessary space of video production due to its relevance to the youth

context, I believe it is notions of the body, process and knowledge that make it pedagogically

provocative. The lack of focus on particular knowledge, the process of creating and sharing, and

the invitation of sensory responses, may translate to pedagogy as experience of learning

(Ellsworth, 2005).

And yet, the medium does not make this automatic. By that I mean, pedagogical

engagement with digital video production matters. Traditional, modernist notions of teaching

and learning can school video production as knowledge and product, in turn, reifying modernist

notions of teaching and learning. This is particularly the issue I engage in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: MRS. MIMESIS

Knowledge, once it is defined, taught and used as a "thing made," is dead.

--Ellsworth, 2005, p.1

How might we think of knowledge in the making and pedagogy experimentally?

--Ellsworth, 2005, p.5

This research was conducted within an educational context and drew on methods and questions emanating from pedagogical concerns. As previously articulated, my intentions were to explore the practice, particularly the *process* of digital video production, so that emergent, partial, fluid understandings of gender, sexuality, youth and media might emerge. Considering the pedagogical and methodological theories that inform this research, I was not anticipating that I would become a barrier to this complexity. While steeped in the process of research, I failed, in part, to notice the constant incongruencies between the theoretical groundings of this study and my research practices. It was not until I began coding the data that I was repeatedly confronted with Mrs. Mimesis, the modernist enactment of teacher.

Introducing Mrs. Mimesis

Through this chapter, I draw on the literature to support the notion that video production potentially provokes prescribed knowledge, and promotes group collaboration, pleasure, play, and process. Regardless, throughout the data I continually noted moments within the research space in which I implemented modernist (Popkewitz, 1997) interferences upon the practice of digital video production. Which is to say, the many spaces in the research in which I became fixated on the product, in particular the finished videos. Such pre-occupations follow modernist notions of teaching and learning that consider products artifacts *of* learning (Ellsworth, 2005). This compulsion became evident through the constant references in my research journal about

the participants finishing their video productions, and manifest in the pedagogical and methodological attempts made to prescribe knowledge, privilege rationality, and assert linearity to the process of the production.

Throughout the data, I began to refer to myself as Mrs. Mimesis, as these enactments are imitative of a modernist construction of teacher. That is, the expert teacher (Britzman, 2003) who: approaches knowledge as a trafficked commodity (Ellsworth, 2005); who privileges the pervasive modernist discourses in education of individuality, rationality, reason, and knowledge (Popkewitz, 1997); and who approaches "knowledge as a thing already made and learning to be an experience already known"(Ellsworth, 2005, p.5). Although I was 'officially' acting as a researcher in this space, I am also an educator; therefore the discourses of teacher come before me, and are already inscribed (Britzman, 2003; Janzen, 2011). Following Janzen (2011), the discourse of teacher "exists prior to the body entering the classroom; always, already formed and as representative of and constituted by the normalized discourses of education" (p. 25). The classroom context was already steeped in discourses of education, and my role as a participant observer was similarly imbued with teacher identity.

While I am Mrs. Mimesis, the performances of teacher on which I draw are representative of the subjectification of teacher, and not intended to be understood as individual actions of a fixed self. As Mazzei (2013) suggests, these data fragments are not only representative of "individual 'lived' experiences" (p.737), they are also representative of the modernist discourses of teaching and learning. As such, these performances cannot be reduced to my individual biography. Phillips and Larson (2012) concur, stating that 'Teacher' is not representative of an individual, instead is representative of a label that is made intelligible

through the apparatuses of school. In this case, Mrs. Mimesis is an assemblage (Mazzei[45], 2013) of the instructive forces of school and the dominant discourses of knowledge, pedagogy and teacher.

I draw on the term 'Mrs.' as a representation of the way the discourse of teacher is gendered. That is, the way the profession itself is feminized (Gore, 1993; Grumet, 1988). As Janzen (2011) asserts, "the gendered discourses that enact the teaching subject continue to circulate and constitute the teacher as feminine" (Janzen, 2011, p.28). Using a gendered term is both recognition and refutation of the feminization of the practice—to recognize the circulation of gendered discourses so that they might be interrogated. Similarly, in using a title, often associated with formality, I am seeking to connect these data fragments to the modernist enactment of teacher as 'expert'. The use of 'Mrs' is a playful mocking in an attempt to draw attention to the discourses of gender and authority within the discourses of teacher.

Significance: Nails On The Chalkboard

Throughout the-eight month ethnographic process, I did not notice Mrs. Mimesis. I was not reflective about the ways in which my practices reified modernist discourses of education. Rather, throughout the research process, I often thought about the way my role as a participant observer allowed me to talk and work with youth in a way that I do not often get the chance to in my own classroom. The discovery of Mrs. Mimesis does not negate those moments; instead, it challenges me to consider what I had been unwilling to see. Without the practice of data analysis, I may have never noticed Mrs. Mimesis. For myself, and other practitioners, these moments of incongruence, make tangible the modernist discourses of education that may stifle the pedagogical volition (Ellsworth, 2005) of practices, such as digital video production.

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[45] I am drawing on Mazzei's re-theorizing of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblage.

Based on theoretical assertions, production practices may automatically be understood as playful and provoking forms of pedagogy. However, as Britzman (2003) reminds, the teaching subject, produced through the experience of teaching, can both "constrain and open the possibilities of creative pedagogies" (p. 26). Ellsworth's (2005) question about the ways we might think of knowledge and pedagogy experimentally, might only be answered alongside Britzman's (2003) discussion of the subjectification of teacher, particularly through examples in practice.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes[46]

Rather than a specific body of knowledge, media education is defined in terms of conceptual understandings (Buckingham, 2003b; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). In turn, "it does not specify particular objects of study (a 'canon' of prescribed texts, for example)" (Buckingham, 2003b, p. 53). In addition to repudiating prescribed knowledge, media education recognizes new literacies, such as community involvement, networking and collaboration (Jenkins, 2009), promotes visual and digital literacies, and recognizes visual and graphic means of knowledge (Goldfarb, 2002).

Media production, a major element of media education (Buckingham, 2003a; 200b; Goldfarb, 2002; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012), "integrates art, language skills, problem solving, technical proficiency, and performance" (Grace & Tobin, p.196). By engaging performance and play, video production might become a powerful means through which students can subvert and transgress the boundaries of language and ideology (Grace & Tobin, 2002). Further, the 'curricular slippages' and 'excesses' often associated with video production may unsettle the

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[46] Reference to a common term used in formal provincial education documents to outline the objective of teachers' units and lessons, and one that Mrs. Mimesis would likely use. Much like my derisive use of 'Mrs', I draw on this educational jargon to mock the belief that one can prescribe learning.

equilibrium of the classroom and blur the taken for granted boundaries (Grace & Tobin, 2002, p. 136). As many "young people are coming into schooling contexts with capacities, skills and knowledge that far exceed those of their teachers" (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p.145), media production also potentially provokes the position of teacher as expert (Buckingham, 2003a). Likewise, the collaborative aspects of media production may decentralize the role of the teacher (Buckingham, 2003b; Goodman, 2003; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012).

Like many 'creative' visual methods (Buckingham, 2009), digital video production has the potential to be pedagogically provoking[47]. Without slipping into naïve empiricism (Buckingham, 2009), there are elements of digital video production that potentially tug at the modernist reins on education. Provoking both what is deemed salient knowledge, and the mediums through which knowledge can be communicated, video production might unsettle the primacy granted curriculum/knowledge in education and instead first consider pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005).

Despite the potential qualities of media production, the practices of teacher can channel media production toward modernist approaches to knowledge and pedagogy. The educator, and the educational researcher, according to Ellsworth (2005) most often attempt "to center pedagogical practices in schools in a close and regular orbit around curricular goals and objectives, as well measurable, verifiable educational outcomes' (Ellsworth, 2005, p.5) Speaking of media education specifically, Buckingham (2003a) states that even when teachers seek more positive engagements with their students, their paternalistic attitudes towards young people's

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[47] Certainly there have also been valuable critiques of the optimism lauded at youth video production, particularly in relation to voice and agency (Bragg, 2007; Fleetwood, 2005; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Soep, 2006). While these critiques are an extremely important piece of the pedagogical conversation surrounding media production, they do not overwhelm the possibilities for video production; rather, these critiques emphasize that this is not a guarantee in video production projects.

pleasure in popular culture and production practices "frequently end up re-inscribing traditional notions of what counts as valid knowledge" (Buckingham, 2003a, p.314). Drawing on moments throughout the research process, I consider the ways in which my performance of Mrs. Mimesis stifled the potential of digital video production practices. In particular, I look at the ways in which my actions re-inscribed particular knowledge, privileged rationality and traditional literacy, asserted linearity, and established the finished product as *the* representation of learning. Again, I share these not as a way to admonish a particular practitioner, in this case me, rather to consider the subtle, constant weight of modernist notions of teaching and learning on practices and processes that might otherwise provoke modernist discourses in education. This is more than a critical ethnography of a teacher, it is critical of the larger pervasive discourses of teacher.

Miss Metalanguage

In order to do so, they will need to develop a metalanguage, a form of critical discourse in which to describe and analyze what is taking place. Some would undoubtedly see this as a betrayal of the ludic dimension of postmodernity and an attempt to recuperate it within conventional forms of academic seriousness and rationality. Personally, I cannot imagine how education itself might be otherwise.

--Buckingham, 2003, p.325

With the groups that I have been working with, there has seemingly been very little discussion about film language, camera angles, etc.

-Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, November 15, 2011

It was interesting to hear what they said, but I wonder if small groups, or metalanguage might have elicited more.

-Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, January 3, 2012

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Throughout the research, concerns arose surrounding a perceived lack of planning for the productions. In particular, anxiety about a lack of thoughtfulness and intention in the way the camera was used. There are consequences of the camera, guided by an operator, continually changing position, employing various shots, made into a complete film through editing—a camera does not respect or represent a performance as a whole (Benjamin 1968/1936). The lack of planning in regards to camera shots and angles led Mrs. Mimesis to declare that the participants were letting the camera speak for them instead of using the camera as a medium through which to speak.

As a result, I often interrupted the participant's production processes and volunteered to create shared on-line word processing documents that included scripts, costume choices, locations, and required an outline of particular shots. The format of these documents varied depending on the group, but in each case Mrs. Mimesis encouraged the groups to be more detailed and organized in their planning process. As one specific example, the document for the film *Aftershock* was separated into charts; the first of which encouraged the group to name each character, create a background story to help the actor understand the character, and outline the wardrobe that would be needed for the actors in each scene. The second chart in the document included an overview of the storyline for each scene, outlined the dialogue spoken, and described the setting and the props required (*Aftershock*, Google Docs, February 23). Regardless of the creation of these documents, most groups did not record the shots and angles they planned to use, and some were generally resistant to write things down. When the fiction projects were initially introduced, and the participants were told they needed to brainstorm, storyboard, and make a shooting schedule with location choices, one participant protested, "Oh, we have to write stuff!" (Research Journal, January 31, 2012). Rather than re-considering the scripted methods that I had

been advocating the youth use, and possibly inviting less structured play with the cameras, Mrs. Mimesis instead created a lesson on representation [Appendix C] and a subsequent *Film Race* [Appendix D] to insist that the groups employ metalanguage and describe their choices in relation to the camera[48].

The lesson on representation [Appendix D] interrupted the filming process. Although many of the participants were in various stages of brainstorming, scripting and filming, the lesson required that all members pause in order to take part. The overall objective of the lesson was to engage with the notion of representation, the way in which media offers a 'mediated version of the world' (Buckingham, 2003b, p. 57). In particular we viewed two media clips to consider the way in which social groups were re-presented. In a second viewing of each clip, the students were also asked to consider the way that dialogue, sound effects, camera work and lighting all contribute to representation. In order to 'prepare' the students to consider the intersection of film language and representation in the media clips, the class was asked to participate in a warm-up activity where they reviewed film language terms: by placing them into categories, by thinking of media examples for each term, and by pulling out terms they did not know (Appendix C, Term Review).

As per the instructions, the participants were able to put the terms into categories[49] and find examples from popular media to represent each term. The only term that some of the groups were unfamiliar with was *foley,* the way in which sound effects are added to films. The students could verbalize their understanding of these terms; however, in my observation, this lesson did nothing to encourage the participants to engage with these terms through the filming process.

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[48] In addition to the handouts and criteria sheets being included as appendices, I explain both the lesson and the *Film Race* in more detail in the subsequent sections.
[49] For a full list of the terms, see Appendix C

Rather, it simply interrogated their use of these terms through an activity rooted in traditional literacies. Production is supposed to integrate play, performance and problem solving (Grace & Tobin, 2002). Instead, this activity reduced the production process to defining terms and decoding media texts. Not only does this practice vacate creativity and play, it re-establishes the teacher, who may not know as much as their students about camera or computer technology, as expert.

In a subsequent lesson, also representative of Mrs. Mimesis's fixation on film language, the students participated in a *Film Race* (Appendix D). For this, the students were placed in groups and given the same two pages of dialogue. The instructions outlined on the criteria sheet stated that the youth must: use the dialogue given, indicate a rationale for the settings chosen, explain the choices made for camera shots, and indicate five directions given to the actors. Before the race began, we discussed the way students perceive a camera. Specifically, as a class, we contemplated the end of the phrase, '*a camera is*'. The answers for this varied, but many responses recognized that a camera frames, constructs, and/or interferes with stories. After the initial activity, the purpose and effect of different camera shots and angles were reviewed: establishing shots, wide shots, over-the shoulder, close-up, two-shot, reaction shot. Regardless, or possibly because of this review, the participants did not methodically go through the camera shots and angles they intended to use for the dialogue they were given for the race. Rather, the majority of the groups filled in their choices surrounding camera shots and angles after they had finished filming, seemingly more of an afterthought and attempt to meet the assignment criteria than an indication of planning (Research Journal, February 14, 2012). In addition, these sheets were often filled in by a single member of the group rather than in a collaborative review of the choices made (Research Journal, February 14, 2012). Even here, however, assumptions are being

made about the thoughtfulness surrounding the use of the camera, solely based on the order and manner in which the sheets were filled out. As Ellsworth (2005) points out, education expects linear progressions, scaffolding, ladders "for moving students' cognitions up a hierarchical grid of scripted schemas and concepts" (p. 120). In this case, my scripted expectation of the production process, in which camera shots be chosen and written in advance of filming, contributed to my negative evaluation the participants' processes. Yet, the requirement to follow a determined process prescribes modernist linearity (Bragg, 2012).

Each of these pedagogical interruptions recentered knowledge in the process of planning. That is, Mrs. Mimesis labelled 'what' was lacking in the process of filming based largely on the lack of overt discussions and use of particular terms. The 'what' that was supposedly lacking was the knowledge of metalanguage. In this way, the knowledge of film terms and camera angles is privileged over group collaboration, problem solving, or criticality, to name a few examples. Why is it that I refused to acknowledge understanding of these concepts within the process of production, or in the production itself, rather than through an expression in traditional literacies? Moreover, if the youth are developing digital literacies, might these choices be simply a matter of action. As Bragg (2002) states, there is a social embeddedness of meaning, in which understanding shapes practice, but not in a way that we are always aware, or can specifically articulate: "Without an inner plan, students' work is presumed to be necessarily meaningless—a notion that flies in the face of common sense, since we can speak without knowing the rules of grammar" (Bragg, 2002, p.46). Within traditional literacy, a poem is not required to supplement the medium with a visual explanation. For Bragg, it is not only the way that particular, traditional literacies are privileged, but also the rational perspective that one can account for their

production practices or their understandings. The presumptions of self in such activities ignore partiality and fluidity.

Mr. Rationality

Perhaps [students] are merely being polite in not wanting to expose the delusion embedded in the very demand for explanation—that we can capture the understandings implicit in our practice, in complete way, within a rational framework.

--Bragg, 2012, p.107

They have three classes before the due date now, and I do not see a coherent theme/vision.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, December 5, 2012

It seems as if a lot of the decisions on the direction of the film come out in the editing process rather than in the story inception and the planning.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, January 23, 2012

When verbally asked about the camera choices made in relation to their films, some participants admitted that this had not been discussed prior to filming. The participants involved with the film *Aftershock* described their use of the camera, as 'more on the spot', followed by the declaration that 'physically being there helped to make choices' (Research Journal, May 3, 2012). Alternately, the directors of *Parallel* were able to reference several different types of shots they used, but spoke very little of why they made these choices for particular scenes, with the exception of explaining that they used a close-up to show emotion (Research Journal, April 23, 2012). *Miss Perception* spoke about using an establishing shot to help present a scene as a whole, and close-ups to reveal how characters were viewing the protagonist (Research Journal, May 1, 2012). The participants involved with *After She Left* offered the most detailed explanation about the way they used the camera: to frame shots, the use of a re-occurring shot,

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panning, the absence of point of view shots, and the way the camera is always in third person (Research Journal, May 3, 2012). However, the problem in asking all of the groups, 'how did you use the camera?' (Research Journal, May 3, 2012), is the expectation that they should be able to account for this (Bragg, 2012). Any assumption that the group *After She Left* was the most thoughtful about their camera work would result from their ability to articulate their visual choices through verbal means.

When the groups were asked about the process of editing, more were able to articulate the specific changes made to the text of the films, and explain their reasoning for altering their productions. As an example, a group that explained their use of the camera minimally, referencing only a close up shot, framing a scene due to an actor's height, and the limited movement of the camera because they did not have a strap (Research Journal, May 3, 2012), explained their editing process in detail: discussing changes made to the sequencing of shots; adding a glass like, foggy impact for memory scenes; using black and white to signify a flashback; creating a sound effects sequence to play for the introduction; using point of view shots; blurring the camera to signify confusion; adding music; and the close-up on a door knob as a form of symbolism. These references were plentiful and specific; the group not only provided examples but were also able to articulate why these choices were made and how they influenced the final product (Research Journal, May 3, 2012). Although the participants described the adaptations made to the films in more detail, the issue again is the assumptions surrounding intentionality and/or thoughtfulness based on these articulations. This privileges the verbal and written over the visual; asking students to write or explain their productions advantages the students who are already successful at the conventions of school and penalizes those who are unable to explain their choices (Bragg, 2012).

The problem with the very questions asked of youth about their use of the camera is the expectation that is embedded, that they should be able to reflect on their choices in a 'systematic and rigorous' way (Buckingham, 1992). If a student dances, and is unable afterwards to articulate the meaning of each movement, does this render these movements meaningless? Such an assumption, refuses the emotional experiences associated with production (Buckingham, 1992), and privileges particular knowledge (film language) and literacy (traditional).

Ms. Linearity

Or, if the arrow moved it is because it was never in any point. It was in passage across them all…. A path is not composed of positions... It doesn't stop until it stops: when it hits the target. Then, and only then, is the arrow in position. It is only after the arrow hits its mark that its real trajectory may be plotted.

--Massumi, 2002, p.6

It seems like they will not be getting this done on time either.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, January 27, 2012

I felt bad and like we should get back to this.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, January 27, 2012

Prior to the *Term Two Fiction Projects* [Appendix E], the class assignments were not hinged to criteria sheets, marking rubrics, or timelines. For example, there was very little discussion about deadlines throughout the process. By that I mean, other than a fluctuating final deadline for the assigned video productions, the students were not expected to show evidence of completing work along the way. Further, discussions surrounding grades, marking rubrics or specific assignment criteria were minimized within the classroom space. Film projects were often introduced by showing examples from previous classes, followed by time for the students

to brainstorm their own ideas in relation to the genre they were creating (documentaries, fiction pieces or public service announcements). Despite the 'absence' of these conventions, the students completed their film projects.

Of course, the classroom is still imbued in modernist discourses of education. That is, as Film is located in a classroom that is part of the larger educational context, the students in the room are certainly influenced by the modernist expectations of school, finishing their assignments being one such expectation. The majority of the Film students completed their projects; however, this occurred in varied stages and the discourse around grades remained minimal. Numerous times throughout my research journal I commented on the lack of discussion in this space about grades, particularly that the students did not seem concerned about one another's marks (Research Journal, December 5, 2011), and that they did not seem to need the grades as a motivation (Research Journal, January 9, 2012).

In contrast to the previous terms, as the students began their *Term Two Fiction Projects*, Mrs. Mimesis created a criteria sheet that outlined specific objectives and steps to follow (Appendix E)[50]. The objectives of the assignment were listed as: working as a collective, engaging the multiple elements of writing fiction, and challenging students to think about the ways in which the camera can be used to translate their story into film (Appendix E). The assignment sheet broke the steps down into a prescribed linear process, beginning with brainstorming and methodically following six specific steps towards the editing process. Re-enacting 'best practice', the marking rubric, included as part of the handout, was divided into

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[50] Although the classroom teacher, Thomas, invited my pedagogical input on the course, I was not responsible for any marking or evaluation. While I made this handout, including the marking rubric, as you will see throughout my discussion the youth strayed from the steps of this handout. Further, I have no idea, however I suspect, that Thomas did not follow the marking rubric. I am engaging with Mrs. Mimesis motivation to make this handout, rather than whether it was precisely followed.

three separate criteria: group dynamic, storytelling and film. This handout not only privileged and prescribed linearity, rationality, traditional literacy and the finished video productions, it upheld the Teacher as Expert (Britzman, 2003) through the enforcement of a recognizable pedagogical process.

Regardless of media production practices outside of school spaces, few production projects in schools are open-ended; rather, they are nearly always tightly structured exercises (Buckingham, 2003b). In the case of video production, this may manifest in formulaic, linear practices, in which production follows instruction in media theory and textual analysis. Productions, then, are meant be evidence of what youth have learned about these concepts (Bragg, 2012). This linearity and focus on the finished product is amplified when media educators follow a formulaic pattern in which production follows instruction in media theory and textual analysis. In this way productions are meant be evidence of what youth have learned about these concepts (Bragg, 2012). This linearity, evident in prescribed process of the *Term Two Fiction Project,* ignores the fluid, messy, unknowability of learning (Britzman (1998; 2000; 2003; Ellsworth ; 1989; Felman; 1992; Kumashiro; 2004; Loutzenheisier 2001).

As one of many examples of this 'messiness', several of the Term Two groups abandoned projects that they began to start anew, and one group did not finish. As referenced in previous chapters, one group planned to produce a *Bachelor* parody. Within the cast of contestants vying for the love of the bachelor, the group planned to include a man in drag and a lesbian female. Concerns were raised during the planning sessions about these representations, and before the filming began the group abandoned this project. The process ended during the storyboarding phase; however, if we consider this moment in relation to discussions of gender and sexuality, there may have been unlearnings (Kumashiro, 2004) through this process. That is,

some of the concerns raised about a man dressed in drag and a lesbian may have caused the group to re-evaluate these representations of gender and sexuality. I am not sure whether this was the reason for the abandonment of this project, and I do not seek to declare this, rather to provoke education's fixation on identifiable 'moments' of learning, recognizable in the supposed *look* of 'turning gears' (Ellsworth, 2005). Similarly, there is no piece of data that will capture *a* moment of learning.

Certainly, there may have been a re-thinking, an unlearning, of gender and sexualities in the group's abandon; however, despite education's fixation on recognizing these moments, this un/learning is neither static, measurable or identifiable in/as a finished product. If some re-thinking around representation and gender did occur in the brainstorming and storyboarding sessions surrounding the *Bachelor* Parody, it cannot be falsely pinned to a particular moment in the same way it cannot be attached to a finished production—and not just because there isn't one. When would educators declare this learning started, and stopped: When the question was raised about whether or not the character dressed in drag was deriving laughter from acting female? When one of their male classmates refused to play the role? When they pondered his refusal to dress as a woman? Can we say with certainty that this moment has ended? Is this lack of a finished product, or a deviation from the process, indicative of a lack of learning?

The group that created *After She Left* also drifted from the linear process. After a weekend of shooting, the group found that due to a camera malfunction the sound was unusable. As a result, it was necessary to alter the concept of their film. Although the issue did cause the group to feel defeated, they figured out how they could go forward with their film. Abandoning the recorded dialogue, they manipulated the footage into a silent film. The concept for their production came after they had already done their filming—a break from the linear prescribed

process of brainstorming, storyboarding, filming, and editing. With the prescribed steps, the criteria sheet for this project does not account for 'non-linear' processes. As is seen in this example, the criteria sheet cannot prevent a break from the linearity; however, the methodical expectation may suggest to the group that they have made a mistake. Similarly, it may discourage groups from playing with the camera before thinking of a story.

As problem solving (Bragg, 2012; Grace & Tobin, 2002) is one of the objectives of video production, this group certainly demonstrated evidence of this. Yet, the narrow assessments associated with the finished product do not recognize this piece of the process. Although the criteria sheet asks the students to account for difficulties that arose, there is nothing in the marking rubric that recognizes problem solving [Appendix E]. And still, even if *After She Left* had abandoned their project and started anew, would we say that they had not learned? Or, if they had not started anew, and in the end did not have a finished film, would we say the same?

Little Ms. Get Back In Line

I wonder if students could hand something in after to identify which shots they used.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, January 19, 2012

A linear, rational, modernist model of education is further imposed when youth are required to explain, often in writing, how their video productions demonstrate media theory and analysis (Bragg, 2012). For The *Term Two Fiction Projects*, this imposition manifest in the assignment criteria that suggested students register their intentions with the camera with a written explanation of the planning and processes [Appendix E]. Again, there is an expectation of rationality (that one can account for their choices) and linearity (that the process can be outlined in a systematic manner). Bragg (2012) refers to these written demands as a way of recentering traditional literacies and as a way of privileging the final product over the process.

More so, the demand to write through the process in a particular way undermines the medium of video production to account for itself (Bragg, 2012).

Mister Product

I really think that film projects need to be quicker, short, or at least have shorts as they go.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, February 2, 2012

I wonder if they need more discussion about the film showcase, to see it as an authentic task. I wonder if they needed more deadlines along the way.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, March 26, 2012

They have been working on it all year and have nothing to show for it.

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, April 3, 2012

Tangled up with education's fixation on knowledge, rationality and linearity, is the focus on the finished product as a representation of something learned. As was evident in the *Term Two Fiction Projects* [Appendix E], and the *Film Race* [Appendix D], the films themselves, the texts, were privileged as evidence of student learning. The *Film Race* in particular demanded that the students finish their productions within forty-minutes, the goal being that everyone have a completed film at the end of the period. Even the name of the assignment, *Film Race*, places the focus of the activity on the product rather than the process. The process is burdened by the competition to finish.

Similarly, the *Term Two Fiction Project* criteria sheet [Appendix E] channeled all of the focus toward the completed videos. As previously mentioned in my discussion of linearity, each of the steps led to the completed film, and the assessment was mainly focused on the film text. Other than a reference to 'group dynamic' in the marking rubric, the specific criteria are focused on the finished product. Even 'group dynamic' is judged according to what is evident in the

finished product: "the finished product represents a collective effort" [Appendix D]. Further, the final step referenced in the criteria sheet is 'editing', and there is no reference to any expectation beyond the creation of the films in either the marking rubric or the criteria; where then, is there space for the filmmakers to share and critically engage with one another's films?

Where is the space to consider the messy, unresolved conversations that occur in pre and post-production? In the case of this research site, that includes the conversations about males dressing in drag, or how a homeless man should be dressed, or how to reveal mental health issues in a silent film, or how to represent gender and sexualities. While I have already spoken about this particular conversation in more detail in *Chapter Three*, I raise it again here as a way of pointing to the complex elements of process that are not represented when assessment is narrowly focused on a finished video product:

> J: like Queer characters in media sometimes, it seems like/
>
> P: /their whole identity is that they're gay
>
> SM: yes
>
> J: no, it's not that we need to have more characters, it's that being gay has to be less of a
>
> big deal (February 23, Group 3, Lines 1110-1117)

Pepper (P) participated in this conversation, but did not complete her own production. I posit that this conversation, and the many others like them *throughout* this dissertation, refute Mrs. Mimesis's suggestion that, *"They have been working on it all year and have nothing to show for it"* (Research Journal, April 3, 2012). And still, I am playing into a similar game of 'show' by using the transcript of complex conversation as proof of learning—again looking for the evidence of 'turning gears' (Ellsworth, 2005). I am not making an argument for incorporating conversations along the way into the assessment of the finished product, as that would be a

further obsession with product. By that I mean, the text of the conversations are no more evidence of learning than the text of the films are. In his discussion of youth production, Buckingham (2003b) states, "it is difficult to ascertain what kind of *learning* might be going on here" (p. 168). Instead, this uncertainty, the ambiguities, the refusal of education's look (Ellsworth, 2005) might push back at the obsession with product, and subsequently a false end to learning.

Little Miss Rolling The Credits

Despite viewing all of the previous projects within the classroom space, Mrs. Mimesis arranged to have the Term Two Projects shared in the large, theatre style, school auditorium. The result, as Pepper pointed out, was a stifled environment that made the participants feel that their projects needed to be complete:

> P: I think there's a difference between watching it here [in room] and watching it there [auditorium], because watching it here is like, you're looking at it like, it's stuff your friends worked on. If you're watching it in the auditorium you're looking at it like it should be a finished film, and it should be like professional quality, and it's not. So watching it here, there's a lot less pressure and a lot less expectation and over there it's a lot higher (Group 3, May 17, lines 140-47).

The auditorium, an environment that parallels a movie theater, magnified the expectations for the films to be professional, finished products. Pepper is not only expressing her distaste for the environment in which the films were shown, this fragment also suggests that she had understood all of her previous film projects as works in progress, something she could go back to and alter, enhance, remix, if she wanted. As Pepper writes, produces art, photography and graphic art on her own time, this understanding may emanate from her practices outside of the classroom

context. In this case, Mrs. Mimesis' practices interfered with Pepper's view of productions as continually in process. The focus on product negated the learning, problem-solving, abandon, incompletion, group dynamics, conversation, and criticality that are part of the process, and as Pepper pointed out—the possibility to continue the process of learning. That is, the youth producers may have used their experiences of viewing the films with their peers as an opportunity to re-visit their films.

Mrs. Mimesis's Report Card

Through this chapter, I have outlined the ways in which creative methods might lose their speculative qualities (Ellsworth, 2005) amidst/within the discursive constraints of formal educational spaces. In particular, the way the practices of teacher can school the video production process (again, the constant weight of teacher/researcher). Attempts to invite transgression, play, messiness, crisis and unknowability might only be 'achieved' alongside critical conversations with the enactment of teacher, theories of pedagogy and media education, and theories of the subjectification of teacher (again, a plea to theorize with/through the complexities of practice). These practical examples, might invite discussions about the interplay and inconsistencies between the discourses of teacher and the pedagogies one is trying to enact (again, theoretical incongruence). Without, Mrs. Mimesis's modernist practices may go unnoticed (again, methodology and pedagogy fuse). Again—repetition and/or interruption.

CHAPTER 6: RERUN

all research data need to be analysed in terms of the context in which they were gathered, the

social relationships among the participants, and the 'expressive' resources (whether linguistic or

visual) that are employed.

Buckingham, 2009, p.648

Disillusioned by the traps of talk (Moore, 2008), I naively (Buckingham, 2009) turned to

the method of video production in hopes that it might encourage emergent, contingent, and

contradictory understandings of gender. Yet, in many ways, I reinforce the primacy of traditional

literacies, exclude knowledge produced through the visual, and selectively construct the

production process.

Under the guise of conducting fashionable research that appropriately aligns with my

research interests (Buckingham, 2009), I further exclude the visual and uphold a literary form

"that offers little by way of an understanding of the contemporary world in which visual media

play such a central role" (Grimshaw, 2001, p. 2). The same tendency toward traditional literacies

evident in my pedagogical engagement with video production appears in my methodological.

Whereas in the classroom context, I imposed written expectations upon the production process as

a way of re-inscribing traditional notions of knowledge and resurrecting my 'expertise', through

data analysis I also relied on written descriptions of the research process far more than the visual

productions themselves. This both reifies the binary between the verbal/written and the visual,

and invalidates the study of 'non-linguistic' forms.

Decoding the visual can act as a bridge between the visual and verbal, and in turn

provoke their separation; this practice invites discussion of what the translation to verbal reveals,

and what the inability to translate might also reveal (Collier & Collier, 1986). As MacDougall

(2006) posits, in treating images as language, or as a product of language:

> we ally them to a concept of thought that neglects many of the ways in which they create
>
> our knowledge. It is important to recognize this, not in order to restrict images to
>
> nonlinguistic purposes--this merely subordinates them further to words--but in order to
>
> reexamine the relation between seeing, thinking, and knowing, and the complex nature of
>
> thought itself (p.1)

The form of an artwork, O Donoghue (2011) suggests, creates the "conditions for knowing, and knowing differently" (p. 638). A visual medium has the potential to change social meanings dramatically and/or acts as a form of social intervention (Collier, 1965). Invalidating the knowledge of the visual representations dismisses the possibility of producing different/ly knowledge—which was the intention of engaging digital video production suggested in the research questions.

Further, although I draw on Ellsworth's (2005) discussion of sensory pedagogy, I do not engage the relationship between the visual and the senses (Pink, 2006). That is, both in the way the visual can represent a sensory experience and in the way it invokes a sensory experience (Pink, 2006). Yet, Participant L's suggestion that his brain was thumping is one of the most resonant moments of the research:

> L: I remember watching while you guys were editing, the one scene where she's dancing
>
> [excited many voices talking] and the shadows are dancing together, and one shadow
>
> stops and looks at the other one, at that point my brain is almost like thumping, like what,
>
> what does that mean…[Group One, Participant L, May 15, lines 525-530]

Although this moment was one of the catalysts for engaging understandings of the senses and experience as pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005), I dismissed the specific visual elements of the film

that produced his response. In turn, I miss the opportunity to produce different knowledge and to continue to provoke 'what counts as data' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) through both the visual and the senses.

While this is certainly a flaw of this research, it would be equally problematic to rely solely on the visual representations as data. Using the text of a video production to represent participant understandings parallels the use of an interview transcript as a representation of *an* identity. Both rely on humanist assumptions of a sovereign self (Kvale, 1996), ignore the complexities of individuals' subjectivities (Cook-Sather, 2006; 2007), and imagine the capacity to represent understanding and/or experience. So as to not perpetuate notions of authenticity, reminiscent of the celebrations of voice in research, digital video production must also trouble notions of identity, truth and data. That is, as is evident in the admissions above, and in my discussion of *Mrs. Mimesis*, the method itself does not automatically invite complexity.

Redeeming The Process

Despite a glaring omission of the visual in the analysis and representation of the research, I engaged fragments that emerged through the *process* of video production as data. Focusing on this process as data aligns with my theoretical understandings of the way in which identities are produced through interaction, contingent and recursive. I am not suggesting the method grants access to more authentic representations, rather because the method takes time (Buckingham, 2009), nuance, complexities, fluidities and contradictions emerged. As an example, Group Two's abandoned production of *The Bachelor* and subsequent production of *Miss Perception* involved continual, collaborative negotiations surrounding filmic representations of gender.

In Group Two's initial brainstorming phase, they considered doing a parody of the 'reality' TV show, *The Bachelor*. For this production, the youth producers planned to include

both a male dressed in drag and a lesbian female amongst the contestants vying for the love of the bachelor. On the one hand, representing a male body performing femininities could provoke the conflation of sex and gender. At the same time, a male body performing femininities may have been made laughable. Similarly, the lesbian contestant may have provoked heteronormativity, or she could have perpetuated homophobic responses. The group struggled with such questions of representation, intelligibility, audience, ethics and harm before deciding not to continue with the parody.

The elements of group collaboration, multiple viewpoints and negotiation evidenced above may have potentially promoted more nuanced conversations about gender and sexuality— as per the intent of the research questions. By that I mean, considerations about producing a filmic representation of a woman in drag or a lesbian female may have made thoughtful, difficult conversations about gender possible. This process, I posit, is the potential of video production both as a methodological and pedagogical tool. And still, there were elements of the production process that were undervalued in this analysis.

Re: Re-Deeming The Process

Understanding that "culture and social relationships are constituted and rendered in and through the visual, by visual means, and through visual practices" (O Donoghue, 2011, p. 640) neither the visual, nor any element of production practices should be excluded. And yet, my discussions of editing, and to some extent viewing the productions, is minimal in comparison to my engagement with the planning, discussions and filming. Through the editing process, the productions go through multiple transformations that potentially reveal the construction and disruption of normative discourses. This involves the cultural meaning of visual data and relate to the ways in which actors themselves interpret visual data (Pink, 2008). An image is both the

content and the context in which it is interpreted (Banks, 2001). Moreover, if content and context are both recognized as essential elements of visual research (Pink, 2006), the video productions may have potentially revealed understandings of gender particular to this research context. To draw on a literary explanation, through this research incomplete sentences were made part of the data through discussions of abandoned projects; yet, complete sentences were also written, and I have only included selected pieces. Without suggesting that one can ever capture the whole of anything, or that particular pieces of data are not always privileged in our representations, or that there is a formulaic process to analyzing video production, this ig-norance (Ellsworth, 1997) of editing and viewing falsely tethers them from the production process.

And still, like the lessons derived the 'appearance' of Mrs. Mimesis, the ruins of these moments (St. Pierre & Pillow, 1999) inform current methodological conversations surrounding the use of visual methods. That is, like the tendency toward traditional literacies might school video production processes in pedagogical spaces, this research warns of the tendency to do so in research. Further, it elucidates the way that process potentially invites contingent, recursive understandings, but how articulations of process can also be edited (pun intended) through the analysis and representation of research.

Producing Pedagogy

As the research questions that ground this project arose from pedagogical concerns hinged to discussions of gender and sexuality, I would like to return to the theorization of pedagogies that emerged through this research project. Although I previously mocked the certainty and lack of nuance in my inclination toward teacherly reward, within each of the discussions of digital video production and popular culture that follow, I am unable to resist the temptation. This impulse speaks again to the necessary discussion of the subjectification of

teacher alongside attempts to engage knowledge, teaching and learning disparately in educational environments and research—this assertion of necessity is the first of my rewards.

Go Figure

Much like the naïve empiricism that Buckingham (2009) suggests cloud 'creative' visual methods in research, media education theorists often rely on essentialist declarations about youth to support the implementation of production practices in formal educational spaces. As was outlined throughout the literature, there is certainly evidence to suggest increased youth engagement with video production; however, this is not representative of all youth. Theories hinged to declarations about 'youth' and video production risk addressing, limiting and producing an imagined 'you' (Ellsworth, 1997).

Rather than fueling the grandiose claims made about youth and media, the data fragments engaged in *Chapter Four* suggest *how* some youth may be connected to digital video production, and *how* that informs pedagogy. This research, articulates the particularities of precisely how some youth are connected to the medium: through childhood play, which may invite play into classroom spaces; through the body and the senses, which may invite discussions of the body into educational spaces; through unfinished understandings and thumping brains, that may recognize learning as an endless process; through an assumption that their brains are being shown on the screen, which may fuel notions of authenticity. As a teacher and an educational researcher, the particular ways in which the participants engaged with video production filled the theoretical assertions with particularities and in turn informed theories of pedagogy; through these particularities, I came to recognize my own omissions of the body and senses in/as pedagogy.

What A Shame

Burdened by the pervasive 'cultural myths' of teacher that celebrate control, expertise, and intuition (Britzman, 2003), often moments of uncertainty and loss are silenced and shamed in education. However, I posit that these moments within practice, while of course already theoretical, might provoke and contribute to theoretical discussions of teacher and pedagogy. As in *Chapter Three*, promoting spaces of 'and/or', of uncertainty, may unsettle the damaging mythology of teacher and promote spaces in which the endpoint of learning is not decided in advance. That is, the constant tangles that emerge within such a space may unsettle pervasive, damaging discourses of teacher.

In my own teaching experience, I have felt profound moments of failure, shame and loneliness, particularly in relation to discussions of race, gender, class, privilege, and sexualities. Bound by the constraints of the cultural myth of teacher, there is a perceived risk to sharing these moments of loss, which contribute to the feelings of shame and may tempt teachers to abandon these discussions. In turn, inviting the constant unknowns of teaching might provoke the pervasive discourse of teacher and encourage teachers to continue engaging these important topics.

Teacher *Hangover*

Chapter Three warns that broad declarations about the pedagogy of popular culture may contribute to the ambiguity of the term. Instead, discussions of address, normative discourses, perception, intelligibility, and interpretation of/in popular culture, inform theories of pedagogy, and in turn suggest the ways in which pieces of popular culture might be pedagogy, or be engaged pedagogically. While the chapter recognizes the ways in which sweeping statements about popular culture suggest problematic notions of both public and pedagogy, I remain

adamant about engaging popular culture in formal educational environments. The conversations that were elicited throughout the research context have only fueled my belief that popular media invites complex, incomplete, critical conversations about gender, sexualities and race.

Regardless, like some protectionists, even some of the youth participants refute the place of popular culture in formal educational spaces:

> J: [participant reading interview question] Do you think youth should be protected from certain media? Or, do you think that popular culture, like *Superbad*, *Rack City*, *Boondocks*, *Trailer Park Boys*, and *South Park* should become part of what we learn in school? Explain.
>
> CB: I don't think it makes any sense to learn that in school
>
> J: no
>
> CB: that's not, like, things you need to know, it's entertainment/
>
> F: ya, and which way would you learn that in school, like what (Group One, March 28, lines 187-200).

However, the impossibility of assigning meaning, and the way in which popular culture provokes conversation (Gonick, 2000) make these sources a productive medium for discussions of gender. Evidenced in the data fragments engaged throughout this dissertation, popular media texts grant space to wrestle with the intangible discourses of gender, race, and sexualities. Echoing Gonick (2000), and media education theorists more generally, this involves milieu, varied viewpoints, negotiation of meaning, and the collaborative construction of knowledge (Buckingham, 2003b; Goodman, 2003; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Jenkins, 2009). Drawing on visual elements also potentially erodes stable conceptions of literacy (Goldfarb, 2002). The result of which are complex conversations of/in gender that play with the boundaries of language and ideology

(Grace & Tobin, 2002). The way in which these conversations invite variant responses and potentially encourage being left undone may also promote pedagogy as messy and unknown.

With that said, the indeterminable and/or, and the mess that might ensue, is not to be mistaken as a relativist rant in which the teacher feigns to admonish all responsibility. As has been articulated, Teacher (Britzman, 2003), alongside pervasive modernist discourses in education (Popkewitz, 1997), is always already understood as an authority within formal educational spaces. Further, teacher neutrality is an irresponsible impossibility (Bigelow and Peterson, 2002). In turn, the goal is to create a space of criticality in that encourages constant interrogations of interpretation through notions of normative discourse, intelligibility, visual perspective, and fields of perception. Within such an environment, any interpretation is invited as long as it is placed in conversation with each of these elements. In turn, learning, like interpretation, might be recognized as constantly incomplete.

And yet, this dangerously formulaic suggestion ignores the impossibilities of encouraging spaces of criticality within educational environments that approach knowledge as a commodity and consider progress measurable (Ellsworth, 2005). Further, as popular media may not be recognized as relevant in formal classroom spaces, such spiraling discussions may be perceived as wasting time. Finally, as has been discussed, students may be resistant to critically engaging with 'their' popular media pleasures within school spaces. It is precisely this impossibility that I discuss in the subsequent section.

Criticality's Curtain Call

I is Another.

--Rimbaud

As was discussed in *Chapter Five*, the Term Two Projects were screened in the school auditorium. After the viewing, there were few peer responses. This may have been a

consequence of the seating formation, in which everyone faced the screen, or due to the darkness of the room, or as a result of the perceived finality of the viewing. Instead of critically engaging with one another's films, and possibly as an attempt to mock the entire event, the participants repeated the same phrase after each film, *I think the fight scene could have been more realistic.* This comment was made after the first film was shown, to which many people in the room laughed. As a result, when the classroom teacher, Thomas, asked for thoughts or comments after each viewing, somebody from the audience would shout that phrase. There are many explanations for this response from the class: the youth may have felt that criticality was futile as there would be no chance to apply these conversations; the youth may have resisted the practice of criticality, seeing it as an attack on pleasure; the youth may have been uncomfortable offering suggestions to one another; the youth may have been trying to assert humour against the formality of the context. Any/all of these explanations is possible. And still, the judgment of others is a major element of media production, and responsibility or power to encourage these discussions cannot rest solely with the teacher (Bragg, 2000). How then do educators foster criticality between youth producers? How also, do educators foster both criticality and play, without suggesting a binary between these two terms?

While much credit is owed to theories of media education that petition for the inclusion of media and popular culture in the formal curricula, often the complicated, nuanced spaces of classrooms are neglected within these discussions of pedagogy. Although practice, methods, and the day to day of the classroom may not be of concern to some media theorists, this project asks after these theorists in the face of difficult discussions with youth surrounding pleasure, race, gender and sexualities. That is, there is very little discussion about the knottiness of engaging these moments with youth in formal classroom spaces. As such, this contributes to the shaming

of practical uncertainties, and encourages the myth of the teacher as expert. In this case, without overwhelming the space with their own opinion, the expert teacher can supposedly: invite pleasure and play while fostering criticality, encourage variant responses while provoking the ways in which interpretation is also discursively produced, and recognize negotiation alongside discussions of the fields of intelligibility and visual perspective.

Practice of/and/as Pedagogy

What is the line between play/parody/student production and intervention?

--Mrs. Mimesis, Research Journal, November 15, 2011

Our aim is to produce critical consumers, even if what we mean by the term critical in this context is often ill defined.

--Buckingham, 2003a, p.313

As an educator and a theorist, I am often left lost at the intersection of theory and practice, and of play and criticality. If, as Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) declare, media education is the work of empowering young people through meaningful and critical participation (p. 5), what is the role of the educator, particularly when many youth are already critically participating? Further, how do *we* define 'critical participation', particularly when the very definition is imbued with power that undermines notions of 'empowering youth'? Through this project, I confronted many questions like this, and still have many left of/for theories of media education and pedagogy.

Much educational research makes the case for more open-ended, playful approaches to media education. Amidst these playful pleas, there are a plethora of media educators and theorists who demand the necessary space for criticality, for intervention, for judgment, or morality (Bragg, 2000; Buckingham 2003a; 2003b; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Poyntz, 2006).

Within these theoretical demands there is a recognizable tension between play, pleasure and critique. Buckingham (2003a) reminds that pleasure does not ensure criticality. Poyntz (2006) states that pleasure does not dismiss the necessary space for ideology and critique. While, Bragg (2006) warns that analysis should not be placed above pleasure.

Beyond the confusion of the theoretical teeter tottering between play and critique, many theorists do not follow the demands for both with pedagogical examples (Buckingham, 2003a). As such, beyond weighty theoretical assertions for both pleasure and critique, there are very few classroom examples to help practitioners theorize the constantly moving line between play and criticality amidst varied contexts. Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012) recognize the struggle for practitioners to draw a line in youth productions. Similarly, Duncum (2009) asks, "When students produce work that is just plain silly, or ostensibly sexist, racist, homophobic, vulgar, offensive to people with physical disabilities, and so on, what are teachers to do? (Duncum, 2009, p.232). Although they do not answer Duncum directly, Grace and Tobin's (2002) research on children's video production recognizes the 'transgressive challenges' and 'unwanted consequences' of exploring pleasure in youth productions. Bragg (2000), Buckingham (2003a; 2003b; 2006), and Buckingham & Sefton-Green (1994) are also media education theorists that draw on rich, complex practical examples to interrogate the ambiguity of student productions and the subsequent difficulties that arise in relation to teacher intervention and criticality.

Re-visiting a few of his earlier research projects, in which youth productions relied on stereotypes related to race, gender and sexuality, Buckingham (2003a; 2006) interrogates the very notion of ambiguity. He asks, what/is there ambiguity in relation to representations of a 'gay child molester' or a 'slut' in youth productions? Drawing on the earlier example of the *Bachelor* parody, if the participant group had gone forward with the production, would the film

have been labeled satisfyingly subversive or injuriously imitative? The 'answer' to these questions, unfortunately, is neither simple nor answerable by current theories of media education. No such criteria could decide whether the character dressed in drag in the *Bachelor* parody, would have been read as a subversion, one that mocks the notion of a true gender identity (Butler, 1990), or as a mockery of femininities, or as re-alignment of masculinities and the male body; nor could any criteria suggest which of these readings to celebrate and which to censor. Certainly this is not a plea to stifle ambiguity or mandate a particular criticality, rather to demand more theoretical discussions of the many nuanced practical moments residing at the intersection between play and critique. Without, there is too large of a theoretical gap between celebrations of parody and play and demands for criticality within educational spaces.

Over a decade ago, Buckingham (2003b) commented on the way that theories of media education abandon the nuanced moments of the classroom. That is, while many theorists make the case for more playful approaches to media education, few discuss the teaching process in any detail (Buckingham, 2003b). Specifically, amidst celebrations of children and youth's transgressions through media production, there is little discussion of how teachers might intervene beyond their intuition (Buckingham, 2003b, p.164). As a result, criticality then is relegated the space of 'gut feeling', in turn feeding the cultural myth that a "natural teacher somehow possesses talent, intuition, and common sense. The valorization of these qualities diminishes reflection on how we come to know and on what it is we draw upon and shut out in the practice of pedagogy" (Britzman, 2003, p.230). In this case, where is it that we derive notions of criticality and how do the discursive constraints with/in educational spaces regulate youth productions? Amidst multiple interpretations, there are certain readings that do not satisfy the expected criticality of the school (Buckingham, 2003a). Some transgressive behaviours push

beyond the 'proper decorum' of the classroom (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). A further

consequence of this mythology, is that the normative regimes of school remain invisible.

There is a line of acceptability, and allowing that line to remain invisible makes it difficult to

challenge.

Faced with these 'transgressive' behaviours, practitioners are left in the theoretical chasm

between play and criticality—although certainly play itself can also be critical. There is no

perfect pedagogical way to intervene when a group of youth producers wants to dress a man in

drag; however, there is pedagogy in an unraveling of this moment. Buckingham does not

necessarily answer his own critiques with a 'teacher' discussion; yet, he does offer the practical

example of *Slutmopolitan* and *Flat Broke* (Buckingham, 2003b; 2006). His unlayering of

Slutmopolitan, as both 'hopelessly sexist' and/or subversive, is pedagogical; the learning being

that youth production can be both a parody of women's magazines and contribute to sexist

portrayals of women. Further, he explains that some of the youth producers of the magazine

understood it as a critique of the representation of 'sluts' in mainstream media while others

understood it as a critique of 'sluts' themselves. As Buckingham (2003b) points out, this leads to

further complications surrounding student assessment and teacher intervention, as such

productions can neither be labeled subversive or oppressive. Sharing the complexities of this

moment, provides at the very least, recognition of the difficulties, the nuances, the complexities

of engaging with youth productions and animates theory.

Despite his own critiques, Buckingham does not follow these examples with discussions

of teacher interventions, suggestions for assessment, or pedagogical suggestions. Like the

demands for knowledge, linearity and rationality, criticality becomes another modernist

prescription that encompasses production. Amidst celebrations of parodic playful productions,

unspoken modernist, rational notions of criticality overwhelm. There is a pervasive

understanding and expectation of criticality, despite the capacity to name or define it. I posit that

theories of media education might only draw on terms like criticality or morality (Hoechsmann

& Poyntz, 2012) alongside rich and complex practical examples, so that the we might understand

the way a 'line' of acceptability curtails youth productions, and so that we might consider the

fluidity of the line itself.

Considering examples from this study, that includes the moments attached to:

Boondocks, in which racialization and privilege were messily discussed; *Bruno*, in which

discomfort, nudity and sexuality were interrogated; *Sherlock*, in which the performance of gay

identities was debated; and the *Bachelor* 'parody' in which femininities were considered in

relation to the male body, to name but a few examples. Without these, the way in which pleasure

interferes with criticality, the variance of youth responses, the unpredictability of learning, and

the gulf between the claims of theory and messiness of practice remain. Further, without

engaging these practical examples, the pervasive discourses of education and the practices of

Teacher remain at the 'gut' level, in turn upholding the cultural myths of teacher. Additionally,

as criticality is both an end and a beginning, recognizing the necessary space for criticality within

educational environments negates the linear process that fixates on the product.

Productive Tensions

This research is informed by theorists who dare pervasive humanist notions of voice,

knowledge and identity, and subsequently contest modernist conventions of data, truth and

validity in research (Britzman, 2003; Ellsworth, 1992; Gallagher, 2008; Lather, 1991; St. Pierre,

2000). Drawing on these notions, the hope of this project was to not only "produce different

knowledge, [but] to produce knowledge differently" (St. Pierre, 1997, p.175). Although

methodologically encouraged by theories that promote "getting lost" (Lather, 2007), there were

many moments in which modernist assumptions, and institutional and discursive expectations,

regulated the process of conducting and representing the research. As such, this work contributes

to conversations about enacting troubling, and troubled research, and considers the ways in

which these moments of methodological tension become data. The articulation and analysis of

these tensions, theoretical idiosyncrasies, and failings, resulted in significant methodological and

pedagogical contributions.

Telling Tensions

Within this section I elucidate three unresolved/able tensions that emerged throughout

this project in hopes of provoking 'what counts as data' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). Despite the

suggestion of 'findings' often applied to research and data, what follows are the moments of loss.

These moments of loss become data, and can be drawn on to elucidate the discursive constraints

of research. As these pieces remain broken, I am also reiterating data is/as fragmentary. Further,

inviting others to engage with these troubled, unknown and unfinished moments recognizes data

as continually in process.

Gendered InTensions

Through this research, I sought to conduct a project that provoked fixed, binaried

understandings of gender, and did not presume an alignment to the sexed body. This theoretical

intention framed the research within naïve impossibility. Each use of a gendered term,

male/female, or pronoun, he/she, enacts a participant, regulates understanding through gendered

discourses, and reifies fixed notions of identity. Further, the reliance on binaried terms falsely

aligns data fragments with a 'generalizable male/female', where none exists. However, gender is

relevant, and identities matter (Lather, 2006). The hopelessness of participant representation,

particularly in relation to gender and fluidity, exposes the way in which methodological weights, laden with normative discourses of gender and humanist understanding of identity, burden research. Yet, in sharing the futility of representing fluidity, I may also have unsettled, if only for a moment, the presumption of gender. Moreover, as this study asked after the construction of 'youth', 'gender' and 'media' in the process of research, this tension makes overt one of many ways in which gender is constructed through the process of research.

Teacher Film

The same modernist tendency that manifest in the rewards of my writing also emerged in in the process of conducting research. The incongruity between the pedagogical and methodological theories that inform this study and the enactment of teacher/researcher through the process revealed *Mrs. Mimesis*. Approaching the ruins as data, made space for a conversation between the subjectification of teacher (Britzman, 2003) and video production practices. Approaches to knowledge, group collaboration, and process in digital video production may provoke pervasive pre-occupations with linearity, rationality and product in education; however, as is evident in *Mrs. Mimesis,* the teacher can also attempt to regulate this practice. Recognizing this incongruence as data, resulted in one of the most salient offerings of this dissertation. The playful potential of video production may be confined within/by the pervasive discourses of school and teacher.

Saying Something Without A Voice

Just as the discussion of gendered terms uncovers the way in which the desire to provoke fixed identity categories can become troubled with/in the representation of our research, the struggle to enact uncertainty and messiness through analysis and writing also confronts the expectation of research. Compelled by the expectation to offer something through our research,

how do we draw on data in ways that encourages doubt and resists modernist slippages? The act of: juxtaposing data fragments offered by the same participant; positioning data within a milieu; re-engaging data fragments within different contexts; placing data fragments in conversation with various competing discourses so as to recognize and refute identity; and leaving analysis open and unfinished, offered momentary reprieve from the constant resin of theoretical incongruence—a film left by the methodological temptations of certainty that continually emerged through analysis and writing.

Much like the failings of gender, I posit that these moments of loss, if approached as data, may be redeemable. Not in the declarations they make about pedagogy or youth, rather in how loss informs methodological conversations. By that I mean, my inability to resist certain rewards in the research process and writing become, in themselves productive pieces of data, as they makes visible the discursive expectations of research. That is, as Britzman (1995) suggests, the way research produces the materiality it attempts to represent. My suggestion in *Chapter Three* that the participants ignore whiteness, and coincidentally are more willing to critique representations of gender in rap, is one such example of the production of identities through the research. Through this act, I negate the troubles of data, identity and representation on which this research is grounded and instead fix data to fixed identities. Further, I ignore pedagogical theories of messiness that resist single interpretations of popular culture and essentialized understandings of youth. In turn, I also dismiss the necessary space of negotiation with pedagogical address. And still, I posit, these moments of loss fertile pieces of data.

Rigor Mortis

The provocations of knowledge, truth, validity, authenticity and data upon which this research is grounded, does not devalue research or dismiss rigor. Moreover, recognizing that

data is suspect (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) does not necessitate a particular approach, or lack thereof, to research. On the contrary, these elements increase the expectations placed on the researcher to constantly question (Britzman, 1995). That is, data needs to be constantly interrogated against the research process, relationships within the research context, various normative discourses, and the milieu of voices in which it was constructed.

The research that I conducted involved sustained engagement with the participants, constant record of my participant-observations, audio recording and transcription of the group discussions, and collection of the participant produced materials. While there have certainly been discussions that encourage doubt in the process of coding, and instead encourage a symptomatic analysis that both tells about the research and 'tells on the researcher' (Janzen, 2011), I remain committed to coding my data. This is not an endorsement of a universal or formulaic process for research; rather, the process of coding encouraged me to recognize themes in the data that had not previously resonated. Additionally, this is by no means meant to suggest that coding 'finds' themes that are not already constructed through the research process; however, it invites themes that may not have emerged in the initial engagements with the data. Mrs. Mimesis is one such theme that I had not recognized prior to coding. In this way, coding still recognizes the way the research produces themes, and the way that particular themes emerge first. In this way, coding might encourage reflexivity about what the researcher had been unwilling to see—as Janzen (2011) suggests, this still tells on the researcher.

In Conversation

This dissertation places various fields in conversation, which in turn recognizes the ways in which education/educational research is expected to engage multiple disciplines; although, this sometimes occurs at the expense of the field of education (Biesta, 2011), I also recognize that

constantly residing between creates a space alive with tension[51]. This generative space is evident in Ellsworth's (2005) discussions of places of learning outside institutional spaces, and in her discussion between film theory and pedagogy (Ellsworth, 1997).

Beyond placing various competing theories of media education in conversation in order to rationalize the place of popular media and video production in formal educational spaces, this research informs theories media education through discussions of the modernist discourses of teacher and education. As a result, this research invites discussions about the resistance to popular media in schools, *and* about the ways in which schools might regulate discussions of popular media and video production practices. On the surface, the latter may read as 'literary conceit'; rather, drawing heavily on theories surrounding the subjectification of teacher (Britzman, 2003; Janzen, 2011), this conversation elucidates the way normative constructs, particularly that of the teacher, can instruct production practices.

More so, methodological discussions about reflexivity and coding alongside this discussion of subjectification, in particular the way coding revealed an otherwise unfound Mrs. Mimesis, encourages conversation between methodology and pedagogy. Discussions of data (as both constructed, and contingent and recursive), researcher power, ethical research practices and critical reflexivity, re/in/form understandings of teacher, educational spaces and learning. Theories that recognize data as constructed, recognize knowledge similarly—in turn provoking pedagogy and learning. Theories that suggest the researcher, and research process, influence the research space and the data constructed within, also recognize the ideological influence of the teacher and the instructive confines of the institution. Theories that trouble the ethics of research, similarly stimulate conversations about the ethics of curricula, teaching and learning. Notions of

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[51] Ted Aoki theorizes the in-between as a space alive with tension.

critical reflexivity, represented within each of the previous sentences, also invite constant re-theorizing of one's practices. Further, like Ellsworth's (1997) intersection of film address and pedagogical address, methodological interrogations of identity unsettle the way that education potentially constructs/confines identity and learning through normative understandings of identity (boy, girl, youth), and the dominance of developmental discourses (Lesko, 1996; 2001; 2002; 2005; Vagle, 2012). It is in the way that this dissertation recognizes the interconnectedness of pedagogy and methodology that new understandings emerge of both emerge; research spaces are pedagogical, and pedagogy involves methodological complications.

Finally, theories of gender, race and sexualities are engaged throughout to place data fragments in conversation with multiple, often competing, normative discourses. As previously stated, in this way, data might be understood in relation to context, milieu, and discourse, rather than as the utterance of an individual. Theories of gender, race and sexualities also promote the indeterminable and/or of pedagogy. Pedagogical conversations that engage varied theories of gender, race and sexualities may unsettle interpretations, encourage reflection, and inspire new understandings.

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Appendix A: Phase One Participant Pseudonyms

1. Pseudonym: Pepper

2. Pseudonym: Ponyboy

3. Pseudonym: Mordecai

4. Pseudonym: Sir Lancelot Junior

5. Pseudonym: Calvin Broadus

6. Pseudonym: Bison

7. Pseudonym: Watson

8. Pseudonym: Subject X

9. Pseudonym: Joon

10. Pseudonym: Dr. Greenthumb

11. Pseudonym: B

12. Pseudonym: Y

13. Pseudonym: Phil Collins

14. Pseudonym: Mr. Castle

15. Pseudonym: H

16. Pseudonym: Josephine

17. Pseudonym: W

18. Pseudonym: Farmer

19. Pseudonym: Z

Group 1:

1. Pseudonym: Josephine
2. Pseudonym: 'L'
3. Pseudonym: Watson
4. Pseudonym: Calvin Broadus
5. Pseudonym: Farmer
6. Pseudonym: Ronscach

Group 2:

7. Pseudonym: Bison
8. Pseudonym: Ponyboy
9. Pseudonym: Joon

Group 3:

10. Pseudonym: Subject X
11. Pseudonym: Pepper
12. Pseudonym: Mordecai
13. Pseudonym: Jason Bourne

Group 4:

14. Pseudonym: Sir Lancelot Junior
15. Pseudonym: Mr. Castle
16. Pseudonym: Dr. Greenthumb
17. Pseudonym: Phil Colins
18. Pseudonym: Steve French

Reel Representation

Term Review:

Take the terms out of the envelope. You and your group can either:
Play with the terms and place them into categories
Think of popular media examples for a few of the words
Pull out the words that you don't know
Or….do a combination of the above.

Focusing on representation.

Trailer 1:

What does the clip make you think about in relation to *representation* and *audience*?

Consider all the terms from our introduction activity in relation to *representation*—In other words, how is *representation* achieved?

Trailer 2:

What does the clip make you think about in relation to *representation* and *audience*?

Consider all the terms from our introduction activity in relation to *representation*—In other words, how is *representation* achieved?

In what ways does *representation* in these two trailers compare (similar/different)?

Clip: The Sound of Representation

Consider all of the ways in which sound, dialogue, and sound effect are used in relation to representation?

Clip: A View into Representation

Consider all of the ways in which camera work, lighting, and location are used in relation to representation?

Envelope Terms

Camera Angle	Shot Transition	Music
Foley	Ambient Sound	Sound Effects
Focus	Lighting	Dialogue
Representation	Audience	Long Shot
Mid Shot	Close Up	Pan
High Angle	Point of View	Low Angle
Plot	Theme	Character
Pacing	Conflict	Framing

Fourty Minute Film

Instructions:

You must use the dialogue you are given
You must indicate why you chose your settings
You must fill in the sheets to outline the choices you are making for camera shots and angles
You must indicate five directions you gave your actors

Shots:

Establishing/Long Shot	Wide Shot	Over-the-Shoulder
Close-Up	Two-Shot	Reaction Shot

Angles:

High-angle looking down on subject(s) the subject may appear insignificant, small, weak, powerless.	Low-angle looking up at subject(s) may appear important, powerful, domineering
Eye-level eye-level may represent as 'neutral'	Reverse-angle shows what subject sees could create empathy or understanding

Camera Movements:

Tracking
Dollying
Panning
Tilting

Are You Talking To Me?

Set-It Up

Setting choice:	Reasons for the choice:

Oh, Shoot! For each change in shot or angle you make, you must record your shot, angle and reasoning:

Shot Choice	Angle	Reasoning

Which Direction? Record 5 directions the actors were given.

Fiction

This assignment is designed to encourage you:
- to work as a group to make collective decisions
- to engage with multiple elements of writing fiction, such as plot, setting, theme and character development
- to challenge you to think about the ways in which you can utilize sound, lighting, and camera angles/work to help translate your story through film

To help keep you organized:

Step 1: Group Brainstorm
You must utilize some form of brainstorming to come up with fiction idea. This brainstorming session should reflect collective decision making, and consider ideas surrounding plot development, setting, theme and character.
Due:

Step 2: Storyboard
As per our earlier discussions of storyboarding, your group must hand in a storyboard that outlines the major elements of your film, before you can begin filming.
Due:

For steps 3-6, I recommend your group keep a filming log or journal.

Step 3: Casting, location & shooting ideas.
Your group must hand in a film plan. This plan should:
Outline the casting choices you have made, in relation to character development and representation. What are you hoping to achieve with these characters? What direction will you give the actors? What costuming choices will you make?
Outline the locations in which for different scenes from your storyboard. Why have you chosen these locations? Time of day? How do they help tell your story?
What shooting ideas do you have in relation to sound effects, camera work, lighting, etc?
Due:

Step 4: Filming Schedule
Your group must create a schedule for filming that outlines shooting dates and which actors will be needed for which days.
Due:

Step 5: Filming obstacles
What are some of the challenges your group faced throughout the process? Consider filming, working with actors, and group dynamics? How did you overcome these obstacles?
Due:

Step 6: Editing
Keep a log of the editing choices you have made. Consider sound, lighting, sequencing, etc?

Due:

Marking Criteria:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Group Dynamic	There were obvious problems with group completion of steps 1-6 Attendance hindered group collaboration Group had some problems making collective decisions and resolving conflicts The finished product does not represent a group effort	Most of the steps were completed according to the timeline and reflect a group effort All members were generally included in the writing, filming and editing Group was generally successful at representing members and making collective decisions The finished product represents a collective effort	Steps 1-6 were completed according to the timeline and reflect a group effort All members were involved in the writing, filming and editing Group worked to represent all voices in the group and come to collective decisions The finished product represents a collective effort
Storytelling	There is a problem with two or more of the storytelling elements: character, plot, setting, or theme	There is a problem with one or more of the storytelling elements: character, plot, setting, or theme	Characters are developed and reflect discussions of representation Setting choices reflect the theme and atmosphere of the piece Plot is developed and engaging There is a resonant theme
Film	Group utilizes two or three of the following to help tell their story: camera angles/work lighting sound effects, ambient sound, music, 4. special effects	Group utilizes two or three of the following to help tell their story: camera angles/work lighting sound effects, ambient sound, music, 4. special effects	Group utilizes the following to help tell their story: camera angles/work lighting sound effects, ambient sound, music, special effects