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Resisting the Resistance: The Emancipation of Students from the Hidden
Curriculum of Commodified Resistant Narratives in Young Adult
Dystopian Film Through Open Pedagogical Space
and Culture-Jamming

Robert B. Bauer

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Resisting the Resistance: The Emancipation of Students from the Hidden Curriculum of Commodified Resistant Narratives in Young Adult Dystopian Film Through Open Pedagogical Space and Culture-Jamming

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Young Adult Dystopian Film exercises an influence over young people of which they are not aware. As part of a structure of domination these films teach students to participate in their own oppression by the capitalist system. The film industry maintains a hidden curriculum like that utilized in school classrooms to conceal the oppression from the masses. One particularly effective means is the portrayal of resistance against oppression in the narratives of the YA Dystopian Film. Young people are drawn to that narrative and end up supporting the structure of domination financially and ideologically. Modes of resistance to this oppression can be found in Media Literacy Education and Public Pedagogy (e.g. culture-jamming). Teachers can incorporate Media Literacy and culture-jamming into a form of radical pedagogy to emancipate students from that oppressive relationship.

This thesis investigates the usage of this radical pedagogy through an action research project in a high school drama class in the intermountain west. The students learned the theories, critically reflected on the situation, and created a live culture-jamming performance. The results of the action research show the affordances and limitations of this approach and offer suggestions for instigating its usage by media literacy educators.

Keywords: ideological state apparatus, media literacy, action research, emancipation, hidden curriculum, dystopian film, culture-jamming

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Chapter 1

The Apparatus of Domination in Young Adult Dystopian Films and Potential Responses

In 2014 the online magazine, *The Guardian*, published a photo essay on a resistance group in Thailand that opposed a recent military coup. The interest in this particular group, as opposed to so many other resistance groups the world over, was that they had adopted the Mockingjay salute as seen in the 2012 film, *The Hunger Games*, and its sequels, *Catching Fire*, (2013) and *Mockingjay pt. 1* (2014). Several of the photos in the piece showed the protestors flashing this salute in unison as an organized protest. In the films, the oppressed peoples in a dystopian future used the salute as a way to establish unity and as a form of resistance against ‘the Capital’. When these Thai rebels were asked why they chose to use that salute for their movement, one participant responded, “We know it comes from the movie, and let's say it represents resistance against the authorities.” (The Guardian, 2014) In this case a group of the oppressed identified a symbol of resistance in a film and appropriated it to fight against their oppressors. The appropriation was a means of establishing solidarity in their opposition to the government.

Interestingly, in the United States there was a different appropriation of that same Mockingjay salute. In 2013, *Hunger Games* actor Josh Hutcherson attended a University of Kentucky basketball game in his home state of Kentucky. After walking onto the basketball court before the game the audience responded by giving him the Mockingjay salute. (Yapalater, 2013) In this case the salute was not given as a means of resisting an oppressive military coup, but rather it represented a form of performative fandom. The attendees of the game showed their love for the film and for the actor through their appropriating of the sign of the Mockingjay and using it in a new context. Again it was a means of establishing solidarity, but among fans and supporters, not rebels.

These two instances are clearly different as they involve different cultures responding to different political and economic circumstances. However, they have at their core a similar perception. Both see the *Hunger Games* film franchise as an ally in negotiating their lived experience. Both groups have interacted with the films and appropriated an image of revolution, but to very different effect. In one case the sign was appropriated to create solidarity of resistance to an oppressive government and in the other it was appropriated to create solidarity of fans of the film and their love of a character.

The appropriation of the signs from these films is by no means limited to these two instances. In my practice as a public high school teacher I have seen first hand the popularity of these films and how students appropriate the imagery and signs to show their identification with the characters in the film, and other fans. This affection towards these narratives appears to be related to the natural desire of young people to rebel against authority. They are drawn to these media representations of resistance because they feel a kind of mediated rebellion by way of their participation as an audience with the film.

Films that represent resistance to oppressive authority are exceedingly popular with the movie-going public. Audiences show up in droves and cheer for the rebels in *Divergent* (2014), *Maze Runner* (2014), or even *The Lego Movie* (2014). The most popular of all, however, has been *The Hunger Games* (2012) and its sequels. After earning nearly \$2 billion together and with the final sequel to be released at the end of this year, that number could easily surpass \$2 billion worldwide (Box Office Mojo, 2014) *The Hunger Games* and other such films represent a new mega-market to be exploited. With their immense popularity and the increased market push that includes: dolls, Mockingjay pins, Halloween costumes, cook books, websites, TV spots, and

endless discussion and speculation of the films in social media, it is clear that ‘resistance’ sells.

This massive popularity, especially with teenagers, of course manifests in my own classroom. I see the students with their *Mockingjay* t-shirts and pins. I hear the buzz as they anticipate the latest installment of the films. They discuss their favorite characters, who is the most attractive, and with whom do they most identify. They talk with starry eyes of how impressively strong Katniss is in fighting against authority. They draw comparisons between authorities in their lives (i.e. parents, teachers) and the oppressive Capital. All this leads me to question what sort of effect this experience is having on children. Do students exist in the context of those fans at the Kentucky basketball game but believe themselves to be the same as the rebels in Thailand? More to the point, I wonder if my students realize that by buying into these media portrayals of resistance and their marketing techniques, they are supporting their own oppression by other forces invisible to their view.

Through the course of this thesis I will look at the YA Dystopian film and its relation to my students and young people at large. I will start with a contemporary Marxist perspective drawing principally from the theory of Althusser and his discussion on the ISA, and analyze these YA dystopian films and their place in that apparatus. I will also trace the genealogy of the theories that have led to the creation of Media Literacy Education (MLE) and discuss how those theories can operate to help young people critically engage with media like YA Dystopian film. I will also identify what is missing that could be of use in teaching young people to emancipate themselves from the oppressive structures identified by Althusser and others and embodied in YA Dystopian film. I will use this theoretical basis to lay the foundation of my research project that is an attempt to fill those gaps for the good of my students and others.

ISA, Culture, and Critical Theory

Althusser and his discussion of the apparatuses that oppress the people is useful in discussing this problem of young people and their negotiation of YA Dystopian film media. His perspective gives insight into how the YA film media oppresses young people and how their engagement with said media perpetuates the system that oppresses them. I find that his discussion of class and power particularly useful as it takes into account the effect that ideology and culture can have within the capitalist modes of production. For the purpose of clarity I will briefly summarize Althusser's argument and then connect it with other scholars' theories which support and expand his claims.

Althusser was interested in moving beyond the insufficiencies in classical Marxist thought. Primarily, he and others of the Western Marxist tradition were of the opinion that the culture was more than merely an extension of the economic base. In his case he argues that there are two apparatuses that are in place to maintain the economic system, or to allow for the reproducibility of the system. (Althusser, 2010) The first is the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), which consists of military, government, police force, etc., and that uses violence to maintain capitalist modes of production. This apparatus is highly visible and is fairly candid in its allegiance to the system. One does not have to go far in the rhetoric of government officials to find language that defends and promotes the current economic system. For example, one can look to former President George W. Bush encouraging Americans to continue shopping after 9/11 so that the terrorists 'don't win'. However, a far more insidious apparatus exists that is effective in maintaining the reproducibility of the system.

Althusser identifies this second apparatus as the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). Being

largely hidden from view, the ISA works through schools, media, social groups, clubs, families, religious organizations, and so forth to disseminate the ideology of the economic system. What makes this apparatus so powerful is that the people believe that they are participating of their own choice, thereby the ideology is taught and the people accept their place because they believe they are being agents. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to note that both media and schools are part of this ISA.

Key players in the Frankfurt school offer theories that relate to and help inform Althusser's theory. They make bare the power of the culture to influence the consciousness of the masses. Adorno and Horkheimer identified a culture industry that works to reproduce the dominant culture that teaches us to obey the social hierarchy. (2010) These two believed that culture was even more important than Althusser would later indicate and it became the focus of their research, having a notable influence on the later development of cultural studies.

These theories are part of the critical theory that is used to discuss media and its hegemonic influence. Some have taken a political or economic position, arguing that media artifacts are commodified symbolic forms that disseminate the culture of consumption supporting the system of domination. As Nicholas Garnham says, "A delimited social group, pursuing economic or political ends, determines which meanings circulate and which do not, which stories are told and about what, which arguments are given prominence and what cultural resources are made available and to whom." (2000, p. 65) In other words, those in charge of the media spread the ideology by deciding what to include and what not to include in the stories told. This is not limited to one form of media, but any form can be used to teach the ideology of the economic system: television, radio, print, and social media. Dallas Smythe (1981) discusses at length the

way in which media markets commodify audiences whose labor of consumption is sold to advertisers. Garnham (2000) also explains how these media markets operate differently than traditional markets, focusing on reproducibility of audience. Film critics like Jonathan Rosenbaum have managed to bring political and economic discussions into the popular form of the movie review, identifying how Hollywood films, as a business, are given more validity in the public than art films since they are seen as ‘work’ producing money and supporting the economy. (1997, p. 87) This points back to Althusser and his assertion that media is part of the ISA disseminating an ideology that supports the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Cultural critics like Grossberg (2009) and others (see Frymer et al, 2012) have looked at culture and how the mass media has worked to disseminate an ideology of other repressive systems to maintain those systems of power. This is similar to the culture industry identified by Adorno and Horkheimer. Frymer et al in their book, *Hollywood’s Exploited: Public Pedagogy, Corporate Movies, and Cultural Crisis*, look at specific forms of cultural oppression as portrayed in film artifacts. (Frymer et al, 2012) For example, one author in that text discusses how Hollywood conveys a Christo-centric worldview, effectively leaving out other voices. Another looks at how masculinity is represented in three films set in Boston. The key connection in these two examples and others in the text is that there exist forms of oppression or suppression than class that films can represent and grapple with.

While cultural critics and political economists are often at odds (see Garnham and Grossberg) in identifying the problem, the two both posit that media is a means for disseminating oppressive ideology that maintains the system of domination, be that cultural or economic. The

ISA and culture industry, therefore, are not oppositional, but rather divergent views that can be brought together in certain contexts.

Henry Giroux is one who engages with film in both a cultural and economic perspective. He argues that Hollywood films work to instill in society the ideological constructs that support the system of domination both culturally and politically. In his *Theory and Resistance in Education: a pedagogy for the opposition* (1983) he points out that these theories taken alone are inadequate to fully engage with the problems of our society. He advocates a synthesis of the theories that take into account the social relations of class and culture. (pp. 107-111) This can be identified as a form of critical pedagogy. Giroux says:

Hollywood films are not merely elements of screen culture that reproduce a magical combination of entertainment and fantasy. On the contrary, they function as emotionally charged, image-saturated cultural practices where the coordinates of dominant power are often constructed and the 'state of things seems evident, unquestionable.' (Giroux, 2008, p. 7)

Films, then, are a means of galvanizing the status quo, thus maintaining the current hegemonic system. But they are more than this alone. As repositories of ideology, they help to define what this culture is. They do not "simply reflect culture but actually construct[] it" (Giroux, 2008, p. 8). He identifies the hard truth that films are part of "a mammoth culture industry largely dominated by a handful of corporations that exercise enormous power over what can and cannot be seen and heard in the public sphere." (Giroux, 2008, p. 12) By controlling what is and is not seen and how it is presented, these corporations are able to maintain their position of power within the system of domination. They create and disseminate the culture through these films. This makes film a powerful pedagogical tool.

Film as Public Pedagogy

Public Pedagogy can be defined as a mode of teaching that exists outside the sphere of formal schooling to which the general public has access. (Sandlin and Milam, 2008) Types of public pedagogy can include billboards, television programs, internet memes, social media, performance art, and film. (See Burdick and Sandlin, 2010) Seeing film as a public pedagogy reveals its power to teach the ideology of the dominant culture. (as in Frymer et al, 2010, Giroux, 2004, 2008, Hoechsmann, 2012) Seeing film as a pedagogical enterprise is also useful in helping formal educators know how they can engage with these texts. In my practice in a public school I perceive a greater ability to engage with film and its place within the system of domination if I see it as pedagogical. By looking at film as a similar to that with which I wrestle every day as a teacher helps me to see it as surmountable.

If films are pedagogical then they have a curriculum. Various theorists have identified a dichotomy between what is termed the hidden and the visible curriculum (Phillips, 2014, Gatto, 1992, Giroux, 1983, Snyder, 1971). The visible or overt curriculum consists of the objectives, knowledge base, and lessons while the hidden or covert curriculum is the set of beliefs, values, and ideologies displayed in the social relations and routines. (Giroux, 1983, p. 45) The purpose of the hidden curriculum is to teach the students how to live within the current set of social relations. They learn respect for authority, the value of work for pay, and an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. The basic premise of the hidden curriculum is that it is more important to schooling than what is visibly taught.

Films also have their visible and invisible curriculum. The visible curriculum consists in the plot, characters, dialogues, genre tropes, formalistic elements, etc. The hidden curriculum is

composed of the ideologies, politics, structures, and social relations of an audience's interaction with a film. Like the hidden curriculum of the classroom, the hidden curriculum of the film is more important to the dissemination of ideology than the apparent content. Many have discussed how films use both the visible and the hidden curriculum (though they do not use the same terminology) to teach the capitalist ideology. (Rushton, 2013, Frymer et al, 2010, Giroux, 2008, Giroux, 2004, Rosenbaum, 1997, Prince, 1992, Zavarzadeh, 1991, Wood, 1977) In Robin Wood's discussion of synthetic criticism (which combines genre and auteur theories with ideology) she identifies the ways that films incorporate key capitalist ideologies into their fabric. (1977) While her discussion does not work toward breaking down the ideology, her recognition of the means by which film conveys that ideology is noteworthy.

While there are many ideologies that can be taught by way of this hidden curriculum, the principle ideology of both the classroom and film is that the capitalist state is in the right and the people should work to promote that state. There exist other ideologies that promote positions of power. Some have identified these specific cultural ideologies as: sexism, racism, xenophobia, American exceptionalism, and militarism. (Frymer et al, 2010, p. 2) Frymer et al see these ideologies as extensions of the American ideology, which is capitalism. Therefore, films are teaching people that to be good citizens they must be good consumers and support the systems of power and domination. (Frymer et al, 2010) Giroux argues that this can fit under the ideology of neoliberalism, which underlies Hollywood films (Giroux, 2008, 2014).

These ideologies are inculcated in the social relations between the audience and the film. Films mirror the traditional school and its structure of the classroom (e.g. a single speaker, slide show presentations, and students locked in their desks) with the social relation between the

audience and the screen. (See Giroux, 1983) In the classroom, the teacher is the authority who disseminates knowledge, effectively teaching the clear power differential between a teacher and her students. The meaning-making is held in the hands of the teacher as she makes sense of the mysteries of the curriculum. The same exists in the movie theater. The film has a similar power relation to the viewer which functions by various means. One of which is the relation of the screen to the audience. The screen operates similar to a teacher in a classroom or a preacher from a pulpit. That relation between the voice of Hollywood and the consumer places the audience in a passive receptive role. Also, the film is presented in a way that maintains hold on the meaning-making; telling the audience what it means instead of allowing space for the audience to make that meaning.

Another way in which this hidden curriculum functions is by way of the traditional linear narrative. Characters in film are almost always seen in a series of increasingly outrageous and irresolvable crises, but these problems are resolved by the end. The audience makes a subconscious connection between the resolution and the creators of the film. There is no problem so large that the film cannot solve, therefore, audiences are taught this way to see the film industry as a solution to the insurmountable ills of life. (see Rosenbaum, 1997) This is similar to the argument in *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1985). Boal states that the traditional narrative structure as found in Aristotle's *Poetics* is designed to maintain the unequal relations between the classes. With the narrative's pursuit of catharsis, it purifies the spectator of political desires that run contrary to the established order. (Boal, 1985, pp. 27-32) This same narrative structure in contemporary film cements loyalty to the political authority, gaining consent from the masses to participate in the system of domination. Boal says:

Aristotle formulated a very powerful purgative system, the objective of which is to eliminate all that is not commonly accepted, including the revolution, before it takes place. His system appears in disguised form on television, in the movies, in the circus, in the theatres. (1985, p. 47)

Audiences then accept the ideology of the capitalist system even as it may run contrary to their perceived beliefs.

YA Dystopian Film and Commodified Resistance

As indicated previously, films directed at young adults are becoming increasingly popular and financially viable. As such, they provide a ripe classroom for teaching the ideology of the capitalist state and loyalty to said state. Films like *Catching Fire* (2013) have the built-in audience to reach millions of consumers, and the film industry has cashed in on that value. More importantly, they have found that the narratives portraying resistance to oppressive forces make lots of money, supporting the very system that is oppressing the audience. The visible curriculum of *The Hunger Games* (2012) is of a young woman fighting against the oppressive regime of ‘the Capital’ that maintains power by way of force (RSA) and entertainment (ISA). Similarities between current oppressive structures and those used by the capital are intentional, particularly in relation to the media. (Walker, 2013) The author of the novel and consultant on the film, Suzanne Collins, wanted to critique the media and how the messages of reality television and the news coverage of the Iraq war coincided. This is, by all accounts, an anti-hegemonic message.

However, the enormous popularity of the novel led to its development into the film. The film shows the same ostensibly critical message but it is shared within the pedagogical hegemonic framework of the movie house classroom. The hidden curriculum is still in force, teaching the masses covertly that the institutions have the authority, have the power of meaning-

making in their hands, and can resolve all issues no matter how insurmountable. The linearity of the narrative with ever increasing crises that are solved through veritably miraculous means teaches this. Katniss is seen in ever increasing danger through the film (starvation, dangerous training, being trapped in a tree by more talented fighters, etc.). But her death is averted by the powers of the Capital. A veritable *deus ex machina* delivers her as she and Peeta decide to eat the poison berries and are stopped by Seneca Crane, the runner of the games. This rescue of the protagonist by the forces that oppressed her galvanizes the ideology that the structure of domination is what actually saves.

What is happening here is that the Hollywood machine has co-opted the resistant message of the original novel and used it to entice the masses into the controlled oppressive space of the theater. They gain the consent of the audience by portraying the rebellion against authority that they consciously or subconsciously desire, then teach them to submit to the authority and continue to perform the citizen's work: to consume. The hidden curriculum of the movie theatre and the structure of film have the greater influence over the members of the audience than the visible anti-hegemonic message. The true intent of the film is concealed behind the message of resistance. It is this very adaptability of the market to co-opt the signs and imagery of resistance and fill the sign with the ideology of consumerism that makes it so insidious and effective. The enemy is therefore concealed within the ally.

The rabid popularity of these types of stories in YA fiction and film indicates a sort of false consciousness in today's youth. My observation is that many of my students fail to see the hidden curriculum of these films. They do not recognize that the filmmakers are trying to sell to them, not incite rebellion. They believe them to be an ally in rebelling against their consciously

perceived foes in education and family. It is well documented that youth in adolescence feel a strong desire to rebel against perceived authority. (Parianti and Parianti , 2014, Bloom, 2010, Pickhardt, 2009) These films feed that desire in surrogate fashion. Young people identify with the film and feel as if they are participating in a proxy resistance through their patronizing of the film and purchasing its associated merchandise, which in reality supports the capitalist system ideologically and financially. What has happened to the anti-hegemonic message of Suzanne Collins' novel is lost and replaced with the ideology of consumerism. This is what Jonathan Rosenbaum observed about so many counter-culture films when he said "What had seemed political on Saturday had become a sort of marketing device by Monday." (1997, p. 8)

Forms of Resistance

There are ways to resist this oppressive relationship with the hidden curriculum in YA dystopian films. Much has been written about the capacity of critical theory to help in the mitigation of this problem. Some have discussed the injection of critical and cultural theory through media literacy education (MLE) into the formal classroom as a means of helping students to reject the ideology of the capitalist system and liberate themselves from it. (Brady, 2004, Giroux, 1983, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, Duncombe, 2002, Hobbs, 2010, Kellner and Share, 2005, 2008) Others have looked at modes of public pedagogy as a means of critically engaging people outside of the formal classroom in analysis of their place within the system. (Cheung and Kirby, 2009, Frankenstein, 2011, Handleman, 1999, Sandlin and Milam, 2008, Burdick and Sandlin, 2011) I will first look at how critical theory intersects MLE in the classroom to create a radical form of pedagogy and then I will look at how public pedagogy modes are also used to counter the hegemony. Then I will discuss how to synthesize both in a way that fulfills the goals

of both public pedagogy and Critical and Media Literacy Education.

Critical Pedagogy and Media Literacy Education

In the literature on critical pedagogy and MLE various authors have identified key components or steps to apply these theories in the classroom. I will review the various different approaches¹ and then synthesize them into the simple process of *Access, Critical Reflection, and Action*. I will start with Henry Giroux's seminal work *Theory and Resistance in Education: a Pedagogy for the Opposition* (1983). In this work Giroux establishes the fundamental needs of any sort of radical pedagogy, meaning a pedagogy that leads to emancipation of students from oppressive social relations. While he discusses at length the origins of critical theory and the affordances and limitations of each theorist and various different practices that exist in schools, the aspect of his work most useful here is Dialectical Thought.

Dialectical Thought is a pedagogical tool to help people understand the contradictory nature of the economic system. In other words, it makes bare the fact that the structure (be it political or cultural) claims to be beneficial to all when it is clearly not. (Giroux, 1983, pp. 18-19) Dialectical Thought has a series of instructions that are necessary for a radical pedagogy. Giroux identifies these as: 1) Instruction of a group of their position within the system of domination, 2) Instruction on how to develop a discourse free from cultural inheritance, 3) Instruction on how to appropriate the most progressive aspects of the dominant culture, 4) Instruction on how to restructure and appropriate the most radical aspects of bourgeois life, 5) Must lead to action. (Giroux, 1983, p. 35) Giroux's most common critique of other theories of radical pedagogy is in that last step, they lack action. Action in his text refers to applied

¹ For a greatly reduced summary of this discussion see Table 1, p. 24

knowledge in the lived experience. This process, while not mentioned specifically, influenced much of Giroux's later work. He has applied this in different contexts: to film (Giroux, 2004a, 2008) public education and academia (2004b, 2004c) and even the Occupy Wall-street Movement (2014) all with the same ultimate goal: liberation from oppressive ideology.

The media literacy education movement has taken many of the critical and theoretical educational ideas of Giroux and applied them specifically to media. This is pertinent as they recognize media as a powerful arm in the system of domination. Kellner and Share identify three basic elements of literacy, which are then applied to Media Literacy. These are to *read*, *interpret*, and *produce*. (Kellner and Share, 2005, p. 369) They identify and discuss the Core Concepts of Media Literacy. These concepts are used as a framework for how to engage in creating a media-literate population, and express how to analyze media in a way that is critical of the institutions that create it. (Kellner and Share, 2005, pp. 374-377) The authors refer to the Center for Media Literacy, which offers a media kit to educators on how to engage with media using the Core Concepts. (2015)

Renée Hobbs is another media literacy advocate that has delineated a media literacy framework. While she has been reluctant to advocate for any action that is political, she lays out steps that are similar to those identified by both Giroux, and Kellner and Share. In *Digital Media Literacy: a plan of action* she identifies the need of people in today's media-saturated world to "access, analyze, and engage in critical thinking" about media. (Hobbs, 2010, p. iv) In this same paper she creates a paradigm that consists of *access, analyze and evaluate, create, reflect, and act*. (2010, p. 18) Elsewhere she identifies the steps of "access, analy[sis], evaluat[ion], and communicat[ion of] messages." (Hobbs, 1998) These steps are geared toward helping people

navigate the media seascape and its ever-changing form and structure.

Similar to the aforementioned authors, Hobbs indicates that one must not only critically reflect on media, but also do something in response. She says, “Full participation in contemporary culture requires not just consuming messages but also creating and sharing them.” (Hobbs, 2010, p. iv) People must act in some way on the knowledge in order to truly resist, not merely critically reflect.

Other scholars have discussed the power of MLE to engage with and resist the power of the ideology of the system of domination. Some focus on the public sphere and digital media (see Milhailidis and Thevenin, 2013), seeing MLE as essential to creating democracy in our society, particularly in and through new media and social networking. Others focus on the formal educational system, applying the ideas of discourse and media literacy specifically in the classroom (see Draper et al, 2010). Draper et al identify the four steps of media literacy as *access, analyze, evaluate, and create*. Like others before listed, these authors see the essence of MLE and therefore resistance to the ideology as being some form of enlightenment, then reflection, and then action.

These various theorists find a nexus in The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) to define what the primary goals of media literacy are and how they can be achieved. NAMLE defines media literacy as, “a series of communication competencies, including the ability to ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE, and COMMUNICATE information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print messages.” (NAMLE, 2007) These four skills draw from those identified by other authors as before described. The purpose of these skills is to lead to critical reflection and action. NAMLE states, “Media literacy empowers

people to be both *critical thinkers* and *creative producers* of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound.” (NAMLE, 2007 emphasis added) It is clear that NAMLE expects audiences to make themselves active by critically analyzing media and actively creating responses to it, all catalyzed by a participatory pedagogical experience.

This becomes all the more clear in the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education as set down by NAMLE. Of most interest in this thesis are points one and four. They are as follows: 1) *Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.* 4) *Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.* (NAMLE, 2007) Under point one it is emphasized that “all media messages are ‘constructed’ ...[and] are produced for particular purposes [and]...contain embedded values and points of view [and] ...can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the democratic process”. (NAMLE, 2007, p. 3) Clearly NAMLE is advocating the critical understanding of the system that controls media messages. That critical understanding should lead naturally to action in the public sphere. That is the ultimate goal of MLE.

Hobbs says, “Shifting the business of schooling toward the analysis and creation of messages, away from the providing of answers and toward the asking of questions, is essentially a radical act.” (Hobbs, 1998, p. 27) This harkens back to Giroux’s radical pedagogy. While this radical act Hobbs identifies is not necessarily political as it is in the context of Giroux, it is advocating the liberation of students from oppressive ideology, be it in the public sphere or in the classroom. By teasing together the different approaches of Giroux, Hobbs, Kellner and Share, and NAMLE, I am attempting to shape what this radical pedagogy can be. I have synthesized

from these sources the basic steps in the process of emancipation: *Access to new knowledge*, *Critical Reflection*, and *Action*. Essentially, teaching in this way is a ‘radical act’. If teachers radically act in the classroom, it can lead to students who radically act both in and outside the classroom. While this is valuable in the educational sphere, others have worked within the public sphere to resist oppression and teach ways of resistance to the masses outside of that formal classroom.

<i>Giroux, 1983, pp. 18-19</i>	<i>Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 369</i>	<i>Hobbs, 2010, p. 18</i>	<i>Draper et al, 2010</i>	<i>NAMLE, 2007</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to theories of oppression. ● Analysis and evaluation of cultural inheritance. ● Appropriation of the progressive aspects of culture. ● Finding ways to restructure the way of life. ● Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read ● Interpret ● Produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access ● Analysis & Evaluation ● Create ● Reflect ● Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access ● Analyze ● Evaluate ● Create 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access ● Analyze ● Evaluate ● Communicate

Table 1: The various commonalities between the media literacy scholars used to synthesize a radical pedagogy.

Culture-jamming as Public Pedagogy

Many theorists and scholars have looked at ways in which individuals appropriate and subvert media to reveal and resist the ideology of the structure of domination. One form that this can take is culture-jamming. Culture-jamming is defined as a “turnabout to counter or appropriate well-known media constructs in order to reveal their hidden agendas. Examples of [this] include subvertizements, performance art, and flash mobs.” (Chung & Kirby, 2009, p. 35, see also Handleman, 1999) Sandlin and Milam, borrowing from Guy Debord, call this turnabout a ‘Detournement’, which is a moment of *recognition*, *reflection*, and *action*. (2009, p. 329) This is similar to the *Access*, *Critical Reflection*, and *Action* I have defined as necessary for radical

pedagogy. Detournement caused by culture-jamming achieves the same goals as explained by those authors and organizations referred to above. Essentially, the culture-jammers turn the media back on itself, revealing the ideology or the institution behind the media construction. This detournement creates an 'Open Transitional Space', which is a space of play, creativity, and cultural production. (Sandlin and Milam, 2009. p. 330) When encountering a piece of culture-jamming, the audience is placed by way of the incongruity in a position to critically reflect on the ideology and choose to act. These culture-jammers work in different media but all is focused on critically engaging with media and resisting the ideology.

One well-documented mode of culture-jamming is what is termed a *subvertizement*. (See Handleman, 1999, Sandlin and Milam, 2009, Chung and Kirby, 2009) Subvertizements were popularized by The Media Foundation in *Adbusters* magazine. (Handleman, 1999, p. 401) A subvertizement is a media artifact that appropriates the commercial media imagery that is part of the public consciousness (meme) and adapts it to convey an ideology that is contrary to the ideology of the institution that created the original artifact. Ubiquitous are the memes on social networking sites that take a screenshot from a film and add a caption that critiques some aspect of society. While they are not as pointed to capitalism and consumerism as the Media Foundation's *Adbusters*, these memes are true to the spirit of culture-jamming in that they create an open transitional space through their incongruous detournement.

Other forms of culture-jamming are found in live performance art and flash mobs. Exemplary of this is the Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping. (see Sandlin and Milam, 2009, Burdick and Sandlin, 2010) This performance art group stages 'revivals' in front of or within major corporate chain stores in which they sing hymns about the deadly sins of

consumerism, Reverend Billy preaches the damnation of climate change, and people can confess their sins of participation in the corporate culture. Ultimately, Billy advocates the cessation of consumerism. Audiences in the stores find themselves in a space of play, of contradiction, and must reflect within that space on their place within the system of domination, opening a transitional space in which they can choose to make a change. This live experience relates also to Boal's concept of making the audience a subject rather than an object. (1985, p.119) The action is placed in the spectator's hands by awakening "critical consciousness" and taking on the "protagonic role". He advocates a performance that "launches into action". (Boal, 1985, p. 122)

These two modes of culture-jamming are by no means exhaustive. Remix videos like those of Jonathan McIntosh, ubiquitous memes, Yes Men! and others help to give a clearer view of the diverse tapestry of culture-jamming modes. There are those that have taken the opportunity to try and incorporate culture-jamming into the formal classroom curriculum as a way of teaching resistance and critical reflection to students. While Sandlin and Milam (2009) advocate bringing culture-jamming into the classroom, for the purpose of access and analysis, others attempted to implement culture-jamming as a form of class project, a creation. Chung and Kirby (2009) developed a project in a middle school classroom in which they discussed the power of the logo, and then investigated various different culture-jamming modes. After doing so they discussed the ways in which advertisements disseminate the ideology of consumerism, and other social issues. The unit culminated in the students creating their own subvertizement of a corporate logo, which they screen-printed to a t-shirt that they were to wear to school as a means of sharing their resistant message.

Another example is in the classroom of Marilyn Frankenstein (2011). She has her students

study different culture-jamming groups and artifacts. Her focus is the culture-jamming performance group, Yes Men!. However, unlike Chung and Kirby, her focus is on studying the culture-jamming to encourage changes in thoughts or beliefs and then changes in practice on the part of the students in the public sphere. The study is therefore geared toward analysis of the artifacts, after which, the students may or may not change their behavior outside of the classroom. In a way, these authors have fused MLE and culture-jamming into a kind of radical pedagogy. They have made the ‘action’ required by radical pedagogy and MLE, the creation of a culture-jamming project.

Culture-jamming is a form of pedagogy in which audiences can gain knowledge of their state in the system, critically reflect on that state, and ultimately act to change or emancipate themselves from the oppressive ideology. Much of the literature is glowing in its advocacy of culture-jamming, portraying it as a veritable magic bullet in combatting false consciousness. However, Sandlin and Milam do admit to the fact that the critical reflection of culture-jamming can slip into critical didacticism. It can become directive in defining how one has to think about the institutions. (2008, p. 346) These weaknesses in the literature could simply be attributed to the fact that there is scant research on culture-jamming as a practice and even less on its use in the classroom. While some teachers might balk at the highly charged political nature of groups like Adbusters and their anti-consumerist, pro-environmental stance, they can still find a way to teach culture-jamming without limiting students’ agency. Part of the ultimate goal of this thesis will be to address at that issue.

Gaps and Spaces

While both MLE and Culture-jamming work with the goal of emancipation from the false

consciousness of the ideology, there are some gaps in the literature that are related directly to the primary problem of this thesis. Within much of the literature on studying film in the classroom, the emphasis is on how one can analyze the film texts from a critical perspective, but stops before leading to any action. (see Brady, 2004, Frymer, 2010) While critically analyzing films in order to look for the ‘hidden curriculum’ is valuable, without action that study falls short of the paradigm extolled by Giroux (1983) and Hobbs (1998, 2010), and both NAMLE’s Core Principles (2014) and the Center for Media Literacy (2014). In order for my students to be able to fully emancipate themselves from the ideology taught in the hidden curriculum of YA films like *The Hunger Games* (2012) they must do more than simply make themselves aware of the ideology. They need to do more than even critically reflect on the institution creating and disseminating the ideology. They must act in response. That is where the emancipation truly lies.

While there is literature that discusses culture-jamming in the classroom, there are certainly gaps and spaces. There are studies looking at the creation of subvertizements and even taking those subvertizements into the real world. (Chung and Kirby, 2009) However, there is a veritable dearth of research on incorporating other forms of culture-jamming that take place in the real world, particularly those performances akin to Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop-shopping, into the classroom. Also lacking is any sort of critical reflection in the classroom on culture-jamming and its potential to become hegemonic in itself. In order for a curriculum that utilizes culture-jamming to fit within the parameters a radical pedagogy it must also critically reflect on itself, and not only criticize the system outside of itself. As stated in NAMLE’s Core Principles, MLE is about “asking questions about all media messages, not just those with which

we may disagree.” (NAMLE, 2014, p. 3) In other words, there seems to be a significant and ironic lack of skepticism about the culture of education itself that gives rise to which messages it finds worthy of critical reflection. My thesis is insufficient to address this issue, but perhaps the ideas presented here can lead to further research in that area. Additionally, there is virtually no research on using culture-jamming to subvert film texts in the classroom. Almost all focus on subverting advertisements or consumable goods. Little exploration has been done in how the classroom can be used to create subversion of film texts that can be taken into the real world.

My goal in this thesis is to look at ways to respond to these gaps and spaces by devising a curriculum that combines the principles of MLE with culture-jamming into a form of radical pedagogy that emphasizes action through performance. There is potential for a curriculum that can go beyond simply questioning films to emancipatory action. In fact it is possible to engage with all of these gaps by way of the same curriculum. The media literacy scholars I have cited encourage action in response to critical reflection. Live culture-jamming is a form of action that can respond to the ideology of the apparatus of YA Dystopian Film media. By creating a curriculum that critically engages with the hidden curriculum of YA film and creates a culture-jam of that apparatus, it is possible to fulfill the goal of radical pedagogy: emancipatory action.

Terms and Usage

For clarity in the remainder of this thesis I will employ the following terms based the theoretical discussion contained in the previous sections. First, my synthesis of the concepts of Giroux, Kellner and Share, Hobbs, and others in MLE (i.e. *Access*, *Critical Reflection*, and *Action*) I will use the term *radical pedagogy*. This term I am adapting from Giroux (1983) as I feel that my process is true to the spirit of what Giroux intends, though I may diverge from his

usage in a few pragmatic ways. The goal of this radical pedagogy is emancipation from the oppressive forces of the capitalist modes of production, the ISA, the Hollywood machine, and traditional schooling. These four I will term the *structure of domination* though I will occasionally refer to the individual structures as need be. I will define *emancipation* as the agentic action on the part of an audience. I will define *audience* as the receptors of a performative text, be that a film, a culture-jamming artifact, or lesson in school. *Agentic action* I will define as any action based on new theoretical knowledge (as in Access), and critical reflection. *Access* is new theoretical knowledge of the social relations created by the structure of domination. *Critical Reflection* is the analysis and evaluation of the new knowledge as applied to media and lived experience.

Plan of Action

I will create a curriculum that takes my students through the three stages of radical pedagogy with the goal of emancipation from the structure of domination as represented by YA Dystopian Film. I will show that by creating a classroom of open space in which students have access to theory, and can critically reflect on the structure of domination without it becoming a hegemonic structure. In this way I will show that the form of the curriculum is essential to the emancipatory effort, perhaps more so than the content. I will also show that live culture-jamming performances can be a useful means of incorporating action into a radical curriculum that seeks emancipation. Rather than looking to prove that this approach is effective, I will look at the affordances and limitations of the curriculum through the course of the process.

The curriculum will be divided into three parts. The first will be a sub-unit that discusses the Ideological State Apparatus and how YA dystopian media are used to maintain the

reproducibility of the system. We will discuss the hidden curriculum of film texts and how they use the invisible elements of the film to instill the ideology of the film's institutions in the audience. We will pay special attention to how these YA films portray resistance as a way of gaining consent from their audience to teach them the ideology. This theory section will largely correspond with the *Access* stage of the curriculum. Even so, there will be plenty of opportunity to critically reflect, to analyze the film text, and evaluate it within the context of the students' lived experience.

The second stage of the curriculum will look at how culture-jamming modes engage with media in order to combat the false consciousness created by said media. We will look at subvertizements in digital media, much like Adbusters. We will also look at the live performances of 'Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping' and 'Yes, Men!'. (see Sandlin and Milam, 2008, Frankenstein, 2010) We will discuss how these culture-jamming modes create open transitional spaces through detournement, and how that can lead to critical reflection on the part of the audience. This stage uses *Access* to the concept of culture-jamming; also it *Critically Reflects* through analysis of the modes and evaluation of the effectiveness of each type.

The final stage of the curriculum will entail the creation of a culture-jamming performance as a class that will open a transitional space for an audience regarding their relationship with YA films. This will be a creation on the part of the students with myself acting as an advisor. In this case I will be allowing space for my students to *Act*, by creating their own work to communicate with an audience the ideas and theories that they have learned through their study. The students will have the opportunity to *Critically Reflect* on their experience to evaluate the effectiveness of

the process. We will look at the affordances and limitations of the curriculum as a means of emancipating students and audiences from the hidden curriculum of YA films.

In my next chapter I will go into more detail on the methodology of the project. I am choosing to do an action research project within what is called the emancipatory mode. (Berg and Lune, 2012) This mode follows a process of Theory => Enlightenment => Action. I will show how this mode of action research works best for engaging with the concerns and questions that have been raised in this first chapter. I will make connections between the goals of this research and the goals of MLE and culture-jamming. I will describe in detail the specifics of the research, including the data collection, and modes of analysis.

In the third chapter I will share the data that I collected through three data collection means: Interviews, Field Notes, and Written Artifacts. I will analyze the data using grounded theory. I will organize the data in terms of the affordances and limitations of the curriculum in emancipating the students from the hidden curriculum of YA dystopian film.

My final chapter will consist of my conclusions regarding the project. I will express how the curriculum was successful or unsuccessful in the process of emancipation, and what weaknesses or failures are apparent in the data. I will look at possible adaptations of the curriculum for future use, and suggest how it might be applied in other classrooms by other educators.

Chapter 2

Methodology

It is the claim of this thesis that by using a form of radical pedagogy, the oppressive forces that influence young people can indeed be mitigated. In order to bring about this emancipation I devised an action research project that incorporates this radical pedagogy into its form and content. In this chapter I will describe the theory of action research that forms my project, my methodology for pedagogy, and for data collection and analysis.

Action Research Theory

In this first section I will identify the type of action research I have chosen. I will then discuss how such a research project functions and interacts with the students. I will also identify how such projects are effective in dealing with the type of questions that I am pursuing in this thesis by looking at how it relates the radical pedagogy.

Action research has several distinct forms, each with a unique set of parameters and goals. For the purposes of this research I have chosen the Emancipating or Empowering/Enhancing/Critical Science Mode for framing my research. (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 272) For simplicity's sake I will hereafter render it simply as the *emancipatory mode*. Berg and Lune identify two main goals in this emancipatory mode. The first is “an attempt to bring together theory and book knowledge with real-world situations, issues, and experiences.” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 272) This means that the research is pointed to inciting some kind of action, based on the theoretical constructs of which the stakeholders (students) are made aware. The students will make some kind of application of the theoretical knowledge given them, taking that knowledge into their lived experience. The second goal is, simply put, to enlighten students as to

their repressed circumstances so that they can act in agentic ways. The students, newly aware of oppressive structures, can now act as agents instead of ignorantly supporting said structures. Necessary for this is the implementation or development of a social critique that brings together theory and practice. (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 272, see also Grundy, 1987)

Berg and Lune identify three steps in a non-linear and free-flowing process (See also, Grundy, 1988). These steps are: Theory, Enlightenment, and Action. They say, “It is actually the coming together of theory and enlightenment that provides the emancipation and empowerment to the participants, which then leads to action and change.” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 273) It is justifiable that I used this approach, as its parallels to the radical pedagogy that I synthesized in the first chapter are clear. This paradigm of radical pedagogy that emphasizes access, critical reflection, and creation fits nicely within Berg and Lune’s construct of Theory, Enlightenment, and Action. Access is given to the Theory. Critical Reflection leads to Enlightenment. Once again, the ultimate goal is Action. The form of the research project will reflect therefore the theory expressed in the first chapter.

More to the point, I am choosing the Emancipatory mode of Action Research precisely because of the action-oriented goals of that mode of research. In Giroux’s work he champions the importance of action. The action is identified as resistance. Resistance is the key component to radical pedagogy whose goal is emancipation. He says, “Resistance is a valuable theoretical and ideological construct that provides an important focus for analyzing the relationship between school and the wider society.” (Giroux, 1983, p. 107) This connection between school and the wider society is the crux of this research. My students are interacting with the wider society every day, and school is a place to mitigate the influence of that society. Emancipation through

resistance taught in radical pedagogy is what Giroux calls for and what I want to investigate through this research project. I believe that it is a valuable means of looking at how young people can resist the hidden curriculum in YA Dystopian Film.

Action research is a commonly used method in education as most teachers are concerned with the issues related to a small population, and are less concerned with making generalizations based on large sample sizes or longitudinal studies. Berg states, “Action research can be understood as a means or model for enacting local, action-oriented approaches of investigation and applying small-scale theorizing to specific problems in particular situations.” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 260) This approach will prove invaluable to my individual practice and will then lead to possibilities for broader implications for future research.

Research Methodology

I have chosen to employ my action research project in my Advanced Drama Class at a public high school in the Intermountain West. I chose this class as they have had experience studying complex theoretical constructs and applying them to theatrical performance. The class was an honors course and represented students who have completed the beginning and intermediate level courses. The class consisted of 33 students. Eleven percent of the students in the class were Hispanic, two students were of Asian descent, and one of Polynesian. The remainder of the students was white/Caucasian. The age of the students ranged from 14 to 18 years. Sixty-six point six percent of the class was female with the remaining 33.3% male. There were no self-identified transgendered students. The socioeconomic status of the school is 60% free and reduced lunch and 40% on school fee waiver. It can be safely assumed that the class had a similar demographic.

Data Collection Plan

I chose three ethnographic means of collecting data for this project: Personal Interviews, Field Notes, and Artifacts. The interviews correlated with three phases of the curriculum (which I will discuss at length in the next section) and occurred upon the completion of each phase. I sampled six students from the class and interviewed each of them in a single session for each phase. The interviews lasted from 5 to 15 minutes depending on the length of the responses and the cooperation of the students. I chose the students based on their apparent diversity of interest in the material ensuring that I had a variety of student perspectives. The first interview took place after the first phase and asked questions related to theory and the YA dystopian film. The second interview took place after the second phase and asked questions related to culture-jamming as a response to the structure of domination. The third interviews took place after the third and final phase of the curriculum and dealt with their thoughts and feelings regarding the project they had created and how they felt about my efforts to be emancipatory in my praxis.

The field notes were collected during all three phases of the curriculum but most particularly in the third. As the students discussed their project in groups, I floated from group to group making notes as I went. I also took notes as the groups presented to the class. I made note of the students' engagement with the material that we had discussed as well as their enthusiasm for the project. I noted both verbal and nonverbal cues checking for understanding of the material as well as critical reflection. I also made notes of the ideas and plans for the project itself, looking for how the students were applying the theories. On the days of the performances, I made note of how the students engaged with the audience as well as their discussions with each other after the experience was over. In this way I documented how they felt about their

experience in a candid and open manner. The purpose here was to gather data from the class as a whole in a more informal environment and to document the action portion of the project.

After the process was over, I had all students write a reflective essay on their experience.

The essay was given with the following prompt:

Think about your experience in this unit learning about YA films, Critical Theory, and Culture-jamming. As you do, think also about the following questions: What things did you learn that have changed the way you see the world? Do you feel that the project was successful or not? Why? How might you utilize this experience in the future? What hope do you have that such acts of resistance can make any change? What might those changes be? Why is it important to talk about these issues in a public school? After contemplating all of this, write a one page (minimum) reflective essay about your experience participating in this unit. You will be graded on thoughtfulness, clarity of ideas, and basic mechanics. Your grade is not dependent upon agreeing with me or any of the theories we have discussed.

The students were given forty-eight hours to complete the essay. The purpose was to gather data from the whole class regarding their final feelings on the project as well as opening space for them to critically reflect on their experience and organize their response as agents.

Since the students felt that the performance ought to be done again after the initial shopping mall performance, I gathered field notes on the process of preparing for the new venues as well as their feelings about the experiences. Of particular value was noting the response of the judges to our performance at the one-act play competition and the students' subsequent reaction to their feedback. I had not intended initially to include this data, but I felt that I could be flexible in this way as long as I made note of it.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the Data collection was complete I began the analysis. After collecting the data through the three instruments (Interview transcriptions, Field notes, Reflections) I organized the

data to be read. I started with the research questions, identifying analytic categories for the process of coding. Then I read through the data in the three instruments to establish grounded categories. I used open and axial coding in this process. I looked at the data and identified commonalities in the responses from each individual student (open coding) and then made those connections between the students (axial coding). After determining the systemic criteria for dividing the data into chunks, I began the process of sorting the data into these categories, adapting them as determined by the data itself. I then reviewed the data chunks looking for magnitude and patterns. I then considered the analysis in terms of the theoretical constructs that I have referenced determining the success at emancipation.

As stated earlier, I have defined emancipation as agentic action on the part of the students. Agentic action I defined as choosing to act after access to knowledge and critical reflection. I have defined three categories of emancipation and list them below.

- *Emancipation from the hidden curriculum in YA Dystopian Film.* How did the students make themselves agents regarding those films?
- *Emancipation of others through culture-jamming.* How did the action of the students (the culture-jamming project) work toward the emancipation of others outside of the class?
- *Emancipation from traditional schooling.* How did the parameters of creating open space in my classroom stay true to the radical pedagogy I synthesized and emancipate the students from the hidden curriculum of the classroom?

By framing my analysis in terms of these questions I was able to see the affordances and limitations of this Emancipatory Action research project. I could see what works well and where gaps and spaces exist in my own practice. By working through this emancipatory framework, I

can find ways that I can shape my practice that lead to agentic actions of resistance, or at least show the possibilities and weaknesses of such. The purpose of this is to enhance my understanding of practice. As Giroux says, “What is being called for here is a need to reformulate the relationship among ideology, culture, and hegemony to make clear the ways in which these categories can enhance our understanding of resistance as well as how such concepts can form the theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy that takes human agency seriously.” (1983, p. 111) This project is directed at fulfilling this injunction to take human agency seriously and I will show in my next chapter how this approach to teaching can lead to the fulfillment of human agency.

Teaching Methodology

In this section I will be describing first my pedagogical approach to the curriculum to avoid the common pitfalls found in radical pedagogy. Second I will describe the course content connecting each section of curriculum with the three necessary elements of radical pedagogy in MLE.

Praxis

One of the primary difficulties in utilizing a radical pedagogy² is the same as that which culture-jamming faces: the teacher becomes a hegemonic force in themselves limiting a student’s agency by expecting that he or she adopt the new ideology. Throughout this thesis I have argued that the power of the film is in its structural similarity to the classroom and as Giroux and others have identified, the structure of the classroom represents a hegemonic system that disseminates

² While I did not use the theory and practice of Boal to devise my own pedagogical praxis, he does provide insight into why radical pedagogy as defined in this thesis is effective. Therefore I have included his theory in my discussion of the curriculum and project.

ideology through a hidden curriculum. Both radical pedagogy and culture-jamming have the same goal, to emancipate from oppressive ideology, and that goal inheres the possibility of undercutting itself by enforcing a single counter-ideology.

In order to mitigate this problem I established a set of guiding principles that I implemented in my instruction. The first guiding principle of this project was agency. Students living ignorantly within a structure of domination are not able to fully exercise agency as they are acting within a limited understanding of what directive influence that structure has and much less reflect critically upon that influence. They go along believing that their participation in mass culture, or media, or consumerism will make them happy, and yet they do not feel fulfilled. This is due to the fact that they are not fully realizing their agency. Agency is fully realized when an individual has full knowledge of the circumstances, possibilities, and consequences of their choices, critically analyzes and evaluates those circumstances, and is free to act. Emancipation and agency are interlaced. Therefore any attempt on my part to create a radical curriculum that emancipates students must utilize agency.

My next guiding principle draws on the principle of Open Space. Similar to the Open Transitional space extolled by culture-jamming theorists (see Sandlin and Milam, 2008) my classroom required me to allow the tension between my direction and the students' agency to go unresolved. That tension would provide space enough for the students to act in creative ways and negotiate their own position in relation to the theories I taught and the means of teaching them.

In NAMLE's Core Principles it states:

MLE is not about replacing students' perspectives with someone else's (your own, a teacher's, a media critic's, an expert's, etc.). Sharing a critique of media without also sharing the skills that students need to critically analyze media for themselves is not sound MLE practice. (NAMLE, 2014, p. 3)

The students must be free to interact on their own terms, not to fulfill my directives.

These two principles are interrelated and work together for the emancipation of students. When a student exercises agency, they do so in a space of play and choice. When I open space in the classroom for action and choice, the students are free to exercise that agency in a supportive environment. I used these two interlaced principles to create praxis of emancipation.

I created this by, first, making the instructional period a time for discussion rather than lecture. Teaching students to ask critical questions is a means of opening up freedom in the classroom to make that meaning and thereby liberate themselves from both the institution of the media and formal education. I asked the students what they thought of the theories and if they saw the results that I described in their own lives. I often asked if the students disagreed with the theory and I encouraged the contrary views. I even allowed one student to opt out of the unit entirely because he disagreed with the fundamental premise of the theories that were presented.

Second, I had the students create their own culture-jamming project instead of assigning them a prepared text. The extent of my direction as a teacher was that the students needed to make a live culture-jamming performance that related to the issues and theories associated with the YA Dystopian film. The work of creation was to be their invention. After giving these instructions, I made myself a collaborator instead of a director. I gave my feedback, but always in conjunction with the other students. We all responded to ideas presented equally in order to open space for the students to create what they wanted instead of what I expected them to do. This is similar to the kind of work that Boal did with the People's Theatre in Peru in creating an environment in which the actors were creators. (See Boal, 1985, pp. 121-155)

Another measure I took was to frame myself in relation to the theories as another learner

who as yet had not fully decided his position. I openly approached theories with a modicum of skepticism. I showed the students that while I had a full understanding of the theories and saw their logic and their flaws, I had not yet decided to believe what they said. It is important to note that it I made clear to my students that I understood the theories and their implications but I was still in the process of analyzing and evaluating those theories. This equalized the relationship between the teacher and student. I was learning and reflecting along with them.

In addition, I identified the contradictions in the theories and in my own teaching. Specific to this was the fact that I was teaching my students about how the ISA uses schools to teach the ideology of the capitalist modes of production and that one way that it does this is by the assigning of grades based on performance. I equated the grade with the paycheck and showed that this system was teaching students to do their work and collect their paycheck in the end as assigned by the authority. I then acknowledged that I would still be giving them grades based on the assignments in class. I highlighted this contradiction in my own practice in the name of transparency, to avoid hypocrisy, or at least recognize it so that the students could decide what to do with it. Transparency became key in my efforts to create an emancipatory environment. I clearly explained what radical pedagogy is and how I was going to implement it in my instruction. I showed how the structure of the lessons was an effort to be emancipatory, to teach in a critical and radical way. I believed that this would be effective because the ISA derives much of its power from the covert curriculum (be it in media or the classroom) so if I were make the covert overt in my own practice, to reveal the artifice, I could open space for the students to choose.

It is important to note that during this process I also drew attention to the various

oppressive structures in the classroom. The one of most interest to the students was ‘learning targets’. As implemented in our school district, learning targets are simple clear statements of what the students should know and do by the end of the lesson. The learning target is to be phrased in the first person as if the student is declaring what they will learn in the class. E.g. *I can identify the protagonist and antagonist in a short story.* The learning target is to be posted in a conspicuous place and referred to throughout the lesson. Assessments and, therefore, grades are based on the learning targets. It was determined by the class that the fundamental problem with such learning targets is that they limit student agency in what they can learn. In other words, they tell the students to learn only what the authority says that one should learn, implying that anything else is of no value. The students have often expressed distaste for the practice of learning targets and this perspective helped them focus on why. I chose to not use learning targets through the course of this curriculum in order to allow space for the students to choose what they learned.

Most of all I had to acknowledge to myself that what I was doing had the potential to be oppressive. I had to constantly check myself against my established steps to avoid becoming directive. I also had to be willing to accept that there was no practical way for me to pursue the goals of this thesis project without being directive to some extent. Therefore, the end result was a classroom with oases of open space for the students to make agentic choice.

The Curriculum

My Primary goal in this project was to help the students emancipate themselves through Access, Critical Reflection, and Action. I wanted to instill knowledge in my students that they could critically reflect upon, and ultimately act upon within the course of one unit. I devised a

unit that had three phases: Media Theory and the Dystopian YA Film, Culture-jamming and Responses to Oppressive Structures, and a Performative Project.

Pedagogically the phases were constructed differently. The first phase consisted in fairly formal presentations of the theories during which we diverged into related topics encouraging the students to make connections and critically reflect on the topics. Each lesson ended with a written piece of work in which the students expressed and applied their understanding of the theories presented. The second phase was similar in that there were visual presentations including picture, video, etc. related to culture-jamming, mingled with discussion and reflection on the content. This was followed in each lesson with a more active application than in the theory phase. The final phase was largely focused on action by creating the Performance Project and was far less formal in which I flowed freely between lecture, discussion, group and individual work, modeling, and oral presentation. I will discuss hereafter in brief the content of each phase and then show how those phases were intended to meet the goals of radical pedagogy and the Emancipatory mode of Action Research.

Phase 1: Media Theory and the Dystopian YA film.

This first phase of the curriculum was divided into three lessons. The first lesson was an overview of MLE and its purpose. (Appendix A, p. 123) I introduced the students to NAMLE and its core principles through a visual presentation (Appendix B, pp. 135-137) and discussed how they could be used to analyze any piece of media. We looked at a trailer for the film *Divergent* (2014) and used the *Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages* worksheet (See Appendix A p. 124) to analyze and evaluate the trailer. I also gave the students a brief genealogy of MLE and its theoretical basis in economic, educational, and cultural theory.

(See Appendix A p. 125) This overview was to give the students an understanding of the theoretical heritage of MLE and help them have some context as we delved more deeply into the media theories presented.

The second lesson focused in on Althusser and the ISA. (Appendix A, p. 126) It covered material related to the ISA and how films are part of that apparatus (Appendix B, pp. 138-140). We connected the concept of the hidden curriculum from the classroom to the movie theater. It also looked at cultural studies identifying that there are other forms of oppression besides class e.g. race, gender, etc. The lesson then looked at how Genre works in the service of both the ISA and the Culture Industry as a way to ensure reproducibility within the structure of domination. As an application, the students chose a genre (e.g. horror, romantic comedy) and identified the key reproducible elements and then created an idea for a new film that utilized those elements to ensure that audiences would come back. To do so, they utilized a worksheet that is included in Appendix A, p. 127.

The third lesson focused on one genre as a key component in the reproducibility of certain films. (Appendix A, p.128) It identified the key generic markers of YA Dystopian film. Those identified for the purposes of the class were: a post-apocalyptic future that oppresses by labeling people, a protagonist who is special and unique, a love interest/triangle, and portrayal of the oppressed class rising up against the oppressors. (Appendix B, pp.141-143) The lesson focused primarily on the *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* franchises but drew also from *The Giver* (2014) and *The Maze Runner* (2014). It also looked at the arms of these media that reach into other media and merchandising. The students presented ideas of what they were going to do to respond to what they had learned about YA Dystopian film.

Phase 2: Jamming the Culture

The second phase of the curriculum focused on culture-jamming as a mode of resistance to the oppressive nature of the structure of domination that was covered in three lessons. The first lesson (Appendix A, p. 129) consisted of an overview of the nature of culture-jamming as a means of playing with critiquing the institutions that create and disseminate our ideology. (see Appendix B, pp. 144-145) It defined culture-jamming as a form of public pedagogy and its relation to dialectical thought and detournement. Three forms of dialectics were delineated and connected to those concepts. I labeled the dialectics in terms of the space that they created: Open Creative space, Open Tactical space, and Open Pedagogical space. (See Appendix B, pp. 144-145) It identified three categories of culture-jamming: Print, Digital, and Live Performance. The students then did an analysis and evaluation of the relation between *The Lego Movie* (2014) and the concepts of pedagogical space and detournement. The students then determined whether the film could truly be considered a form of culture-jamming.

The second lesson (Appendix A, p.130) honed in on print and electronic media modes of culture-jamming. It drew from several different examples to show the broad capabilities of culture-jamming as well as the different kinds of hegemonic systems with which they engage. (Appendix B, pp. 146-149) The first investigated was *Adbusters*. (2015) We looked at the website for the magazine as well as a multiplicity of subvertizements. We discussed the ideology being challenged by the subvertizements. (Appendix B, pp. 146-149) We also watched the political remix videos of Jonathan McIntosh (2015), particularly his mash-up of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Twilight* and questioned the results of his work. We looked at *Feministfrequency.com* (2015), which produces videos critical of portrayals of women in video

games and played a gender remixer app that switched the audio on commercials aimed at boy and girls. In the end the students each created a simple idea for a subvertisement that they drew and then presented to the class.

The third lesson looked at live culture-jamming performance. (Appendix A p. 131) We visited the website of Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop-Shopping and analyzed several videos of him performing with his church. We also looked at other flash mob performances that performed music that played on popular songs and criticized consumerism. We then had the students divide themselves into groups, identify a problem of school culture, and create a live culture-jamming piece that was performed in front of the class. We then discussed the potential effectiveness of doing culture-jamming in school and brainstormed possible improvements to a few of the projects deemed by the class to be of particular interest.

Phase 3: Putting it together

The third phase of the curriculum consisted of the class collaborating on the culture-jamming artifact that they would produce. Some of the days were more structured and others were more free form. I chose not to lay out formal lessons, but rather to do activities that would encourage collaboration and creativity in the students. (Appendix A, p. 132-133) Initially I divided the students into groups and had them brainstorm on ideas for what sorts of things could be done to play with the YA dystopian films and open a pedagogical space for the audience to critically reflect on both our piece and the films.

After sharing the ideas, we grouped and sorted the ideas and identified some that we wished to incorporate into the main structure of the piece. The students determined that they wanted to incorporate something like a flash mob that plays with the culture of rebellion in the

structure of domination, meaning that individuals rebel by conforming to a certain set of culturally defined parameters. They also determined that part of the performance should represent the mirroring of the school classroom and the movie theatre. In addition, they decided that they wanted to portray scenes that represent the 4 key elements of the YA Dystopian genre: Labeling by the Authority, Love Triangle, The Special³, and Revolution.

On another day I divided the students into 4 groups with each assigned to one of the 4 aspects. I told them to create a scene that played with the concepts of those 4 issues if the YA Dystopian genre. Out of this experiment came the ideas to incorporate the audience in the performance by handing out cards that identify what faction a person is sorted into and on the back it would say “You are the Special”. Also, they decided that having shirts with a conglomerate design of both the Mockingjay pin and Tris’s tattoos from *Divergent* should be worn by the cast with the tagline “I am the Diver-jay”. In addition, the students decided to incorporate a parody of the song “The Hanging Tree” which Katniss sings in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay pt. 1* (2014). The parody would ask the audience if they should go to the movie, and then incite them to fight against the structure, then ultimately settle into conformity.

We also discussed how the traditional narrative structure of film with its linearity of cause and effect helps support the structure. (See Boal, 1985) The students felt that structuring our piece in that way would counteract the open space that we were trying to create. So, I taught them about mosaic structure⁴ and how the nature of that structure allows audiences more

³ ‘The Special’ was defined by the class as an the protagonist that is chosen as the leader of the rebellion for having special qualities that in the context of the film or in reality are not particularly unique while the physical characteristics of the actor are fairly generic making he or she more relatable to the audience.

⁴ Mosaic structure as used in the class is a narrative structure that is distinct from traditional linear structure and episodic structure by using a form consisting of various differing structures and styles that when looked

freedom to make connections and draw conclusions. The class determined that the project should be structured this way. This structure is similar to what Boal extols, with the purpose of making the intended audience “on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors...[where] the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place”. (Boal, 1985, p. 155)

On another day I observed the students were still confused about some aspects of the correlation between public school and the structure of domination. I had assigned the students to write a soliloquy about their feelings about their place in the structure of domination and all of the things that we had learned regarding ISA, Culture-jamming, etc. The next day, only a third of the class had brought their assignment, so I separated them out and left the remainder to work on their soliloquy. I had the soliloquies read to each other and then we returned to the class. The students who had finished on time were given special favors (e.g. sitting at the front of the room with me, kind treatment). I then had the students who were late with their assignments read to the class. Students in the preferred group who applauded were banished from the group. I was unduly harsh with the un-preferred group. One girl rebelled and stood up and read her soliloquy without my permission. I banished her from the class. Any show of support for the un-preferred group or questioning of my authority by the preferred students was met with dismissal from the group. In the end all that were left were three boys. We then discussed as a class how the experience made them feel and identified the similarities between what I did and what they see in the school as a whole. We also connected it to the hidden curriculum and how what I did was teaching students to comply with the system.

at individually do not carry the intended message but taken together reveal a thematic unity. E.g. *Thirty-two Short films about Glen Gould* (1993)

Creating and Adapting the Performance

In this section I will describe the performance that was created by the class and the process of adapting it to different venues for different audiences. As we approached the performance date, the lessons became more decision based and less discussion based. The students began to nail down specifics and order, lines and blocking. The classes left most instruction entirely for analysis and evaluation of the work being created. On one day I assigned one student to lead the decision making process for the project and I participated as one of the class. We chose a venue, (an upscale outdoor shopping mall), a date for the performance, and chose which of the things that had been discussed would be included.

The structure was laid out as follows: First, all participants would arrive from different areas and converge on the pavilion in the center of the mall. Next, they would walk at random around the pavilion reciting lines they had written (See Appendix A, 132-133 Appendix C, p. 150-158) all at once. On cue, all would sit except the first group who would perform their scene representing the love-triangle convention of YA Dystopian film. Then the scene would dissolve back into the crowd of students who would stand and continue their lines as before. Again, on cue the next scene portraying the labeling or sorting of young people into cliques or factions would perform while the rest of the students would sit and watch. Then they would dissolve back into the crowd and speak lines as before. Again, on cue, they would sit and the scene portraying the concept of the 'special' would perform. After that all students would stand and speak the lines as they approached the center of the pavilion and then freeze. A single actor would sing the song parody of 'The Hanging Tree'. Then the students would distributing stickers with the 'Diver-jay' logo on it.

The next class period we divided into groups to write the script for each individual scene. It can be understood as follows: The ‘love-triangle’ has one girl with a Katniss mask stand with two boys behind her forming a triangle. Each boy showers compliments on ‘Katniss’. At key points a girl from the crowd would insist that it is her turn to be ‘Katniss’ and takes the mask and her place in the triangle. When she calls for joining the revolution the boys balk and leave the scene. ‘Katniss’ finishes by saying that they can’t market themselves without a love triangle.

The ‘labeling’ scene takes place in a classroom in which a teacher passes out the results of each student’s placement test. The students represent various cliques in the school environment. The placement test identifies each student with a clique that they find repugnant (the jock is sorted as a band nerd). The students try to resist but are forced to change their behavior to fit the clique. The teacher admonishes the students to not resist their place in society as it will always bring them back.

The ‘special’ scene consists of two interviews of Katniss and Tris from *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* respectively. They are asked similar questions and give almost identical responses. They finish by speaking in unison that the animal that best relates to them is a bird.

The song was also staged to begin with a single singer who questions the validity of going to see the next *Hunger Games* film. Caught in a conflict of interest she brings in three friends who also ask the same questions. By the fourth verse, the entire crowd has joined but instead of questioning, they sing about how it will probably be a good movie and that all should go see it and learn ‘how to be free’. It ends with the girl from the beginning once again singing alone about how she doesn’t know how to free herself from all of the contradictory messages.

Each of these scenes was assigned a student director who cast each role and directed the

scenes. The whole project was put together on the day of the performance. The lines opening the performance were not ordered and so a cue was determined for the start of each individual scene. This cue was chosen by having the students do the soliloquy section and listening for a line that stood out that would provide a segue into the scene. The students were then instructed to listen for that line, so that they could know when to change.

The original 'Diver-jay' sticker design proved too difficult for the students to create so was simplified by using the Mockingjay sign with the word conformity written on it. Unfortunately, the stickers were not ready by the time of the performance and had to be cut from the performance. The students also determined that it would be good to perform the project at lunch at the school one day and also to take the performance to the One-act play competition.

After this public performance, we spent a day identifying the weaknesses of performing in the outdoors and of the content of the play. Significant changes were made to the 2nd scene which were as follow: the teachers from the scene identified the results of the test as assigning the students to a 'faction', a direct reference to *Divergent* instead of using the term 'clique'. Also, a student was added that had 'inconclusive' results to the test as another reference to *Divergent*. After the students separated into the factions, she was left alone in her chair. This student suddenly stood on a chair and shouted 'I want to do drama!'. The students chose to include this in the revised version as that group (drama) was conspicuously absent from the original performance of the scene. At that point an alarm sounded and two guards forced the student to her knees and executed her. The other students gave the Mockingjay salute and then shifted suddenly to the salute used by the teachers. The students felt that these changes would better communicate their critique of both school and the YA Dystopian film.

The students performed this new version of the scene in the commons area of the school during the lunch period. They maintained the flash mob quality by appearing at an agreed upon time and performing the adapted scene in the middle of the room. At the end, they passed out the stickers, (which had by then been made), which were received with relish by many audience members.

Another change was made to the script before the One-act competition. Knowing that the performance would be in a traditional auditorium with a proscenium stage, the students adapted the scene to operate effectively in that space. They recognized the similarities between the auditorium and a movie theater and the classroom and wanted to help draw out those similarities in their performance. It was decided that instead of entering the auditorium as a flash mob, they should enter like people arriving at a movie theater and finding their seats. They spoke their soliloquy lines as if speaking to each other before the start of a movie. Then the music cue for the Warner Bros. logo at the beginning of a film came on and everyone shushed each other for the start of the film. All sat and the love triangle scene started being performed on the stage. The class thought that this would hearken better to the movie screen. Then the soliloquies were spoken with each student standing and facing the auditorium. Another music cue for another studio sounded, this happening between each scene. For the song they decided to have all the cast move from their seats to the stage during the soliloquies. The song was performed with the whole group singing marching with heads down back to their seats. The soloist finished the song and one student leaped to his feet yelling, “Yeah, let’s rebel”. The crowd jumped in with similar cheering until the THX sound test was heard and once again they all sat to watch the movie. At the end of all of this the cast then left their seats to pass out a sticker to each member of the

audience while saying, “Thanks for rebelling.” The students felt that these changes not only better suited the change in venue, but also improved the performance over all. It operates to make the spectators subjects as well by placing the potential action in their own hands with a tangible token. (See Boal, 1985) The final draft of this script can be found in Appendix C. A brief discussion of the response of the judges and how the students felt about it will be covered in the data analysis section of the third chapter.

Chapter 3

Data Analysis

The purpose of this third chapter is to analyze the data that was collected during the process of the unit, and apply the results of the project to the research questions that I identified in the second chapter in order to suss out the affordances and limitations of the radical pedagogy that I employed. For the sake of clarity I will review my project and my methodology first and then proceed with the detailed analysis of the data.

In review, radical pedagogy consists of three basic stages: Access, Critical Reflection, and Action. These coincide with the three stages of the Emancipatory mode of Action Research: Theory, Enlightenment, Action. *Access/Theory* I have defined as giving the students a knowledge base of theories and social relations of the structure of domination as described in the first chapter. *Enlightenment/Critical Reflection* I have defined as the analysis and evaluation of knowledge and the reflection upon one's own place within the system of social relations. *Action* I have defined as application of knowledge and analysis in the lived experiences of students. Simply put, now that they know what is going on with the structure of domination and YA Dystopian films they can make agentic choices regarding their relationship to those realities.

In order to avoid the pitfall of becoming hegemonic in my efforts to emancipate students, I have chosen to not narrowly define action as either refusing to patronize a film or choosing to make a culture-jamming project. Rather I opened the possibility of action to include a multiplicity of choices as defined by the students' own agency. The student's ability to act must include all choices even those contrary to the position of the unit. What was necessary for a radical pedagogy to be effective was for the students to act based on new knowledge and

critically reflect on that knowledge. Though students may act in response to these YA Dystopian films on a regular basis, what can make said action agentic is the theoretical knowledge and critical analysis and evaluation. If I am to be serious about agency I must allow the students to choose what they are going to *do*. This chapter will look at how this curriculum worked to “[take] human agency seriously.” (Giroux, 1981, p. 111)

In order to look at how the three research questions intersect with the three stages of radical pedagogy I am dividing this chapter into three sections corresponding to the three stages of the curriculum. Each section will have three subsections that show how the phase of the curriculum engaged with the research questions. It will look as follows:

- *Access Theory*
 - Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film
 - Emancipation from of Others Through Culture Jamming
 - Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Traditional Schooling
- *Critical Reflection*
 - Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film
 - Emancipation from of Others Through Culture Jamming
 - Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Traditional Schooling
- *Action*
 - Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film
 - Emancipation from of Others Through Culture Jamming
 - Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Traditional Schooling

In each section and subsection I will look at what the students said and what I observed them do during the three phases of the curriculum. I will analyze their responses, unpack them, and relate them to the research questions. I will thereby try to pin down some of the affordances and limitations of this action research project.

At this point it is imperative to discuss the use of the word ‘system’ by the students in their responses and discussions in class. I taught them during the access phase of the curriculum that there exist various apparatuses that influence, repress, and dominate them. There is the capitalist

mode of production, distribution, and exchange that constitutes the economic base as understood through the contemporary Western Marxist tradition that I am using. There is Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus that teaches conformist ideology to maintain that economic structure. There is Hollywood as a capitalist endeavor in itself and as an ideological teaching ground that maintains reproducibility. And there is conventional school as an institution and an ideological training ground that prepares students to work within the related structures listed above. The students often mashed all of these cohesive and interrelated constructs into the efficient but woefully inadequate term 'system'. As such I will attempt to clarify which aspects of these apparatuses are being referenced as I discuss the responses of these students.

The following sections of this chapter will be divided by the stages of the Action Research project. Each section will have a subsection dedicated to the research question that is being engaged and the interaction thereof. Affordances and limitations will be identified and evaluated for the purpose of influencing my future practice.

Access/Theory

Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film

Access to theory and media content is the foundation of the radical pedagogy and is imperative for the continuing process of critical reflection and action. In this section I will look at the how the students responded to these concepts of power and oppression and how they can be used to understand the institutions that hold stake in YA Dystopian film. I will show how they came to know what the goals and functions of the institutions are and how there exist theories as a way of engaging with those forms of oppression. I will discuss the student responses to this access and look at affordances and limitations as represented by such.

As I looked at the artifacts, I observed that many of the students were very interested in the idea that there exists an apparatus that exerts control over them of which they were not aware. I found that the students had extensive amounts to say regarding this question, more than twice that of the other two questions combined. This is likely due to the fact that the content of YA Dystopian film is something very present in their minds and lives. There was much spirited discussion in class from the students as we talked about the ISA and the Hidden Curriculum and how it relates to these YA Dystopian films. Many also showed particular interest in the structure of the classroom as being the same as the structure of the movie theatre. Many comments in class discussions indicated that they had never heard of any of this before but it rang true.

The students' responses to the ISA and YA Dystopian film indicate the value of this new knowledge in their minds. Many tapped into the concept of an apparatus of ideology that was influencing them without their knowledge. One student, Hallie, said, "We are influenced without realizing it and that was interesting to me because [...] it was something that I had never thought about, obviously, because that's what we are talking about. About how we haven't thought about it." This was the consensus of most of the class and represented how enlightening it was for them to be made aware of this structure.

They were also interested in specific aspects of how YA Dystopian film exploits them by feeding certain desires that young people have. One that was of particular interest was the trope of the 'special', that character that has unique qualities to save the day but is simultaneously generic enough to be more universally applicable. With regards to this concept of the 'special' another student, Leo, drew connections with the seminal *Catcher in the Rye* with its young protagonist that rebelled against the dominant culture. He said:

They sort of realized what teenagers want to feel, I don't know, they want to have stories where the character is unique and special and stuff [...] and even like, Holden Caulfield was such a big book character and stuff to a bunch of teenagers, and now it's just kind of gone into the movie phase, where apparently teenagers are the theater's biggest audiences now.

What he identifies here is that this special character is something that appeals to young people in the wider culture. Also, by referencing the theater 'audience' he is connecting to the principle that this popularity has cultural and financial repercussions as well, that the motivation for including a 'special' is to maintain the reproducibility of the audience as consumers.

The students were also made aware of how the qualities of the 'special' are designed to make it easier for the audience to relate to the protagonist and thereby feel special themselves. Hallie noted that many of these YA films have characters that are very average so that any teen can relate, but that they are also called special in the text and that appeals to teens' desire to feel unique. As defined in class, the 'special' is the protagonist of these YA Dystopian films. He/she is called upon to lead, often being told that they have qualities that make them different or unique and therefore, specially equipped to lead the resistance. However, the students noted that there was little description of their personality making them more akin to a blank slate. This they determined made a character with which they could act by proxy. They even noted that actresses like Shayline Woodley and Jennifer Lawrence are more average pretty instead of 'movie star' pretty. This made their characters more sympathetic to the average girl. Hallie's response to this was:

There's a lot of things that go into being the 'special' that are actually everyday traits, or things that should be normal for people, but in these they aren't [...] the things that are trying to make these 'specials' or make us feel special because we're [seeing] them, actually aren't that special.

Here she described how she felt regarding the concept of the 'special'. The qualities that are

advertised as being unique are really average making the character more reachable by a lay audience. Like Leo, she recognized that this approach to the protagonist was focused on drawing in the young adult audience of consumers which, once again, feeds the structure of domination.

It is worth noting that none of the students in their interviews mentioned the other YA Dystopian genre conventions like the representation of a future in which people are sorted or labeled based on skills or inherent nature e.g. factions in *Divergent*. They also mentioned nothing in their interviews or reflective essays about the use of the love interest/triangle. This surprised me since both of those conventions featured prominently in their performance project. It would seem that while they found those conventions useful to criticize the Hollywood system in our specific project, they did not incorporate them into their worldview as a means of critiquing films in their everyday life.

They did, however, identify with the commodification of rebellion in these films. They saw that being shown rebellion against oppressive forces and participating by proxy by watching the film did not incite them to action but, rather, assuaged their dissatisfaction with the oppression they experience due to the ISA. They understood that it was a concealment of real purpose. Margie said, “I remember thinking about how we talked about the *Mockingjay* and *Divergent* and I was just like, ‘If they’re trying to teach us a lesson, why would they show that to us?’ and it’s kind of like reverse psychology.” She was able to see the way that this rebellion in film fed young people’s desire to rebel but kept them locked into the structure. Sally added, “We’re just watching the movie [and] we’re like, ‘Yeah, let’s do that! That’s a pretty good idea!’ But we’re never actually going to do anything like that.” She was able to see how the Hollywood machine feeds the desire to rebel and satiates it. Margie was particularly articulate

when she said:

If we watch somebody else do it, we're like, "Oh. I can kind of do it, too." Which is why sports are so popular. And everybody's like, "Oh! Our team totally won!" They say "we" even though, "You did nothing to help the team, you just sat in the bleachers." And that's kind of how I think these movies work. You're like, "Yeah, we won! Like, Katniss totally destroyed him! Yeah, we did it!" And you're like, "No, you just watched the movie." But, by giving these people the opportunity to watch somebody overthrow government, our own desire to rebel against the government is quelled. That's kind of how it works, by giving us the opportunity to see it. To see the standard white teenage girl take down the government, and we're just like, "Oh yeah! That could totally happen!" But we feel no desire to do it ourselves because they just "did it".

By putting all these pieces together she was able to see the way in which the Hollywood machine commodifies the resistant act in these YA Dystopian films and thereby suppresses the desire to act out.

The students also came to understand how the system of rules, known as the Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR), exists as a hidden curriculum of films, that by having such strictures in place, attending and making film is bowing to the authority. Leo said, "The Institutional Mode of Representation [...] all filmmakers pretty much follow that, to make a movie that is seen anywhere besides an art-house." This also points to the understanding that other work can be made but the capitalist structure does not support it, so it is limited in its scope. Margie remarked, "We think that [it's] kind of like divine providence, like, 'This is really how it should be made. This is the Rule and anything that goes against the Rule must be cast out!'" The acknowledgement of how Hollywood has trained them to reject alternative structures and forms is evident in her comment. In her final reflective Margie also said, "No matter what formula there is, there will always be the 'right' formula, the right way to think." This reflects on the adaptability of the structure to adopt popular forms that fight the structure of domination

and assimilate them into itself. If someone creates something new and it becomes popular, the Hollywood machine adopts and adapts that new mode into IMR.

The students came to understand how these things were part of the capitalist structure expressed through Hollywood and the Institutional Mode of Representation, that these conventions and genre and structure were used to support that capitalist endeavor similar to Wood's argument as mentioned in the first chapter (1977, see also Rosenbaum, 1997). Leo said, "They've just kind of cashed in on the, 'oh you can be special and go against the system' [but] no matter what you do, you're kind of supporting the capitalist system, because everything is meant to support that system." His understanding of the state of the structure of domination through the Hollywood system is that even as the content of the film seems to support the rebellion against authority and the value of the individual, the end result is still sitting and watching and supporting financially.

The students also identified how that support was not just about attending the film itself but also marketing and merchandizing. Hallie wrote in her final reflective about buying "silly pieces of merchandise" in connection with support of the film. Another student, Jane, identified how audiences are "so easily influenced by ads and big sales that they fall into the sands [...] in the blink of an eye." Her poetic denomination of consumerism as 'sand' shows how she saw the danger in this process as it traps people into service to the Hollywood machine.

Many of the students felt enlightened by this new knowledge. Thalia stated, "Without education and knowledge in this area, the system is extremely [oppressive] and there is a lack of agency." She clearly saw the new knowledge gained in the Access portion of the curriculum valuable not just for herself, but also for society as a whole. Leo gained a greater appreciation

for the extent of the Hollywood machine and its conventions of representation and reproducibility. He said, “I’ve come to understand just how far it expands into everything, including Young Adult Dystopian films.” However, all did not replicate this enthusiasm for the theories that were presented. Alison demonstrated some ambivalence on the subject when she said, “I can’t say that I knew about the system present in entertainment and in other aspects in our lives. Sometimes the entire idea of this system can seem pretty far fetched to me, but at the end of the day, I do believe it is there.” This vacillation deserves discussion. Many students felt torn between wanting to believe in the visible curriculum and being willing to accept the realities of the structure of domination. Many students love the films, and so it becomes easy for them to want to dismiss the critical nature of the theories. Even so, they still feel as Alison articulated that there was something there that was influencing them.

While this stage of access served many students well, some reported negative effects to their newfound knowledge. Susan stated:

One day as we were talking I began to realize that whether you conformed or not, whether you rebelled or not, you weren’t really doing either because the system would not allow you to break away from it. I began to fear that there was no escape from the system and as time went on I realized that I was right. There is no way to fight the system.

This pessimism was also reflected in Diego’s comments in his final reflective, “I hated this whole unit, not because it was bad, but because it reminded me of how stupid humans are and how much I just don’t want to deal with them anymore.” So, some limitations on this project, at least in this section, are that it can in some cases lead to pessimism and cynicism, or in the case of Diego, apparent misanthropy. This ultimately could work contrary to the stated goal of the project, which was to inspire agentic action. This sort of pessimism can lead to supporting the

structure of domination rather than opting against it.

Emancipation of Others Through Culture-jamming

Overall the discussion about culture-jamming as a means of action and education was far less spirited than that of the previous section. While the students were intrigued by the actions of groups such as Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop-Shopping or *Adbusters*, they seemed in general put off by the antagonistic nature of some of the artifacts. They did become more engaged as they were given the assignment to make their own subvertizement, which they executed with admirable success. Many remarked that the most difficult aspect was to be clever and funny and still critical of the corporation. They also were engaged during the short live action piece they created to critique an aspect of school. One group decided that it would be fun to go to the courtyard of the school where the sports kids hang out and do a flash mob singing ‘Stick to the Status Quo’ from *High School Musical*. This presents an interesting issue with culture-jamming in the classroom. Culture-jamming is a form of action, an application of theory. As a result the students found it much more interesting to *do* rather than *talk* about.

Many students noted that this concept of culture-jamming was completely new to them. They were aware of memes as a form on the Internet, but not that such things existed to effect social change. Tyler said:

Something unique is like how we talked about memes and how they’re culture-jamming. And I think that’s kind of funny, because you see those everywhere and you never really think anything about them. And how they’re funny. But then, you really think about it sometimes, and it’s like, ‘Heh. That was, crazy’.

Others had a passing knowledge like Leo:

I guess I really didn’t know how much of a big, sort of movement it was. [...] I kind of knew the whole like, “Oh, fight the man, fight the power!” that sort of thing, it’s always out there and stuff. But, like these organized campaigns and

magazines like *Adbusters*, that's a completely new thing. And I went and like looked on their site and stuff, and--they're not messing around and stuff! There are all these really devoted organizations and stuff, you know?

Margie has some similar sentiments when she said:

I thought it was weird that what I thought was culture-jamming, based on my previous knowledge, wasn't culture-jamming, and that kind of weirded me out. Because I see a lot of things on social media sites like Facebook and tumblr that I think is culture-jamming, but then when I saw the actual explanation I was like, 'Oh, that wasn't culture-jamming, that was just the opposite'.

She points out that she thought that anything that was political or cultural on social media (e.g. skinny shaming in the comments section) was culture-jamming. But after the discussion in class she was able to shape her understanding more accurately. This also applied to other students who were then able to assess better what culture-jamming was and that would enable them to create the project for the class and interact with the media in the future.

They really seemed to connect to the idea of highlighting the contradictions in our society to make people reflect. This is related to the idea of detournement as discussed in the last chapter and explained by Sandlin and Milam (2005). This would play out to greater effect when they put together their production. Hallie said:

I think the effect culture-jamming has is just that it allows culture to kind of choose for themselves what they can make fun of. I think that it's one of our social responsibilities to decide for ourselves what we believe in all the media that is thrown at us. And so with culture-jamming we can see kind of the flaws in that media. Or we can see the things that might not always be true, and then be able to then take that, and apply it into our lives.

This contradiction is the lifeblood of culture-jamming, called by Sandlin and Milam a "pedagogical hinge", and became foundational for the creation of this project. (2005) When creating the performance Shari always asked: How does this show the contradiction? She wanted the class to focus on creating that detournement. (see Sandlin and Milam, 2005)

Aside from gaining knowledge of what culture-jamming is, they also understood how it can lose its effectiveness in efforts to be funny. Shari, said:

What it's become with the memes [...] I think it's just a form of entertainment for most people. They're like 'oh, this is such fun to make the little memes and stuff. I can use this thing that is already set up and try and be funny.' And so it's kind of like wasted, I mean if it's funny and it makes them happy then that's great, but that's not the purpose [...] I think people walk away from a lot of things and are like, "Well that was fun," like what's next? You don't change them.

She was able to see that these subvertizements can lose their effectiveness through humor. This knowledge would be valuable as they created their own project later and tried to find the balance between humor and critique.

They were also able to identify how these forms of culture-jamming could apply to their nascent knowledge of YA Dystopian film and its commodification of youth culture. Leo said:

I think culture-jamming can help [...] bring to light not only the ideas of 'Oh, here we are, paying for another love triangle and special individual in a post-apocalyptic USA with some vague disaster that we'll never speak of.' But I think it can bring awareness to that.

Though this was the case with Leo, many other students initially struggled with seeing how to use culture-jamming to critique the YA dystopian film. One student, Sally, repeatedly insisted that she did not know how one could respond to the other. The only thing she seemed to recall about culture-jamming is that 'people want to fit in.' Note that this is not really part of the issue.

Giving this access to the students about the capacity for culture-jamming to interact with the existing oppressive structures was eye opening for many. They were surprised by the intensity of emotion that such actions have. Margie was shocked by a particular subvertizement that showed an emaciated African child squatting with an empty bowl in her hand. The caption on the image was 'got milk?' in the style and font of that eponymous campaign (Adbusters,

2015b). She thought that the subvertizement was chastising her for shopping when she could be helping the third world with her relative largesse. She interpreted the message of that subvertizement, as, “That is your responsibility, why aren’t you doing it right now? Why are you being such a selfish human being, and going out and buying products from Wal-Mart when there could be starving children in Africa you could help?”

Even so, this concept seemed difficult for many to grasp. They were either distracted by the humor or off-put by the confrontational nature of the various artifacts. None of them seemed interested in pursuing much understanding of culture-jamming beyond this classroom. I believe that this reveals a weakness of culture-jamming as stated in my first chapter. People are often taken in by the humor of the piece but miss the message.

Others are offended by the politics and stonewall. I found this as the students watched Jonathan McIntosh’s mash-up of *Twilight* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in the class (McIntosh, 2015). The students laughed extensively. But in the ensuing discussion they could only articulate what was funny in the video and how stupid they thought *Twilight* was. It was necessary that I point out to them most of the deeper connections to problems in society. I pointed out to them that the film was commenting on the dangerous relationship portrayed in *Twilight* and how the placing of the obsessed Edward next to the liberated Buffy opens a contradiction revealing the oppressive quality of his ‘love’. Some students demonstrated a turning toward distaste upon framing the film in a more feminist context. As seems to be the case in this area and era, the word ‘feminism’ (or ‘Marxism’ for that matter) carries a negative connotation leading students to balk at the idea of sympathizing with the source. However when the main precepts of that ideology are described the students seem willing and open to

understand. In other words there were nods and shouts of agreement as I pointed out the creepiness of Edward, but a visible backpedaling occurred as soon as I said, ‘feminism’.

Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Schooling

The students were very interested in the idea of hidden curriculum in school. Throughout the Access and Critical Thinking phases I made bare the nature and structure of the traditional schooling methodology. We talked about how my class operated within the structure of public school and that that structure operated as part of the ISA to maintain the economic system. We talked about how schools teach kids to respect authority and to sit and listen. They really latched on to the idea of the classroom and the movie theater as being structured the same and that school prepares them to ‘learn’ from the teacher in the movie theatre. We discussed how my classroom was different than the other classrooms that they attended as well as the ways in which it was similar. This enlightenment led the students to many conclusions and helped prepare them to make agentic choices.

The students found this new knowledge a key to understanding the world outside. They were able then to make connections between what happens in the classroom and what happens in their lived experience in the public sphere. Cleo said, “I think that we should talk about these issues in public school, because it helps lots of kids see how the real world is and how it actually works.” Diego expanded on these thoughts in the following way:

These ideas [...] need to be taught in public schools. Most people don’t talk to their parents about anything, especially not complex concepts like these. Teaching it in public schools will help to fill this void. Teaching in public schools will give the students the opportunity to be free thinkers.

Interestingly, while they acknowledge the value of learning to critically engage with the concept of school, they still believe that school is the place to learn it. They still believe that the teacher

student relationship is one that will enlighten them, not oppress them. That aspect of the hidden curriculum of school still holds value in their minds to the point that they do not see it as oppressive.

This problem however was not lost on Jane. She said in her final reflective, “In a school setting, the teachers are the leaders and the students are the mindless drones. The people that vocalize their opinion on how they think school is pointless and/or constantly don’t show up to class because they think it’s stupid [...] are labeled ‘bad’.” She recognized that the relationship between the student and teacher is not always benevolent and that the derogatory labels placed on students are a result of their resistance against the oppressive nature of school, even if they do not realize it. She wrote at length about this issue and felt that the problem of school is in the social relations more so than the ideology being ostensibly taught. This was particularly interesting to me. One of Giroux’s major points in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is that much of pedagogy literature that deals with fixing problems in education ignores the social relations that are the real curriculum of the classroom. (1983, pp. 60-61) Teachers may speak about respect to authority and the importance of getting a job and supporting the capitalist structure, but it is the relation of teacher to student that teaches the students to obey that authority throughout his or her life. That structure of the teacher in the front of the room as the dispenser of knowledge and the meter out of justice is the real lesson of school. The ostracizing of the resistant students even more so than punitive action against them is particularly powerful. Jane noted that teachers rejecting resistant students teaches compliant students to reject them as well. That lesson was the most important to her.

The irony of learning about the oppressive nature of the classroom within a classroom

setting was not lost on the students. Margie said:

I thought it was funny, because I'm just like, 'You're teaching us to fight against the system and then you're using the system anyway.' Because it's just like, we all have to sit down, and we all have to be quiet, and then we have to watch you do the presentation. And that was like the structure. And it's like, even though you basically told us, 'This is only designed to keep you in your place,' we still did it anyway.

I was open about this issue as I taught them. I even pointed out that if we were to be true to such theorists as Freire we would need to equalize the classroom to the point that I was literally not in charge. But they also recognized that that would not be as effective and that they could still learn from me as long as I provided enough space for them to choose. Shari said, "So I think that the fact that it was like 'choose to learn or don't' made [me choose] to learn it--I actually learned it, instead of memorizing it for a time and then losing it." She found that having knowledge of the hidden curriculum gave her agency to participate or not and made learning a more empowering experience.

Perhaps the best articulation of the limitation of teaching about the oppressive state of schooling was from Hallie. She said:

The defect [...] in this project is that our class has been learning this information within a system-type setting. Had we happened upon this information through the internet or in random conversations with acquaintances, we might choose to take a different stance on this particular subject. Even though we are not being graded on our opinions or the stance we take, we are still expected to learn the information and participate in the activities.

She could see that the setting was the major limiting factor of this approach. She even admitted that willingness to accept the knowledge was due to being in a class in school. She acknowledges that school trains us to accept what we are being taught. This points back to the hidden curriculum discussion in my first chapter. That relation in the classroom of the teacher in

the front and the students in the seats instills a respect to authority that is necessary for the students to develop into the workforce of the capitalist structure. In teaching my students in that way I am galvanizing the relationship that is continued in the movie house and in front of the TV screen. If I can teach in a way that breaks that structure and opens space in the classroom, then that will teach the students to also open space in the movie house. So if the goal is agency, the way of teaching it limits or expands that due to the nature of the mechanism.

Critical Reflection

This next section will look at how the use of Critical Reflection in the classroom can lead to emancipation. I will look again at each question within that context of critical reflection, particularly the concepts of analysis and evaluation. I will demonstrate how Critical Reflection consists of *analysis* of the content and *evaluation* of its use per NAMLE's core principles. Also, I will show how the students *analyzed* their new knowledge and *evaluated* it for use in their own lives, which ultimately leads to agentic action.

Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film

The critical thinking stage in the curriculum is where things really start to get interesting. I found that as the students analyzed and evaluated the new knowledge they had about the hidden curriculum of these YA Dystopian films, they found ways to think about the world around them and felt motivation to make agentic choice. The enlightenment through critical reflection made real choice possible for them, and some found the prospect of agency liberating while some found it distressing.

Some students used critical reflection to analyze and evaluate the theories that I was teaching. In this phase many students, upon reflecting on the new knowledge, chose to continue

participating in class or pull back and limit their own participation. The strongest example is a young man named Silas. He came to me one morning very distressed. Upon inquiring as to his concern he told me that he really hated the material we were studying. He said, “I understand it, but I just hate it. I feel so depressed every day after class [...] I don’t understand why people just can’t be content with what they have.” I tried to encourage him to press forward with the course when I realized that this act of his was the natural result of his own reflection. He had considered the content and chosen to pull away. I offered to him that he did not have to participate any more if that was his choice. He accepted that and spent the remainder of the unit laughing about our project under his breath and calling it silly or ridiculous. I found this both annoying and interesting. Was he resisting because he disagreed or was he stonewalling because the ideas, if true, were far too frightening for him? Either way, many students voiced concern over why he was not participating and I informed them that he was not willing to participate because he did not agree with the theories and approach to education. The class accepted this as part of the process and continued. Others began to withdraw, as well, but did so indirectly. Suzy began to spend more time on her cell phone. One boy, Rafael, would argue constantly with other students about the issues, taking a resistant position. Leo began to play his guitar instead of participating in class discussions or exercises. All of this began to occur during this critical reflection process.

Those that chose to accept the theoretical construct accessed in the first phase, started making connections to media in their personal lives and thought critically about their experiences with said media. Tyler offered this perspective, “This project has made me think about ‘Grumpy Cat’ and all the memes and movies and things. I mean what is the point of laughing at memes?”

While his analysis was not particularly deep, he was looking at media in a new way and asking evaluatory questions. Margie delved deeper and looked into her own media choices and found things to reflect upon in an episode of *Sherlock*. She said:

Oh my gosh, they totally[...] took away Irene Adler's position! Because in the books she totally outsmarts Sherlock, she's the only person who can beat him. But in the show her weakness is she loves him and he totally beats her! And I'm like '[...] you're conforming it that way so that Benedict Cumberbatch, or the *man*, always wins and that the woman is always weak because she is too emotional'.

She was able to critically reflect on what was happening in this media artifact and see how it represented interests that she had not seen before. By analyzing the text and evaluating its place in the culture she could see the sexist ideology. As she continues watching the show, her perspective of that ideology having changed, she can look for ways that ideology affects content.

The students were also able to make more connections to the YA dystopian films and critically reflect on our society's current obsession with that genre. One student, Shawnee, saw how people were supporting the Hollywood system that claimed to be teaching rebellion, observed, "I watched as people became absorbed in the stories [of *Hunger Games*] with the whistle as a ringtone, with T-shirts with the symbols of rebellion on them." She was able to identify how this behavior satiated the desire to fight repressive forces while supporting them financially. Another student, Tierna chimed in with, "Now every time I see a commercial [for it] I laugh because I understand the irony of it."

Many of the students identified how the new knowledge was making them think about the media they were consuming and were drawing connections between what we had learned about the ISA and other theories with their media habits. Most of the students spoke about this in general terms. For example, Thalia said, "I have made a better separation in my mind between

media and reality. This has changed my perspective and helped me to have more realistic expectations.” While it is good that she is thinking, she lacks the specificity of some of the others’ responses. Tyler and Cleo managed to make comments about how they think more pointedly about movies now. Tyler said, “I’m watching some of the newer movies coming out and finding [the hidden curriculum] as well.” Cleo was able to speak more at length when she said, “ Now I am able to look at the world in a slightly different way. Instead of going to a movie and just thinking that it has a pretty good message, I think on what they were trying to make us believe.” Margie found the connection in her video gaming experience. She said, “I think it’s really interesting that they all--once you get down with all the details and stuff, they kind of teach you the same thing, which is ‘obey authority’ or ‘obey the controller’ or ‘obey the movie screen’ which is really disturbing.” This relates to the concept of the hidden curriculum of film and the classroom being found more in the structure, rituals, and procedure than in the content. This idea of “obeying the controller” is found in the structure of the game, even while in the game a player is fighting an oppressive authority. Margie even expressed concern that her brother was just getting into gaming and was not aware of the way that it was influencing him. This critical reflection was more powerful as it engaged with what was happening ‘right now’ instead of a generalized future.

Others, while lacking that specificity, came to appreciate the power of critically reflecting on the media and how it can broaden into all aspects of life. Shari said:

On the basic level, this experience has taught/encouraged me to question the things I am presented with. I think it can be great to take a step back and look at things before you swallow them. Particularly, this can be applied to the media, but I think it’s relevant to other things too.

Another student, Suzy, put it this way, “Learning about the system and conformity has taught me

to question the world around me. I don't have to accept the answers or even like them." They indicated that they are able to ask those hard questions that contradict the messages that are given them in media and other aspects of the ISA.

Similar to what happened in the enlightenment phase of curriculum, pessimism and apathy came to the fore in the critical reflection phase. As mentioned before, some students started to pull away in this phase and it can be reasonably concluded that as they reflected they chose that path. Cleo felt trapped in her desire to be a part of the crowd. She said, "I feel like I am the ultimate follower. I pretty much do everything the system wants me to do. I dress like everyone else and act like everyone else." This feeling of being trapped was echoed by Sally, "[...] feel anxious about it, like --what if I'm not really in control? What if I'm just playing into what the system wants me to do?" Perhaps the most wrenching of the responses was from Suzy, "I am not sure the price of this new knowledge was reasonable. I feel that it was great to learn and society makes a lot more sense now, but I feel more threatened now than I ever have before. It is startling to realize that we can't escape from the system." Upon reflection, it seems that these students did not see that there was any action that would prove effective against something so large and dominating as these apparatuses of the structure of domination.

More distressing were the students who after reflection proved apathetic. Tyler said, "I think a lot of people are like me. We go to see the movies and stuff like that, following the system, while watching these rebellions [...] and we just don't think anything of it." His bland acceptance of his place is counterpointed by Ally's decisive rejection of any need to act. After clearly and effectively writing about how she understood the concepts, and analyzing the points of the theory, she came to this conclusion: "If it doesn't even affect me, how can it oppress me?"

She was arguing that even though the structure is there, her new-found knowledge simply rendered it ineffective.

These responses do not concern me as much as Shawnee's response in her final reflective.

She said:

It made complete sense to me. When we first began to learn about it, I was in denial, feeling like I was being controlled. I went to the library and read articles and books, anything that could piece it all together. When I had finally gained the knowledge I looked for, or the absence of knowledge, I realized I didn't need to fight it. It wasn't controlling me, it was part of me.

What is so astonishing about this is that after taking initiative and studying further on her own than I would expect any student to do, she concluded that she should not fight or act, but blithely accept that the structure of domination was a part of her. She saw the assimilation and embraced it. She had decided that living in the structure of domination was fine and as such no action on her part was required

It appears that the students had many varied and complicated responses to the theories and ideas presented to them in the access phase after critically reflecting on them. Though many found value in the theories and began to use them to reflect on media in their lived experience, they struggled with their desire to participate in media. Within themselves they felt contradictions which some embraced, some negotiated, and some blatantly opposed.

Emancipation of Others Through Culture-jamming

Perhaps the most intriguing thing is that in all of the discussion of culture-jamming and its effectiveness, most students did not seem to believe that it had much value. As they *analyzed* and *evaluated* the types of culture-jamming and the effect that they could have, the general consensus seemed to be that it would have little to no effect in the long run.

Leo seemed to have the most positive things to say during the reflection stage of the curriculum. He saw that culture-jamming could affect the way one consumes. He said:

It seems like it is your responsibility to not just be a mindless consumer. But to realize what you are doing and how it has an effect. And I mean, there are things of culture-jamming that I think have value and stuff, like the whole black Friday thing [the National Day of No Shopping as promoted by *Adbusters*].

Here Leo seemed to be equating culture-jamming and Media Literacy. This supports my rationale for using culture-jamming as the form of action that we would take as a class. I identified that many of the goals of culture-jamming and media literacy are the same. Both fit within the realm of radical pedagogy in that they draw attention to a problem (access) create space to think about it (critical reflection), and encourage agentic action. Leo's recognition of that is evidence of an affordance of this radical pedagogy that I devised for this class.

He does acknowledge that the effectiveness of culture-jamming is encumbered by the need to be witty and memorable. "To present it in a manner that's witty and will stick with the audiences? That's a lot harder to do [than just make them laugh by being silly] and that is where I feel like a lot of culture-jamming falls flat." He noted that many of the culture-jamming artifacts that we viewed in class were either funny or overtly didactic. Many in the class shared his sentiments observing that the funnier ones were often more difficult to place on the issues while the clearer ones were not as funny or memorable. They decided that there is a fine line that one must walk, and even then it is impossible to reach everyone.

Even so, the students seemed pessimistic that culture-jamming could really effect any sort of change in others. Cleo remarked, "I honestly don't think that many acts of resistance actually help or do anything. They just cause a commotion that is very unneeded." Aside from this cynical view, she expressed without much explanation that, "I think that the people who protest

are really actually following the system.” Due to this sentiment, it appears that she sees no real value in culture-jamming. It would seem that her perspective of the enormity of the structure of domination and its pervasiveness in so many different media leads her to conclude that there is no point in fighting it. This was culminated when she said, “I don’t think I will ever be in a [culture-jamming project] soon.”

Jane offered similar antagonism to culture-jamming. She said:

I think that culture-jamming is kind of a joke.[...] People will continue to buy merchandise, fast food, etc., and no matter how much we make them think about their actions[...] there still will be others that don’t care or will purchase in spite of what we say.[...] you can’t win everyone over.

This was consistent with many others who believed that because there was no way to change everyone, that it was almost not worth trying. They felt the inertia of humanity within the economic structure and couldn’t see the value in reaching a few people. Here are some of the other students’ comments:

[it leads] to false hope/not even real hope at all. An action [can be used] to try to make everyone think differently but in the end everyone will just go back to thinking the same. –Jane

People do performances of culture-jamming on the street--a few people see those and they are like, ‘oh that was cool,’ and it makes them think for a second, and I think that they might change something, but probably not. They will probably just go to see their movie. -Tyler

All of these responses are similar to a problem observed by Paul Milhailidis (2008) that many times our exposure of students to the theories about these oppressive structures can lead to increased cynicism.

As the students analyzed and evaluated their perceptions of culture-jamming they came over and over to the same conclusion: that culture-jamming has no real power to change the

structure of domination. The best it can hope for is a fleeting moment of critical thought and then the people will slide back into their inert state. It is important to note that even with this pessimism the students still participated in the project. They seemed to feel that the small nature of the culture-jamming performance limited its scope and since it could only reach a small number, the value of doing so was virtually nil in the face of such large structures like the capitalist modes of production, distribution, and exchange and its inherent apparatuses in Hollywood and Institutional School. They still participated in the project and performed for the community, but it could be that it is the oppressive nature of traditional schooling that made them feel obligated to do the project though they didn't value it after critical reflection. In other words, they did it because it was part of school, not because they believed it would change anything.

Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Schooling

While many students felt this sense of apathy or even antipathy toward culture-jamming, they responded positively to the changes in the structure of the classroom as they reflected on its use. Essentially, they appreciated the opportunities to critically reflect on the material being taught and to reflect on the structure of our own classroom.

Many of the students appreciated the environment of discussion that was in place in the classroom. I made clear that at any time students could offer *analysis* or *evaluation* of the material being taught. The students regularly commented, often without raising hands or any sort of request for permission to speak. Leo discussed this aspect of the class and its value in creating an environment of critical thinking and reflection. He said, "I feel like the class is just kind of [...]we have always been free and open and people can yell out what they want." He also

noted that while there was this freedom to speak, it did not descend into cacophony of noise but that the students self regulated for the common goal of learning the material. Leo said, “While there was discipline, it’s just kind of a student kept thing, where if you had an idea to add to the class you can add it to the discussion, and we all kind of accept things.” This opportunity to discuss free from the oppressive structure that tends to exist in school in the name of order was liberating for the students, and in fact motivated them to self-order.

Others found that it was helpful to have a leader in the discussions but appreciated that it was not always the teacher. Hallie said, “Just letting the students lead the discussion [...] we all got to see what each other were thinking, and not just what one person, the teacher, was thinking. So I think that was vital to this project.” The open space of discussion that was led by the students made the students feel safe sharing ideas, and as they shared more, they thought more.

She goes on:

You let other students lead a lot of the discussions, or a lot of the final decision-making processes. And I thought that was really interesting because when the students were doing it then [we] were more apt to participate. And more apt to say what we were thinking [...] because we’re not scared of not agreeing.

This open space contrasted with what happens in a more structured classroom where teachers ask students to think critically but require them to do so within the strictures of their assessment metric. In fact, many other teachers at the school complain that the students do not know how to think critically, but rather look for the ‘right’ answer to get a good grade. So when the teacher asks for a thoughtful response the students do not know what to do, because the structure still uses grades and rubrics to assess ‘rightness’. I found this at the beginning of my unit as many students felt like my questions were expected to have right responses and struggled to navigate the open discussion. In fact, I had to remind those interviewed that I wanted to hear their honest

responses to my questions and not just what they thought that I wanted to hear. Some of them, like Margie and Shari, relished this opportunity while others, like Hallie, seemed uncomfortable with the openness at first. Though she eventually came around on it as well.

Some were able to not only appreciate the opportunities to critically think in the open space provided, but due to that space they were able to critically reflect on the process of learning itself. Thalia said, “We learned about these theories about the system, within the system, because according to the [ISA] we are [repressed] through teachers and classrooms and certain structures in public schools. That created a huge contradiction.” Highlighting that contradiction to the students made possible this kind of reflection on the action. I made sure that all students knew that there was a contradiction in my teaching these things in the structure of traditional school, and by making them aware of that contradiction they were able to critically reflect on how they felt about that space. Thalia continued, “I don’t know that there was a better way to teach about it considering that’s the way we’re used to learning.” She evaluated the structure of domination and her and my place in it and came to the conclusion that there was still value in learning this way as long as one is aware.

Action

In this section I will look at the stage of Action Research that involves agentic action on the part of the students as it deals with the three questions. Giroux says, “The task [...] is not simply to analyze knowledge and social relations for dominating ideologies or subversive unintentional truths, but to appropriate their useful material elements and skills, and to structure them as part of the production of new ideologies and collective experiences.”(1981, p. 160) In other words, I will show how, in order for radical pedagogy to be effective, it must move beyond

critical reflection to action, particularly action that plays with and transgresses the form already extant in contemporary media. I will look at how the students acted or saw themselves acting in response to the YA Dystopian film and media in general. I will then look at how the culture-jamming project that they created behaved as a means of emancipating themselves and others. Finally I will look at how intersecting the open space of the classroom with the agentic action of creating a culture-jamming project emancipated students.

Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum in YA Dystopian Film

It was interesting to me to find that the students found many ways to act on their knowledge regarding YA dystopian film and the related media immediately. Those that did not acknowledge that they were changing in their perspective, now gave credence to the possibility to act in the future. Some students gave way to pessimism or apathy and stated that they would still just keep doing the same thing as always.

A few of the students reported on some actions that they began implementing immediately regarding the new knowledge that they had gained. One student, Hallie, remarked this way, “I want to pay more attention to what the media is throwing at me [...] and decide my opinions on all of the information [...] rather than ‘okay, that’s what the media told me’.” She had started to question and make decisions based on new knowledge. Shari said something similar in that she can now take a critical approach to films: “I don’t have to just take what the movie teaches, I can reject it or accept it. I can take it apart and say, ‘This is what this is teaching and this is why it is teaching what it is teaching, and this is who it’s trying to teach’.” She was able to see that her new knowledge and ability to reflect affects her choices in the films she views.

Her reflection became even more specific in her family life. She shared the following

thoughts on an experience with her younger brother:

My little brother loves to watch the TV show *America's Funniest Home Videos*. It's basically what would be labeled as "clean" but the issue I have with it is that the overwhelming number of videos are of people hurting themselves badly, and we laugh at it. It's real, which is the worst part [...] I think it has similarities with the concept of *The Hunger Games*, Watching real violence or pain for entertainment. I've had ideas about telling him to turn it off before, but recently I decided I had had enough, and I asked him to turn it off. Learning in this experience has given me the inspiration to act.

It is important to note here that common in the culture in the area is the protectionist approach to being critical of media. (See Hobbs [1998], also Kellner and Share, [2005]) Children are taught to discern between films and shows based on how 'clean' they are. Clean is defined as being free of profanity, sex, nudity, and excessive violence. Some even go so far as to equate 'good' with 'G-rated'. This cultural context provided an opportunity for Shari to evaluate the text of *America's Funniest Home Videos* and her previous conceptions about the evaluation process as taught by the culture. She found an intersection of her previous knowledge and the new knowledge and was able to evaluate the text that her brother was consuming and acted on that knowledge, leading to action on behalf of another in the process.⁵

Perhaps the most interesting action the students started to take was in how they approached their learning in other courses at the school. Shari and a friend from the class, Maddie related the following experience:

Me and [Maddie] are in creative writing together, and we were doing a video project. And we were coming up with ideas for it, and me and [Maddie] kept saying all this stuff about, like, 'oh, we can do culture-jamming this way!' and we wanted to use what we learned in class. And it feels like the people that are in drama, we make these references to culture-jamming outside of drama and we're like 'oh, we're so cool, 'cuz we know this!' It's just another way of thinking that

⁵ Interestingly, and ironically, she controlled the outcome of her brother's media choices, rather than inform him and let him draw his own conclusions as she had in the classroom. This is likely due to her recent introduction to these concepts.

I feel has affected how we see the rest of schooling.

These two students were looking for ways to incorporate this new theoretical knowledge and capacity for critical reflection in their actions in another class. They were able to see that the knowledge was not for this class only but could be expanded into other spheres. They also noted that other students were participating and acting as well. Shari noted in conjunction with that, “I feel like this learning has become a part of my thoughts that just happen in the day, instead of like government class, [where] I’m like ‘okay, learn all this stuff for the test!’ and then throw it away.”

While not every student was running out and creating acts of resistance based on this new knowledge, many saw the value for it in their lives. One student, Shawnee, said the following, “I think I will use this a lot in the future. It has altered the way I see the world.” She realized that, with enlightenment, possibility for change on a personal level is opened. Shari was more specific in that she could see a specific action resulting from her knowledge: “I think that I will be more cautious on what I spend my money supporting[...] I don’t have to let the movie dictate or even affect what I believe [...] I can choose to partake or not.” Tierna applied very specific concepts from the curriculum in how she now sees herself as an agent, one who can choose and be more unique than the teen girls portrayed in the YA Dystopian film. She said, “To realize that we are conforming to this can give us the choice whether or not to join in. By not going with the crowd that is [labeled] different or special, we will be normal, which [is] the ultimate special.” She saw that she could resist the convention of the ‘special’ in YA Dystopian film and achieve a more real version of that by being an agent. This possibility for action would not likely have been possible without the access to the theory and the freedom to critically reflect.

Some students did not find so much liberty in their agency. While acknowledging the freedom given by enlightenment, they saw that agency mitigated by the power of a system that was so large as to be insurmountable. Some see their resistance as an individual act of choice that will not topple that structure of domination, but stands as a witness of their agency. Thalia says:

I do think there is a certain system, mindlessly run by the selfishness of man. I am now aware of the reasons why things are how they are, and how I may be being [oppressed] by giving my money and time to places and things whose sole purpose is to take my money. But this will not likely affect my actions, I'll still choose to give them my money, but that's just it, I'm choosing.

She could see that her choice was the good that came from this new knowledge and that value was worth it to her. Shari had similar feelings. She knew that the actions of herself and even the whole class would not do much to change the world, but the lives of the individuals who worked on this project were changed. She said:

Learning about this in a class for a decent span of time, with people that I am friends with and I care about, has changed me. I don't think that what we created and performed will directly have a significant impact on society, or even on the population of our school. But it has changed my world and my thoughts and the world of our class enough for me to notice. I think that is a difference that is worth it, and is significant.

That individual change and even the community change in the class was deemed valuable. Even in the face of a structure that seemed so invincible, she saw the power in the individual influence. Shawnee saw the 'system' as a structure that, if understood, could be used to personal advantage. She said, "[the system] however corrupt can be played. Now I will do what they want me to, I will continue school and getting a degree to work. But I won't be ignorant." This view, while cynical, still saw value in this knowledge and led to her choice of a plan of action in response.

Others demonstrated uncertainty as to any good that the new knowledge would have for

them. That uncertainty was weighed against the strong desire to still participate in the culture, to willfully accept the ideology of the structure of domination. Margie said this about her enlightenment:

I don't really know what I want to do with it now that I have it, because [...] I still want to go to Bath and Body Works. I still want to go and use part of the culture. I still want to be involved in the culture, but I don't agree with what they're doing. Because if I don't have the culture then I don't know what I am.

She was seeing her very identity as being bound up in this culture of consumption. The capitalist doctrine that one's value is determined by the success in supporting the means of production, distribution and exchange has taught her that she is valuable when she buys. (See Smythe, 1981) Hollywood encourages her to identify with characters in a film and show that identity by purchasing associated merchandise and participating in the online fandom. She recognized this and yet could not see any other way. Even with all she now knew she still was going to keep her "poster of Ron Perlman on [her bedroom] wall." This uncertainty for Margie contrasts and even contradicts with other statements that she made about action that she has done. She recognizes that in the future she probably will still support the capitalist structure, but it will be in a negotiated space; a space in which she finds ways to resist while still participating.

Diego supports this view as well drawing similarities between Margie and Shawnee's comments. He said:

We need to be able to look at these phenomena and judge them to see if we want to participate. Voluntarily conforming is totally okay, conforming without even thinking is bad. Enjoying something, knowing you're being manipulated makes it even more enjoyable...You can participate and feel like you know what's going on, you can feel like you're better than mindless drones.

While his cynicism about humanity is somewhat alarming, he recognizes the power in

enlightenment even when one is participating in the structure of domination. It is akin to a self-reflexive support of said structure. Essentially he is saying that due to the fact that one knows he/she can derive pleasure from it, he/she might as well do it since ‘you can’t beat them anyway’.

Others took this pessimism further, deciding that any action against the ‘system’ was a worthless endeavor. Tyler said, “I know for me personally, that I’ll just keep going to the movies and continue conforming.” His reason for such inertia was explained as follows, “I haven’t really learned anything so monumental as to change my actions regarding movies.” This is surprising as Tyler was one of the most supportive of the project and often had insightful comments to make in class. However, Tyler’s decision pales in the face of Sally’s apathy. She says:

I just like doing what I’m doing. I really don’t care if there’s reasons behind it, because I’m like, ‘There’s reasons behind it?’ But I don’t care enough not to do it. I just want to do what I want. Even if they’re convincing me that I want it, then I’m okay with that [...]Because it’s just stressful--it’s just this never-ending thing. There’s no way to win. I feel, I don’t really want to fight it. I don’t care enough [...] I’m totally part of [the system]. I’d like to think I’m not, but I totally am. Yeah, I just am. I like watching movies even if they’re making money off of me. I’m like, ‘Yeah, I wanna see that,’ and so I do [...] It’s kind of annoying but really not going to stop.

Sally seemed like she didn’t want to do anything and that she was frustrated with the new knowledge. She would rather not act and perhaps not even have known about this in the first place.

It is intriguing to see how these different students implemented or saw themselves implementing their new knowledge about the hidden curriculum. Much of the discussion of what they were doing seemed fairly general to media and the ISA if it was positive. Many, like

Tierna and Hallie understood that there was a structure in Hollywood that supported the larger capitalist structure, and that they could make agentic choices regarding how they participated, but they did not have specific plans as to what that action would be. It could be summed up for them as, ‘Be careful what movies you watch’. Others like Margie and Shari saw more specific possibilities for themselves. This was made clear in that they began almost immediately to reflect and act. They took that new knowledge and their analysis and evaluation of media artifacts and applied it to their lived experience outside of the classroom, Shari even reaching out into her family. This demonstrated the potential that this form of curriculum has to emancipate students, and to lead them to agentic action.

The more negative responses seemed directed specifically at movies and YA Dystopian films. Many students showed that they would still keep doing the same thing. The reality is that they like these films and others produced in Hollywood. It fills their desires to belong and feel special and, frankly, they are a lot of fun. These are the “tools used to the advantage of Hollywood [...] apathy, cynicism, and embracing of consumer and spectacle culture”. (Frymer et al, 2010, p. 2) This enjoyment factor leads to their pessimism. Why change if it is so much fun to be a part? It is similar to the infamous scene in the Wachowski’s *Matrix* (1999) in which one character in the resistance, Cypher, meets with Agent Smith to arrange being plugged back into the matrix so that he can essentially enjoy steak again. In the classroom, the hope is in that the students believe that they can plug *themselves* back in after having been enlightened as to their state. And if they can plug in, they can unplug too.

Emancipation of Others Through Culture-jamming

As the culmination of our unit was a live culture-jamming performance, the students had a

lot to say about the capacity for culture-jamming to encourage agentic action on the part of an audience. Much of the discussion of the class during this phase of the curriculum was related to what the students anticipated the audience reaction would be. The students were very concerned with making their point clear while still providing space for the audience to choose what meaning to make and what action to take. It was imperative that the piece not be oppressive in its own right, insisting that the audience accept the same point of view as our class. As Sandlin and Milam claim, the key is leaving a transitional space by way of detournement. (2007, p. 330) The students felt that creating contradiction would lead to detournement, ultimately resulting in agentic choice in the audience. In this section I will discuss the responses of the students to the creation and performance they did and also the experience that they had as they were adjudicated at the Region and State competitions. I will discuss how that specific feedback from audience members at those events informed how the students felt about the effectiveness of these types of resistant artifacts.

Since the project was performed in different venues, the audience response varied extensively. Many students explained that they enjoyed performing in the more structured space of the theater. Even so, some felt that the nature of the spontaneous space at the mall was more effective to the intent of the project. Shari said, "I feel like people were like, 'What's going on?' I feel like it gave us power." Leo was able to elaborate on this when he said, "When you present it as a flash mob people are like, 'Oh, a performance! Okay, I'll watch,' and then they learn something from it. Then, we got 'em." They seemed to believe that the flash mob was able to grab the attention of the audience. Since people are used to performances being done in a theater, the incongruity of a performance in a public shopping mall opened a space for the audience to

reflect on what was being shown.

A number of students felt that the performance at the mall was a success. Hallie described it as follows:

I think they were intrigued by the performance. I don't know if they could hear everything like we wanted them to, and I don't know if they took it all in. But hopefully the ones that were just walking by were trying to pay attention to what we were saying. Because, I saw lots of people get out their phones and cameras and start filming, like, 'What is this thing?' And so I think if they did that and re-watched it and were actually listening to what we were saying, I think they could have taken something out of it

Margie was even more enthusiastic. She talked about how certain aspects of the piece were particularly effective. She says, "As soon as [Maddie] started to sing the entire thing just went silent, and I thought it was the coolest thing! Everybody paid attention during the song! And I think that was our most--our strongest focal point." She matched this observation about the musical portion of the performance with understanding of the reason of why it was so effective. She says, "You pay attention. You're like, 'That's a pretty song,' then you actually listen to it. [...] I think it was well received [...] I think [Maddie's] song gets stuck in my head a lot [...] I hope it got stuck in somebody's head." She seemed to think that by having the song stuck in their head they would be more likely at some point to think about it and then the space would be opened up for thought and action. This is in line with Hallie's assertion that the audience would need to go back and watch it again to get the message. Even the ever-apathetic Sally admitted, "Some, actually cared about it, like, they were the type that seemed like they wouldn't go to the movies and stuff now."

The second performance was in the lunchroom at the school. The students did not feel that there was as much attention paid to them from the student body, though there was not the

antagonism that many expected. At the end of this performance the students added the passing out of stickers of the Mockingjay symbol with the word conformity emblazoned on it while saying, “Thank you for conforming!” The students seemed to feel that this helped the final point of the piece to be clearer as well as give the audience a tangible reminder of the piece that they saw. However, Shari said, “Everyone seemed to be interested in watching this random performance, but they really had no idea what it was about or what was going on.” Shari and others noted that in both the mall and the school it was difficult to hear until the song, during which the audience stopped to listen more intently. They decided that it is more difficult to grab attention using talking, as it is too similar to what people expect to hear, but singing, as it is unusual to a public space, draws attention.

The performance at the Region level competition was adapted for a different space. The students knew that the space lent itself to a hegemonic relationship. Since the stage operates like the screen in the movie house, they knew that their performance could repress agency in the audience because the structure makes the audience passive. They tried to change the structure so that it worked in the space but transgressed traditional theatrical boundaries (e.g. the fourth wall) to pull the audience out of their quasi-hypnotic state. The judges at the event were surprisingly positive and thoughtful in their response. The students had expected the judges to dismiss the performance as weird. But because the nature of the competition requires the judges to think critically about the performance, at least on a formal level, they were in a better position to think about content. One student, Kallysta, said “I really thought that they were going to hate it, but I was surprised by how they pretty much got it!”

Though the students felt that the judges were more receptive, they realized that the most

important point of the piece, opening space for agentic choice, was misunderstood. The judges insisted that the students needed to push the audience more to get them to accept our message. One judge even asked, “You want me to join the revolution. What are you going to do if I say no?” The students gave each other surprised glances and laughed. After the competition, Kallysta said, “I can’t believe he said that! He totally missed the point.” We discussed how the point of all of this was to allow space to act, and that we wanted there to be the opportunity to resist our message. To hear him consider the possibility of saying ‘no’ to our piece was considered an exciting success for the students. Hallie remarked, “We’re not trying to brainwash people [...] we’re trying to exploit the system without making them change their opinion. [...] We’re saying, ‘Here, take whatever you want out of it, and choose what to do now.’” Tyler added that we wanted the audience “To come to a conclusion or to leave it [...] and so I think it makes people think.” Leo chimed in with, “That’s why I try to focus on the idea of Media Literacy Education. By enlightening people they are free to make their own decisions.” This experience with the judges proved a solidifying moment for many as they realized what the real goal of our work and culture-jamming is: to open space so resistance is available.

However, many students still maintained their pessimism about the possibility for change. They recognized that culture-jamming could certainly engage an audience but many saw that the concepts of our piece were fairly complex and in order to allow space for the audience to choose they needed to be sufficiently informed. Without that, they would simply be following a call to action instead of acting as their own agents. Hallie conveyed it this way, “At the beginning, we took multiple class periods to try and explain this to ourselves, and so trying to explain it to an audience in 10 minutes is kind of hard.” Gabby, another student, said:

This project certainly made those participating think about conforming and society, but I am not sure how much of it actually translated to the audience. The way the class decided to portray the different ideas they had come up with was very interesting and seen again and again may have had a large impact, but upon a first glance it may be hard to ascertain the point this performance was trying to make.

Shari shared this anecdote about her mother's response to the performance:

I remember driving home with my family and my mom was talking about [the performance] and she was like, 'Well, that was interesting.' She's like, 'Yeah, I feel like I kind of understood. I saw stuff that you've been talking about at home, like, learning about in class.' And I was like, 'Well, that's cool.' She's like, 'But I don't know if I would have gotten it, if you hadn't been talking about the things you've been learning for the past couple of weeks.'

The consensus here is that it is difficult to expect the audience to truly be able to be emancipated by this culture-jamming performance by seeing it only once as the theoretical content is too complex to understand on a single viewing. However, inherent in the comments of the students is revealed a powerful and important result. The real change happened in the minds of the students themselves. While the project was designed to reach others, in making the piece the students were embodying the ideals of the theories they had studied. Their learning experience may not directly translate to change in the lives of others, but it forges a bond in the hearts and minds of the creators. That change matters.

Unfortunately, their blindness to their own change and the pessimism as a whole devalued the project in the eyes of some students. They believed that their actions were not able to change anything and therefore were, in the words of Shawnee "A waste of their time." Sammie expressed this feeling of impotence thusly:

A single person cannot change the world alone.[...] You can't make big changes without a big group of people. I have no idea how I alone could use this [...] I think that if enough people were to rebel then we could do it. But way more people need to know and they all need to care.

Sammie saw the expansiveness of the structure of domination and let that dissuade her from pursuing this kind of action or believing that it could make any difference.

A final limitation with these kinds of projects is that the way of communicating with an audience has become so ingrained in our culture that it is difficult for students to see outside of that mode of representation, and as a result they use forms that support the ISA. Many students in the project would contradict ideas that broke from mainstream formalistic conventions by saying that ‘The audience wouldn’t like that’. Margie noticed this irony as she said:

I personally wanted to do more audience interaction, but almost every single group I was in when I suggested that we do something with audience interaction, they’d always be like, ‘Oh no, they won’t like that!’ and I’m like ‘That’s the point. They won’t like it. They will be disturbed and they’ll realize it.’

She saw audience interaction as a way to engage the audience in detournement by tearing down traditional boundaries of performance. This, however, was frowned upon by most students who wanted to maintain that separation. Both she and I found this indicative of the pervasive influence of the institutional mode of representation. It draws corollaries between what radical pedagogy is and other practitioners like Bertold Brecht⁶. The boundary between the audience and the performer is part of the hidden curriculum. It teaches the audience to maintain those power relations. Margie wanted to break those down, true to form for culture-jammers and others like Brecht, but students were afraid of that boundary due to the indoctrination of the Hollywood machine.

⁶ Bertold Brecht is well known for his ‘*verfrumdungseffekt*’, which has been defined as ‘alienation effect’ or ‘make-strange-ing effect’. Simply put he believed that traditional narrative structure and dramatic forms were designed to lull the audience into an emotional stupor. He wanted audiences to think so he devised a series of practices that would jolt the audience out of thoughtlessness through breaking of traditional theatrical conventions. So the apparatus of the theatre was revealed and actors performed characters instead of inhabiting them. They changed costumes on stage. Stage devices like lights were made visible. Songs were added to narration, spoiling the surprise of the narrative. And perhaps most notably the ‘4th wall’ was broken, inviting interaction between the audience and the actor. Brecht believed that these unusual practices would shock the audience and cause them to reflect on the action instead of passively watch.

Ultimately, the students struggled with some of the expectations of culture-jamming as a mode of emancipating others. They recognized that the problem of the YA Dystopian film and its relation to the structure of domination was far too large for them to face, even as a group. For a group of kids so used to learning something and then tossing it after the test, it was a bit daunting that I was teaching them about something that could be of use in in the long run. Margie summed it up this way, “You need to keep doing it for the rest of your life. It’s not going to take one long run, it’s going to be like, forever.”

Emancipation from the Oppressive structure of Schooling

This section differs slightly from the others because the action being described includes my action as a teacher as well as the action of my students. In many cases the students are describing what I did as a teacher to allow space for them to be emancipated from the oppressive structure of the classroom. I never explained to them what I was doing to open the class up. I just did it and then asked the students to reflect on things that they saw that did that for them. The students still saw ways that they could act within this context. Those that pulled away in the critical reflection phase of the curriculum moved back in during the action phase. I saw students that were on their phones in the reflection phase, put the phones away when it came time to write and create.

The students identified a few things in the action phase that they felt opened space for them. The first was having the students do the work of creation in groups. The second was leaving the instructions vague enough to allow them space to create. And the third was leaving the option of participating to the students.

The use of groups is by no means a new idea in education, even in more traditional

education. However, with these students using groups to create a project helped more of the students to feel that they had a voice in the space. I was not the leader dictating or even facilitating what should be done, rather each group had equal value and an equal say in the final product. Margie had this to say about working in groups: “I saw when we worked together in groups [...] we were able to work together and we were able to [...] do our own thing [...] and then going up and sharing our ideas with everybody, I think worked out pretty well.” She was able to see how the groups provided autonomy and accountability to the whole. Tyler said, “You put us in a lot of groups. Like we had a song group and the other scenes, and we worked with that, and then we all presented to the whole class, and kind of came up with a big consensus, or a big conclusion together. And then we put it all together.” He recognized the power of the communal creation and valued the emancipatory power of that creation that was not dictated by a teacher.

Vague instructions might be considered poor educational praxis. But the students found it liberating and stimulating of their creative powers. I gave soft directions. Instead of telling them what to do using very specific instructions, I gave a general idea of the kind of thing they were to do and then let them loose. When they asked for more instructions, I became more cryptic, signaling to them that I was not going to give them the answer. Ultimately, this was welcomed and embraced by the students. Sally said:

You would give us space. Like you told us the general idea of what we had to do, but [...] There weren't complete steps where you were telling us everything like to do and instructing us like, 'This is how you're going to do it.' You [...] explained it enough that we had an idea and then we mostly had to come up with them on our own.

Even though she often acted apathetic toward the subject matter, she recognized and valued the

space available to make her own creation. Margie added, “You would just give us the basic instructions, but you would always be super vague on them. And then that kind of was like, ‘Alright then, we’ll just do our own thing.’” She and her groups relished in the opportunity to offer their own perspective on the theories being taught and how to express that through culture-jamming. Leo was right along with them:

Just kind of telling us, ‘This is your job, but you’ve got to perform something.’ Because if you tell us that, we’re like, ‘We want to perform something good’ [...] And giving us all the background and giving us a prompt and then saying, ‘Alright, come up with stuff. Split into groups.’ What kind of ideas do we have that we can funnel through?

He saw the vagaries of instructions as a boon to the creative process.

As already mentioned in the section regarding critical reflection, students were given the choice to resist the structure of the class without disciplinary measures. This was championed by the one student, Sy, who chose not to participate. He became the sign that agency in the classroom was a real possibility. The students were able to see that resistance was accepted in the environment, and so they felt that choosing to be apart was not conforming, but an agentic experience. This allowing of dissent or resistance led to some interesting conclusions on the part of the students. Some felt that having the freedom to resist made participation more valuable. Hallie put it this way, “Because of the way it was presented, where it was like, ‘Choose to be a part of this if you want,’ so as we wholeheartedly went for it, it was like, ‘We’re going to learn about this, and we’re going to use it in our lives outside of this class’.” This realization that the freedom to opt in or out led to a fuller acceptance of the material, and it spread beyond the limited sphere of our classroom. Shari spoke at length about this:

I feel like there are people within the class, that even a part of the project, are still rebelling within that. I think it’s funny that that’s made possible by this space

where you can not [participate], if you choose. [As we wrote the script] people started writing about, like, “Why don’t I have cinnamon rolls to barter with?” you know? I got annoyed, initially. I was like, “Take it seriously!” But then I realized, they are! They are taking it seriously. They’re just using this different way of being in a classroom, and it’s [...] it’s good to have that. In normal classrooms, it’s like, “We’re going to talk about a serious thing now, and so everyone has to be serious.” And sometimes that makes it seem not important. But I think having a classroom where you can totally goof off the assignment and make a joke out of it, or a pun, or whatever, almost makes the actual thing seem more serious. Because everyone is taking it seriously, just in their own way. [Being able to] choose to not agree or whatever, and not learn if you want--made learning more poignant. ‘I’m not going to pay attention if I don’t want to, because we’re not going to take a test, and Mr. Bauer’s not going to do anything. So, I’m going to pay attention because I’m interested in this’, so it made learning things more personal.

This somewhat complex response presents a unique perspective. When she argues that goofing off is taking it more seriously, what she means is that by allowing students the possibility to not take the material seriously, agency is being taken seriously. While this may interfere with planned objectives and expectations for discipline, it allows for the real purpose of radical pedagogy, to give freedom to make one’s own meaning. Shari was able to see that the real point of all of this was not necessarily to make people accept that they need to not see movies, but that they need to be free to critically analyze and choose to resist or participate. By making that choice available, the students value their experience and knowledge more and are more likely to incorporate that knowledge into their lived experience. The project would be nullified by a structure that required participation.

Perhaps the best evidence of all of my efforts to make my classroom an emancipatory space was in my approach to ‘learning targets’. As a class we identified the learning target as a major part of the hidden curriculum. Even though we had no learning targets, the students would often refer to them when talking about the oppressive nature of the school. From time to time

students would write gag targets on the board. For example one student wrote, “I can rape and pillage the village” as the learning target for one day. Towards the end of the curriculum Leo composed a learning target on the board that reflected all that he had learned in the class. It was as follows in all caps:

I can understand and explain the intrinsic sociological ideas present in young adult dystopian novels, chiefly the allegory of the special and its metaphysical connections to the capitalist society based on mindless consumption of self-worth media, with its subverted culture based on supporting the Institutional Mode of Representation, and how this factors in to the presence of love triangles essential to the afore mentioned medium, and finally the copy paste similarities that have formed in the genre and apply them all to our simulacrum, that being our one-act, and thereby instilling a deeper meaning to our one-act, and hopefully conveying these objectives to the adjudicators.

Some students thought that Leo was showing off, which he likely was, but most loved the statement. It remained on the board for a few days including during an observation by the principal. On this day I pointed out the learning target and read it to the class, as is expected of all teachers at the beginning of each class. The students stifled laughs and looked sideways at each other. They played the game all day, acting as ‘model’ students, raising their hands, sitting quietly, agreeing with the teacher. The administrator loved the class and even took a picture of the learning target to show at faculty meeting.

This represents two things. First, that Leo was able to synthesize his thoughts regarding the content of the unit into a statement of action, what he wanted to be able to *do*. He took the theory and combined it with the action through his critical reflection on the whole process. His statement even seems to relate to the three research questions of this thesis: emancipation from hidden curriculum in YA Dystopian film, Emancipation of others through culture-jamming, and his act of writing his own learning target is emancipation from the structure of schooling. He

made himself his own agent of learning and was critical of the ‘system’ with his act of writing the target on the board.

The second thing that this represents is the act of resistance of the classroom. The students performed compliance. As a performance the lesson of the day became a burlesque of what schooling is ‘supposed’ to be. By doing so they were enacting their criticism of the oppressive nature of school. They opened their own space by acting in contradiction to their knowledge and desire. This intentional act meant more than the culture-jamming project that they had created. They were not trying to change others outside of the school at some future date, they were resisting in the present. They were applying their knowledge and critical reflection to what they felt most passionate about, almost unintentionally.

Even with all of the good that the students were able to see in these points, they felt that there were weaknesses in the radical de-structuring of the traditional classroom. Primarily they found that it was difficult to efficiently arrive at the final product without direct guidance from an authority. In this case, they saw any involvement from me in the capacity of a director as a form of salvation. Margie believed that project would not have arrived at completion without my influence. She said, “We wouldn’t have been able to get it done any other way. If we had honestly been like, ‘this is everything equal’ nothing would have gotten done because everybody would just talk to each other.” She felt that the nature of students to resist work would lead to a disintegration of the project. Shari noticed that even in the group work, one person would often take charge and bend the group to his or her will. She said, “It was difficult for me to deal with the collaborative nature of the project [...] I was dictating but it seemed to be an effective way to get things done.” She is noting here that traditional constraints like time limits encourage more

oppressive forms of decision-making. Because she felt under the gun so to speak, she chose to be authoritarian, which her group accepted comfortably.

She also felt that in those moments when I took charge the project progressed more smoothly and effectively.

I felt we were more productive once Mr. Bauer took over. People's opinions and ideas still get used, but it really helps to have a final voice to make decisions and move things along. This made me aware that I do like there to be one person or very few people that are officially in charge of things.

The students felt more comfortable in those moments when I was directing them. The culture of school with its rules of order is a safe place for them and they will gravitate to that if given the opportunity. So, there exists a contradiction that is occupied and negotiated by the students. They resist oppressive pedagogy enough to create that contradictory space between full out resistance and blithe compliance and they are choosing to slide one way or the other, but constantly aware of that space.

In looking at all of the data of this project it becomes clear that there is great diversity of possibility in using a radical pedagogy in the classroom. Many students are happy to transgress structural norms in the name of resisting the dominant ideology. While the YA dystopian film is only an arm of the structure of domination it did prove an adequate jumping off place for the students to begin understanding the theories and critically reflecting on them. Culture-jamming seems to be a useful means of encouraging action in student in the drama classroom as it gives them something to perform. While some students proved apathetic or antagonistic, most were ignited with an enthusiasm for this kind of educational praxis.

In my concluding chapter, I will discuss in detail the conclusions based on these findings and implications for my future practice and applications in other disciplines in the educational landscape.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

My stated goal at the outset of this project was to design a curriculum structured by the phases of radical pedagogy that would lead to the emancipatory exercise of agency. This emancipation had three articulations: Emancipation from the Hidden Curriculum of YA Dystopian Film, Emancipation of others through Culture-jamming, and Emancipation of students from the Oppressive structure of school. All of this was brought to pass through an action research project in the emancipatory mode as defined by Berg and Lune. (2010) I chose this mode of action research because it resembled so well the structure of radical pedagogy as defined in the first chapter. I found in my analysis of the data expressed in the previous chapter that each of the three phases of the curriculum had affordances and limitations related to the articulations of emancipation. As I looked at all of the artifacts and notes that I had taken I saw patterns emerge. I have identified four conclusions: 1) Giving students access to critical theories opens space for them to critically reflect and ultimately act. 2) The use of radical pedagogy in the classroom is more likely to directly lead to individual action than to concerted group efforts. 3) The creative projects in the classroom work more for changing the students in the class than changing the world. 4) Open space in the classroom is essential to radical pedagogy and thereby, emancipatory action.

Access and Critical Reflection Opens Space for Action

In the Access/Enlightenment phase of the curriculum I saw students really grasp the concepts of critical media literacy. I saw the light go on in their eyes as they came to understand this new way of viewing the world and media. As they applied the theories of Althusser and

others to the YA Dystopian genre they found enthusiasm in the process of critiquing it. Due to the current popularity of the genre, the students connected strongly with it. I doubt that they would have been as drawn into a discussion of these same theories in relation to Westerns or Police Dramas, for example. The particular set of formal qualities found in the YA Dystopian genre helped connect the students to the material. Using the YA Dystopian film gave them something to care about within the context of the curriculum, and removed the barrier of apathy.

The access provided to the critical theories provided a new way of seeing for the students. That new way of seeing helped open a space for students to critically reflect on media and then make choices. Students like Thalia and Leo applied this new knowledge to future endeavors. Thalia saw herself being a more discriminating viewer; to not simply take what was given, but to analyze and evaluate. Leo, an aspiring filmmaker, saw himself taking the conventions of film in the IMR and subverting them just enough to still make film acceptable in the mainstream, but also fight back in his own way. Students like Shari and Margie took this new knowledge and immediately began to use it to critically analyze media and make choices. As mentioned in the last chapter, Shari used the theories to critically analyze *America's Funniest Home Videos*, which ultimately led to her advising her brother to turn off the show, which he did. Margie was able to critically evaluate *Sherlock*, seeing that the relationship between Irene Adler and Sherlock was commodified and repurposed from its original representation in the books, in order to support a popular misogynist narrative/appeal to audience's expectations of male/female roles and the idea of the infallible hero/etc., rather than letting the original stories speak for themselves. The theories of the class helped her to see that the change was meant to give the audience what they wanted so that the TV station could continue to sell them to advertisers. (see Smythe, 1981)

Understanding that everything in the media has an economic interest empowers the students as they critically reflect on the media they consume. This is the real advantage of critical reflection. It provides the students the opportunity to apply their knowledge outside the structure of the classroom, opening space for emancipation in other areas of their lives. As they see these YA Dystopian films, they can see the conventions that we identified in class (A socially stratified culture with an oppressive government, a love triangle, a ‘special’, and commodified resistance) as existing for the purpose of maintaining an audience for profit. Knowing this, the students can then reflect on their own position in the structure of domination and choose to which degree they participate. This was the most common response from my students. They said that they are now aware and can determine based on their critical evaluation of the films how to navigate the seascape of media. They feel empowered that they can choose to follow or not.

Many teachers pay lip service to critical thinking, but structure the class after the traditional manner. They then complain at length that the students do not want to learn, but are only interested in grades. The structure of a classroom in general does not lend itself to critical reflection because the analysis and evaluation is done by the teacher. Because the grades are assigned, the students seek that form of approval of the teacher and it becomes a game at trying to give the teacher what he or she is looking for. The students reported that in my class the discussion format of the lessons helped to free them from the expectation of the grade. They felt liberated from the expectation of the teacher and freely shared their perspectives on the material.

This is in harmony with Dialectical Thought, Critical Media Literacy, and MLE as explained in the first chapter. As Giroux identified; students need instruction “on their place in

the system of domination”, and the students in my class received and recognized that. (1983, p. 18) This corresponds with the first stage of the curriculum: Access/Enlightenment. The second stage of critical reflection was also present in the curriculum. The first point of NAMLE’s Core Concepts is “Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.” (2007, p. 3) The students were able to apply this and felt liberated by it. All of the theorists from whom I draw indicate that action must be included. Giroux says, “it must lead to action”. (1983, p. 19) Kellner and Share use the term ‘produce’. (2005) Hobbs says that they need to communicate messages. (1998) NAMLE states that “Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative *producers*.” (2014, emphasis added) It is clear that action must be part of MLE in order for students to truly be agents. While not all students see themselves as creating acts of resistance in their lives, they did do so in the class project. Some took that action into other classes as Shari mentioned in the third chapter. She and another student created a video project in their English class that tried to implement these theories. She talked about how they specifically asked themselves how they could make their project a form of culture-jamming. This shows that the curriculum led to action outside of the classroom.

While giving access and opening space for action with critical reflection has all these affordances, there is a notable limitation in that students can become cynical which can mitigate action. This has been noted by Milhaildis as he identifies the difference between an *informed skeptic* and an *informed cynic*. He defines informed skeptics as “media consumers critical but understanding of how and why media works as it does [...] they question with the aim to be further enlightened, empowered, and critical [...] in a way that helps spur reform, accountability,

and an overall better media industry.” (2008, p. 18) This is in line with radical pedagogy as it has been defined in this thesis. However, Milhailidis notes that many in his research became informed cynics, which he describes as being “sensitized to the media’s negative traits, and thus take assumingly pessimistic stances towards media.” (2008, p. 19) Giroux says similar things with regards specifically to the result of Althusser’s theories, noting that while his theory is effective at pointing out the power of the ideology in maintaining the capitalist structure, understanding it leads to pessimism as to the hope for change. Grossberg calls this the ‘monster of Apocalypsim’, which means that there is no hope for any real change after all we have done or could do. The worst has happened and all have been subsumed in the machine. (Grossberg, 2010, p. xiii)

I found this attitude in many of my students. For example, Tyler and Suzy reported that they felt that it was good to know this information, but they would continue with their viewing practices. Others like Sally felt that the knowledge was burdensome and made them feel oppressed and depressed and helpless. The main reason for both of these was a feeling that they could not make much of a difference in changing ‘the system’. Even so, this is no reason to assume that the curriculum was ineffective. Much of the change in the students was not consciously perceived by themselves, but rather ingrained into their thought processes. I observed these very pessimistic students talking and acting upon their access to new knowledge without even realizing it. As Milhailidis says, this cynicism it is no reason to assume structural problems in MLE.

Individual Emancipation is more Effectively Achieved than Systemic Revolution

As I have defined in this thesis, agentic choice is action that is motivated by access to

critical theory and critical reflection. As they experienced the curriculum, the students showed great interest in the theories and the experience of creation even though very few showed any interest in taking that creation into the public sphere. This is how my approach differentiates itself from the critical media literacy advocated by Kellner and Share. In their article, *Toward Critical Media Literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy*, they state, “Critical media literacy in our conception is tied to the project of radical democracy and concerned with developing skills that will enhance democratization and participation.” (2005, pp. 372-373) It is clear here that they see the goal of teaching about media in the classroom as being firmly political, with public policy implications. While this is important and is similar to the ultimate goals of Giroux as stated in his later work (see Giroux, 2007a) it is apparent that at least in a high school classroom similar to mine a more individualized approach to future action is more effective. This is in line with the kind of action advocated by NAMLE and Hobbs as cited earlier. The action is to create or communicate. It feels much more focused on what the single student can do with their knowledge. While this resistance may still involve a simple act of choosing to not watch a movie and support the Hollywood machine, it can also incorporate creative pursuits such as culture-jamming.

I found that the students were more than willing to see personal application. They applied the principles to their own worldview. In many cases the students saw their action as being to analyze and evaluate the institutions that created the work and then choose to attend or not. Many, Thalia and Shari being some, saw themselves using this in the future with their children, teaching them how to navigate the media as they had been taught. Shari did not wait so long though in that she taught her family every day after school about her new knowledge. As she

stated earlier in this thesis, her mother better understood the culture-jamming project because she had been talking about it with her. This personal sphere of influence demonstrates the more individual effectiveness of this approach to MLE.

While this may seem like it is a drop in the bucket when faced with the complexity and enormity of the oppressive forces in our culture and economy, the students feel comfortable with what they *are* able to do. Those that did not give in to the cynicism or pessimism really saw power in their own hands. This empowering of the individual is perhaps the best way to combat the common problems that occur in MLE as mentioned in the previous section.

The Creative Action in the Classroom Galvanizes the Knowledge in the Students

One might ask, “If all students are doing is thinking and choosing to go or not to a movie, then what is the purpose of doing a performance?” This is a valid question that necessitates careful consideration. I have found two divisions in my classroom experience with these students that clarify this issue. One is that the future action that students see themselves doing in their normal life is choosing after thinking. That is emancipation for them. However, the second division is action in the classroom. As a teacher I could not adequately teach them about theory and have them critically reflect and then simply expect them to act on their own in the future. That is not sound pedagogy. In order to provide the full possibilities of radical pedagogy to my students they had to do something with that knowledge and reflection within the context of the class. This shows them two things: First, one learns that there *is* something to be done with new knowledge in the here and now and Second, as they embody the theories in performance, it instills and solidifies in them a firmer commitment to those principles.

I observed that when the students finished their critical reflection, they felt the cynicism

sink in. Many felt little or no desire to use the knowledge. This proved true even after the first performance of the culture-jamming project. However, by the time the students had refined and performed this piece three more times in different venues, their attitudes had shifted significantly. When the students talked about the ideas and theories in the project, they did so with affable positivity. They expressed more hope for the future and interest in using this knowledge. No longer was the capitalist state or the ISA or even Hollywood seen as a controlling force. It was seen as a dragon that, though it could not be slain, would not slay them. They were empowered.

This, I believe, is the strongest advantage to creating a live performance as an act of resistance. It takes media out of its distanced boundaries of video screens and brings it into the lived experience of the students. By bringing mediated experience into the lives of the students, to their turf so to speak, they were able to reduce the power of that monster. While culture-jamming in print or digital media has its value, it competes with the media on its own turf. It runs the risk, therefore, of being commodified and assimilated as so many artifacts have before been. Putting on a live performance that has an end mitigates the ability of the structure of domination to do that.

Also, by embodying the theory students galvanized the knowledge within themselves. As a drama teacher I have seen so many students learn empathy and compassion for others that they would judge harshly by embodying those kinds of people in a live performance. Similarly, I have seen students change perspective on Marx as they performed in *Mother Courage and her Children*. This is true to Boal's goal of liberating the spectator. His efforts in using theatre as a means of emancipating oppressed peoples testifies of the very power of theatre to change and

empower those dominated by the economic structure. Likewise, embodying the theory in a live performance like our culture-jamming pieces affects those sympathies and gives students real experience with theory and critical reflection, in action.

In this way, I diverge slightly from Boal. He repeats in his text that “Theatre is not revolutionary in itself ...it is a rehearsal of revolution!” (1985, p. 155)⁷ This declaration diminishes the powerful changing effect that my students experienced in their own lives through live embodiment. My observation based on the above conclusion is that theatre (live performance) when used in the classroom context can be a revolution in itself. It is a revolution of the mind of the individual students. That is the revolution that changes culture and politics.

Open Space in the Classroom is Essential to Radical Pedagogy

The efforts I made to open space in the classroom and allow the students to create their own action is in my view the most important part of this project. In much of the research on critical and public pedagogy the teacher risks undermining their plan to emancipate by forcing an oppositional ideology on their students. (Sandlin and Milam, 2008) Grossberg calls this the monster of Vanguardism. He says, “[We assume] that we already know the answers and it is our job to ‘educate’ others so they can gleefully ‘choose’ to follow the path we lay out for them.” (2010, p. xiii) I responded to this problem by opening space for students to participate or not. As such the students seemed most passionate about the power and creativity they felt as space was left for them to comply or resist within the classroom. That liberty allowed them to find their own value in the curriculum and thereby incorporate it into their lived experience. The

⁷ I believe that Boal misses an opportunity here. He so clearly defines the traditional poetics of theatre as oppression but then never identifies the liberation from that structure as valid in its own right. He is, by leaving out this point, essentially saying that emancipation from the structure of the narrative is only valuable if it then extends to tearing down of oppressive economic structures.

communal experience of creating together reflected the goals in the curriculum to emancipate themselves. They did so in their personal lives and in the classroom. They even worked at creating a piece that would open space for the audience to make agentic choice instead of telling the audience what to think. They never said, “Don’t go to the movies,” but they presented the contradictions (See Giroux, 1983, pp.18-19) and the audience was able to question whether they ought. That transposing of the goals of culture-jamming to the classroom and then back to the performed space is the greatest success of the curriculum.

My efforts to provide open space in the classroom emancipated students from the hidden curriculum of school. Or rather it provided space for the students to become emancipated. I encouraged open discussion. I was open about my place in the school and the nature of the curriculum I was teaching. By doing so I made it possible for the students to resist if they wanted to, and some did. I identified for them aspects of the school that were related to the hidden curriculum. I made bare the “assumptions about learning, achievement, teacher student relations, objectivity, and school authority” to the students and encouraged them to question that. (Giroux, 1983) I particularly took time to attack “learning targets”, showing how “administrators [...] spend long hours developing curriculum models based on the rather narrow principles of control, prediction, and measurement.” (Giroux, 1983) I did this by refusing to place a learning target on the board and allowing the students to write their own on the board, be they silly or profound. This was a resounding success as discussed in the third chapter with Leo and his extensive target.

All of this was well received by the students and represented the synthesis of theory and practice. Not only was I teaching about these critical theories, but my class was an embodiment

of those theories. It was a critical reflection on the educational process. It was an act of resistance. This is the way radical pedagogy must work. We cannot expect students to be able to adequately emancipate themselves from the various modes of domination in their personal lives when they are being taught to do so within one of those very apparatuses.

While there are many affordances in this approach to curriculum, there are some limitations. The nature of MLE and its quest for critical reflection can lead to an undoing of the material itself. The apathy of the students, and the devaluing of the possibility of change through culture-jamming are very real outcomes that I had to deal with. As a teacher who cares for his students, I want to emancipate them, but the reality is that if I teach in this way some students will choose to not be emancipated. Or they may choose to emancipate themselves but make no effort to spread that change.

There were various limitations to incorporating culture-jamming in the curriculum with these students. It is clear that many of them participated in the project because it was fun. It was fun to create. It was fun to transgress the 'system'. The danger is that they are only interested in that: fun. That is why they still go to the movies. That is why they laugh when Buffy kills Edward but dig no deeper. (see McIntosh, 2014) That is why they will make a play that criticizes the structure of domination but doubt its power to affect others. This is by no means insurmountable. Students having fun may still learn, and as they embody these theories and practices they gain a greater affinity for them. Perhaps fun entices them, but the theory remains ingrained in the sinews of their experience.

While students talked much about how they enjoyed the open spaces created in the classroom, I can't help but wonder if it is not much different than the kids enjoying having class

outside for a day. It may be too similar to the YA Dystopian films' commodification of resistance. The students sympathize with me because I am fighting the structure of domination just as they sympathize with the film because it is fun and portrays people fighting authority. I give them something they enjoy and yet the hegemonic structure is still there. They are still given grades and still expected to maintain certain codes of behavior. In that sense anything that I do in my class that is contrary to established norms could very well be guilty of simply ingratiating the students further to the structure of traditional schooling. I have to ask some hard questions about this. Am I really fighting the system? Am I really working to emancipate these students? My only saving grace here is that I was open about the irony of my position. I made bare the contradictions in myself and in so doing, hoped the students would be able to access agency.

Implications for Future Practice

The true value of doing this sort of project is to reflect on how I can improve my practice as a teacher and how it can be implemented by media literacy educators. By looking at the data I can determine that there are aspects of this particular project that worked well and ought be duplicated and other aspect that should be changed. My stated goal being emancipation I can see that in many ways the students were emancipated, though there were aspects of the project that were ineffective. I will identify which aspects I recommend for future use by myself and other media literacy educators.

I surmise that using the material related to what students are already interested in (i.e. YA Dystopian Film) was a wise choice. In future units such as this I will try to incorporate similarly current media artifacts to which students can relate. Other practitioners would be wise to utilize

the same tool. This requires teachers to be on constant watch as to what media the students are consuming. The accessibility of YA dystopian films is advantageous, but Hollywood will constantly adapt and produce new 'hits', so teachers must stay abreast.

I also believe it wise to retain the majority of control over the creative project in the hands of the students. Many times in the past I have done group projects like this in the classroom, but this time I truly passed the majority of the creative process over to the students. Since the students responded so well to this, and honestly the competition piece performed so well, it seems wise to continue in that vein. Indeed, this is imperative for the success of a radical pedagogy. Students need to *do* something with the knowledge they have accessed. As I discussed in the first chapter, many media literacy programs stop at critical reflection. (e.g. Brady, 2004) For the learning to be effective and true to radical pedagogy it must incorporate some kind of action, a project of some sort that moves them from passive audience to active.

The success of using a live culture-jamming performance instead of print or electronic media cannot be overstated. The embodying of the theories in a performance helped the students to incorporate the new knowledge and lead to action in their experiences outside of the classroom. While many studies of culture-jamming have used digital and print media to act on the knowledge, few if any have used live performance. (See Chung and Kirby, 2009 and Frankenstein, 2011) As my students demonstrated, Shari and Margie being primary examples, the use of live performance as the action in the media literacy experience will help students solidify their new knowledge and increase the likelihood of action beyond the classroom. By using this approach to Action, educators will likely find similar results guiding students to make their own meaning of their experiences.

As demonstrated, the students proved cynical to the possibility for large-scale structural change, giving way to Grossberg's monster of Apocalypsim. I conclude that the focus on the individual is more effective than trying to mobilize large scale lasting change. As Milhailidis says in regards to the problem of cynicism in MLE, "More research, exploration, and evaluation are needed." (2008, p.19) This thesis then represents an offering into that exploration. If teachers focus their praxis on emancipation of individual students and frame their instruction in that way, the students will see the power in their own hands to make agentic choice in their lived experience instead of feeling overwhelmed by the seeming omnipotence of the structure of domination. They will still have the skeptical attitude toward the media that Milhailidis and others extol, but with a hope for change for themselves.

I advocate utilizing open space in the classroom. The students responded so positively to the freedom to discuss and contribute their ideas that such practice would be foolish to discontinue. Also, the placing of students in charge and allowing them to fail and succeed on their own terms proved motivating for them. They were more involved in the learning process as they were free to make of it what they wanted. They also valued what they were doing more because they were free to choose their level of participation. This is the heart of emancipation. To provide access to the theory, encourage critical reflection, and make space so that the students can choose to act in the way that they see fit. In the end this became much more interesting to me than the relation the students had to the YA Dystopian films. Media comes and goes, but the classroom endures. That is where change needs to happen. Even though there are limitations, and the school setting provides a context of oppression that teachers cannot help but be a part of, teachers can facilitate emancipatory change on an individual level as they do all they can to open

the space available to them for critical reflection.

The implication here for educators is that schoolteachers can work for the emancipation of students without becoming an oppressive force themselves. As NAMLE says, “MLE is not about replacing students’ perspectives with [the teacher’s]”. (2007, p. 3) The key is honesty and open space. Teachers need to not only enlighten students about the problems of the system of domination but also be open about their own place within it. If teachers can show the contradictions in their own class and with their own relationship to the ISA and the hidden curriculum, that candid honesty will open a space for the students to analyze and evaluate that position and choose to act. Leaving space by opening contradictions is a powerful means of emancipating students because it leaves the choice to them on what their action is going to be. It makes critical reflection not only possible, but creates a cognitive tension that necessitates it, and gives the agency over to the student. In fact, for brighter students who become aware of such contradictions on their own, it can prove school’s saving grace for them by greatly reducing hypocrisy, thereby making school, for them, a place where instruction can be taken seriously.

This is important for students in their media experiences because movies do not open this space. The whole goal of a film is to keep that space closed so the audience does not know that resistant action is even an option. By and large, young people are going out into the world with little to no preparation on how to open that space themselves. They are not trained on how to spot contradiction or, even if they do, how to respond. Teaching students how to open space and make bare contradiction becomes an invaluable skill in their emancipation. They can go, therefore, to a film and see the commodification of resistance or other conventions of genre and they can identify the contradiction and reflect, and then ultimately act. To prepare students to

enact that process was my goal as a teacher in this project. One student, Amy, said this in her final reflective:

I thought it was awesome that a teacher finally made a stand against how the school system is run and society in general. I feel like most teachers are just traditional about what they do and take no mind of the big picture. So there we are learning how to rebel while still going to school.

She learned how to use her agency to reflect and act. I wanted to teach my students how to do that. They did. Some will take this with them and use it consciously. Others will have a vague recollection in the back of their mind, yet strong enough still to enable them to respond to some contradictions they encounter in their future. Others have chosen apathy. But that even so pursues the point. They have chosen.

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Appendix A Lesson Plans

Note: *As part of this thesis I have intentionally avoided using much of the traditional mode of pedagogy. In an effort to make the lessons more student-centered and driven the lesson plans represent more loose outlines rather than detailed structures. I include them to give further insight into the pedagogical practice rather than a description of what actually occurred in the classroom.*

Emancipation And YA Film Day 1

Intro to Theory

Objective: The students will demonstrate understanding Media Literacy Education by analyzing a film.

Materials: Trailer for *Mockingjay* or *Divergent* or *Mazerunner*. Projector. One copy of *Key Questions to Ask when Analyzing Media Messages* for each student. Keynote Presentation on the nature of The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education.

Hook: Show the students one of the trailers. *What did you see in this trailer? What happened? What would the message of this trailer be? What do you think the theme of this film is? What skills do you have to aid you in the interpretation of this trailer? What would help you to better access the content?*

Step 1: Instruction

Hand out sheet *Genealogy of Media Literacy Education*. Give lecture instructing students using the Keynote *Genealogy of Media Literacy Education*.

Step 2: Practice

Hand out *Key Questions to Ask when Analyzing Media Messages*. Watch the clip from before. Project a copy of the sheet on the screen. Go through the sheet with the students and fill in the sheet as you go.

Step 3: Discussion

How did this sheet help you to negotiate this text? How might you use this in the future? What limitations might this approach have?

Step 4: Assessment

Show a different clip. Have the students fill out the sheet based on the class discussion. Have them turn in the sheet at the end of the period.



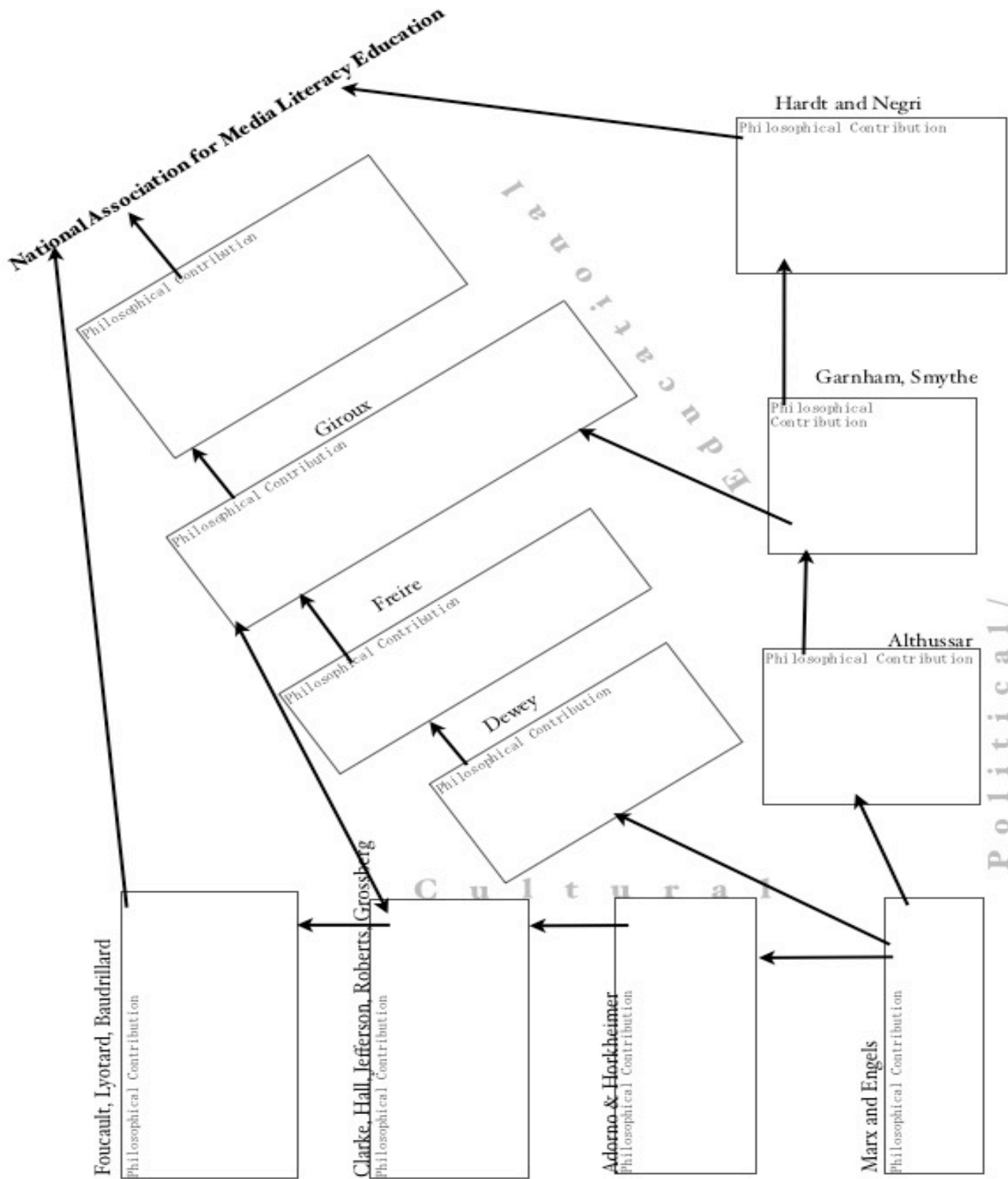
KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

NAMLE

*www.projectlooksharp.org
www.namle.net*

AUDIENCE & AUTHORSHIP	AUTHORSHIP	Who made this message?
	PURPOSE	Why was this made?
		Who is the target audience (and how do you know)?
	ECONOMICS	Who paid for this?
	IMPACT	Who might benefit from this message? Who might be harmed by it?
Why might this message matter to me?		
RESPONSE	What kinds of actions might I take in response to this message?	
MESSAGES & MEANINGS	CONTENT	What is this about (and what makes you think that)?
		What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied?
		What is left out of this message that might be important to know?
TECHNIQUES	What techniques are used?	
	Why were those techniques used? How do they communicate the message?	
INTERPRETATIONS	How might different people understand this message differently?	
	What is my interpretation of this and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?	
REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY	CONTEXT	When was this made?
		Where or how was it shared with the public?
CREDIBILITY	Is this fact, opinion, or something else?	
	How credible is this (and what makes you think that)?	
	What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions?	

Genealogy of Media Literacy Education



Emancipation and YA Film
Day 2

The Co-opting of Resistance

Objective: The students will demonstrate their understanding of the co-opting of resistance by writing a letter to a movie theater.

Materials: White board. Markers. Keynote presentation. Projector. Projector Screen.

Hook: Write on the board: *What are your favorite things to buy? How do you most like to spend your free time? What influences what you consume?* Read the questions aloud to the class. Have them write down on a paper an answer to that question. Then have them share with the person next to them. Call on a few random groups and have them share with the class. Discuss briefly the responses. Now write: *Why do you consume at all?* on the board. Read it aloud to the class.

STEP 1: Instruction

Look back at your sheet on the history of media literacy. Find the box labeled 'Althusser'. Today we will talk in depth about what started with Althusser and led to how many feel that the media can influence what we do today and why.

Use the Althusser Keynote presentation

STEP 2: Practice

Put the students into groups of 5-7. Instruct them to create a pitch for a new film that they will present to the class. The film will need to be designed to encourage reproducibility and fealty to the system. Use the 'Factory Media assignment' sheet for this.

STEP 3: Assessment

Have the students pitch their ideas to the class. Have the class vote on which they think will be the most successful. Have them turn in the assignment sheet.

Factory Media Assignment

Objective: You will design a pitch for a reproducible film product that will encourage support of the system of domination.

Identify the perspective that you will take
(Cultural, Economic):

Describe the concept of the film:

List the Genre Points that will be reproduced:

Describe the plot and characterizations of the film:

Circle and draw a line between the Genre points and how they are represented in the concept and plot description.

Explain how this film will work to support the system:

Emancipation Unit
Day 3

The Hidden Curriculum of YA Film

Objective: The students will be able to identify the elements of the hidden curriculum in a Catching Fire.

Materials Needed: Hunger Games: Catching Fire, White board.

Hook: Stand up at the board. Ask the students to call out the key genre requirements of The Young Adult Dystopian genre. As they call them out write them on the board. *How do these things relate to the things discussed in class last time? In what ways does the Hollywood machine treat these movies like an assembly line product? How does that relate to the ideas of Althusser and others in MLE? How might this process represent a form of oppression?*

STEP 1: INSTRUCTION

Today we will speak about the specific genre of YA dystopian film and how it interacts with the ideology of the institutions that maintain the system of domination. Use Presentation to guide discussion.

STEP 2: Discussion

Instruct the students to get into groups and discuss the following questions: *What might you do in your own life in response to this new knowledge regarding YA Dystopian Films? How might you teach others about these issues?*

STEP 3: PRESENTATION

Have the groups present their ideas to the class. Discuss each response with the class.

Emancipation Unit
Day 4

Culture-jamming and Public Pedagogy

Objective: The students can identify the kinds of culture-jamming and evaluate an artifact to determine if it is culture-jamming.

Materials: Projector, Keynote presentation, White board.

Hook: Write the word ‘culture-jamming’ on the board. Ask the students to define the term. Have a few volunteers write what they think the definition is on the board. Read each definition on the board and ask the class what they think of it. Declare that today’s lesson will cover the basics of what culture-jamming is and how it relates the theories discussed in the previous phase of the curriculum.

STEP 1: INSTRUCTION

Using the Keynote presentation as a guide. Discuss with the class the nature of culture-jamming as a form of public pedagogy.

STEP 2: SYNTHESIS

How does this practice of culture-jamming relate to MLE? How can it be used to combat the problems discussed in our last lesson? Does this give you hope as to the possibility for change in the system of domination? Why?

STEP 3: PRACTICE

Show a clip from *The Lego Movie* where the protagonist is watching is getting ready for the day. Ask the students: *What contradictions are made bare in this clip? How does this relate to culture-jamming? What irony is there in this film between the message and mode of representation?*

Is this film culture-jamming? Can a corporate product look like a mode of resistance? Can it be one?

STEP 4: ASSESSMENT

Instruct the students to find an example of culture-jamming to bring to class the next period.

Emancipation Unit
Day 5

Culture-jamming in Electronic and Print Media

Objective: The students can create their own subvertisement.

Materials needed: Projector, Keynote.

Hook: Have a few volunteers present their culture-jamming artifact to the class. Discuss each with the class to see if it fits the parameters of culture-jamming as per the previous lesson.

STEP 1: INSTRUCTION

Explain that last time the class was on the general nature of culture-jamming as a form of public pedagogy and that today they will learn more about print and electronic media and how it can be used to jam culture. Use Keynote to facilitate discussion.

STEP 2: PRACTICE

Watch Jonathan McIntosh's mash-up of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Twilight. Have the students identify the contradiction in the film and then define what that makes the audience think about. Help them see the moment of detournement. Ask the students to share with a neighbor what their new choice is with regards to both Buffy and Twilight. Ask a few volunteers to share their choice in class.

STEP 3: MODELING

Demonstrate how to make a subvertisement. On the board write the Phrase 'I'm lovin' it'. Ask the students to what it refers (MacDonald's). Ask what some of the negative effects of MacDonald's are. (e.g. obesity, diabetes, exploitation of the poor) Then ask how that could be related to the slogan. (Under the slogan put a big fat guy stuffing his face with burgers next to his girlfriend who looks on in disgust.) Ask how this image creates detournement. Ask for other possibilities.

STEP 4: ASSESSMENT

Assign the students to make their own subvertisement in the same way that was modeled. Have them share their subvertisements at the end of class.

Emancipation Unit
Day 6

Culture-jamming Live!

Objective: The students will be able to create a live culture-jamming performance that criticizes an aspect of school culture.

Materials needed: White board, Projector, Internet connection.

Hook: Show a clip of Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping found at http://www.revbilly.com/stop_shopping

STEP 2: DISCUSSION

What are you seeing in this video? What aspect of culture is being criticized? How does it utilize detournement?

STEP 3: INSTRUCTION

Explain that while much of culture-jamming occurs in electronic media, there are artists that create culture-jamming artifacts that are performed live. Show another video from the above site. *What would you do if you came upon a performance like this? How would it make you reflect on the nature of capitalism and consumerism?* Show clip from Yes Men at <http://theyesmenfixtheworld.com/> *How is this similar to what Reverend Billy is doing? How is it different? How is it still culture-jamming?* Then have the students watch the Improv Everywhere clip at: <https://youtu.be/jwMj3PJDxuo>. *In what ways is this similar to the previous two forms? How is it different? Would you consider this culture-jamming?*

STEP 4: PRACTICE

Have the students identify three necessary qualities for a live culture-jamming performance in groups of three. Then have them list their qualities on the board. After this is done go over the lists on the board and circle the ones that are similar. Erase the outliers (unless the class determines the outlier to be worthy). Determine as a class which three qualifiers on the board should be accepted for use in the class. Erase the rest. Write the 3 qualifiers on a large piece of butcher paper and post it on the wall for all to see.

STEP 5: ASSESSMENT

Put the students in groups of 5. Instruct them to think of a cultural problem here at the school. Then instruct them to devise a culture-jamming performance that engages with that problem that also follows the 3 criteria determined by the class. In the end have the students perform their scenes.

Note: For the third phase of curriculum I did not use formal lesson plans at all. Rather, I had the students do various activities that helped them to create their project. I describe two of the more significant ones here. Both led directly to specific portions of the final product. (See Appendix C).

Activities Soliloquys

Step one: Have the students take out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Instruct them to write a soliloquy (if students are unfamiliar with that form, further instruction will be needed) about their feelings regarding the oppressive structures that influence their lives and possible responses to those structures.

Step two: Collect the soliloquies from the students. Read the soliloquies to the class. Discuss them by asking for thoughts and feelings from the students related to the final project. E.g. *How could this be used in the final project?*

Step three: Pass the soliloquys out at random to the students. Have them read over the soliloquy and choose three sentences or phrases that stick out to them.

Step four: Have the students stand. Have them get into *soft focus*. Instruct them to walk around the room passing through the negative space or turning and following other students.

Step five: As they are walking, instruct them to at random say one of their lines from the soliloquy. They are not to speak at the same time, but listen to each other and try to say each line as a response to what another said. Allow this to continue for about 10 minutes or until you feel the experience exhausted. The longer the better. The students will become more invested and start to listen better.

Step six: Discuss the experience and how it could be applied to the culture-jamming performance.

Sorting the class

Step one: Collect the written work from the class before. (a portion of the script to be performed.)

Step two: Separate those with the assignment from those who have not complied. Those with the assignment (group a) bring out of the class for a portion of the activity, while those who did not (group b) stay in the classroom to write their assignment.

Step three: Have the group a students read their work to the rest of the group. Give feedback. Be overly positive and congratulatory. If any students try to join the group from the classroom tersely send them back.

Step four: Return to classroom with group a. Be sure to scowl at group b and give other manifestations of displeasure. Have group A sit in the front of the class with you.

Step five: Have group b read their work to the class. Scoff at the work. Any show of positivity to the group b by any member of group a results in expulsion from the group e.g. applause, praise. Continue until all students have read. If any in group A or B rebel or are insubordinate punish them harshly. e.g. sending to the hall, yelling, swearing, shouting down.

Step six: Ask the students what is going on. *Why do you think I am acting this way? Where have you seen this behavior in the school setting? How did you feel as you participated in this*

activity? How does this relate to the theories and ideas we have been studying? How could we apply it to our scene?

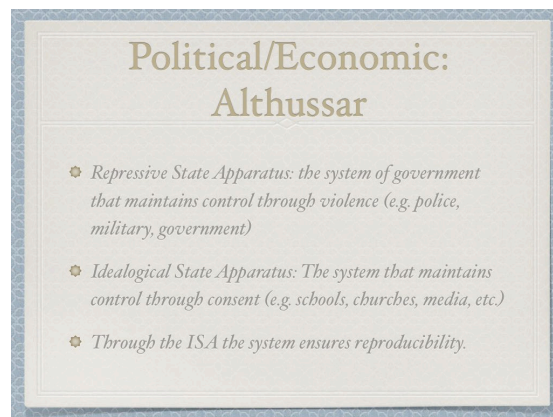
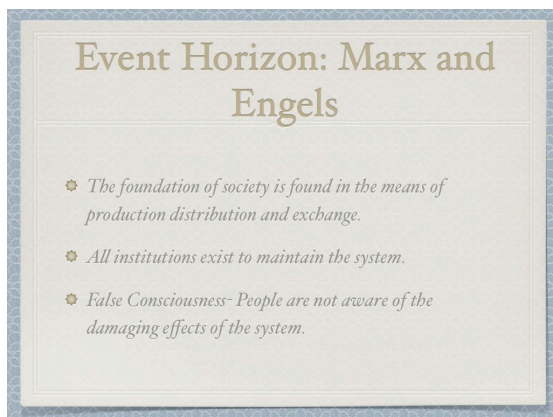
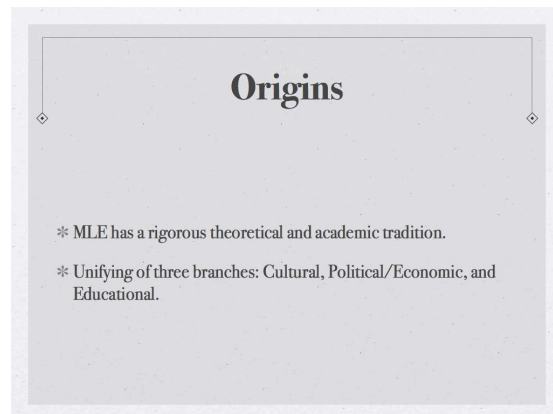
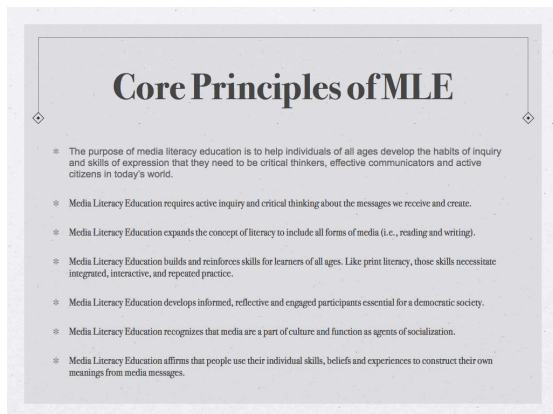
Culture-jamming Reflective
Advanced Drama

Instructions: Think about your experience in this unit learning about YA films, Critical Theory, and Culture-jamming. As you do, think also about the following questions: What things did you learn that have changed the way you see the world? Do you feel that the project was successful or not? Why? How might you utilize this experience in the future? What hope do you have that such acts of resistance can make any change? What might those changes be? Why is it important to talk about these issues in a public school? In what ways did the process reflect or contradict the theories we studied? After contemplating all of this, write a one page (minimum) reflective essay about your experience participating in this unit. You will be graded on thoughtfulness, clarity of ideas, and basic mechanics. Your grade is not dependent upon agreeing with me or any of the theories we have discussed.

Appendix B

Note: These presentations were used to frame discussions about the concepts contained therein. I made every effort to open the space during these, as I felt the ACCESS to knowledge was necessary but I wanted the students to be able to reflect and critique the content.

Keynote for Lesson 1



Political/Economic: Garnham, Smythe

- *Media must be understood in economic terms.*
- *Media operates as a distinct and unique market from traditional markets.*
- *Media markets are maintained through either direct sales or advertising.*
- *The product of Media Markets is audience not artifacts.*

Political/Economic: Hardt and Negri

- *Empire: The consolidating of ideological consent to participate in the capitalist system on the world stage.*
- *Corporations adopt and adapt resistance modes in order to maintain the empire of ideology which keeps the power in the hands of the status quo.*

CULTURAL: ADORNO&HORKHEIMER

- Cultural Industry: The systems and structures that create culture as a means of consolidating power.
- Media is a part of the culture industry maintaining control through homogeneity.
- Repetition of style teaches us to obey the social hierarchy.

CULTURAL:CLARKE, HALL, JEFFERSON, ROBERTS, GROSSBERG

- Culture is lived then recorded then reproduced in truncated form.
- The dominant culture (Hegemony) maintains control over subculture by way of discourse.
- Discourse: the rules of the game.
- Subcultures can resist the Hegemony by adopting and adapting the dominant culture.
- Race and Gender are discourses in addition to Class.

CULTURE: FOUCAULT, LYOTARD, BAUDRILLARD

- Myth-appropriation of a sign for a new purpose.
- Bricolage- mixture of various styles and forms into one whole.
- Pastiche- Parody without the bite. Reference for the purpose of play.
- High culture and low culture equal in value.
- Author is dead. Reader has full power.

EDUCATION:DEWEY

- EDUCATION ESTABLISHES CULTURE.
- EDUCATION IS KEY TO CREATING A DEMOCRACY BY PLACING ALL ON EQUAL GROUNDS.

EDUCATION: FREIRE

- THE STRUCTURE OF THE CLASSROOM REFLECTS THE OPPRESSIVE NATURE OF THE SYSTEM.
- TEACHERS MUST BE EQUALIZED WITH STUDENTS SO ALL CAN LEARN EQUALLY.
- OPPOSED BANKING APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN WHICH TEACHERS SIMPLY DEPOSIT KNOWLEDGE IN THE BRAINS OF STUDENTS.

EDUCATION: GIROUX

- DIALECTICAL THOUGHT: REVEALING THE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE SYSTEM SO STUDENTS CAN EMANCIPATE THEMSELVES FROM OPPRESSIVE IDEOLOGY.
- FILMS OCCUPY A CONTRADICTIONARY SPACE CAPABLE OF OPPRESSING AND EMANCIPATING AUDIENCES AT THE SAME TIME.
- SCHOOLS MUST BE FREE OF THE DISCOURSE OF CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY.
- ACTION MUST RESULT FROM EDUCATION.

EDUCATION: HOBBS, KELLNER & SHARE

- PEOPLE NEED TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH MEDIA IN A CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE WAY.
- TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE ACTIVELY AND CRITICALLY AN AUDIENCES NEED ACCESS TO MEDIA AND THE IDEOLOGY, ANALYZE IT, AND THEN ACT UPON THAT KNOWLEDGE.
- NOT TO PROTECT BUT TO LIBERATE.

NAMLE

- * National Association for Media Literacy Education formed to give support to educators on how to teach students based on these theories.
- * Emphasizes access, analysis, evaluation, and creation/communication.

How do these theories apply to this?

- * Within North America, media literacy is seen to consist of a series of communication competencies, including the ability to **ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE,** and **COMMUNICATE** information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print messages.
- * Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages.

(From NAMLE, 2014)

How do these theories apply to this?

- * The purpose of media literacy education is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today's world.
- * Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.
- * Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy to include all forms of media (i.e., reading and writing).
- * Media Literacy Education builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice.
- * Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.
- * Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.
- * Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.

Keynote for Lesson 2

THE IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS

HOW FILM TEACHES US TO SUPPORT THE SYSTEM OF DOMINATION

ALTHUSSAR



- ❖ Part of the Frankfurt School
- ❖ Believed that the capitalist institutions had means (apparatuses) to maintain their power.
- ❖ Murdered his wife in 1981. Spent 10 years in an asylum

REPRESSIVE STATE APPARATUS



- ❖ Consists of Military, Police, Government
- ❖ Uses Violence to maintain system.
- ❖ Is not the system itself but protects it.



IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS



- ❖ Schools, Family, Church, Media etc.
- ❖ Gain consent of the masses to maintain the system of domination.
- ❖ Is not the system itself but a support of said system.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- ❖ Overt- The institutions tell you to support the system. (ineffective).
- ❖ Covert- Through structural and formal means the system is supported. (very effective).

EXAMPLE # 1



- ❖ The hidden curriculum- the system of rules, mores, and procedures that teach children to respect authority, repress creative thinking, and seek a place in the system.



HOW DOES IT APPLY TO MOVIES?



THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF FILM

- ❖ Structure- The standing in line, sitting in seats, paying for tickets, watching the screen.
- ❖ Form- The institutional mode of representation.
- ❖ Narrative- The linear structure (one path), inevitability, resolution.

GENRE

- ❖ Genres have developed as a composite of key hit ingredients.

MEDIA MARKETS

- ❖ Media markets operate differently than commodity markets.
- ❖ The media is not about production rather reproduction.
- ❖ The media is to reproduce need in the audience.
- ❖ Audiences are the commodity sold to corporations. Their work is to buy.

WHAT DOES THIS DO?

- ❖ Audiences see the film as a voice of authority that should be obeyed.
- ❖ Audiences are fooled into thinking that they are agents.
- ❖ Audiences support the system economically and ideologically.

REPRODUCIBILITY

- ❖ Media seeks for 'hits'.
- ❖ Key qualities of hits are identified.
- ❖ More hits can then be produced with little capital.



CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES



- Adorno & Horkheimer
- Also Frankfurt School
- Didn't kill anyone.

CULTURAL INDUSTRY

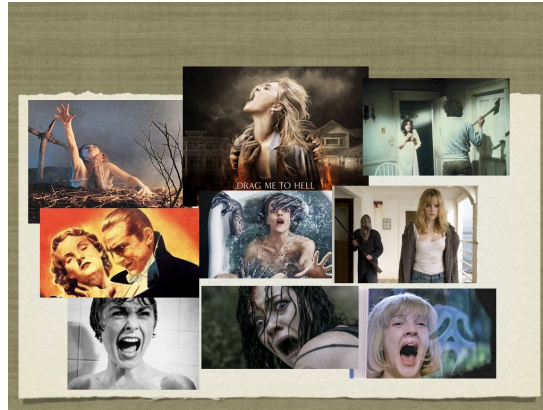
- The system consists of institutions of power that are not economic. i.e. race, gender
- The culture industry produces content that leaves out other voices and maintains power in the hands of the system
- Hegemony- the collective term for the system that maintains the dominant discourse.

HOW DOES IT EFFECT FILM?

- Movies are used to teach the discourse.
- Stories told support system.
- The economy supports the culture.

GENRE

- Genres exist as a repository of discourse. (Think Foucault and Myth)



PLAY

- Repressed cultures can adopt and adapt media for their own purposes.

Keynote for Lesson 3

The Hidden Curriculum of YA Film

How to fight and be the Mockingjay

Popularity

- The Hunger Games (2012) \$691,247,768
- The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013) \$864,912,963
- The Hunger Games: Mockingjay (2014) \$701,140,446
- Divergent (2014) \$288,747,895
- The Maze Runner (2014) \$340,655,830
- The Giver (2014) \$66,980,456

Ubiquity and Saturation



"We know it comes from the movie, and let's say it represents resistance against the authorities," Weerachon said, noting that if authorities encounter the salute they will first ask protesters to stop.

"If a single individual raises three fingers in the air, we are not going to arrest him or her," he told the Associated Press. "But if it is a political gathering of five people or more, then we will have to take some action."

"If it persists, then we will have to make an arrest," he said.



Websites

[HTTP://THEHUNGERGAMESFANSITE.COM/](http://THEHUNGERGAMESFANSITE.COM/)

[HTTP://HUNGER-GAMES.NET/](http://HUNGER-GAMES.NET/)

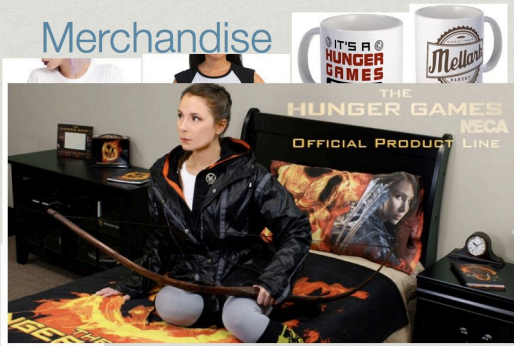
[HTTP://MOCKINGJAY.NET/](http://MOCKINGJAY.NET/)

[HTTP://WWW.JABBERJAYS.NET/](http://WWW.JABBERJAYS.NET/)

[HTTP://WWW.HUNGERGAMESTRIOLOGY.NET/](http://WWW.HUNGERGAMESTRIOLOGY.NET/)

[HTTP://WWW.HUNGERGAMESDWTC.NET/](http://WWW.HUNGERGAMESDWTC.NET/)

Merchandise



Advertising



Genre Tropes

- * The Young Adult Dystopian film has a series of reproducible elements that crop in various incarnations.

Futuristic Post-apocalypse



- * The world involves a post-rebellion world in which order was restored in a way that limits freedom and labels/categorizes individuals.
- * How does this appeal to Young People?

The 'Special'



- * Protagonist is a member of the oppressed class.
- * Protagonist has unique abilities that make them different from the rest.
- * Protagonist becomes a leader amongst the rabble.
- * How would this appeal to young people?

Love Triangle



- * Protagonist has to choose between two love interests of opposing personalities.
- * How does this appeal to the young?

Commodified Resistance

- * Adolescence is a period of individuation.
- * Young People seek Identity, Uniqueness, and freedom from 'oppressive forces'.
- * This is represented in the rebellion of the Young People in the film.

Visible Curriculum

- * The tropes and commodified resistance become the visible curriculum of YA dystopian film.

The Hidden Curriculum

- * The Structure of the theater. (Pay and Obey)
- * The Reproducibility of the form. (Sequels and Genre)
- * The Inevitability of Resolution. (The powers that be can solve all problems!)
- * What is the ideology conveyed in each of these?
- * How is it occluded behind the visible curriculum?

Keynote for Lesson 4

Culture Jamming

A mode of Resistance

Definition

- The act of adapting existing cultural artifacts with the intent of encouraging critical dialogue about the institutions that originally created the Artifact.

Public Pedagogy

- A teaching articulation outside of the formal schooling environment. e.g. Film, Memes, mash-ups, etc.

Dialectical Thought

- Looking for contradictions to open space for individual action.
- Not about resolving tensions but acting within the space.

Open Space

- Sartre- Dialectical Tension (Open space exists between the Author and Reader)



Open Tactical Space

- The tension between the institution and the oppressed opens a space for choice on how to interact with product.



Open Pedagogical Space

- The tension between the what is taught and pre-existing beliefs opens a space to choose how to act.



Detournement

- When the pedagogical space opens up the agent is left to critically reflect on what they believe and what they are being told.
- They then are free to act in response.

Modes of Culture Jamming

- Digital Media- Memes, Mash-ups
- Print Media- Magazines, Pamphlets
- Live Media- Performance Art, Flash Mobs

Keynote for Lesson 5

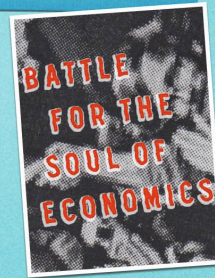
Culture Jamming

Print and Electronic Media

Let's Play!

Adbusters

- ▶ Founded in 1989 in Vancouver, BC
- ▶ Anti-capitalist
- ▶ Pro-environment
- ▶ Promoted *Buy Nothing Day*, *Technology Detox*, and *Occupy Wall Street*.



[https://
www.adbusters.org/](https://www.adbusters.org/)

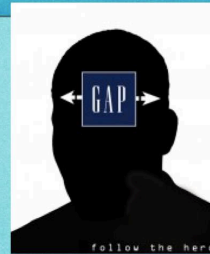
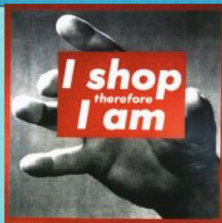
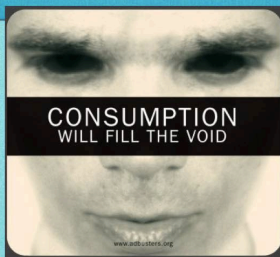
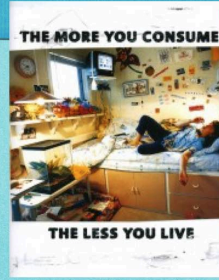
Subvertisements

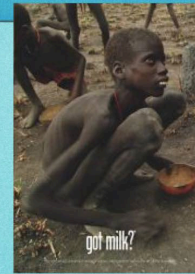
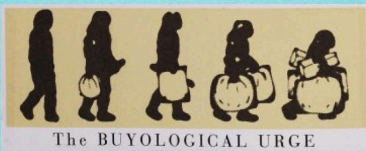
- ▶ Changing a well known Ad to cause the reader to critically reflect on the institution that created it.



Examples







Rebellious Pixels

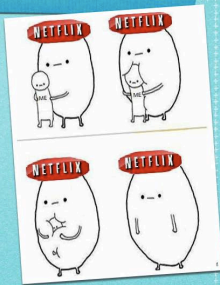
- ▶ Operated by Jonathan Macintosh.
- ▶ Remixes media to create commentary on cultural discourse.
- ▶ Advocate of fair use law.
- ▶ <http://www.rebelliouspixels.com/jonathan-mcintosh>

Other sites

- ▶ <http://www.feministfrequency.com/>
- ▶ <http://www.genderremixer.com/html5/#>

Memes

- ▶ Originated as a way for consumers to critically reflect on content of films.



Problem

- ▶ Because of the fun associated with the meme, eventually they lose critical quality.



Appendix C
I am the Diver-jay!

The stage is empty. All actors are located in the back of the house. They enter in clumps walking down the aisles speaking the following lines. The lines are chosen by actors and delivered at random.

ACTORS

Who is going to help me decide?
If everyone is conforming, the is it really conforming?
I don't know what to do.
Should I fight and risk death?
I won't make a single decision for myself ever again.
Mindlessly following like a drone.
I will still leave more free than I came.
I can still choose to be free.
Life in joy? or life in ignorance.
I'm finding it rather hard to go on.
I'm getting rather bored of this.
The system is so comfortable.
Am I becoming the system?
Is it my duty to change? Is it worth it?
The government is trying to practically brainwash us.
As usual, the special wins and everyone is happy.
So the question is, do I conform or don't I?
Do I really have agency?
Am I just following the herd?
I make my own decisions right?
I'm fighting day in and day out against a system that I am not sure I want to fight.
They're leading me in directions I don't even want to go.
Do I fight to never be accepted?
Anarchy? or Tyranny?
In a world without order, everyone would die.
Nobody wants to be told what to do.
The world worships difference.
Not going to the store, not going to see the movie.
Everyone thinks that they're rebelling is just not.
Not doing anything!
If everyone is standing up to rebel are they really rebelling?
The choice is easy.
It's basically a choice between freedom and happiness.

The looks are so good.
The system is messed up.
The voices in my head are saying no, but my heart is saying yes.
I'm living a lie.
They tell everyone their special
That's what they want us to think.
I can't really make a difference.

As the actors move down the aisle speaking these lines they should speak all at once, but not so much that one cannot hear the individual lines.

Upon reaching the front rows the actors stand near their seats.

SOUND CUE- Warner Bros. Title Music

ACTORS

(Various) The Movies starting! The Movie's starting! Shh! Quiet!

The actors all sit. Three actors, KATNISS, GEETA, and PALE. Ascend the stage. KATNISS stands DC with a picture of Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen in front of her face. GEETA stands UL of KATNISS and PALE stands UR.

GEETA

You're so strong and committed.

PALE

You're so much prettier than the other girls.

An ACTRESS in the audience stands suddenly and runs to the stage.

ACTRESS

I want to be Katniss. I want to be Katniss. She is the best. She's so beautiful. I am SO her!

She wrests the picture of Jennifer Lawrence from KATNISS and takes the same position on the stage.

GEETA

You're so delicate it makes me want to protect you.

PALE

You looked so good picking up that bread in the rain. You were on Fire!

Another ACTRESS stands and runs to the stage.

ACTRESS

It's my turn! It's my turn! I wanna be her!

She rips the picture out of the other actress's hands and pushes her down.

The other actress crawls off stage back to her seat.

GEETA

The way you killed those squirrels...(Satisfied grunt)

PALE

I could be in a hundred hunger games if I could be with you.

ACTRESS

Okay guys, it's time to start a revolution. Who's with me?

PALE

Yeah I think I'm gonna go make some bread.

GEETA

Yeah I Have a lot of family and they're starving. So I'm gonna go hunting.

ACTRESS

No! You guys can't do that! You guys are in love with me so you have to do what I say, because I am the main character.

GEETA

Whoah, you've changed. And it's just not something that I'm that in to. Whatever happened to Katnip...the girl of the woods. (sniffles)

PALE

Let's get out of here.

GEETA and PALE exit. ACTRESS calls after them.

ACTRESS

Wait! Geeta! Pale! How am I supposed to market this thing without a love interest? Wait for

me!

ACTRESS runs off stage in pursuit of the two. They return to their seats.

One Actor stands and repeats one of the lines from the beginning. The others join in until each has said at least one line.

SOUND CUE: New Line Cinema title music.

A group of actors consisting of a TEACHER, four ASSISTANTS, and six students ascend the stage.

ACTORS

(Various) Shh! Quiet! The Movie's starting!

The group on stage sets six chairs DSR. The TEACHER and ASSISTANTS form a line DSL facing the students. The students sit uniformly in their seats.

TEACHER

Now class, the results for your aptitude tests have returned. These results will tell you which faction you belong to and your place in society.

He hands a piece of paper to each student as he tells them their faction.

You are a jock. You are a nerd. You are a cheerleader. You are a musician. You are a student body officer. And you...

He pauses in front of the LAST STUDENT.

I'm sorry but your results were inconclusive. Okay now separate into your factions!

All students but the last get up and join with an ASSISTANTS. The ASSISTANTS put them to work immediately doing tasks related to their faction encouraging them in a manner like unto a drill sergeant. e.g. push-ups for the jock. This continues for about 30 seconds.

The LAST STUDENT stands on her chair.

LAST STUDENT

I want to do drama!

SOUND CUE: Sirens

The students turn to LAST STUDENT and give her the Mockingjay Salute. The ASSISTANTS stand at attention. The audience returns the Mockingjay Salute.

Two GUARDS enter. They force the LAST STUDENT to her knees and shoot her in the head.

SOUND CUE: The Mockingjay Call.

The other students drop the Mockingjay Salute and stand as the ASSISTANTS.

The actors in the audience drop the Mockingjay Salute.

The Guards high five each other as they exit.

TEACHER steps forward.

TEACHER

Never try to leave your faction, because if you do, society will put you right back where you belong.

The actors leave the stage and return to their seats.

The actors stand, turn to the audience and repeat one of their lines from the beginning. When all have spoken they turn and sit.

SOUND CUE: 20th Century Fox title music.

Four Actors, KATNISS 2, INTERVIEWER 1, INTERVIEWER 2, and TRYS, ascend the stage. They stand mirroring each other.

INTERVIEWER 1

Thanks Cheryl. I'm here with the beautiful Katniss Everdeen--

KATNISS 2

Thanks but looks have never been that important to me. I've always felt just average. (Flips hair

and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 1

Tell us about yourself Katniss.

KATNISS 2

I am from district 12. The mining district. It's the poorest of the districts. I have always felt more at home in the woods. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 2

Thanks. I'm reporting here live with none other than the beautiful Trys Prior--

TRYS

Thanks but looks have never been that important to me. I've always felt just average. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 2

So Trys where do you live?

TRYS

I'm from abnegation. We are the poorest of the factions. I've always felt more at home in Dauntless. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 1

Tell me about your family.

KATNISS 2

My father died in a mining accident but I still have my Mother and my sister Prim. I would do anything for her. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 2

Mind telling us about your family?

TRYS

Both my parents died in the rebellion. It's just me and my brother now. I love him a lot. I would do anything for him. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 1

How did you become the leader of the rebellion?

KATNISS 2

It just kind of happened. I did what anyone would do in the situation. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 2

Tell me how you became the leader of the rebellion.

TRYS

It just kind of happened. I did what anyone would do in the situation. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 1

Describe to me your ideal man.

KATNISS 2

Like I said looks have never been that important to me. But if I could choose: tall, blonde, strong, and understanding. Peeta was in the games with me so he gets it. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 2

What do you look for in a potential romantic partner?

TRYS

Well looks aren't really that important to me, but if I could choose: tall, blonde, strong, and understanding. I mean, Four is Divergent with me so he gets it. (Flips hair and poses.)

INTERVIEWER 1 and INTERVIEWER 2

One more question and this is from a fan. Is there any animal that you feel you connect with?

KATNISS 2 and TRYS

(Flips hair and poses.) Birds.

Actors exit stage.

Actors in audience stand and face audience and repeat lines from the beginning of the show. After a few moments of speaking they all begin making their way toward the stage. They all ascend and disperse about the playing area. They freeze except SINGER. She looks about and begins to sing to the tune of 'Hanging Tree' from Mockingjay pt. 1

SINGER

ARE YOU ARE YOU COMING TO THE MOVIE?
THEY SAY THERE WAS A MAN WHO WENT AND SAW ALL THREE
STRANGER THINGS ARE HAPPENING HOW STRANGE WOULD IT BE
IF I STAYED AT HOME SKIPPING THE MOVIE?

During the next verse SINGER touches three FRIENDS

who wake up.

ARE YOU ARE YOU COMING TO THE MOVIE
WHERE THE PEOPLE CALLED FOR ANOTHER ONE TO SEE
STRANGER THINGS ARE HAPPENING HOW STRANGE IT WOULD BE
IF WE STAYED AT HOME SKIPPING THE MOVIE?

*SINGER and FRIENDS go about touching the others
during the third verse. They wake up and look about upon
being touched.*

SINGER and FRIENDS
ARE YOU ARE YOU COMING TO THE MOVIE?
OR ARE YOU GOING TO RUN AND LET YOUR MINDS BE FREE?
STRANGER THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HERE HOW STRANGE WOULD IT BE
IF WE STAYED AT HOME SKIPPING THE MOVIE?

*ALL are now awake and wander around the stage as they
sing.*

ALL
DO YOU DO YOU WANT TO GO AND SEE?
IT MAY ACTUALLY BE A PRETTY GOOD MOVIE?
STRANGE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HERE THE STRANGEST IT WOULD BE
IF WE WENT AND SAW THE FINAL MOVIE.

*The actors except SINGER shift into lines on each side of
the stage and march with heads down back to their seats
during this next verse.*

ALL
HAVE YOU HAVE YOU SEEN THE LAST MOVIE
WHERE KATNISS CAME ON AND TAUGHT US TO BE FREE
STRANGE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HERE BUT NOW WE FINALLY SEE
IT'S A GOOD THING THAT WE WENT TO THE MOVIE!

*The actors turn to the stage and slowly sit during the last
verse.*

SINGER
SHOULD I SHOULD I LET THIS REBELLION DIE
OR SHOULD I STAND TALL AND CONTINUE THE FIGHT?
STRANGE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HER WHO KNOWS WHAT IS RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, I'M ENTANGLED IN THESE LIES.

*The actors in the audience cheer shouting: 'Let's rebel!'
and "Come on let's fight!"*

SOUND CUE: THX music

ACTORS

(Various) Shh! Quiet! The movie's starting!

*SINGER runs down off stage and joins the audience.
Actors stare at an empty stage.*

BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP

*Actors turn to the audience and pass out stickers of the
Mockingjay with the word 'CONFORMITY' written on it.
As they do so they say alternately "Thank you for
conforming" and "Thank you for rebelling"*

*The actors make their way up the aisle and out of the
auditorium.*

FIN