

Enculturation of the Arts

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The Enculturation of the Arts

By

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Background

There is little novelty in the concept of enculturation. It exists in a variety of disciplines and social situations. Research into specific enculturation practices, patterns, and effects ranges from the typically sociologic, *Best Practices for Enculturation* (Boyle, P., & Boice), to the **extraordinary**, Alan Bishop's *Mathematical Enculturation: A Cultural Perspective on Mathematics* (1991). Perhaps as part of a growth in the accessibility of information, the cross pollination of formerly specific cultural aspects has witnessed a consistent growth in contemporary history. In kind, the interest in culture and intercultural study has grown. In Robertson's often cited **Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture**, he writes "by now it must surely be clear to

most sociologists that in contemporary sociology and social theory that there is an awakening . . . of interest in the social relevance as well as the intrinsic significance of culture and cultural change" (Robertson, 1992, p. 32).

The new media arts, although not the only artistic endeavor effected by the growth of enculturation is an excellent subject for the evaluation of this process. New media art is a distinctly acculturated art practice. It sits at the nexus between a wide, and often changing variety of artistic cultures. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of this art, the new media artists often float between science and art disciplines. It is this edge at which intriguing acculturation of science and art occurs. This is what Lev Manovich (2002) described as "the computerization of culture" which "not only

leads to the emergence of new cultural forms such as computer games and virtual worlds; it redefines existing ones such as photography and cinema” (p. 9).

Responding to substantial changes within two cultures is an everyday fact of the new media arts. They must be acculturated in order to exist. The culture of technology and that of art, are the subjects and tools integrated into new media art. Again, in Manovich’s (2002) words, “the gradual computerization of culture will eventually transform all of it” (p. 6). Here, that which existed in extra-technical space of artistic endeavor, finds itself blending with the technical. Two cultures are acculturated to make a third. The resultant cultural accumulation is the focus of this chapter.

The cultural aspects, here described, are limited in scope to those characteristics best understood as part of western tradition of art making and evaluation. The reasons for limiting the scope include the popular dominance of these approaches, the author’s proximity to these cultures, and the abundance of writing about them. While it would be interesting to develop sharp contrasts, and use other cultures as a kind of touchstone, the resulting analysis would be the subject of a book, not merely an expository chapter. Instead, I invite readers to develop and investigate their own hypothesis about the relationship of art, culture and education after reading this chapter. This writing serves only as a starting point from which to begin such investigations.

Background: Research in Multiple Disciplines

Anthropological and sociological analysis of the culture of art is not a novel practice. Bourdieu’s *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* serves as an argumentative base within the social sciences for the relationship of cultural standards and art value. The book includes an analysis of the economy of cultural worth that proves relevant more than twenty years after its publication. In the introduction of his work he states “scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education:” (Bourdieu, 2007,

p9). It is this observation that functions as one of the foundations for this chapter. If culture is provided by education, than an analysis of education may illuminate how the creative process is affected.

In concert with the academic, there is much written by contemporary essayists about cultures of art production and their relationship to society. One such book, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, by Greil Marcus, serves not as academic support of the focus of this chapter, but as evidence confirming the permeative character of distinct cultural ideologies. Marcus serves a history that, perhaps unintentionally, supports the claims of this chapter. As told, punk music, even in its purported efforts to develop an anarchist, anti-establishment movement works within deeply engrained cultural ideologies. Here, the master example of the punk group, the Sex Pistols, provides evidence of deep enculturation among artists working against cultural standards. Marcus’s history demonstrates the affinity between the worlds of punk musicians, Situationist manifestos, and Dadaist poetry (1990). Marcus demonstrates, through a disparate collection of artists’ mediums and ideologies, that there are common cultural threads that exist in an intersection of time and social situation (1990).

The range and variety of writing about the culture of art stands as evidence of not only its existence, but of its complicated nature. It is not enough to describe it once. It is instead **investigated** and reinvestigated as the subject of academic and non-academic critique. It rests between that which can be assessed through scientific evaluation, and that which requires entirely qualitative research.

Background: Innovation of Invention

To understand enculturation as it relates to creative efforts, it is first important to distinguish innovation from invention. Innovation is the subset of creativity which emulates, and derives. Invention is the creation of entirely new products, ideas or the like. This dichotomy between invention and innovation finds the most usage in neither science, nor in art. This distinction is more often made in two

unlikely complements, business and education. Betty Edwards', *Drawing on the Artist Within: A Guide to Innovation, Invention, Imagination and Creativity* champions specific educational approaches that foster development of these distinct areas of creative process (Edwards 1986). To understand the distinction from an artistic analogy, consider innovation kin to drawing a familiar form from a reference, while invention is subject-less creation of form without reference.

Business, particularly as it orbits Information Technology and Intellectual Property, sharply defines the distinction between invention and innovation. In a National Institute of Technology Standards paper assessing the business of technology, the authors describe the difference between invention and innovation. In this paper, Branscomb and Auerswald, write "*invention* is distinguished from an innovation by its character as pure knowledge. The direct products of a technological invention are not goods or services *per se*, but the recipes used to create the goods and services" (2002). Supporting distinctions are provided by both the international business community, as in the paper "Sustainable Innovation as a Corporate Strategy" (Khan, Al-Ansari, 2005), and in the domestic business writing provided by the Industrial Research Institute (Roberts 1988)

This writing does not seek to be a critical evaluation of the art making process, but instead an opportunity to step away from current patterns for a kind of social-scientific evaluation of process. If an anthropological distance is encouraged, then there is an opportunity to understand the *why* in certain cultural patterns.

The Cultural Characteristics of Art Production

In anthropological study, it is important to identify particular cultural aspects in order to analyze their relationship to themselves and others. As such, the following few paragraphs enumerate the primary characteristics of the modern, American and European art production process. This study also seeks to consider critical aspects of what the Western world distinguishes as commercial and non-commercial art work.

Much has been written about the tension between these two arts. It is true that some artists intersect at the fulcrum of these two, and that all art may be considered commercial through some perspectives. It is however more important for this study to rely on the traditional definitions that conveniently define distinct barriers between that which is commercial and that which is not. Here commercial arts are those which were made with the distinct goal of selling a product, while non-commercial arts are all other academic, outsider, or artistic productions not intended to sell a specific product.

Cultural Characteristics: Critique

Critique as a formal process predates the invention of new media arts. Traditionally it is the primary evaluative means under which art is shaped and aligned. There is a specific language to critique, that like most sub-specialty diction, purposes to increase the clarity of communication by defining specialized terminology relevant to critique. These terms include subject, medium, and others. Such terms have been absorbed into popular **use** as people outside the art community are exposed to the art production process through courses, behind the scenes content, interviews, and their own art critiques.

One hint at the cultural history of the language of critique suggests its cultural presupposition. The specific language of critique, the diction with which one communicates about a work is designed not to be interdisciplinary, but to be the opposite. The words with which we critique are meant to be specific, useful in abstract across domains, but in particulars only in analogy. Consider the challenge of describing the characteristics of a new media piece. Unlike the traditional arts, which have predefined terms for their descriptions, most of the language of new media critique is borrowed. For Manovich's, *The Language of New Media*, terminology must be adapted from computer science (2002). For others, it may be the opposite. According to Kessler & Bergs (2003), society responds to its technology to produce language developed from the use of new media. The indication from either perspective is that there is **insufficient** language to describe new

media. Interestingly the critique is preserved as an effective tool, although the **tool's** standard form of communication falls short of critique's needs.

Cultural Characteristics: Consensus Building

The culture of contemporary art production favors consensus building. An integral part of the critique process is a shared explanation of **one's** art. The formal critique, for example, often begins with an artist sharing their work with an audience, explaining their goals and objectives and then listening to a panel of specialists who offer their feedback on the artist's perceived fidelity to such goals. Under this approach, the badge of a successful work is in the consensus of the critics. If the respected professionals consider the work to be strong as a group, then it is understood that the critique went well.

Critical evaluation of the last few observations of this process should concern both the philosopher and the sociologists. First, the individual response is merely a part of a group, which in democratic societies may be perceived as an ideological success. Yet, sociologists recognize that groups do not always make the same decisions that individuals make. Groups make the decisions groups make. The consensus built by the evaluating mass, may not be consensus delivered by individuals evaluating individually. In particular, the observation of one evaluator, may lead successive observation and comments made by those who follow. Even the most seasoned critics fall off topic because of intellectual curiosity or social dynamics.

Now consider that there abound on the Internet informal and formal copies of this process in varied scale. At nearly every point at which an artist can share their work, an opportunity for others to evaluate their work exists. These include rating scales, comment boxes, and popularity ranks. From deviantart.com images to Youtube.com videos, the artists on the Internet are encouraged to use consensus as an evaluator of their work. Yet, through cultural value systems, it is understood that these places lack the academic rigor required for serious consideration in the art world.

Cultural Characteristics: Academic Approval and Process

Academics are institutionalized artifacts of the development of art works, art production and development. There has been much written in and out of the academic domain about the value of academic art training and development, the survey of which is too large to present in this document. Instead, it is most important to identify that the structure of academic institutions has been a significant aspect of the development of most artistic critique and production.

Art schools, both commercial and non-commercial, are culturally recognized institutions for the development of artistic skill. The promise of art schools vary from the practical objective of placing students in art making jobs to the abstract of improving artistic process and rigor. The latter is more often the promise of traditional art institutions, while the former is promised by career oriented commercial schools. While the subjects of both institutions may vary, the process of education is typically very similar. They each rely heavily on the enculturated aspects of art production: critique and consensus building.

Art schools, however, add the third dimensions of art instruction to art production. Identifying, evaluating, and promoting art instructors varies by institutional level. At the primary level, art education is primarily executed by individuals trained in arts education. These are individuals who have devoted some post secondary level of their education to understanding how to educate others in the process of creating artists' works. At the secondary level there may be a hybrid of art education trained artists and practicing artists, whose primary focus is arts education. Finally, at the postsecondary level, the educators typically shift from people trained in educating artists, to people trained or practicing in particular arts. Most postsecondary education is provided by artists, not by art educators. This is of particular dilemma at institutions that are seeking to provide an education that is about process, not production. To be a good practicing artist, as evaluated by these institutions, you need not be well-versed in the variety of artistic process; you need only

know that artistic process that has proven successful for you as an artist. Success in the postsecondary education academic universe is a practice in one's own practice, not in the exploration of others. Excluding the dominant practices of art historians, who do routinely investigate art process, art production instructors at the post-secondary level do not need to survey, they need to produce.

Beyond the particular goals of their institutions, what many good art professors have proven is that they know how to navigate the academic terrain. They are then good teachers for future teachers, but they are not necessarily good teachers for future practitioners.

This is not an attack on the institutions, or the institutional machine. Instead it is an observation about the culture. To teach computer programming, one must understand computer programming. To provide effective critique, one must understand art, not necessarily how art is produced.

This may be a result of the cultural reliance on production process and a separation of art from the everyday. Where some academic enterprises are seeking to refine, evaluate and critique process, many artists are asked to explain, and repeatedly invent the process through which they make their art. This process orientation is not historically the same in Asian cultures where "appreciating art was often integrated into everyday life rather than being considered something special"(Grau p. 279). This perhaps, is because "a distinction between art, entertainment, and commercial products did not exist"(Grau p. 279). Consider the work of Takashi Murakami, for example, whose factory oriented production process does not devalue the value of his individual works within Asian cultures. In such an environment the line between commercial and non-commercial art is blurred, and as result process becomes ancillary.

The use, again, of websites, actually moves the western cultures toward the eastern evaluation criterion. In the online gallery spaces, where artists share their work of various digitized mediums, there exists an *almost marketplace* of art. The art is shared, it is evaluated, and it is

given accolades, but it is rarely given money. The interesting thing here is that work published on the internet, by amateur and professional artists is rarely provided compensation for the quality of the work, although the gallery through which it is shown is wholly reliant on artist contribution. The marketplace of art is then neither Eastern, where commercial art and non commercial find similar compensating models, nor in the Western traditional, where the compensation models are sharply contrasted between commercial and non-commercial. Of course, the Internet provides a space where geographic distances mean little, and culture mixes more readily.

Cultural Characteristics: The Gallery

The traditional gallery represents the artistic marketplace of western art. It serves as the place for display, recognition and compensation for artistic works. A gallery's reputation is built on its curatorial practice. A gallery that is selective demonstrates a rigor that the culture of art identifies as important. Thus, a web based gallery, with an all artists welcome approach provides little recognition for the artist's work. Acceptance into a non-selective gallery means little in art culture's value system. Wide, positive review, on the other hand, does provide a specific brand of recognition. The dilemma is then that web-based galleries provide a wide audience, and the possibility of wide recognition, where the traditional gallery space offers its opposite. Traditional galleries, because of the physical truth of offering only limited hours of access, limited capacity, and limited location, provide recognition through acceptance and promotion. To be shown at the Art Institute of Chicago proves greater accomplishment than Google video, simply because the artist has matriculated through successive evaluations. In short, the process of achieving the highest honors in art production is often not only a test of one's ability to produce art, but to navigate the process of art promotion. An artist who is shown in a well-respected gallery may not be the greatest artist, but they are good at getting into well respected galleries.

These claims are old claims, but what is important is to understand the cultural

implications. Consider the well published fact that many gallery spaces are not conducive to the display of new media art (Grau 2007 p. 251). Where then does new media art exist? It generally must find its gallery space in mass media. This often means web- based galleries or specialty arenas like nightclubs and raves. The result is a tightly coupled affinity between the patterns of new media art and the practices of the commercial world. The venues for display of new media art tend to coincide with commercial spaces. These include public spaces. Coupled with designs consistent relationship with commercial arts, the relationship mirrors itself across multiple artistic disciplines. The nightclub DJ works with the VJ artist, for example.

The web-based gallery, on the other hand creates a scenario of self-replication. Since the curatorial measure of success on the web is largely popularity, artists receive positive feedback when their work is highly popular. Popularity is not necessarily derived from quality, but simply from novelty, whether positive or negative. The first naked body on the internet, for example, would be very popular, but in a sea of naked bodies, there is a competitive space. The resulting scenario is that images of largely attractive or unattractive bodies become the novelties that draw attention. The positive is popular for its general appeal, while the negative for the appeal of its repulsion, or the rarity of its experience. This same scenario plays itself out on the repositories of video prevalent on the web. In a short period, producers of film, for example, note what has succeeded or failed, and seek to drive even further in the direction of their experience. If a tribute montage of popular film draws attention, the amateur chooses a film they believe to need better tribute, and soon enough they are providing their own tribute montage. The result is a collage of references, a series of simulations, and self replications. These creative efforts are poured into trying to make something like something else, or decant the best of their subject. They are, innovating on an existent work. While the artistic quality of their creations is varied, the core is still the same. They start from common points of departure, not new locations. Since raw

popularity rules such spaces, innovation succeeds because it is based on the familiar.

It is also worth noting that this pattern is a marketplace pattern. It is the analogous to the cycle of video games clones, of replicas, and of re-release.

Cultural Characteristics: Distinctions between Art, Design and Science

The culture of art understanding defines divisions between the arts and sciences. It later offers a third, born from these two. We call it design. Design is the progeny of art and science, not fully science and not fully art. Yet, critical examination of this enculturated aspect leaves the science of art and the art of science production bastardized. Such a division, or the very desire for need for such divisions, leaves the new media artist in a no man's land between the two great disciplines. An electronic device designed by an artist to produce new musical tones, is, by contemporary definition neither wholly art nor wholly science. It is a product of design, with an artistic aspiration, but a functional purpose, that is implemented through scientific process. The question is then, where does this device rest. Is it at home in a gallery? Gallery spaces have a very particular "look but don't touch" policy, which orphans this device among paintings, video, and sculpture. Is it at home, or does it belong in a scientific journal? It lacks the rigor of scientific research, and the practical application required of many journals. Lastly, design offers a home for it; save for the fact that design offers only the devices used by its ancestors, gallery or journal. This is the fate of many new media arts. They are destitute in the marketplace of ideas, because they are mixed breed arts. They exist, but their existence frustrates the cultural definition of pure science and pure art.

Coupled with the lack of appropriate gallery space, the new media artists find themselves working closely with the commercial arts. The graphic designer works with the web designer to create a consistent *look and feel*, for example.

The Pattern of Innovation and the Genius of Creativity

The cultural history of art production in the Western world is old. It saturates the everyday, expressing itself in crayon drawn works posted on refrigerators, or the layout of furniture in a room. The world is understood by our society as a gallery, a forum for critique, a science or an art, a response to consensus, or matriculation through an academic rite of passage. The transparency of these perspectives makes them unquestionable truths. Their adoption is how everyday life becomes enculturated.

Unfortunately, enculturation can act like an infection. It gets under the skin of creative efforts and spreads, suppurating overused ideology and reeking of what has been. The most creative art is that which is not infected by what has been explored. It is not within the affectations of art instruction, of rewards for simulating accepted methodologies and means of evaluation. Quality creativity is outside culture. It exists in the outsider, who visits but for a moment, to exclaim their brilliance, and then secede from society to perhaps exclaim again. The history of art innovation often breeds and champions the opposite. It loves the orphaned progeny of a dominant school who returns from hiatus with the spoils of another culture's approach. These approaches are then adopted and become part of the general enculturation infection.

Consider the common pattern of a new technology. When the technology is first used, it is novel, exciting and even inspiring. The result is a barrage of imitations. The pattern falls on the adage, *the sincerest form of praise is in imitation*. The visual novelty of the motion picture Matrix included the concept of bullet time. This technique originally employed adaptation of stop-motion animation concepts and multiple cameras, to display a live-action subject in mid-action during a slow motion 360 degree dolly (Orek 1999). Within a year of its release, multiple films and video games used the same visual effect, in tribute, jest and homage. The effect traveled from professional to amateur, down a hierarchy of technology. It is now a standard which has remained, especially among video game designers. It is adopted, and

now rests under all creative efforts as a possible solution. It floats in the sea of creative devices, to be innovated upon by later artistic efforts. Like zoom or pull focus, it is likely to be reinvented, through derivation, by countless artists.

The same pattern is displayed ostensibly in the history of Apple computer-inspired design. At the introduction of the translucent iMac in 1998, its aesthetic became a hallmark of not only the company's design, but of industrial design in general. The clunky lines of an electric grill become the sleek, white lines of a George Foreman grill. Websites seek white and plastic glows. The world innovates on a central design.

How Culture is Given

There is little that can be produced in a society that is not polluted by its own rewards systems. What is produced is solicited, not by the patron, but by the rewards of socially accepted production. A child that draws is rewarded for better simulating, and as such seeks to better simulate. If they understood their subject, say a person, a plane, their pet dog, and the need to envision it in a way other than what is prescribed, they are given transparent praise. Ultimately, their work is immediately compared to the previous renditions of similar subjects. This is a form of enculturation, for culture is not innate, it is given.

The world for these artists exists then only in comparison. It exists because we know how its elements interact. We do not know one thing without its other. We do not know the world without the signs of the world. We do not know existence, without the way in which our senses react to that world. We are then in constant opposition. We can imagine, only in that we imagine what can be described by a relationship to what exists. We can describe only in our words, we can imagine only in what we understand through those words. Our perception is a menagerie of comparisons, a constant description of what is and what could be compared to what is. We do not understand the nether regions of possibility, because we

have been blinded to it. We see what our infected senses allow us to see. Perspective exists because we have been taught perspective. Balance exists because we have been taught balance.

If the world was not prescribed to us, we might prescribe solutions that are not reinventions of what we have already experienced, they may actually be new materializations. As one new to philosophy might ask, what is the color blue if you and I don't agree to call that particular combination of light properties blue? I cannot see through your eyes, I do not understand what blue means in the synapses of your brain, but you and I have agreed to call it blue. So too, you and I have agreed to call it quality, or to call it rational because we have both been infected with the same doctrines. We both limp about our worlds with the same wounds. We both have the same dumbness because we have both experienced the same enculturation.

The infection is only spreading. We are indoctrinating remote societies with ideology, inoculating them from potentials outside our constructions. However, it is in those remote societies that the greatest revelations may be derived. The purest notions, those that are least derivative, are those which have not been exposed to the subject, and thus can not mirror it. Insight and creativity are often available through the uninitiated.

The central dilemma of enculturation in the arts demonstrates itself as a subject of critique for audio arts of the last century. As artistic composers in the 20th century evaluated the possibility of sound beyond definition, and experimented with extra-musical sounds, they have come across this dilemma. How do you define sound, when sound has already been defined? All that is left is redefinition. To redefine is to innovate. It is taking an element that already exists, the definition, and refining it. Redefinition is a derivation from a skeleton, and a reassertion of that definition. To redefine space, is to reorganize it or re-appropriate its original intention for a new intent. Redefinition does not exist without the former state, and as such is permanently bound to it. Without reference, such effort ceases to be. These are all bound in innovation.

Yet, creativity lacks that other world changing event – the invention. Invention is typically considered the domain of science. To invent is to create what has not been. When the light bulb was invented, light did exist, but indoor electrical light did not. To invent is not merely to derive from what has already existed, an addition, or reapplication, but to make what did not exist, exist. If the wheel is an invention, the unicycle or bicycle, are innovations on the wheel. Without the wheel neither vehicle exists, but without bicycles, the wheel will remain. Innovative art exists as a stem on the trunk of historically invented art. Innovative art only self-replicates, in a kind of recursive motion, inventing ever smaller, ever more self referential innovations on the same invention. Such art is a fractal, capable of creating new through revisions of the former.

Invention is the seed from which that fractal is born. Invention was the ability to preserve the intersection of time and light into photographic image. Innovation created moving film and color photography. Invention changes the world; innovation is what moves it in specific directions.

Imagine then that innovation has as its motivator, reason. This is, after all, a fundamental aspect in the current standards of art and design. If reason does motivate innovation, than the innovation works toward its purpose. An innovation in automobile design creates a more fuel efficient car. An invention in the world of automobiles may obliterate the need for automobiles. If an innovation destroys its subject, it not considered an innovation. It becomes something new, or invention.

Invention may serve as an anarchist's tool, shaking up a status quo without specific intent. An innovation, on the other hand, can serve to strengthen the status quo, or a particular position. Consider the innovation to make a car more fuel efficient. A hybrid automobile is an innovation in automobile design. It encourages the continued use of autos, but does not negate them. No new concept for the use of automobiles can, by definition, make automobiles obsolete. They can only re-appropriate its uses. Overtime the electric light

bulb did make its predecessor, the candle, obsolete for the bulk of its uses. The electric light bulb is not an innovation on the candle, nor on fire, it is an invention which subverts the use of candles and of at least one use of fire.

The politics of preserving enculturation then seem apparent. If an automobile company inspired the invention of something beyond the automobile, it could destroy its own industry. An electric light bulb would not be invented by a candle maker. Yet, both would encourage the innovation on each. Improved candles sell more candles, and improved cars sell more cars. To preserve itself culture must encourage innovation over invention.

Innovation has historically persevered. It was apparent in the use of crosses in architecture. When the cross became too prevalent, the symbol was substituted, but still people championed a language of symbols. Ever wonder why history seems to read like a steady line, with short, stubby, offshoots? This is because the vast majority of people working on that art have been innovating on the same theme. They are trained, and when they are not trained, they are still trained. To see an artist make money, or to see an artwork become famous, means that the artist has received training. Even the outsider artists had a kindergarten art teacher, or an uncle who provided them positive or negative feedback on their creation. To be a part of society in any way, means that one is enculturated.

The intention of innovation is what helps the process of enculturation. That which is invented is not purposed, and its lack of purpose therefore fails to support any dominant regimes. An art teacher for example, cannot endorse an invention simply because it fails the rules of art design. An invention does not contribute in an obvious way. It does not start from a familiar point and move forward. An invention creates a radical shift, to which the world must often catch up. The discovery of new land does not result in the immediate exploration of it, simply the acknowledgement that it does exist. So too, when faced with inventive technologies, the world does not respond by embracing it, it waits to understand what it may subvert.

This may be the reason the world is bereft of invention, and full of innovation.

This is the danger with experience. Experience remains, even if it is forgotten. A positive experience is a positive experience and it reinforces continued behavior. Consider the experience of the senses. If a person is born blind, they may not know shadow, and they may not want for it. Yet, the person who is sighted notices a shadow's absence in even the simplest drawings. To invent, the inventor must be blind to specific experiences.

To define the experience to which one must be blind in order to invent would be to miss the concept entirely. It is not something that necessitates a closing of one's eyes in order to prevent enculturation from happening. Instead, it requires a willing exploration into what is not being explored. To be an inventor, one must look for the spaces that are lacking definition, which like the anthropological world have not been explored.

Defining the Map

Anytime that a people feel they have explored everything or read the limits of their world, an adventurer discovers something new. When the world was flat, it determined to be round. When the world was the center of the universe, it was discovered to be but a speck in a sea of galaxies. This is the pattern of humanity discovery. A void is absent, discovered, and filled. The dilemma for many artists, is then defining what has not been explored. Again, the problem is that enculturation dictates their map of the world. They understand the world as being somewhere between art and science. They understand the world as defined by Euclid, Plato or Paul Rand. The world is what they have experienced. This is a kind of natural topography that people form. They want to learn, so they travel the outlines. The world begins to take definition. As they make that definition, the shape forms. Those who look to find color beyond the lines of the shape are dismissed for the threat they create. The reward for exploration is small. The adventure is marginalized.

To expand the metaphor, we do not send inventors out to sea to bring back the spoils of unexplored land. We send innovators, to confirm our maps, and support our understanding that we have seen the limits. Consider the experience of electronic musician and composer of *Musique Concrete*, Pierre Schaeffer. After a lifetime of pursuing musical sound beyond the conventional definition of music, he “returned to the notion that no music was outside of conventional musical sound” (Kahn 1999 p.110). In short, he felt he discovered nothing beyond the map which had already been drawn.

The assumed corollary is too simply derived. If we need a Christopher Columbus to find colonies and define the missing parts of the map, what will the result be? Will it follow the result of colonization, polluting and terrorizing native concepts? Will it infect and perhaps even destroy the power of enculturation? Again, if enculturation is an infection, does a kind of cure exist for it? These questions rise from an enculturated mind. If we understand something we seek to find analogy in it. Analogy is what makes understanding easier, but it may not make it better. The entire world of sciences is polluted by analogies, that when properly examined admit their own breakdown. The world of art, instead finds analogy in relationships. Each art work, the current science of art critique suggests, is really a part of a vast network of ideas and previous art works. Yet, what was the last new invention of new art critique? When was the last time science designed an evaluative approach outside of the scientific method?

The problem is that to invent such things would mean deriving them. To know that you are reinventing scientific method means that you have experienced the scientific method. Instead the inventor of something deemed a new scientific method, will be analogized to the scientific method. Human understanding is bound to what has been understood. This means that enculturation is not avoidable. It is not something that can be born, it is something that must exist.

The next most likely place to seek the inventor is to seek those people who are so out of touch with what is happening that they may be considered absent from the culture entirely. In common terms, these are the *crazy* people. They are the clinically, psychologically absent. The ones to which we assign the label of extraordinary in the extreme. Perhaps if we seek to understand their behaviors, creations, exercises outside of analogy, and outside of base, they may actually have something we deem valuable. In such a world the genius may need to be crazy. They may need to be detached from standard experience in a way that makes them capable of invention. If they are not capable of invention, they may still offer perspective which is not obscured by the lineage of cultural standards.

Yet, current definitions of quality necessitate a more practical solution. Besides, logical, thoroughly enculturated individuals are not capable of looking beyond the enculturation to see value in the observations of the extra-cultural. People cannot see crazy as a probable source of invention, as once we could perceive of only a geocentric universe. The result for some must then exist in more practical solutions that are practicable by participants who are enculturated. One such practicable solution that finds much proof of success in art history is called the orphaned protégé.

The Orphaned Protégé

Art history has proven the story of *Oliver Twist*, or *Little Orphan Annie*, to be allegory. Those separated early from their roots, and then magically reunited offer tremendous insight. Art adores the Picasso, who trains classically, discovers what existed, and declares it new. An artist is revered if they seek what exists, and innovates upon it. They adore that which finds, steals and brings it home (Tator, et al. 1998). They love that which turns into analogy, the former invention, to be packaged as innovation.

Another art-historical approach is the temporary escape by the trained artist. Such pilgrimages include cross-cultural immersions, retreats, or investigations. The most extreme involve a complete divorce from enculturation by use of drugs, in the pursuit of synesthetic episodes. Their work, although stemming from a practice

rejected by many contemporary artists, does provide an opportunity for artists to explore beyond that which culture has defined. Their short-lived explorations often resulted in production of some extra-cultural ideas, but at the cost of their own health. Unfortunately, this kind of self sacrifice is commonly the fate of the orphaned protégé.

While an orphaned protégé situation may be practiced, it is not one that people readily engage. It offers tremendous benefit to the process of art production but with obvious cost to the artist. There exist, still more practicable solutions that offer diminished results, but move toward the reversal of enculturation.

Conclusion: How to Explore Invention

There are several practices which will help the creative individuals escape the conventional effects of enculturation described in this chapter. The following suggestions seek to present starting points for at least the derivation of new process that move toward invention instead of innovation. The irony, that these processes in themselves are innovations, only indicates the pervasiveness of true invention.

The simplest of all techniques to encourage invention are reversals or omissions of the specific practices already employed. If for example, critique is extensively employed in a specific environment, removal of a critique-based evaluation may alleviate that strain on the creative process. Of course, the absence of specific cultural aspects does not remove the culture, but it does remove the reinforcement of that culture. If a person's daily experience does not include specific cultural aspects, there is more opportunity to deviate from its definitions. Such absence is a mini-departure. It is both a safe and inexpensive journey, with little risk, and minor reward.

An alternative solution, if we accept that enculturation is a process of exposure, is to limit exposure entirely. The hope is that some invention may be derived from inexperience. Following the teaching philosophies often visited in the 1960s, it takes more work to un-teach what has been learned than to simply avoid teaching them entirely. The omission of

traditional winner-loser competition in primary school is such an example. Although the subject of much formal and informal critique, supporters and non-supporters are most concerned with its effect. There is no doubt, for those who care about such omissions, that there will be an effect. One side argues that it is utopist fantasy void of real world analogy, the other champions its' confidence building and support. No end of the spectrum argues its lack of effect. It would then follow logic, that if an essential aspect of the modern art culture is widely omitted, it may find similar effect.

Begin a critical forecasting of such results by removing a gallery orientation, from primary through secondary education. When art is shown, but not produced, students may not consider social response in the production of their art. With the risk of not being placed on the refrigerator, or on the walls of the classroom removed, students might take greater risk. Speculatively, art production for such students might become a very personal process. Art may also realign toward a different kind of purposeful production. Instead of accomplishing the goal of recognition; it might serve an invented purpose. Invention of the light bulb for example, was not a project derived for the purpose of recognition; it was designed for the purpose of light. By removing the gallery as the central aim of achievement, the achiever may work toward another intended goal such as understanding a process or creating a previously non-invented item. Instead of demonstrating understanding that will gain the approval of the reviewer, the work may allow the student to gain understanding.

Consider another, more moderate situation. Imagine a critique under which a college art instructor increased the consensus or critique base from students in the same discipline to students in multiple disciplinary bases. Envision a situation in which all critics are encouraged to critique the art from the perspective through which they were trained. By increasing the consensus base, the kind of incestuous enculturation that occurs when art students critique similarly trained students is mediated by fresh perspective. This may be particularly effective if the student critiquing has no immediate experience with the work, and works

from their non-art perspective. Instead of asking artists if the art is good, ask the non artist what they experience. Such activities also work against the encultured divisions of art and science, and deteriorate the construction of distinctions.

While it is true that grander results may be borne from further points of departure, they are also not well suited for the inexperienced. It is unpractical to assume that students, for example, will take to an entire omission of art-cultural aspects positively. Such students must continue to act within the rest of the world, which as described, is rich with cultural expectation. Such students would become a subculture which might be capable of innovating, but only on what was provided in substitute. Thus if the students are heavily encultured with an alternative mode of teaching which turns away from the standard practices, they may merely be enculturated with the alternative mode of teaching instead. Every culture is a culture, and its effects remain. The force of daily operation within cultural constraints forms the process and attention of the artists within them.

It would then seem clear that there is a kind of stalemate. If there is not an opportunity to build a separate culture, and the current culture leaves the artist in an innovative rut, what is left? The answer is what it has often been – what we seek not to acknowledge. If an absence from society yields inventive solutions, than one must be absent to facilitate that process. Although contrary to the institutionalized spirit of academic practice, it is a viable solution. Yet, it is not an anti-academic endeavor. Consider the idea that new media artists must be both scientist and artist. If the new media artist wants to invent, instead of innovate, they could avoid the environment which seeks to develop their creative efforts in traditional ways. Simply, they should invest in scientific academic pursuit, and remain absent from academic art. They will likely become enculturated with a process that will acculturate with their existing artistic practice. Instead of pursuing the same goals that each peer artist has admired, they will be exposed, and hopefully enculturated, with the admirations of scientists.

The forward-looking critique of such a process yields a new dilemma. If every artist is engaged in non-art academic training, then there would become a new culture of non-artist trained artists. That is, the culture would then become a culture of mixed cultures. The results are a kind of fractal recursion where subdivision yields but a finer image of what already was. However, for a brief moment, such departures yield a new form. They serve to invent themselves.

Some of these techniques have been practiced in whole or in part by alternative colleges or by art schools seeking to encourage invention. However, much of this effort has been in pursuit of specific critique of the art evaluation process, or of education itself. Instead, it may help to evaluate the pattern of social and artistic enculturation to find patterns that alleviate these problems. A school, for example, that removes grades but maintains a strong focus on gallery showings and publication has simply changed the focus of their grades. To step outside of enculturated concepts requires a complete removal of the enculturated concept. One is not healthy unless the infection is completely removed.

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Terminology

Acculturation: change that occurs through the modification, adoption, or adapting a neighboring cultures characteristics.

Art culture: The value systems, beliefs, and habits of the society of artists.

Enculturation: The transparent integration of a culture's beliefs into one's personal beliefs

Extra-cultural: The values, beliefs and habits which rest outside the perception, or acknowledgement of the given culture.

Innovation: The derivation of creative efforts that builds, modify, or is directly reliant on an existing artifacts.

Invention: The creation of objects, ideas, or other items not previously conceived.