

AN AESTHETIC EDUCATION: CONCEPTUALIZING EDUCATION THROUGH
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND THEIR WORKS

MELANIE BOURKE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN EDUCATION
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

August 2014

© Melanie Bourke, 2014

ABSTRACT

This dissertation inquires into a theory of learning through an examination of the intersection of art and education. With the work of educational theorists who explore how art may call our attention to the conflicts and contradictions that reside in education, the dissertation asks how we might understand an education that requires intervention. Drawing upon Adorno's philosophical theories of negativity and aesthetics and psychoanalytic theories, I suggest that an analysis of the relationship between art and education can be furthered through the study of contemporary artists and their works. The focus is on the visual and written works of Kara Walker, Christian Boltanski, and Roee Rosen. Three tensions are explored: 1) that education resides in the realm of both social discourse and psychical life; 2) that education is composed from its limitations and possibilities; and, 3) disruption in a theory of learning is both a necessity and a new problem. The dissertation argues that the relationship between art and education constitutes a theory of learning that is also a delicate balance between the disruption of conflicted conditions and the re-construction of new ideas. Further, it is a theory where learning cannot be anticipated, but instead only reported on in retrospect. Learning therefore involves the paradox that a possibility for new understandings comes at the risk of a failure to understand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my time in the Faculty of Education at York University, I was fortunate to take part in many interesting and engaging conversations with faculty members and students. A special thank you to my writing group members Mary Harrison, Anne Stebbins, Taunya Tremblay, and Karen Kugelmass. Thank you for your kindness, friendship, and intellectual feedback over the past several years.

Thank you to my committee members Mario Di Paolantonio and Carol Zemel for offering generous and thoughtful feedback on drafts of the dissertation. And, thank you to Aparna Mishra-Tarc for and Ruben Gatambide-Fernandez for offering some challenging and interesting thoughts on the dissertation at the defence.

To my supervisor, Deborah Britzman, thank you for the attention and care you took to reading many drafts of my work, for challenging me in my thinking, and for introducing me to the work of Kara Walker. You have made me a better thinker. Thank you, Deborah.

Thank you to my daughter, Baylee Bourke, for your support, love, and friendship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION.....	1
Conceptual Overview of the Project.....	4
Negativity and Walker.....	7
Historical Memory and Boltanski	8
Aesthetics and Rosen.....	9
Culmination of an Aesthetic Education	10
Methodology.....	10
CHAPTER TWO—AN UNCANNY INSURRECTION: DEBATING NEGATIVITY IN THE WORK OF KARA WALKER.....	14
The Debates.....	17
Reading the Negative: Walker’s Fantasies and Ours.....	22
An Uncanny Insurrection.....	34
CHAPTER THREE—THE ART OF SPEAKING THROUGH “INTERMEDIATE NARRATIONS:” CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI AND THE (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION	38
(In)Possibilities of History and Education	39
Storytelling and Intermediate Narrations	47
Newcomers and the Chance of Education	59
CHAPTER FOUR—ROEE ROSEN AND THE PECULIAR PLACE OF A DISRUPTIVE PEDAGOGY.....	66
Provoking Disruption	67
Bringing the Outside In, or, On Being Affected	70
The Peculiar Place of a Disruptive Pedagogy	74
CHAPTER FIVE—CONCLUSION: AN AESTHETIC EDUCATION.....	88
An Intersection of Tensions	89
The Paradox of Learning and an Aesthetic Education	93
REFERENCES	96

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1 Walker, K. (2000). Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On). Guggenheim Museum. Retrieved from <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/artwork/9367>14
- Figure 2 Walker, K. (1998). Cut. Collection of Donna and Cargill MacMillan. Retrieved from <http://www.art21.org/images/kara-walker/cut-1998>.....28
- Figure 3 Walker, K. (1998). Burn. Collection of Jerry and Katherine Speyer. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/art21/images/kara-walker/burn-1998?slideshow=1>28
- Figure 4 Walker, K. (2000). Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On). Guggenheim Museum. Retrieved from http://danasewell.ca/VIS/kara_walker.html32
- Figure 5 Walker, K. (2000). Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On). Guggenheim Museum. Retrieved from <http://arttattler.com/archivewalkerwalker.html>35
- Figure 6 Boltanski, C. (2002). Scratch. Grahame Galleries. Retrieved from <http://www.grahamegalleries.com.au/index.php/christian-boltanski-scratch>49
- Figure 7 Boltanski, C. (2011). Chance. French Pavilion, Venice Biennale. Retrieved from <http://fantasticocotidiano.com/latidos-del-corazon-de-christian-boltanski/>.....60
- Figure 8 Boltanski, C. (2011). Chance. French Pavilion, Venice Biennale. Retrieved from <http://www.cnap.fr/chance>61
- Figure 9 Boltanski, C. (2011). Chance. French Pavilion, Venice Biennale. Retrieved from <http://acasculpture.blogspot.ca/2011/05/christian-boltanski-chance-venise.html>62
- Figure 10 Rosen, R. (2008). The Confessions of Roe Rosen. Tel Aviv Center of Contemporary Art. Retrieved from <http://roerosen.com/tagged/Confessions>70

CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

This dissertation inquires into a theory of learning through an examination of the intersection of art and education. Many scholars in the field of education suggest that art can disrupt us, call us to respond, and, in turn, create new ways of thinking (Britzman, 2009; Felman, 1992; Simon, 2000; 2005). But, how do we make sense of an education that requires intervention? How do we understand an education that is conflicted by works of art? What are the subsequent conditions for thinking about this education? And, how may art act as a site where the contradictions that lie within our education have the potential to incite new ways of thinking? My conceptual project examines these questions to suggest that at the crossing of art and education we may see that art creates a situation of possibility beyond a critique of education's shortcomings.

My discussion engages with theories of philosophy, aesthetics and education to analyze the works of three artists: Kara Walker, Christian Boltanski, and Roe Rosen. From the fields of philosophy and aesthetics, Adorno (1997; 2008) argues that art can be a site for critical reflection on our current societal frameworks through its relation to being both artifact and antithesis to society. Apel (2002), Dubois Shaw (2004), Saltzman (2006) and Van Alphen (2005; 1997) all suggest that art can communicate the ongoing effects of history. Lacan (2006; 2008) also states that works of art can act as metaphors for thinking about constructions of subjectivity in society. Arendt (2006a) argues for acts of creativity in bringing new ways of thinking and being in the world. While these theorists work within different conceptual frameworks, they share an interest in

examining the role of art in constructing and deconstructing knowledge, culture, history, and subjectivity. Through their respective theories, they suggest that there is an overflow from what is or is not, can and cannot be, contained in discourse. My project examines this overflow that occurs in the production and reception of cultural narratives to ask: what does the excess bring to teaching and learning? How does encountering art create new contradictions in education?

My interest in examining the excess that occurs in the production of knowledge draws upon educational theorists interested in the intersections of the social and emotional world and who work within either literary, artistic, or aesthetic frames as a mode of educational critique. What they have in common is an attention to the problem of education as that which perpetuates limitations to understanding. Britzman (2009) states that our internal worlds affect and are affected by our education. And, artists hold an ability to express this affectedness, which can bring insight to disavowed narratives of history. Simon (2000; 2005) argues that art can bring into education new and unsettling engagements with the past that also hold hope for the future. Felman (1992) suggests that art can educate through difficulty and dissonance, where a crisis in understanding brought about by art can lead to new ways to thinking. Although their conversations pertaining to the relationship between art and education take different vantage points, Britzman, Simon and Felman propose that in art there is a return of the repressed, or the excess of what the social disclaims and that the act of being presented with this surplus unsettles education. I draw upon these insights to analyze

how a study of art can assist educators in coming to think about frameworks of understanding and experience.

Although varied in subject matter, the visual art of Walker (2002; 2007), Boltanski (2002; Boltanski & Grenier, 2009), and Rosen (1997; 2002; 2008) represent a cross-section of contemporary conceptual artists who trouble our relationships to history, memory, culture, and ourselves. These artists produce works that challenge our current conceptual frame and they write, speak, and theorize about their work and their process of creation. I suggest that through their work and their writing, each artist provides a theory of education. Further, I argue that what situates these artists' works as troubling to education is simultaneously what permits them to be a potential site for understanding the peculiar place of education as residing in both the social and the individual. I explore how and why these artists, their works, and their theories confront education with its contradictions. And, I begin to inquire into a theory of learning from thinking about the relationship between art and education.

My inquiry into the relationship between art and education is structured by the following questions: How may art open new possibilities for thinking through our current frameworks for understanding? What might such a re-examination mean for our relations to history, memory, culture and education? And, how can we conceive of a theory of learning that is built upon a critique of our social conditions and offered through aesthetics?

Conceptual Overview of the Project

Education is a situation that both mirrors our socio-cultural understandings and makes attempts to come to know living in the world. And, it is particularly education's intertwining relationship with society and the individual that often leads to a resistance to any critique of history, reality, memory and culture. Britzman (2009; 2011), Simon (2000; 2005), and Felman (1992) all suggest that education leaves to us its excess, an excess which, when pronounced, so disturbs our education (and society) that it is often ignored. The artists discussed in the dissertation also speak to the failure of our frameworks for understanding through their variety of works that challenge contemporary notions of history, memory and culture and education. Over the course of this study, I propose that each artist is also a theorist and I read their works as addressing this excess that our social and cultural frameworks disclaim. I suggest that it is through their presentations of works of art aimed at questioning identity, exposing gaps in understanding, and presenting society with the flipside of its idealizations that a theory of an aesthetic education may be built.

This section outlines three contemporary themes which build the foundation for my dissertation: negativity, historical memory, and aesthetics. Through an exploration of these themes, I investigate the relationship between art and education for both its conflicts and its possibilities. I begin with a brief discussion of Adorno's (1999) call to education and state how his work influences the three themes of my dissertation. I then describe how each theme, while overlapping throughout the dissertation as a whole,

finds prime residency within each of the proceeding chapters. I end with some culminating methodological questions that are brought to the work of each artist.

Adorno (1999) tells us that education, like society, is built on ideals. These ideals drive the actions of our culture and the consciousness of individuals through the lens of what is seen as the betterment of society. He warns that this process of creating and following idealized structures produces a dangerous undertone to our culture. That is, through the formation of an idealization there is simultaneously a formation of an “anti-idealization.” This dual force of what is and is not acceptable in society can drive people “toward the unspeakable” without thinking about the repercussions of their actions (p. 191). Adorno understands this state of our social condition as a recapitulation of the historical conditions, and that any education “After Auschwitz” should have the primary concern of ensuring such atrocities never happen again. But, he warns, our social and cultural conditions can be read as holding traces of the past through an ongoing “coldness” of the present (p. 198). This coldness, he explains, takes shape through “a deficient libidinal relationship to other persons” (p. 198). He insists that he is not “preaching love”—as he believes that is a futile pursuit. Instead, he is trying to draw our attention to a level of indifference held towards other persons; at least those others for whom we have no direct relation. It is a collective that puts focus on one’s own interests ahead of the interests of others to the extent where consideration for, and identification with, others can be blinded by this cold, and selfish, pursuit (pp. 198-200).

To bring attention to the conditions that foster this coldness, Adorno proposes a theory of learning that is built upon a critique of our current frameworks for

understanding. He states that hope for change in our socio-cultural conditions lies in an approach to education that is in drastic contrast to the culturally consuming power of idealized structures; an approach, he calls, a “turn to the subject” (p. 193). This turn to the subject has the possibility to bring awareness to the power of the collective that oversees and manages our culture through a process of critical self-reflection. Through self-reflection, we may heighten our cultural consciousness to the power of collectivization and the dangers that can ensue (pp. 193-197). Adorno proposes a theory of learning that takes place through a critique of idealized structures in society and a reflection on how these structures relate to unspeakable narratives of the past. He suggests that through the display of possibilities of resistance we may be able to rethink and engage with positions other than those driven by the powers of collectivity. Through an engagement with something that asks us to question what our social and political conditions allow, as made possible through art, we may learn about the societal forces that guide our cultural conditions (pp. 201-204).

In sum, for Adorno: “The only education that has any sense at all is an education toward critical self-reflection” (p. 194). And it is with this goal in mind where I turn to themes of negativity, historical memory, and aesthetics as read through the works of Walker, Boltanski and Rosen. Through these themes and these artists’ works, I begin to theorize what an education of critical self-reflection might look like through an examination of the relationship between aesthetics and education.

Negativity and Walker

Typical connotations of the concept of negativity are: awful, wrong, less than ideal. For Walker, the disruptive nature of her works has led to many criticisms of her art through these connotations. But, it is particularly the connotation of negativity as less than ideal that is so interesting to reconsider education. In her works, Walker offers a critique of African-American history, as well as current cultural conditions, through a series of images that are a mixture of beautiful and grotesque, tranquil and violent, real and fantasized. I examine debates around her work to ask: How might we read the anxieties brought about by Walker's work? And, what might her work bring to bear on education?

In this discussion of the work of the negative as represented in Walker's work, I bring Britzman's (2009) educational theory into conversation with Adorno's (2008) theory of negative dialectics and Reinhardt's (2007) aesthetic theory and discussion of the uncanny to examine the anxieties around her work as well as its possibilities. Common to Britzman, Adorno, and Reinhardt is the ability for artists to present us with what has been repressed, or disavowed, in history. All three theorists suggest that through art we are re-presented not with new thoughts, but old thoughts in a new form. And, through this re-presentation, we are given an opportunity where we may respond to both history and the presence of that history today.

Adorno's (2008) call for a negative dialectic asks us to examine our social conditions through a critique of what is positive and idealized. He argues that through a mode of critical self-reflection, a negative dialectic can offer a theory of learning that is

derived not from preconceived understandings, but through a critical analysis of how preconceived notions shape our understandings of ourselves, as well as our society. Britzman (2009) offers us a discussion on the artist's capability to speak to negative histories, narratives, and notions in the world that have not yet been, or could not be, symbolized. And, that it is the artist's capability to hold, tolerate, and express what is unknown that may open possibilities for new engagements with the excess of history may be redressed. Through an examination of the negative in Walker's work and its reception through a negative dialectic and the work of the uncanny, we can begin to think about how a re-examination of negativity and its connotations holds significance in trying to understand education's residency in both the individual and the social.

Historical Memory and Boltanski

While all of the chapters address issues of history, Boltanski's works in particular assist us in thinking about our relationship to and with the past. His works draw us to a discussion of the possibilities and impossibilities, or limitations in articulating history and bringing it into symbolization. I read Boltanski works as objects, or constructions, which invite the viewer into a struggle with this state of difficulty.

Creative works that gesture towards an excess of history, Britzman (2011) suggests, may offer this history a "second chance" to be attended to. For Boltanski this "second chance" is taken up through the act of creating, what he calls, "intermediate narrations" and storytelling through truth and lies in his work. Grenier (2010) describes that this interweaving of truth and lies functions to access, and make articulable, historical relics that may not be available otherwise. A combination of both truth and

lies, and the role of storytelling is also central to Arendt's (2006) discussion on how historical relics become integrated, and made meaningful, to today's society. She argues that change in the world and upon its conditions is predicated upon engagement in debate. And, this state of debate takes place when historical truths are brought into conversation through an integration with lies and/or storytelling. Through this combination of truth and lie historical truths may become accessible and, in turn, influence the state of the world's conditions.

Aesthetics and Rosen

The theme of aesthetics takes primacy in the Rosen chapter while also speaking back to themes of historical memory and negativity. In his work on aesthetics, Adorno (1997) suggests that art holds a paradoxical relation to society; that it is both inspired by society while at the same time an expression of what this society cannot tolerate. And, he argues, art can speak back to the world and offer an opportunity for a critical self-reflection of our conditions, what he calls, the aesthetics experience. Rosen's disruptive works are read as holding the potential to bring us towards the aesthetics experience. But, they are also read as bringing questions towards what the aesthetics experience, or a bringing of art to education, might mean to a theory of learning. Simon (2000; 2005) and Felman (1992) suggest that education requires intervention, disruption, or crisis in order for the significance and continued presence of the past to be recognized in the world today. Adorno (1997; 1999; 2008) offers a similar critique of, what we can read as the needed education of society. The work of this chapter is to ask questions about how

we imagine this act of disruption or bringing into crisis, and to examine the tensions that reside in a proposition that education requires intervention.

Culmination of an Aesthetic Education

The concluding chapter brings together the tensions laid out in the previous chapters to discuss what the various theorists and artists collectively offer to a theory of education. All of the artists are read as offering a theory of learning through her or his work. These learning theories are further read as taking on the problem of our education as needing intervention. This last chapter is framed through consideration of how a reading of artists and their works may lead to a theory of education that relies on intervention that takes place at the intersection of art, education, society and the individual.

Methodology

To address this problem of an education that requires intervention, I have chosen to work with theories of philosophy, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics. While tensions exist between these frames of thought, each theoretical perspective can also be read as complementary to one another. Philosophy allows for a reading of the question, “How do we make sense of an education that requires intervention?” through a broad social context of the world and its conditions, where psychoanalysis allows for a reading of how our internal worlds shape how we see, and engage with, the world. For example, while Adorno’s (1999) call for a “turn to the subject” and Arendt’s (2006) call for the role of storyteller both bring the discussion of the social to the individual, psychoanalytic theory adds an unconscious dynamic to the subject that affects and is affected by what

we are capable of seeing and understanding. Adorno's (1997) aesthetic theory provides a way of reading that encompasses the social and the individual through an examination of art as both artefact and antithesis to society. Art speaks to contradictions in our frameworks for understanding, while at the same time points to what our socio-cultural frameworks cannot contain. It is art's ability to speak to what our education cannot contain that can at once bring insight to the question of education's need for intervention, while also offer possibility for change in our conditions.

An aesthetic approach to education allows us to conceptualize a theory of learning not simply as a process of acquisition, but as a process that considers how what we acquire is contradictory and problematic. In a turn to aesthetics, we can consider a theory of learning and of education that takes place through critical reflection on both our socio-cultural conditions and how our internal worlds shape and are shaped by these conditions.

Each artist creates works that speak to the large problem of my dissertation: that the disavowal of historical narratives continues to be recapitulated in our current frameworks for understanding. Although in different ways each artist creates works that invite us to reflect upon what our current understandings do not allow us to know. Their works, both individually and collectively, can be read as what Adorno (1999) calls, sites of resistance. These sites of resistance may provoke a reflection on our current cultural conditions, giving the potential for the excess that is created in our education to be symbolized.

Kara Walker, Christian Boltanski and Roee Rosen are integral to my exploration of the relationship between art and education because beyond producing works of art, they also each write and theorize about their works. In my reading of these artists, their works and theorizations, I consider their works to be not only offering something *to* education, but offering a theory *of* education. Each artist produces works with a historical undertone. Each artist also writes about the ways in which social, historical, and political events have, and continue to, shape her or his work. Through the themes of negativity, historical memory and aesthetics, I read the works and writings of the artists to examine how their works offer a rethinking of education.

I examine how breakdowns in meaning are represented in the work of Walker, Boltanski and Rosen and how this excess of knowledge is theorized. Their works are analyzed through the contradictions posed and builds from these tensions and a theory of learning that leans upon representations of crisis. I examine gaps in meaning that occur in these works and interpret these gaps as a surplus of history. I discuss how both the artists and theorists in the dissertation see their representations as representations, which unsettles a conceptualization of education as a process of meaning-making. And, I suggest that this process of unsettling, of engaging with disruptive works of art, may also be an aesthetic experience.

Through the themes of negativity and historical memory, I read critical receptions to Walker's works as responding to the unsettling, disruptive, effects her work has on our current narratives of history and society. I also draw from Walker's theorizations on conceptions of negativity and history to ask: How may we read her works and writings

as offering a negative education? I examine Boltanski's work with abstract images to suggest that his art speaks to the limitations of our societal discourse to symbolize and express the ongoing effects of history on the present. I discuss Boltanski's commentary on his work to ask: How may his representations of impossibility in understanding also be sites of possibility? I read Rosen's attempts to destabilize understanding as raising questions of the work of disruption and crisis in a theory of learning.

CHAPTER TWO—AN UNCANNY INSURRECTION: DEBATING NEGATIVITY IN THE WORK OF KARA WALKER



Figure 1 Walker, K. (2000). *Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On)*. *Guggenheim Museum*. Retrieved from <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/artwork/9367>

In the late 1990s, Kara Walker was gaining international recognition. At the age of 27 she was the youngest recipient of the MacArthur “genius” grant. It was a recognition that would at once launch her works to greater levels of appreciation, while at the same time spur harsh criticisms of her work. Debates around the highly sexualized, racialized, violent images at play in her shadowing narratives were prominent in the art community. The *International Review of African American Art*

captured a portion of this debate through a somewhat heated exchange between Walker and the journal's editor.

After an initial anonymous publication that sided with critics of Walker's works (*International Review of African American Art*, 1997), Walker wrote a response to the journal. She argued that the reported critique of her work was also a personal attack; that many of her works and comments were presented out of context; and that the strong reactions to her work spoke to its necessity. The very fact that her work evoked such a response reiterated the importance of a much needed discussion around the meaning that these images still hold today (*International Review of African American Art*, 1998, p. 49).

In the same issue as Walker's response, the previously anonymous author now named as the editor of the journal, Juliette Bowles, responded to Walker's claims, in part, by saying:

Kara, considering all of the various types and complex strains of racist imaging in black and white Americans, is the most effective way of exorcising its shadow by *depicting* it, as you do in your work—which could have some power but which also has a fatuous character and which, imbued with all your flourishes...[and] bizarre [bodily] functions, sex and violence, could make you the Jerry Springer of the fine arts world—or by *dissecting* it? (p. 50, emphasis in original)

Bowles' question to Walker inferred that she must make a choice to either depict or dissect racist imaging in contemporary culture. According to Bowles, Walker could depict stereotypes and receive recognition through the flashy, superficial likeness of a

tabloid-style talk show host; or, she could reign in the shock and bizarre to make room for a less abrasive dissection of contemporary conceptions of race. But, Walker could not do both. She could not depict and dissect issues of racial tension, at least not in the alleged careless, naïve, approach Bowles claims she was taking to her work. This formulation of depiction versus dissection operated, and continues to operate, as the foundation for the debates around Walker's work.

In this chapter, I look at how the concept of “negativity” is used to describe Walker's images. I begin with an elaborated discussion of how critics of her work warn that her images risk a recapitulation of stereotypes and racist conceptions. For her critics, negativity is something to be censored, warned of, and closed down because it is dangerous and subject to misinterpretation. I then look at how others take up negativity in relation to her work. While they acknowledge the highly racialized, sexualized, violent nature of her work can be read as negative with the insinuation of it being harmful, or perpetuating undesirable representations, they also argue that there is a flipside to this negativity. And, that negativity, or negative imagery, may also open a space for a rethinking of our current social conditions. The multiplicity of the concept of negativity as shown through debates around Walker's work—the dynamic nature of the negative, what it means, how it might be thought of, how it is used—is brought into alignment with Adorno's (2008) theory of negative dialectics. In his work on negative dialectics, Adorno argues for a state of contemplation on the concepts that create situations for knowing and understanding in our socio-political frameworks. Through his proposition that concepts are always both more and less than what they are purported to be, he

suggests that what is perceived as negative in our social conditions can be used as a site for critical reflection on the contradictory nature of society. With this theory in mind, we can read that these different uses of the "negative" in the debates around Walker's work—all coalescing, but not collapsing upon one another—bring attention to the contradictory nature of concepts as Adorno suggests.

I then turn to Mark Reinhardt's (2007) discussion of the uncanny in relation to Walker's work. He suggests that the concept of the uncanny may help us to think about the anxieties over censoring these images and the difficulties inherent in thinking about how these images may speak to, or be reflective of, ongoing tensions in our sociocultural conditions. I suggest that when a mirroring of Reinhart's and Adorno's concerns are brought to Deborah Britzman's (2009) discussions of education, we may read that education faces similar struggles in dealing with difficult histories. I suggest that Walker's works may be read as presenting an offer to education where new engagements with both history and our current conditions may take place. I end with a reading of Walker's installation, *Insurrection!* (2000), to suggest that this piece may be read as a site for critical reflection of our current state of education.

The Debates

Bowles' critique of Walker and her work, draws heavily on the opinion of Betye Saar who, many contend, is one of the most notable critics of Walker's work (Dubois Shaw, 2004; Wall, 2010). In 1997 Saar, an African American artist a generation ahead of Walker, spearheaded a letter-writing campaign against Walker's work. Saar called for others in the arts and political communities to speak and act against the positive

receptions of Walker's work. One of her concerns was that Walker's work would feed into a racist discourse rather than act against it. Her concerns were inflamed, and partially justified by, the overwhelmingly positive reception of Walker's works by white viewers, critics, and artists. Saar's call implied not only a need for a different orientation towards Walker's work, but also a need for censorship of her images:

I am writing you, seeking your help, to spread awareness about the negative images produced by the young African American artist, Kara Walker...Are African Americans being betrayed under the guise of art? Is this white backlash, art elitist style?...These images may be in your city next. (as cited in *International Review of African American Art*, 1997, p. 3)

In her discussion of the reception of Walker's work, Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw (2004) contends that around this same time, the Detroit Institute of Arts pulled one of Walker's images from an exhibit highlighting the work of female African American artists because Walker's images were considered too controversial (p. 103). The interim director, Maurice Parrish, reasoned the Institute's decision by saying: "We believe that it is our responsibility to present controversial art in a way that helps our visitors to understand the work and the artist's intent...In this instance, we determined that we could not present the work with the appropriate didactic material" (as cited in Dubois Shaw, p. 105).

More recently, Howardena Pindell (2009) worked to bring together a collection of, what she describes as, "non-pro commentary" (p. vi) on Walker's work from a range of writers, artists, and curators. The contributors articulate a continued shared concern that

Walker's works do nothing more than reiterate racist conceptions and that her works act against the struggle of previous generations of African American artists (McCannon, 2009, p. 54; Snowden, 2009, p. 88; Spriggs, 2009, pp. 93-94). While the authors in the collection do, in part, attribute the depictions in Walker's work to aspects of our social conditions, they predominantly attribute the disturbing nature of her work as being a result of Walker's psychological state. For her critics, Walker's works are a "signal for help" (Dulan-Wilson, 2009, p. 26); speak more to her "own racial hang-ups" (Weil, 2009, p. 108); or depict that she "is one sick chick and bad for the business of being Black" (Hunt, 2009, p. 33).

Through this pathologization of Walker, her critics imply that not only is negativity at play in Walker's by way of disturbing images, but that this is a destructive force that needs to be closed down, warned of, and censored. And, this dangerous negativity can be eliminated through a shutting down of Walker herself. By placing the disruption, creation, and influence of the images in the mind of Walker alone and discounting her commentary on a larger societal discourse, the critics attempt to frame what it is that needs to be contained. *Walker* is in need of containment. *She* is dredging up the past. And, the eradication of these images and their implications take place through pathologizing the artist.

While her critics do not suggest that issues of race are unaffected by the perceptions in contemporary society, they do draw a metaphorical linear narrative of progression of the state of race relations in contemporary culture. This narrative is one that no longer requires the kind of "sick" or "bizarre" intervention that Walker offers. And,

they argue, Walker's intervention folds back upon, or discounts, the progress that has been made through various other artists.

It is particularly an interesting debate to examine considering these are fellow artists, writers and curators. That is, working in the field of artistic representation, I think it is safe to assume that many (if not most) of these critics, under other circumstances, have found themselves in a position of being against taking such a literal approach to interpretation. Yet, in the critique of Walker and her works it seems that they are suggesting that Walker is representing the world as it is, or how she sees it to be. Their call to censor Walker and her images puts her works in the past where they belong and dismisses the possibility of considering Walker as commenting on ongoing relations of race, sexuality and violence in our current social conditions.

This problem of representation is taken up by those on the other side of the debate. Sander Gilman (2007) argues that the "negativization" of Walker's work as dangerous and something to be censored, or only presented under conditions where "proper interpretation" can be achieved unveils, what he sees as the "double-edged sword" of representational art. That is, Gilman argues that representational art is "damned" through the idea that it "reflects the 'real' world;" and, therefore, it is subject to the unrealistic expectation that it should be "nonrepresentational" (p. 32). At the same time, any art that evokes negative reactions is presumed to support the struggle that it speaks against: "That is, if you show it, you must be an advocate of it; there is no room for ironic distance, critical explanation, or thought" (32). The struggle with disturbing representations, he argues, can in part be attributed to the power of art to speak to and

reveal our fantasies and terrors. The difficulty lies with grappling with these images as both products of Walker's imagination and as social images that address our own desires and the current state of social life (p. 33). We can read this struggle being shut down in the critiques on Walker's work as her images are contextualized as belonging to her and her alone.

Similar sentiments on the operation of the negative in Walker's pieces are offered by Lisa Saltzman and Philippe Vergne. For Saltzman (2006), there is a double meaning of the negative that operates in Walker's work and that allows for more than just a reverberation and idealization of stereotypes to take place. She argues that while Walker's works can be read as functioning as a type of reinforcement of cultural stereotypes—acting “negatively”—they simultaneously operate through the negative as a shadow of a repressed history that perpetually remains and resurfaces through current social frameworks (p. 59). She suggests that Walker's work invites questions toward possibilities and limits of thinking and knowing which may allow for new engagements with history to take place. For Walker's critics, the construction of a linear progression of the status of social conditions between the past to the present is challenged by imagining this shadow that remains.

Vergne (2007), too, argues that the negativity at work in Walker's pieces is not one that should be read as a continuation, or reiteration, of cultural stereotypes, but as a visual language that critiques the overlooked presence of the past. Walker invokes what Vergne calls, a “negative space of representation” which may absorb the dismissive way that the black subject and history have been approached in art (p. 14). Her

presentation of sexually deviant acts and alleged excess are parceled with a reading of society's perception and treatment of history (p. 23). For Vergne, Walker's process draws from negative conceptions, not from the vantage of the perpetuation for repeat, but for the possibility for thinking and reframing what he calls the "historical hangover in the present" (p. 25).

Gilman, Saltzman, and Vergne argue for a difference between perpetuating negative stereotypes and utilizing negativity as an opening for thinking about a shadow of history that remains. They ask why our imaginations may deceive us and question what might help alleviate the "historical hangover." But, what makes this distinction between depiction and dissection and repetition and reframing so difficult to maintain? How do we understand these anxieties around managing and censoring the negative?

Reading the Negative: Walker's Fantasies and Ours

To consider these difficult questions, I take a two-pronged approach. First, I examine the work of Adorno (2008) to suggest that part of what makes this distinction between perpetuation and utilization so difficult to maintain is a tension he observes in his work on negative dialectics. That is, he suggests that the work of negative dialectics is to examine the presence of often ignored underlying discourses that operate within our socio-cultural condition. And, the reasons for this ignoring contribute to, and perpetuate, their status in our culture. I complement this framework with Reinhardt's (2007) work and his suggestion that Walker leans on uncanny anxiety. I use this dual frame as a way to begin a discussion around the double-pronged problem of education: that the problem of education lies not only in social discourse, or simply in the individual.

Rather, that the problem of education is produced by, and resides within, the doubling of conflicts that exist between conditioned ways of thinking in society and the ways that individuals experience these conditions and contradictions.

In his discussion of negative dialectics, Adorno (2008) strives toward a theory of dialectics which is “not of identity but of *non-identity*” (italics original, p. 6). It is a process of thinking that questions the contradictions that exist between the concepts we hold and utilize in comparison to the things, ideas, subjects and objects which those concepts represent (p. 6). It is a way of thinking, reflecting, and contemplating that is not focused on the contradictions between concepts, but that asks us to think about the contradictions that lie within concepts themselves (p. 7).

Adorno suggests that the notion of contradiction within concepts occurs on two levels—where the concept is both more and less than that to which it refers (pp. 7-8). That is, he describes that a concept arrives through a process where an abstraction is created to represent a series of associated characteristics or elements. Each characteristic or element that has been subsumed under the concept has, in itself, different qualities than the concept to which it is associated (pp. 7-8). For example, two characteristics that can be thought of as being subsumed under the concept of education are knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is not defined as understanding, nor is understanding defined as knowledge, but a common element can be abstracted from these (as well as other characteristics) to develop the concept of education. When the concept of education is then used to define a characteristic such as knowledge or understanding, this definition will fall short in that only certain elements

of these characteristics can be realized in the concept. It is this “falling short” where Adorno states the first meaning of contradiction within the concept exists. That is, “[t]he concept is always less than what is subsumed under it” (p. 7).

The second meaning of the contradiction within the concept occurs because a concept is simultaneously *more* than the culmination of elements or characteristics which it represents. Adorno argues that a concept is not simply representative of a unity of characteristics or elements; rather, through the process of abstraction, the concept becomes “a pointer to something that goes well beyond those [characteristics]...without necessarily realizing what this additional element amounts to” (p. 7). For education, this would mean that the concept of education is not simply representative of the similarities that exist between elements of, say, knowledge, understanding, learning, and teaching; but that the concept of education also acts as a descriptor of a situation of education, of what it means to educate and be educated, that cannot be fully realized.

It is through the contradictory nature of concepts—of being both more and less than the characteristics or elements which they represent—where Adorno argues that “we live in an antagonistic society;” a society that he describes is created and sustained *by way* of the very contradictions which render our understandings problematic (pp. 8-9). That is, the abstractions we create become concepts. These concepts, as mentioned, are always both more and less than the things, situations, objects with which they represent—a dual contradiction. But, it is through our management of, and engagement with, these contradictory concepts where society resides; where the reality created *through and of* contradictions is mobilized.

Adorno aligns his theory of negative dialectics, in part, with critical theory. He describes that what both critical theory and negative dialectics have in common is that they both bring attention to the subjective nature of theory and thought. Where negative dialectics differs, however, is that it goes beyond the critical analysis of subjective nature of thought and theory to also analyze the reality through which this subjectivity collectively lives. A theory of negative dialectics, therefore, is “not just a process of thought but also...a process of affecting things” (p. 20). It is a process of thought that not only examines the contradictory nature of the concept—as being both more and less than what is subsumed beneath it—but also how “this assertion of the identity of concept and thing is inextricably intertwined with the structure of reality itself” (p. 20).

The idea that the subjective nature of theory and thought also affects the reality in which we live, brings questions as to whether our reality—intertwined with, produced by, and productive of contradictions—is capable of sustaining the critical analysis of its own structure. That is, as Adorno asks, it brings the question of “whether thought can bear the idea that a given reality is meaningless and that mind is unable to orientate itself; or whether the intellect has become so enfeebled that it finds itself paralysed by the idea that all is not well with the world” (p. 20).

And it is here where we can see this tension being played out in the reactions to Walker’s works. Specifically, her critics’ claims against the negativity represented in her works can be read as an intolerance to, or resistance towards, examining the possible contradictory nature of the society in which we live that supposes a reality that is built upon a linear history, and which excludes the possibility that the fabric of our culture

continues to be a function of the same patterns of contradiction and conditionedness as the past. And, we might read the harsh criticisms of her work as saying, in not so many words, that such critical reflection may be too much to bear.

This tension is also seen in Walker's depiction of her work of engaging with what is negative. She describes that the visceral reactions her works evoke, speaks not only to the ongoing stereotypes and racist conceptions in our culture, but also to the failure of positive imagery to address these conditions:

Had positive imaging of the black body to date solved the problem of representing blackness and power, thereby ceasing the need for further discussion of the issue, the "black" and "white" bodies in my work would be virtually silent. Unfortunately, repeated denials of racist stigmas have not killed them...Any sustained approach cannot afford to rely on the unstable terrain created by replacing negative absolutes with positive ones. (The International Review of African American Art, 1998, p. 48)

Walker's critique of the potentially concealing and discarding nature of positive imagery aligns with Adorno's (2008) critique of a lack of critical reflection toward what is perceived as positive within our social framework. He argues that within our society the concept of positive has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, positive implies that something is "given, is postulated" (p. 18). Simultaneously, a positive connotation is one that infers something as beneficial, preferable, or ideal (p.18). This dual work of the positive in our society—of constructing a framework for concepts as both given as well as ideal—creates a situation where "the positive is intrinsically positive *in itself*" and it is

this situation that Adorno criticizes in that there is no one “pausing to ask *what* is to be regarded as positive or whether it is a fallacy” (italics original, p.18). In other words, the concept of positive operates to create and sustain a situation where our societal discourse perpetuates what is accepted without stopping to question *what* exactly it is that we are accepting; or, by extension, what is being left out.

It is in this way—in the perpetuating of the positive without questioning what this “positive” is—where Adorno claims that the positive of our society is actually negative; “the thing that is to be criticized” (p.18). His theory of negative dialectics asks us to pay attention to this negative force of the positive and look to what it leaves behind, neglects, excludes in the creation of our societal abstractions. For education this implies that education becomes a task where, instead of developing concepts, we are asked think of what our current conceptualizations are excluding for us to know.

Walker, too seems to be arguing for a process of thinking that asks us to put into question the contradictions that exist between the concepts we hold and utilize in comparison to the things, ideas, subjects and objects which those concepts represent. Walker’s works may be read as sites of resistance which speak to the problems that exist in our current frameworks for understanding. The gamble, however, as these debates suggest is whether the power of the positive as it operates in society will negate or tolerate such a critique.



Figure 2 Walker, K. (1998). *Cut*. *Collection of Donna and Cargill MacMillan*. Retrieved from <http://www.art21.org/images/kara-walker/cut-1998>



Figure 3 Walker, K. (1998). *Burn*. *Collection of Jerry and Katherine Speyer*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/art21/images/kara-walker/burn-1998?slideshow=1>

Walker's struggle to engage in this critique is further seen through her images *Cut* (left) and *Burn* (right). Both were created in 1998 at the height of her criticism. At first glance, the silhouette in *Cut* is a joyful character. She is leaping into the air, her arms are swung up above her head, and it seems she is kicking her heels in celebration. Only upon a closer examination of the image, does it dawn on the viewer that the playful silhouette is also one of torment and despair. The sweeping designs above her head that at first seem to suggest the joyful motion of her leaping into the air are sprays of blood. She has slit her wrists. Her left hand grips the razor blade and two puddles of blood form below. In *Burn*, the silhouette is also engaging in an act of self-inflicted violence. A can of lighter fluid drops from her hand as she stands in a ring of fire. In neither image is the young girl panicked about what is happening. On the contrary, the silhouette in *Cut* is blissful, in *Burn*, stoic.

Raymond (2007) reads both *Cut* and *Burn* as representations of a young black female slave in the eighteenth century rebelling against the power of the master. Each, as an act of revolt against the lack of control in life, is taking control over death. They are, he argues, acts of defiance against the master-slave discourse of the eighteenth century (pp. 351-354). Dubois Shaw (2004) reads *Cut* as Walker's self-portrait reflective of Walker's struggle to deal with harsh criticisms of her work (pp. 125-127). In both of these readings Walker's images act to frame conflicts between the black body and societal discourse.

As well as being part of an installation in 1998, *Burn* is the image Walker chose for the cover of her book, *After the Deluge* (2007). Walker describes this book as a

visual essay inspired by, but not wholly centered on, the events of Hurricane Katrina. She suggests that her work aims to speak to the idea that the aftermath of the disaster in New Orleans can be a way of reading into the underlying narratives of our current social and cultural frameworks; frameworks which recapitulate those of the past. Walker states that her art works to represent “the idea that a Black subject in the present tense is a container for specific pathologies from the past,” and that she has “asked the objects [in her book]...to take a step beyond [their] own borders to connect a series of thoughts together related to the fluidity and the failure of containment” (p. 9). Walker is asking the objects of her work to speak back to the world and to create points of reflection. Her art objects speak—both individually and collectively—not to what we know (the factual events of the disaster), but to the stereotypes and contradictions that underlay unquestioned narratives.

Reinhardt’s (2007) discussion offers further insight into how Walker’s works speak to the individual. He suggests that the anxiety brought about by Walker’s works speaks to the uncanniness of her pieces. Drawing from Freud, he explains that the uncanny nature of an experience is brought about by anxiety towards what is being experienced not because it is unfamiliar, but because it is a recurrence of something held in our mind which has been repressed (pp. 116-117). The uncanny is not unknown and foreign, but an experience where we are re-presented with material which we hold. This experience of holding in a repressed state brings about anxiety. In Walker’s work, Reinhardt argues, it is this anxiety “that seeps off the surfaces...as we who view [her work] are urged to confront the bearing of the slave past on the white supremacist

present” (p. 116). In her formulation of images which speak to the existence of a repressed past, Reinhardt argues that Walker takes on the challenging position of representing a fragmented past that “remembers the pieces without putting them back together” (p. 118). And, it is through the presentation of these pieces where the disturbing uncanny effects may be felt.

Walker’s use of silhouettes, Reinhardt suggests, intensifies the uncanny feelings brought about in her works (p. 118). The silhouettes act as shadows, both familiar and unknown, which call for recognition but simultaneously refuse any absolute comprehension of what is being represented. They enact a doubling, what he calls, an “eerie echo of the self” (p. 118). This doubling is furthered through Walker’s shadows that are not simply presented in isolated forms, but which are in action, play, and violent performance with one another:

To look at Walker’s silhouettes is to confront the deeds and misdeeds of shadows, shadows acting...of their own volition. The effect is heightened further still by the fact that these are portraits not of living bodies but of figures of collective fantasy and phobias: they are thus, in a sense, the spectators’ own shadows. (p. 119)

To think of Walker’s work as presenting viewers with their own shadows however creates a possibility for engagement with thoughts and preconceptions that relate the individual to societal preconceptions. Her work, a shadow drama of uncanny thoughts and figures, calls the viewer into their pre-existing play.

An uncanny understanding of Walker's works suggests these images have already been censored. Instead of being worried about these images coming to our cities next, we are faced with the suggestion that these images already reside in our cities and our minds. Reinhardt's work on the uncanny adds an additional layer of complication to the reading of Walker's works through Adorno's negative dialectics. It allows us to see the additional frame of psychical contradiction that plays out in the power of the positive in our culture. Through Reinhardt's uncanny proposition and Adorno's negative dialectics, the debate around Walker's work depicts the struggle between our strangely familiar selves and the figures, objects, contradictions, and fantasies that continue to go unseen.

This struggle between censorship and possibility, between repression and invitation of difficult images and histories, is also one that takes place in our education. As Britzman suggests (2009) in her discussion of the possibilities and limitations to education, when difficult histories are brought to education they are often met with a



Figure 4 Walker, K. (2000). *Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On)*. *Guggenheim Museum*. Retrieved from http://danasewell.ca/VIS/kara_walker.html

flood of affect; such affect may disavow the reality of these histories and the presence these histories still hold today (p. 121). For Britzman, this difficulty lies not only in the social and cultural frameworks which disavow certain histories and realities, but also in

how our internal worlds shape our attempts to understand and express our living in, and with, the world.

In her discussion of artists and psychoanalysts, and drawing from early nineteenth century poet John Keats, Britzman states that artists hold the ability to tolerate what is unknown in the world. Artists' capacity to tolerate and express the unknown, a "negative capability," opens possibilities for understanding (p. 118). An artist's ability to grapple with, hold, and express a struggle with the unknown brings emphasis to problems that occur in the process of symbolization: "With the idea of negative capability we are permitting the depth of emotional reality as capable of both registering the world that cannot be known and signifying how it is that we come to be affected" (p. 118). Through their capacity to toggle and create within a space that is between phantasy and reality artists present, what Britzman names as, an "uncanny index of doubts" to the viewer whereby their works can bring into symbolization that which has previously been defended against (p. 113).

Through the process of coming to understand our negotiation in and between these two worlds, Britzman suggests that we can begin to reflect on our responsibility, education's responsibility, to learn about what we do not yet, and may not be able to, know (p. 125). Drawing from the work of Hans Loewald, she argues that education should not *take* responsibility for the past—as taking responsibility would revert to a cycle of blame, guilt and defense—but should *accept* responsibility for the past, for our ongoing relationship to and with events which preceded us but for which could not be represented. In Britzman's terms, "the past leaves to us its excess, what could not or

would not be grasped at the time of the event but now must be symbolized” (pp. 123-124). In other words, in accepting responsibility for the past, we also confront its excess and our response to it.

An Uncanny Insurrection

A look at Walker’s installation, *Insurrection!* (2000) suggests that through its uncanny frame we can study the excess of our history, our continued states of contradiction, and our responsibility toward the future. In *Insurrection!*, viewers walk into a room that is covered floor to ceiling in her signature silhouettes. Old school projectors are placed strategically on the floor throughout the room. The projectors serve a dual function. Unlike some of her earlier works using only a black and white colour scheme, gelled overlays of red and blue are placed on the projectors which then add aspects of dimension and colour to the background of the characters that play along the wall. As viewers walk throughout the installation, the projectors also cast the shadow of the viewer unto the wall alongside the silhouette cut outs.

In the casting of the viewers’ shadows unto the installation, Walker enacts a recasting of characters into the drama. Not so much an invitation, the projectors work through an insinuation that the viewer is already implicated in the work. The viewer is implicated in both the sociocultural conditions the work represents and the conditions through which the work is read and conceptualized. The viewers are involved, therefore, not into a fantastical drama that belongs to Walker alone, but one that speaks to, and draws upon, a series of conceptions that are active in our social conditions.

Walker explains that *Insurrection!* was inspired by the work of Thomas Eakins and his surgical theatre paintings. The piece was created through a meditation on the

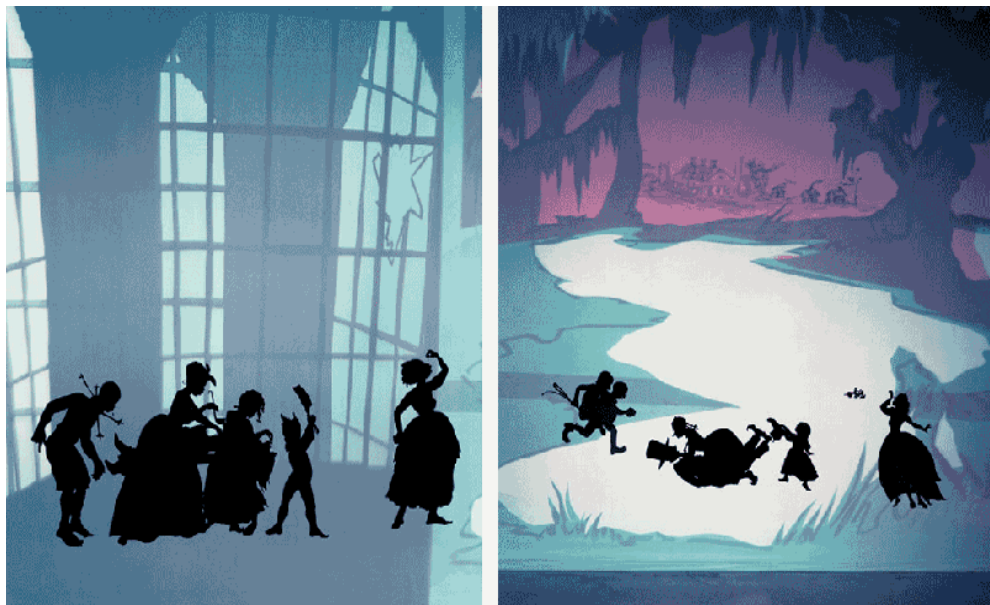


Figure 5 Walker, K. (2000). *Insurrection! (Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On)*. Guggenheim Museum. Retrieved from <http://arttattler.com/archivewalkerwalker.html>

performance of dismembering in relation to slave revolts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Art21).

The full title:

Insurrection! Our Tools Were

Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On speaks to the use of rudimentary objects, such as kitchen utensils, which she envisions were used in the revolts (Art21). This title may also be read as a metaphor for Walker's tools in her installation. Her tools—projectors and cut paper—are also rudimentary. Yet, her use of these tools creates an interactive shadow drama that acts as a revolt against the narratives of both the past and the present. Her use of rudimentary objects also works to “press on,” or challenge, the frames for knowing and thinking about history and its presence today.

When thought through the treatment of difficult histories in education, Walker's work may be a site where we are presented, or re-presented, with thoughts and narratives that our education has disavowed. Through this re-presentation, we are

called to reinterpret the past, this excess of education, as that which could not be symbolized at the time but for which we must now accept responsibility. And theories of negative dialectics and the uncanny may be read as a frame through which we understand artistic works.

To think education through Adorno's theory of negative dialectics is to conceive of an education that is both contradictory and problematic. The very concept of education itself is an abstraction that while operates to signify characteristics of education also falls short in this representation. Adorno argues for a theory of knowledge acquisition that is not derived from preconceived understandings, but instead, from a critical analysis of how preconceived notions shape both our understandings of ourselves, as well as our society. Adorno offers us a way of thinking about how negativity operates and functions in society. His call for a negative dialectic speaks to the struggle of positive imagery to create change in society. Walker's work can be read as taking on the work of the negative dialectic. And the debates around her work speak to the challenges inherent in this thinking.

Through her uncanny play, Walker's shadowing historical narratives offer a site where a flood of affect may give shape to the past in relation to the present. The debates over Walker's work can be read as scenes of education made anxious by Walker's presentation of histories and images which we both hold and have left behind. An uncanny reading of Walker's works may allow us to step outside the need to choose between the depiction and dissection of difficult images to a space where we may read this anxiety *to choose* as the presence of an unattended past.

Through an examination of the debates and discussions around Walker's works, consideration can start to be given to trying to inquire into a theory of learning that intervenes at the dual level of the individual and the social. In the next chapter, I explore how even once this dual level of confrontation has been established we are still faced with questions of the limits to which intervention and learning can take place. I explore how impossibilities or limitations of education within these conditions may be considered.

CHAPTER THREE—THE ART OF SPEAKING THROUGH “INTERMEDIATE NARRATIONS:” CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI AND THE (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION

This chapter examines Christian Boltanski’s art and writings to ask how his work may be used to think about limits to and conceptualizations of education. Where in the last chapter Walker’s works pointed us towards an examination of the doubling of conflicts of the individual and the social in education, in this chapter Boltanski’s works are read as a doubling of conflicts as well. Boltanski’s works help us to examine the dual conceptualizations of education that is at once impossible while at the same time suggests that impossibilities in understanding may be the disruptive landscapes where learning can take place. Boltanski describes his creative process as that of a “failing archeologist.” I question whether his process is not as much one of a failing archeologist, but one that may be compared to the work of psychoanalytic theory and Britzman’s (2011) construction of Freud’s theory of learning in the clinic. Britzman claims that Freud drew from impossibilities in understanding formulations that could frame these difficulties as potential sites where new learning could take place. Through analysis of Boltanski’s *Scratch* (2002) and *Chance* (2011), I suggest that Boltanski offers a similar practice of drawing from impossibilities in understanding to create works that may be sites for learning, and that his works may be read as metaphors for the difficulty of learning in education.

Drawing from Hannah Arendt’s works in “Truth and Politics” (2006b) and “The Crisis in Education” (2006a), I suggest that as well as working within the impossible professions, education is faced with layered tensions of multiple states of intermediacy.

That is, Arendt (2006b) tells us that hope for change in the world is brought about through a debate of the world's conditions that takes place through an intermingling of truth and lies in the realm of politics. And, she (2006a) further explains that the potential for this debate resides in the pre-political realm of education; where education, and educators, hold responsibility for meeting a tension of natality that welcomes new ideas into the world while simultaneously preserving the past and present. These tensions—of truth, lies, history, politics, and natality—also appear in Boltanski's pieces. I explore how his approach to creating, what Boltanski calls, "intermediate narrations," may be providing a metaphor to think about our educational difficulties. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of chance and responsibility in symbolizing our navigation of these tensions.

(Im)Possibilities of History and Education

Christian Boltanski was born to a Jewish father and Catholic mother in Paris on September 6, 1944. His birth came just months before the end of the Second World War. While Boltanski was too young to remember the events of the war, he describes that his childhood was consumed by the aftereffects of a war-torn society. Stories of survival and loss circulated his childhood home through family members and friends who struggled to comprehend the events they lived through. Boltanski recalls one particular story of his father that held, and continues to hold, great significance for him. Months before Boltanski was born his parents sought a divorce in order to protect his mother and siblings against their Jewish lineage. They staged an argument after which Boltanski's mother told others that her husband had left and that she hoped he would

never return. Unbeknownst to their neighbours, Boltanski's father did not leave that evening, but instead slipped between the floorboards of the family home. According to Boltanski, his father would spend nearly a year in hiding waiting for the war to end (Beil, p. 53).

While Boltanski offers little analysis of why this memory holds such significance, we may read that there is a metaphorical link between the significance that this memory holds and his relation to his works. Boltanski's work as an artist, he explains, is inspired by the struggle he has in articulating his history. In a sense, he too holds his relation to this history in the metaphorical floorboards of his house. While what lies beneath the surface inspires his work, his creations speak to the impossibility in understanding this inspiration from below. And, it is this struggle between creativity and impossibility that makes Boltanski's works significant to education.

Boltanski's story of his father, as well other memories, led to Boltanski's many reflections on the chance of his birth—the timing, the place—that inspired his work into how memory, history, and war leave their mark on us and affect us in incomprehensible ways. As he describes:

In principle I'm trying to preserve things; to find the past once more...I try to reconstruct [things] like an archeologist...On the one hand I'd like to return to these things; on the other hand I realize that is impossible...The result [is] a kind of research into the act of creating and reconstructing which is always shadowed by failure. (as cited in Beil, 2006, p. 51)

Boltanski's archeological project attempts to reconfigure these memories, that is at once his own, and at the same time, a compilation of the aftereffects of a war witnessed secondhand. Like the archeologist, the material of his work is made from the fragments of a buried history. While his re-collection of these fragments offer a recollection of the past, his work at reconstruction will always fall short of the return he desires. This falling short is what leads to Boltanski's feeling that his work, as he puts it, "is always shadowed by failure" (p. 51).

But, perhaps Boltanski's feeling of his work being shadowed by failure is out of line with his use of the archaeologist metaphor. There seems to be a disjuncture between Boltanski's desire for reconstruction (which he uses to connote a re-enactment or literal return) and the work of the archaeologist. That is, the work of the archaeologist is not to re-enact the past, but, according to my dictionary, is to "study earlier [times] through their remains" (Hawker, 2007, p. 27). The archaeologist does not "fail" at returning to the past because the archaeologist is not attempting to return to a previous time. The archaeological pursuit assumes a gap between past and present, between what was and what remains. It collects relics from the past and makes of that collection some kind of significance for today. The work of the archaeologist is better understood through a definition of construction, which means to "make by placing parts together" that can be either in the physical sense or through an "idea or theory" (Hawker, 2007, p. 118). When read through a process of a collection and construction, the gaps between the history Boltanski's works gesture towards and the creations he makes from this

history do not represent a “failure” to return to history. Instead, they represent an opportunity for this collection of relics to bring meaning and significance to today.

Boltanski’s approach of speaking to difficulties in thinking and the impossibilities of knowing is demonstrated in his work. In his early years as an artist, Boltanski created a series of short films, one entitled *La vie impossible de Christian Boltanski* (The Impossible Life of Christian Boltanski) (1968). Boltanski describes the film’s inspiration as what he felt were the impossibilities “of life itself;” of his struggle to articulate his history (Boltanski & Grenier, 2009, pp. 32-43). The film, twelve minutes long, screened life-sized puppets alongside actors in series of non-sequential, violent, clips. According to Ernst Van Alphen (1997), it was Boltanski’s intention to have these short, violent, works placed within larger existing films. Such a placement, Van Alphen argues, would have a potentially jarring effect on the viewer because the viewer would not have a frame of reference available to understand what had just occurred. This lack of a symbolic frame would lead to problems in meaning-making and understanding. And, he suggests, in this way Boltanski’s works do not only speak to problems of symbolization, they in fact act out the very problem to which they refer (pp. 160-164).

In this piece, Boltanski’s archeological project is one that collects not relics of a well-defined and articulated past, but one that encircles, or encodes, the gaps in his history and understanding. He creates an experience for the viewer aimed at “acting out” the gaps that are present between him and the history he cannot articulate. While his work gestures towards an earlier time, it does not *return* the viewer to this history, for it is the effects of this history that are felt by Boltanski; what is left over, or the excess

effects, have been abstracted to create an experience for the viewer. Boltanski's film offers a collection of a fragmented history that *is* "shadowed by failure." But, it is not a failure archeologically speaking. Instead, it is a failure of understanding brought about, or transferred, through his work.

Readers of psychoanalysis may find this phrasing of construction as an archeological project familiar. As Britzman (2011) discusses, Freud often referred to the work of the psychoanalyst as that of an archeologist and the work of psychoanalysis as an archeological dig. Like the archeologist who attempts to construct meaning from the remnants of a lost time, the analyst, too, works to formulate constructions from what remains of our each of our histories. These remains gesture towards a previous time but nevertheless cannot recapture the past as it once was (p. 53). Psychoanalytic theory works to make from obscured artifacts a reimagining of yesterday through an understanding of today. This reimagining may, Britzman argues, "give a second chance" to the artifacts of our histories—our "shards of experience, wrecked knowledge, [and] tattered memories"—that remain (p. 53).

For Freud (1937/1974), the analyst's construction differs from the work of the archeologist, in that for the archeologist the making of a construction signals a finality to the work. Whereas the work of the analyst's construction is just the "preliminary labour" (p. 261). This preliminary labour is then brought into communication with the patient who then "constructs a further piece out of the fresh material pouring in upon him" (p. 262). It is an analytic offering where the one who receives it may find new affective meaning through a constructed, rather than instructed, engagement with the material.

In many ways, Boltanski shares not only a metaphor with psychoanalytic theory, but a practice; a practice that follows a similar path with a familiar end. He, too, is working to take his “shards of experience” and “tattered memories” to create psychical and metaphorical constructions that may offer a reimagining of his “yesterdays” for today’s experience. In *La vie impossible de Christian Boltanski*, reimagining takes shape in a film which enacts and brings to the viewer the experience of a shard of experience. The short, violent, clips disrupt the narrative of the longer film and leave the viewer without the tools for understanding and meaning-making. The “second chance” does not imply a re-presentation or construction that is now newly articulable, but an act of disruption that draws our attention to the unresolved relics that continue to haunt him.

Paradoxically, the site where these remains are found in the archaeological project of psychoanalysis is also the site that impedes their reimagining. For at the crux of the dig for new understandings, we look to the unconscious while we continue to be subject to, and through, its conditions. While the unconscious is the site of the dig it is also the place of the burial; where knowledge, experience, and memories are, Britzman and Pitt (2003) claim, both “lost and found” (p. 757). It is a site we at once look towards, while also already being present within and can only recognize in retrospect.

This paradoxical nature of the work of psychoanalysis, Britzman (2009) describes, is what led Freud to name it one of the “impossible professions,” also in the company of education and government (p. 128). What makes these professions impossible is that they take place within a space that is governed by affect and framed through the complex and uncertain conflicts that this affect creates: phantasy, anxiety,

negation, projection, and transference (pp. 127-128). And, they are filtered through both our own psychological reality and the realities of others. The uncertainty of how we affect, and are affected by, “the impossible professions” brings problems of symbolization not only in these professions, but in how these professions interpret, and symbolize, a living in and with the world (pp. 130-131).

In naming these professions impossible, Freud placed these professions in a peculiar frame of both stubbornness and fluidity: a stubbornness in our psychological selves that refuses to be completely known, categorized, controlled, or without conflict, and a fluidity that allows for, and requires, a continual reimagining of how these professions affect and are affected by the world. But, what might it mean to work in these professions? If education is impossible—never fully known, always conflicted, and fraught with problems of symbolization—what might education look like? And, how might works of art contribute to this understanding of education?

In her work on Freud and education, Britzman (2011) offers us entry into this discussion through her formulation of, what she sees as, Freud’s theory of learning in the clinic. In Britzman’s formulation, Freud approached the impossibility of psychoanalytic teaching through an examination of the manifestations this impossibility brought about—through its difficulties, rejections, and failures (pp. 19-20). He then built from these objections new theoretical constructions which would be utilized to discuss the work of, and obstacles to, psychoanalysis:

It is as if Freud is always addressing a learning subject from the vantage of learning from difficulties. Here is where objections to psychoanalysis

transform into psychoanalytic objects such as ego defenses...constructions in analysis...transference...[and] dreams...These “objects” or sticky constructions that describe, recollect, and work through the psychological events are also the outcome of psychology and perform their emotional work. Further, they lend to Freud performative obstacles that pose questions to his theory, to the work of interpretation and, more generally, to his style of psychoanalytic transmission. Objections, objects, and obstacles constitute psychoanalytic movement...Freud’s approach is an on-going commentary on the paradoxical qualities of learning and so must accept the rule of over-determination. (pp. 19-20)

To work within the impossible professions meant that Freud needed to work within a space that toggled between a desire to know and a failure to understand, between the possible transformative work of psychoanalysis and the obstacles that would impede this transformation. Britzman’s formulation—of objections to objects to obstacles—creates a construction of Freud’s theory of learning that supposes not a shying away from impossibility, but a utilization of impossibility as a resource for its articulation. It frames difficulties to learning as resources for creativity; and creativity as necessary in the play of trying to learn.

When placed within Britzman’s formulation, we may read Boltanski’s practice of creating art objects as following a similar formulation. That is, Boltanski’s starting point for the creation of his work is also the site of impossibility—with the difficulty he has in articulating his history. He then, too, takes from these difficulties the material for his

creations. His constructions, like *La vie impossible de Christian Boltanski*, take shape not as objects which resolve the conflicts that the materials pose, but act as a presentation of those difficulties that may open an opportunity for thinking anew. Just as Britzman describes Freud's approach as "an ongoing commentary on the paradoxical qualities of learning," Boltanski's works, too, propose potential for thinking anew through obstacles to thinking.

While Boltanski's struggles are in one sense his own, his works may also be read as speaking to larger issues of history and the ways that the difficulties of history continue to act as struggles for education and society today. As one of the impossible professions, education is subject to both the world and its attempts at addressing others. And, this situation of education suggests that, like psychoanalysis, education is in need of objects that may allow us to think about its difficulties. Boltanski's play with impossibility may not only gesture towards a history that remains, but may also give this history a "second chance" to be attended to.

But, what might it mean to give history a second chance? What might an education made of second chances look like? And, how might we make sense of an education that is predicated on reproaching historical relics that have been left behind?

Storytelling and Intermediate Narrations

To think of education as having "left things behind" paints a picture of education as both unruly and conflicted. It is an education that both learns and refuses to learn. It is an education that strives to create change, while simultaneously recapitulates the problems it addresses. Working in this paradox, the task of education therefore

becomes not only recognizing limitations, but also questioning how historical relics come to be and what kind of second chance redress of these relics may lead to a fate that is otherwise.

For Boltanski, his redress to the relics of history takes place not through a direct retelling, for the struggle he has with his history is brought about through its inaccessibility. Instead, his is one where the gaps between history and narration play a part in creating works that enact an experience of living with a history that cannot be told. His works make from this struggle, not a re-presentation of history as it once was, but representations which act as pointers towards an untold history that remains. It is a process that Boltanski describes as creating an “intermediate narration:” “My idea,” he states, “is to always build a path, with progression, twists and turns...an intermediate narration, but a narration nonetheless. A vague theme and narration. For me, putting on an exhibit is like making a picture” (Boltanski & Grenier, 2009, p. 231).

To try and understand what Boltanski’s work of creating an “intermediate narration,” I turn to his book, *Scratch* (2002). The book is five pages long. Each page is covered front and back with a silvery surface similar to a covering found on lottery tickets. Underneath this silver surface lie violent photos taken from the Spanish magazine *El Caso*. The photos are a mixture of victims and perpetrators of violent crimes, but the identity of who is who is unknown. Readers can choose to peel away, scratch, the paint from the surface, or to leave the book untouched. Once the silvery surface is removed, readers are left only to find the grainy, dreadful, photos that lie underneath.

Through *Scratch*, Boltanski provides an abstract enactment of his struggle to narrate his history. In the creation of his piece, he asks readers to engage in a process of uncovering, a process of unveiling, what he does not yet, or is unable to, know or understand. His memories also lie beneath a silvery screen. His process is one of images without context, with information that does not yet have a narrative. Through his process of creating he engages in an uncovering, unveiling, what he does not yet know or understand. Through the creation of a work that gestures towards this struggle, Boltanski opens a space of intermediate narration; a narration that speaks not directly to history, but to his living with a history that resists its symbolization.

Through this intermediate narration, Boltanski's readers, too, are given the opportunity to engage in a process of uncovering, of revealing, images that cannot be processed. The photos are blurred, who is presented in the photos is unclear. What is being uncovered is presented without context or narration. And, it is this impossibility for narration, the disjunction between what is seen and what can be understood, that represents Boltanski's struggle with his history. The mixture of photos—where the identity of the victims and the perpetrators are unclear—also transfers an additional complication to the reader on the question of culpability over their potentially voyeuristic desire to, in a way destroy the book, and to uncover what is



Figure 6 Boltanski, C. (2002). *Scratch*. *Grahame Galleries*. Retrieved from <http://www.grahamegalleries.com.au/index.php/christian-boltanski-scratch>

beneath. Boltanski explains that for himself and the reader his piece represents a struggle with knowledge. Both he and the reader can choose to either resist the uncovering of the gory images, or take the opportunity to engage in the fearful encounter of what may not be able to be understood:

Beneath the silver-plated surface there are pictures of corpses in a dreadful condition. We each have a choice of scraping away at it or not, to take part or not. Either one keep the beauty of these silver-plated pages or one can choose to see reality. (Grenier, 2010, p. 148)

In a sense we can read that through *Scratch* Boltanski is offering the reader a metaphor for learning and the difficulties inherent in this process. That is, in order to see what is under the silvery screen, the reader must be willing to destroy the “beauty” that these pages hold. The book protects both the pages and the reader from what is underneath—the unknown. It is a struggle between our desire to know and a fear of what we do not yet understand.

The story that is offered through *Scratch* is a narrative that runs counter to how we typically conceive of education. That is, education is linked to characteristics such as knowledge and understanding. We turn to books in education in an attempt to grasp on to the concepts that will allow for knowledge and understanding to take place. *Scratch*, on the other hand, offers as a source of education where the situation of understanding is confused. Boltanski’s book of blank pages and abstract, nonsensical images is at once a symbol of education, and an indicator for what cannot be symbolized. The interplay of book and art at work in his piece accentuates the contradictions, gaps, and

repressions between history and education. But the interplay of book and art, of book as art and art as book, may act as a site to critique the very education that we seek. We are faced with a reproach to history.

In his teaching, Lacan (2008) puts emphasis on examining the use and limitations of language in attempts to understand ourselves and the world around us. Lacan argues that the origin of our understanding is language; we come into a place of understanding about ourselves and others through the frames with which language provides: “not only is man born into language in precisely the way he is born in to the world; he is born through language” (p. 27). In other words, unlike the common conception that we create and construct language through the influence of how we see the world, Lacan argues that language constructs our understandings of how and what we are capable of seeing. For education this would mean that education does not construct knowledge, but that knowledge is itself a construction of language to which education refers.

Boltanski's works gesture to the limits of language and his struggles to narrate may be read as struggles to live within and understand his history within the constructs and confines of currently available language. His work with intermediate narrations speaks to the point at which he, and his history, bump up against the limits of linguistic possibility. And more so than giving a perfectly narrated story to his viewers, his pieces acts as a pointer to the limits of language, that may be read as the larger message of the works. His work operates to bring a struggle to the viewers, not in the particular, but in the abstract. Where we are thrown into encounters where available language just will

not do. And it is this struggle with language, where the abstract story of Boltanski's experience takes shape—where the problem with language, the insufficiency of language—where language cannot.

Lacan (2008) states that it is the work of the analyst to provide a scaffolding to assist the patient in unfolding the constructs through which her subjectivity and knowledge is formed; constructs which the analyst herself is also subject through (pp. 110-11). The patient does not seek help from the analyst about what is privileged knowledge that the analyst holds and she does not, but about rather what cannot be known at all (p. 111). Through the scaffolding of the analyst, the subject can become aware of her resistances, defenses, and their operation.

In his "Seminar on the 'Purloined Letter'" (2006), Lacan suggests that works of art may provide this scaffolding technique both in and outside the analytic setting. He gives a reading of Edgar Allen Poe's mystery tale as a way of providing a metaphor for his theory of subject formation in relation to symbolic order. He argues that meaning is brought to the characters in the story in relation to their position to the letter. And, that the letter in the story acts as a signifier to where "the letter is...the true subject of the tale" (p. 21). That is, the characters do not make meaning of the letter, but the letter, in its position throughout the story, makes meaning of the characters (pp. 19-21). This metaphor works to explicate his position of the subject in relation to language—that subjects do not make meaning through language, but that language constructs subjectivity and possibilities for meaning.

Boltanski's book, *Scratch*, and his description of "intermediate narrations," may also be read as tools through which he uses metaphor to scaffold a reading of the excess of history and the struggle to bring that excess into symbolization. With this scaffolding, viewers may be provoked to encounter, not a knowledge that Boltanski or his art holds and they do not, but a knowledge that slips away from our current frameworks for understanding.

Along with considering Boltanski's constructions of "intermediate narrations" as being representative of a gap in language, we may also read this state of intermediacy through Apel's (2002) study of contemporary representations of the Holocaust. She argues that art can operate as a form of expression towards the ongoing personal and political effects this history has on the present. She calls this expression a form of "secondary witnessing" (pp. 7-8). This "secondary witnessing" comes from artists born after the Holocaust, who attempt to communicate the effects of history. Apel argues that in their attempt to communicate these after-effects, artists encounter a resistance to representation that is twofold: they are attempting to represent the effects of events which they did not live through themselves; and, the concept of representation requires an identifiable referent, but this referent is resisted by the horrific nature of the events of the Holocaust and the refusal of these events to be historicized (pp. 3-4). It is here—at the site of resistance to representation—where Apel argues that art can perform as an expression of the inexpressible. Art can allow for a form of communication that is "nonnarrative and noncognitive;" a form of communication that can draw our attention to the blind spots of history, society and sociality (pp. 3-5). She suggests that visual art

affects us, unsettles us, and surprises us because it speaks to us through unspeakable forms (p. 3). And, it is through the interplay of representation and resistance where new understandings of the present and for the future, occur.

Grenier (2010) reads the pedagogy offered in Boltanski's work as one that attempts "not to instruct, but to disorientate the viewer" (p. 129). It is through his work to navigate in a space between affect and meaning where, she argues, his work offers a site for fluid interpretations:

Because his art speaks to life and is, as he says, an 'art of emotion,' it embraces the whole gamut of consciousness, from the lightest to the darkest. The absurdity of life, the absurdity of the human condition, by which he was struck at a very early age, present his work from issuing diktats, from constituting itself as an absolute reference. (p. 129)

According to Grenier, Boltanski's works offer not a stable, objective, point of reference, but locations where temporality prefaces any attempt at understanding.

Boltanski describes a certain fluidity to this place of intermediacy as the role of both truth and lies in his works:

I'm an incredible liar. I think lying is a positive thing. Lies fix up life and make it more beautiful...Art represents a lie that unveils a truth—not a personal truth, but an exemplary, general truth. It isn't the truth of 'me' but of 'us,' the essential truth. (Boltanski & Grenier, 2009, p. 238)

For Boltanski, it is the work of lies, the work of art, to take what is harsh and true in the world and transform it into a more tolerable form. While his works take shape through

art and lies, they do not deny truth. On the contrary, his works are inextricably linked to a truth. It is a truth that is not hidden through art, but exposed through its creation. For Boltanski, this blending of truth and lies is not only important to art, but is art itself: “I’ve told my story so many times that my story is both true and false, a mixture of the two—it’s become a work of art” (p. 153).

Grenier’s (2010) analysis of Boltanski and his works has led to her assertion that truth is only attainable through an intermingling with lies. And, this state of affairs, she argues, has led Boltanski to adopt a strategy of storytelling in his works:

Whenever someone asks Christian Boltanski about the meaning of his works, he adopts the strategy of storytelling and formulates indirect answers set in imaginary worlds inhabited by both the questioner and the artist...They all converge...on one central idea: that memory is possible through telling and only through telling. All the stories speak of lies and truth as one and the same thing, because in art a lie is constitutive of truth and the truth is only attainable through lying. In doing this, these narratives and legends weave verbal circles around the artist’s world; they allow access, but they also get his oeuvre across—an oeuvre that, because it speaks of transmission, should be easy to transmit. (p. 5)

Boltanski and Grenier take the position that the intermingling of truth and lies, not the severing, is the driving force which may allow for a communication of truth that may not otherwise be possible. Art is a lie, but a lie that carries with it access to a truth.

Boltanski’s stories act to redress history and encase these relics in a new form.

The role of the storyteller is also one that functions in Arendt's (2006b) discussion of the role of truth and lies in politics. She argues that for historical relics to be integrated into a conversation of the state of the world in such a way that may bring about change, an approach to history must go beyond recognition of the past to making from the past meaningful narratives for today. And, in the act of engaging with history, these narratives take place within a state of intermediacy, where both truth and lies must be present.

In her discussion of the role of truth and lies in politics, Arendt distinguishes between, what she calls, "factual truth" and "rational truth." Rational truth, she explains, relates to discoveries in science and philosophy, and is based in the idea that logic transcends through time. Drawing from Hobbes, she gives the example that if all mathematical books were burned, the rational truth associated with the statement that "the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two angles of a square" would be recovered (p. 226). Factual truth, on the other hand, is not afforded such a fate of recovery. Factual truth is fragile. Based on events in human history, facts are events that no rational thought created, and therefore, no rational effort could recover in the event of their loss (p. 227). In that factual truths are comprised of human affairs, they are important to the realm of politics. Through the use of facts, opinions can be formed. And, it is through the formation and debate of opinion over the state of the world's conditions where the realm of politics and the opportunity for change resides (pp. 233-234).

When facts are presented *without* opinion, however, they have no use to the political realm at all. Arendt describes that both factual truth and rational truth hold in common a “stubbornness” that prohibits debate. Facts are what they are, and as long as the facts remain true in the situation, there is no room for the content of the truth to be questioned (pp. 236-237). In the absence of opinion, facts leave little to occur in the political realm in relation to action or change in the world’s circumstances, “the mere telling of facts, leads...toward the acceptance of things as they are...Truthfulness...has little indeed to contribute to that change of the world and of circumstances which is among the most legitimate political activities” (pp. 246-247).

Arendt warns that in our efforts to avoid the tyrannical nature of truth, the opposite—the mere telling of lies—can be equally as dangerous and unproductive. The teller of lies can create, what she describes as, an “image,” which, if convincing enough, can lead a state of mass delusion (pp. 250-251). In this case, the state of reality may be temporarily taken as that of the image. But, Arendt argues, although “images...can always be explained and made plausible...they can never compete in stability with that which simply is because it happens to be thus and not otherwise” (p. 253). In other words, although images can temporarily distort reality and do nothing to advance the conditions of human affairs, the stubbornness of truth—that facts are what they are—will eventually return the political to a state of informed opinion and debate.

Political action, therefore, must fall between the two extremes of, on the one hand, not taking current and historical political facts for granted—as taking facts for granted would suggest that nothing can be done to alter the world’s conditions—and the

other hand, not denying facts altogether—as denying facts altogether would be a way of trying to manipulate the world (p. 254). That is, facts are important to the realm of politics, but equally important is the use of opinion through which these facts can be formed into arguable positions about the world. Through the formation and debate of opinion over the state of the world's conditions, change to these conditions may be possible (pp. 233-234).

Outside the political realm, but still important to its function, and striving to speak along that same fine line, is the role of, what Arendt calls, “the teller of factual truth.” The teller engages her or his listener as she or he “tells a story, and in this story the particular facts lose their contingency and acquire some humanly comprehensible meaning...To the extent that the teller of factual truth is also a storyteller, he brings about that ‘reconciliation with reality’...that transcends mere learnedness” (p. 257).

Through his process of creating a story, Boltanski is able to loosen the grip on the certainty of what is being shared. For, it is a certainty that even he cannot access. In doing this, he may be able to open historical truth to the reception of others. His book, *Scratch*, speaks to both truth and lies—the truth of a living with a history that cannot be known, and the lies of the representation through which this history is carried. Boltanski's *Scratch* may act as an object where education may think about the obstacles to thinking that occur due to its residence in this state of intermediacy.

To place education alongside theories of the limits of language and truth and lies constructs a theory of education that resides in a place of uncertainty. In the realm of

truth, lies and intermediate narrations, we are left wondering how to understand whether we are being “educated” at all.

Newcomers and the Chance of Education

In reading the stories of education through intermediate narrations of truth and lies we are faced with what, on the one hand, seems like a problematic navigation: how can we make sense of an education that is made of both truth and lies? On the other hand, to think of education as taking place in a state of mediation gives a conceptualization of education that places dependency on thinkers and opens opportunity for the world to be thought anew. In order for there to be an opportunity for the world to be thought anew, Arendt (2006a) argues that there is a partnering paradox that needs to be negotiated. That is, opportunity to think anew resides in the newcomers to the world. And, it is the responsibility of education to welcome these newcomers, while simultaneously protecting the world from the destruction that thinking anew risks to bring (p. 182). But, how might education play within this mediation between new and old, between rejuvenation and preservation? How can we understand this responsibility?

Arendt describes that the place of education is one that is “pre-political” (p. 187). Unlike the space of politics where debate takes place over the state of the world’s conditions, the space of education is one that welcomes the new into the world. These newcomers are in a “process of becoming” (p. 182). They do not yet know about the world and need to be introduced into the world in order to participate in it (pp. 182-186). It is the responsibility of education, of educators, to guide these introductions, to “[point]

out the details and [say] to the child: This is our world” (p. 186). It is important, she argues, to introduce the world as it is, not as how we wish it to be, or how we think it ought to be (p. 186). The introduction of the world as it is, and not as we wish it to be, works to preserve this potential new that may then come to make change upon the world in the adult life of politics.

Education must recognize, she continues, that just as the world is continually welcoming the new the time of the old is continually counting down: “Because the world



Figure 7 Boltanski, C. (2011). *Chance*. *French Pavilion, Venice Biennale*. Retrieved from <http://fantasticocotidiano.com/latidos-del-corazon-de-christian-boltanski/>

is made by mortals it wears out; and because it continuously changes its inhabitants it runs the risk of becoming as mortal as they. To preserve the world against the mortality of its creators and inhabitants it must be constantly set right anew” (p. 189). Education, therefore, must recognize its own mortality for the sake of its

continuance. Even while this new does not bring with it a guarantee of change, or good change, the hope for a world that is different lies in education’s responsibility to take this chance (p. 189).

Boltanski broaches a similar theme of natality, fragility and hope through one of his recent installations. In *Chance* (2011), viewers walk into a room that is occupied by

a metal, maze-like, structure. Multiple scaffolds carry dozens of black and white pictures of infants around the metal structure at a speed that leaves them almost indistinguishable from one another. The string of photos, put together like a string of negatives on a film, wind above, around, and in front of viewer like a newspaper press. The sound of the rattling reels and shuffling photographs are echoed through the metal structure as they weave, twist and turn their way up, down, and around the installation. An alarm bell sounds. It is a sound that resembles what you would hear on a factory production line. The pictures slow until one is left in the video picture frame. Who is chosen to be framed is not predetermined, but a random game of chance.

At one corner of the installation, viewers are invited to take part in their own game of chance. Photos of infants and adults divided into thirds flash unsystematically



Figure 8 Boltanski, C. (2011). *Chance*. *French Pavilion, Venice Biennale*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnap.fr/chance>

on a television screen. Standing in front of the screen there is a post with a button that viewers can push to stop the pictures. Like a game of match played on a horizontal slot machine, viewers can engage in this game of chance where if they stop the pictures at the right moment, a complete photo will appear. But, more likely, viewers will be faced with pieces of photos, fragments of identities, randomly put together by the “chance” in time when they hit the button.

The entire installation is black, silver, metallic, and white. The only colour comes from the two large digital counters placed on one side of the room. Each counter—one in green, one in red—represents those who are born and those who die, respectively.



Figure 9 Boltanski, C. (2011). *Chance*. *French Pavilion, Venice Biennale*. Retrieved from <http://acasculpture.blogspot.ca/2011/05/christian-boltanski-chance-venise.html>

The implied connotation is that as quickly as we come into the world, we also leave. And, how we enter and exit the world—where, when, how, to what circumstance—is largely

left to chance.

Throughout the installation, viewers are invited to participate in a space where chance and its connotations may be reflected upon. The chance meeting between the pictures scrolling around the metal scaffold catching the eyes of the viewer; the chance occurrence, stroke of luck, that a viewer may be able to piece together the faces in the game; and the inevitability that there will be faces, identities, in the installation that will go without recognition. The play between new and old points us to the fragility of our efforts to achieve this balance. Similar to Arendt's discussion of the role and responsibility of education, Boltanski's works, too, ask the viewer to consider that while new ideas for thinking and being in the world may be born with new generations, chance opens a space for hope and risk. In terms of responsibility, however, there is a theoretical tension between Boltanski's treatment of the chance of the new and Arendt's discussion of natality. As mentioned, Arendt stresses that the chance of natality requires

preservation, and responsibility of that preservation lies in education while also teaching the world as it is. Boltanski's piece, however, with its primary focus on chance, random creation of identity, and continual mechanical regeneration, almost negates the possibility for preservation of the new that is continually created.

We can read that responsibility, for Boltanski, instead takes shape through a discussion of chance versus destiny. He describes that what allows for a potential thinking anew is a connotation of chance as one of opportunity, and to avoid the potential collapse between chance and destiny:

The real question is between chance and destiny. If you are a believer you can believe that everything is alright somewhere. And, if you are going to die tonight it's because it is [written] somewhere. And you can't understand why it's good, but perhaps it's a good thing that you die tonight. If you are not a believer, it's only chance...If you are a believer...there's some kind of reason. If you are not a believer, there is no reason. I wish to believe in destiny, but, in fact, I believe in chance.

(Vimeo)

To collapse the relationship between chance and destiny paves the way for passive compliance and indifference. While a belief in destiny may provide comfort from the uncertainty of the new, it also relinquishes our responsibility for the state of the world's conditions. With the fate of world's conditions predetermined, destined to change in this way or that, there is no need to question or debate how things are, how they might be otherwise, or to preserve the world in relation to what is new in a way that allows for

continuance. To think of chance as an opening of opportunity does not shelter us from the discomfort of the unknown, however, it does preserve the space of opinion and debate through which thinking may take place. And, it calls upon us to examine these opportunities with both a receptive hand and critical eye. It asks us to welcome what is new and needed to rejuvenate the world while protecting the world that we care so much about.

Through his construction of works around his inability to narrate his history, Boltanski creates works with “blind spots,” gaps and holes that may act as pointers to that which our cultural discourse cannot contain. For Boltanski: “The artist brings something out that each of us knows but which until then remains hidden. It’s as if the artist has a big bag and can pull things out of the bottom of it” (as cited in Grenier, 2010, p. 147). Through his work of intermediate narrations on the impossibilities of knowing Boltanski offers sites of encounter where the uncertainty that is not tolerated in our education, what remains hidden, can be brought to the fore. The story that is offered through Boltanski’s book, *Scratch*, is one where his book of blank pages and abstract, nonsensical, images is at once a symbol of education, while at the same time an indicator of our conceptual limitations.

Art may bring to education objects that speak to its obstacles and objections. Through art that interrupts our understandings, education may be given an opportunity to reflect on its peculiar frame of stubbornness and fluidity: a stubbornness that limits what we know and understand, and a fluidity that allows for, and requires, that we rethink our education. Boltanski’s collection and construction of relics of history may

bring attention to the unresolved historical remains in our education. His works may offer not only the findings of his own archeological project, but also act as an offering to education for these relics to be given a chance to be symbolized in education today.

To think of education as having “left things behind” sketches a drawing of education’s playground as both unruly and conflicted. It takes place within a space that must recognize problems of symbolization while simultaneously recognize that there is no “outside” to these limitations. It is an education that asks that us to loosen the frames around absolutes of knowing and not knowing and instead play within a space of intermediacy of truth and lies, rejuvenation and continuation. In this space, the task of education becomes one where historical relics are brought back into education for a second look, a second chance, to consider how things are, how they have been, and how they might be otherwise.

In the next chapter I continue a discussion of the limits and possibilities of education through an examination of the work of Roee Rosen and educational theorists that call for a disruptive pedagogy through aesthetics. I ask what a pedagogy of disruption might mean for education and question the possibilities and limitations of such an understanding might offer.

CHAPTER FOUR—ROEE ROSEN AND THE PECULIAR PLACE OF A DISRUPTIVE PEDAGOGY

In the previous chapter I suggested that a discussion of Christian Boltanski's work offers a glimpse into several of the difficult conditions within our education: the impossibility of education, the limits of language, and the role of truth and lies in coming to understand history and its place in our current social conditions. I argue that his works may be sites for us to reflect on these tensions and bring questions to how we conceptualize the (im)possibilities of education. In this chapter, Rosen's works, *Live and Die as Eva Braun* (1997) and *Confessions* (2011) and his writings take us to the problem of what is at stake in intervening within education. I analyse Rosen's disturbing works and his proposition that his works aim to "destabilize notions of identity" (The Israeli Center for Digital Art, 2008) to a conversation of educational theorists Simon (2000; 2005) and Felman (1992), and to Adorno's (1997; 1999) discussion on the role of artworks and aesthetic theory. Simon and Felman suggest that our current state of education requires disruption, or crisis, as a precondition for learning to take place. Adorno offers a similar call for an education of society through critical self-reflection that can be offered in the aesthetic experience.

My reading of Rosen's works and these theorists is framed by the questions: How are we conceptualizing the acts of disruption, destabilization, crisis, surprise, and critical self-reflection? And, how does the complex place of education—as residing in both the social and the individual—bring questions to theories of the possibility of art in conducting, or enabling, this work? That is, these theories lie on both sides of the social

and the individual. And, while they converge on two points—that that intervention is required and that artworks can enable this intervention—each theorist holds a different idea on the process of intervention. Collectively they share a proposition that the problem that education, or, in Adorno’s case, society, requires intervention. But, I suggest that further discussion is needed on this messy space where this intervention is supposed and education resides.

Provoking Disruption

Rosen, an Israeli conceptual artist and writer, works through the mediums of film, writing, painting, and installation (Van Alphen, 2005; Rosen, 1997; 2008). His work focuses on troubling conceptions of history, memory, politics, and identity. Rosen states that through his work, he attempts to “defy stable notions of identity” and make “parody [of] those notions” (The Israeli Center for Digital Art, 2008). He is interested in thinking about how troubling our social constructions and understandings of ourselves may lead to different relations to and with the past, as well as possibilities for the future. Rosen’s book, *Live and Die as Eva Braun* (1997), is based on the larger installation piece of the same name which prompts viewers into a space of scandalous identification with Hitler’s mistress. Comprised of a series of black and white prints and accompanying captions, Rosen’s work addresses the viewer as viewer, but also addresses the viewer as Eva Braun: “Excitement jolts through your body when you hear the steps outside. When he opens the door you gasp at the sight of his small mustache. Because you are not only Eva it seems menacing, almost monstrous” (as cited in Van Alphen, 2005, p.193).

Van Alphen (2005) argues that Rosen's approach to positioning the viewer in relation to the historical perpetrators offers a pedagogy of potential that cannot be addressed through victim identification practices. While there is importance in identifying with victims, he suggests, there are also some problems. Identification can lead to a sense of "victimhood" and a relation to history that disavows any responsibility for the continued presence of that history (p. 196). For Van Alphen, this state of victimhood is unproductive to educational goals aimed at ensuring the events of the Holocaust never happen again: "Victimhood cannot control the future. In contrast, soliciting partial and temporary identification with the perpetrators makes one aware of the ease with which one can slide into a measure of complicity" (p. 196).

What is described as a state of "complicity" for Van Alphen, is similar to Adorno's (1999) critique of our societal tendencies to turn a blind eye to our own "conditionedness" (p.200). Adorno argues that one of education's addresses should be towards the lack of historical referent in the reality of the present. He contends that society operates on, what he calls, a "reified consciousness;" a consciousness which is "blinded to all historical past, all insight into one's own conditionedness, and posits as absolute what exists contingently" (p. 200). He claims that we live without acknowledgement, or responsibility, for both the origin and fragility of our conditions. And, he calls for an education that will address this "reified consciousness" so that the impact and relevance of the past can be acknowledged in such a way that will prevent repetition and open new possibilities for the future (pp.197-202).

Adorno's call for such an address follows a similar tone as the suggestion he presents in his work on negative dialectics. That is, here, too, he proposes that the formulation of this reified consciousness is directly related to a lack of critical self-reflection; a critical reflection that should be taken up by education:

All political instruction...should be centered upon the idea that Auschwitz should never happen again...To do this education must transform itself in to sociology, that is, it must teach about the societal play of forces that operates beneath the surface of political forms. (p. 203)

Adorno is arguing for an education that is called to look back on itself. Through this process of re-education we can be present with the past, acknowledge its ongoing influence on current socio-cultural forms, and attend to its presence in our decisions for the future.

Yet, as Heiser (2010) lays out, such an approach to re-education of difficult histories often provokes a tenuous reception:

There is, obviously, a place for traditional, consoling rituals of remembering the dead; but that is not art's function...Whenever an aesthetic form meant to address the Holocaust is anything other than a dark stone at which wreaths can be laid, there will always be a vocal group who will condemn it as being trite and tasteless...One can't help but think that those who oppose [such projects] do so because of their reservations about contemporary art: as if commemoration should be dealt with in a predictable format so that it signals acknowledgement of

responsibility to the ‘outside’ world while not disturbing the ordinary run of things on the ‘inside.’ (pp. 95-96)

While taken from different vantage points, Heiser, Rosen, Van Alphen and Adorno all suggest that intervention is needed in our current relations to, and thinking about, history. And, it is a specific kind of intervention that is required. One that necessitates acknowledgement that current understandings of social life are predicated on those of yesterday. They argue that there is a lack of conscious relation to this intertwined connection that must be addressed. Only through a provocation into this condition may we recognize our own culpability and vulnerability—a culpability of learning from and accepting the past, and a recognition for our vulnerability to the risk of repeating similar conditions. Rosen’s efforts to destabilize identity in his work *Live and Die as Eva Braun*, Van Alphen’s reading of this work through his argued position for identification with perpetrators, and Adorno’s call for critical reflection, all warn of a repetition of history without such a disruption, and the importance of bringing the “outside” world, or history, “inside.” But, what does it mean to bring the “outside” world “inside”? How do we think about this problem of intervention?

Bringing the Outside In, or, On Being Affected

Rosen’s, *The Confessions of Roee Rosen* (2008), aims to frame this problem, or difficulty, of bringing the outside in. The video work, nearly an hour long, screens three immigrant women



Figure 10 Rosen, R. (2008). *The Confessions of Roee Rosen*. Tel Aviv Center of Contemporary Art. Retrieved from <http://roerosen.com/tagged/Confessions>

reading from a teleprompter Latin transliterations of Rosen's "confessions" in Hebrew; a language which none of the women speak. During each of the monologues, a woman is seated behind a desk surrounded by books, photos, and other personal objects. Each is given the instruction to read from the teleprompter as well as take direction on their physical movements from Rosen himself who stands beside the camera, just out of the shot. At one point in the film, one of the women reads Rosen's confession of pretending to be a Jewish Neo-Nazi, and states: "I am about to raise my right arm," as she stands to give a Nazi salute (Appendix: Confession: English Translation, Winter 2011). Each of these women pronounces a diatribe of Rosen's sexual, professional, and familial admissions while Rosen takes on the role of puppeteer.

Rosen has described the unsettling ability of his video works to speak to the "instrumental" and "exhibitionistic" nature of confessions in our political climate: "At first sight, it seems that a crime or a wound are at the crux of the confession. Actually, the confession usually has another motive and the crime or the wound are the means to obtain it, and therefore they constitute a form of power" (p. 33). This "other motive" that is so blatantly played out in Rosen's work leaves the viewer at odds, disturbed, even feeling responsible for providing a space for this play on power and manipulation to take place. Through this play on culpability and questions of responsibility, Rosen's works aim to invoke in the viewer a confrontation with their understandings of themselves.

Educational theorists have called for a remembrance pedagogy of responsibility. Simon (2000) has developed the idea that education can be both a site that takes responsibility for traumatic historical memories and a site which refutes the ongoing

affectedness that those memories have in the world today (pp. 17-18). He argues for remembrance practices which bring affect to our present education. In order for a “practice of historical memory” to bring hope for the future and new possibilities, it must occur in such a way that it unsettles the present:

[It must] paradoxically incorporate elements of trauma that disrupt the terms of sociality we have forgotten we tolerate...A genuine tomorrow, not a repeat of yesterday or today, requires we reassess what we have learned and repressed...Because a practice of historical memory must be, literally, a re-saying, a further bearing witness to one’s own witness, this re-saying is not merely a recall, but always a renewal of the possibility of the past, which may innovate and interrupt the performance of the present. (pp. 22-23)

In other words, in order for a practice of historical memory to shape the future, the ongoing affectedness of this history must be felt today. And, it is through such remembrance practices where we may initiate, “forms of learning that shift and disrupt the present, opening one to new ways of perceiving, thinking, and acting” (p. 13).

Simon (2005) suggests that a practice of historical memory that can lead to different ways of thinking and living with the presence of the past can be thought of as a practice of “remembering otherwise” (p. 9). Remembering otherwise, he explains, asks us to welcome the histories and memories of others into the present “not simply in the didactic sense...but more fundamentally as that which brings me more than I can

contain” (p. 10). Through this process of being given more than one can contain, Simon argues that new possibilities for “true learning” can take place (p. 10).

Simon (2000) warns, however, that many educative practices run the risk of becoming “object lessons” that can then become “old news, redundant...remembered, but then forgotten” (pp. 17-18). Such practices may act as memorial site, where a certain kinship between the present and the past can be developed, but where no disruption of the present from the past may take place (p. 19). What is needed therefore, is a pedagogical practice where the past interrupts the present, and whereby we are given “more than [we] can contain” (p. 10). But, at the same time that we feel this interruption it must not be felt with such overwhelming force that we become, as Simon puts it, “a symptom of a history [we] cannot possess” (p. 10). Instead, we need a practice where the act of interruption may open the “possibility for true learning” to take place (p. 10).

In her discussion of an experience with learning through crisis in one of her graduate classes, Felman (1992) also suggests that certain engagements with history can interrupt the present and create new ways of thinking both *in* the present and *for* the future. This being brought “more than we can contain,” for Felman, takes shape through her argument for a pedagogy that requires crisis and intervention. Felman confronts her students with “information that is *dissonant*, and not just *congruent*, with everything that they have learned beforehand” (italics original, p. 53). Through use of testimonials from histories of social discord, Felman constructs a theory of learning. She describes that by encountering jarring testimonies, her students’ conceptualizations were brought to the

edge of crisis. But the students' crisis was not something that Felman planned; their anxiety caught her by surprise. Looking back on this event Felman finds a "generic story" (p. 52) that can be extrapolated from her experience to show "the validity of a generic pedagogical event and thus a generic lesson" (p. 53). She creates from this experience, a theory that it is not the educator's intent simply to create a situation that throws students deep into their own discord. Rather, the educator's task is present students with history; affects as found in literature and testimony that brings them to the edge of crisis and then the teacher's work is to "recontextualize the crisis and to put it back into perspective, to relate the present to the past and to the future and thus reintegrate the crisis in a *transformed* frame of meaning" (p. 54).

But, what constitutes a surprise or crisis? What objects, testimonies, or artworks may enable or provoke such surprise? And, how might we think about the difficulties inherent in this process of "recontextualization" and "reintegration"?

The Peculiar Place of a Disruptive Pedagogy

In order to begin to think about these questions, it is important that we first further explore the qualities of artworks and the process of aesthetics as a foundation for a discussion about the place and possibilities of art in education. To inquire into this foundation of understanding, I turn to Adorno's (1997) work on aesthetics. For Adorno, artworks must be conceived as having, and being received through, their own subjectivity. Subjectivity while predicated upon having both a creator and observer, however, cannot be limited to those terms:

In the artwork the subject is neither the observer nor the creator nor absolute spirit, but rather spirit bound up with preformed and mediated by the object...Art's linguistic quality gives rise to reflection over what speaks in art; this is its veritable subject, not the individual who makes it or the one who receives it. (pp. 166-67)

The artwork as subject mediates, what Adorno calls, a "We that speaks" (p. 167). This "We" is the collective social of our conditions, but not those elements that are particular or identifiable. Instead, it speaks to, and reveals, the shared unknown of our conditions: "The aesthetic We is a social whole on the horizon of a certain indeterminateness" (p. 168). While Adorno contends that artworks speak to this shared space, he argues that it is particularly this characteristic of the unknowable that aesthetic theory must be cautious of imposing any universal theorization (p. 339). For the imposition of any universal would impede on the possibilities for critical reflection, and only leave art trapped within the precarious position that it attempts to escape.

The focus of aesthetic theory, and the aesthetics experience, therefore, is a task of engagement that is "wary of a priori construction" (p. 345) and that turns to the artworks as objects of, and subjects that offer, knowledge in and of themselves:

Preartistic experience requires projection, yet aesthetic experience—precisely by virtue of the a priori primacy of subjectivity in it—is a countermovement of the subject. It demands something on the order of the self-denial of the observer, his capacity to address or recognize what aesthetic objects themselves enunciate and what they conceal. Aesthetic

experience first of all places the observer at a distance from the object. (p. 346)

It is only when the observer is able to place themselves both in relation to, but also at distance from, the art object where the aesthetic experience—the address of, and to, the object through critical self-reflection—can take place. Adorno explains that the “self-denial of the observer” takes shape as she struggles to grapple with the content of the work and through this struggle is brought towards an understanding of what the works reveal and conceal. That is, when thinking of the aesthetic experience, we must put into question what we believe to constitute “understanding” to mean, and the process through which such a thing might be accomplished. We must consider that beyond thinking about the intention of the work, or the preformulated idea it may hold, we must take on the task of labouring our experience with the content of the work itself:

Artworks are understood only when their experience is brought to the level of distinguishing between true and not true or, as a preliminary stage, between correct and incorrect. Critique is not externally added into aesthetic experience but, rather, is immanent to it. The comprehension of an artwork as a complex of truth brings the work into relation with its untruth, for there is no artwork that does not participate in the untruth external to it, that of the historical moment. Aesthetics that does not move within the perspective of truth fails its task; usually it is culinary. Because the element of truth is essential to artworks, they participate in knowledge, and this defines the only legitimate relation to them. (pp. 346-47)

Similar to Arendt's and Boltanski's discussions of the role of truth and lies in artworks in the previous chapter, we see this to be of theoretical interest and concern to Adorno as well. This precarious place of relation and distance, and trying to decipher between truth and lies can also be read through Rosen's *Live and Die as Eva Braun* and *Confessions*. In *Live and Die*, the viewer is called, or demanded upon to relate themselves to the story that is being told. Through Rosen's speaking to the viewer as viewer but also as Eva Braun, there is a struggle to defend against this imposed identification within the realm of trying to decipher what is true and untrue as presented and felt in interaction with the work. The viewer is not Eva Braun, but the disturbing ill effects of the identification cause one to question their relation to a history that is both true and not true. Similarly with *Confessions*, the viewer is placed in relation to the seemingly puppeteered women who are giving a diatribe of Rosen's personal and professional misgivings. The viewer is called to attend to their positions of distance and relation—what responsibility do they bear for what is happening?—and to try and decipher from the performance questions of: what is the story that is being told? Whose story is it? And, to ask what, if any, truth lies within this muddled narrative?

The work of the aesthetics experience, therefore, is a labour of understanding, guided by the artwork and that speaks to the impossibility of what the artwork cannot contain (Adorno, 1997, p. 347). And it is this representation of impossibility, that Adorno asserts, also inherently holds a possibility for failure; a failure which is predicated on the "openness of artworks" but which also gives hold to uncertainty: "no artist knows with certainty whether anything will come of what he does, his happiness and his anxiety,

which are totally foreign to the contemporary self-understanding of science, subjectively registers something objective: the vulnerability of all art” (p. 353-354). Through our ability to tolerate this place of unknowing and space of impossibility, we, too, may find ourselves vulnerable in the aesthetic experience. It is a vulnerability that may allow us to reconsider the contradictions of social life and open us to our own conditionedness.

Similar to Walker’s shadowy figures and Boltanski’s intermediate narrations, Rosen’s works play on the act of disruption and intervention that operates to bring the viewer to question what is happening, what can and cannot be understood. All three artists produce works that, while radical, are not so radically unfamiliar that they preclude the possibility for any relation. However, the conditions within which these art works live, and their dependence on subjectivity, make them vulnerable to a reception that may become no reception at all. We can see this anxiety around engaging with the impossibilities of knowing in responses to Walker’s works and the call for censorship of her images, in Boltanski’s worry of being a “failed archeologist,” or in Heiser’s comments on critical response to art that comes in unpredictable forms. All three artists offer works that propose an aesthetic movement that oscillates between me and not me, relation and distance, truth and lies where a space of vulnerability may also be one of critical self-reflection.

Adorno’s discussion on the possibilities of art to bring us to new understandings at the risk of a failure to understand helps us to identify, tease out, and revise some of the tensions in trying to imagine a relationship between pedagogy and aesthetics. Many

of these tensions can be seen through an examination of Felman's (1997) propositions of what she believes is the role of art in education. She supposes:

that teaching in itself, teaching as such, takes place precisely only through a crisis: if teaching does not hit upon some sort of crisis, if it does not encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension, it has perhaps *not truly taught*....I therefore think that my job as a teacher, paradoxically as it may sound, [is] that of creating in the class the highest state of crisis that it [can] withstand, without 'driving the students crazy'—without compromising the students' bounds. (italics original, p. 53)

But, how do we imagine the students' bounds? How can we anticipate a collective "edge of crisis" without imposing both an a priori assumption on the works, as well as constructing universals around art and of the students as a collective? Or, how could we possibly know when such boundary has been reached? There is a tension created when trying to position education in the place of the "generic story." While this construction does speak to education as residing in the social, and therefore is subject to collective conditions—as Adorno considers, the collective "We"—this is not the only space where education resides. Education also resides in the individual, which, paradoxically, in trying to create a "generic lesson" has the effect of washing out the complexities of the messiness of this space and the organic potential of what might come from its engagement. It is not to say that addresses to, or concerns of, the social, or the generic, are not important; however, what is needed is a way to speak of such

addresses and concerns that leaves room for the particulars, such as the aesthetic experience which occurs on the level of individual critical self-reflection. Otherwise, we may miss opportunities to engage with these complexities, and instead only create new normative patterns in our social discourse.

Felman brings attention to the intermingling of the social and the individual in her comparison of her pedagogy to that of psychoanalysis:

There is a parallel between this kind of teaching (in its reliance on the testimonial process) and psychoanalysis (in its reliance on the psychoanalytic process), insofar as both this teaching and psychoanalysis have, in fact, to *live through a crisis*. Both are called upon to be *performative*, and not just *cognitive*, insofar as they both strive to produce, and to enable, *change*. Both this kind of teaching and psychoanalysis are interested not merely in new information, but, primarily, in the capacity of their recipients to *transform themselves* in function and newness of that information. (italics original p. 53)

While I agree that certain parallels can be made between the type of teaching and learning that Felman suggests and that of psychoanalysis, there are also some tensions within this comparison. First, rather than being considered a collective undertaking, the psychoanalytic process is one of an individual “curriculum.” The very reason Freud refused to develop any “generic” “how-to’s” for analysts in his writing was because the “curriculum” needed to come from, develop out of, each individual analysand. And,

while he resisted creating a handbook for the analyst, he did offer several papers on technique that focused on helping the analyst tap into this “individual curriculum” and which, through examination, can assist us in further thinking about the tensions of trying to bring psychoanalysis to pedagogy.

In one of Freud’s (1912/1958) papers on technique, he offers several warnings to the analyst, one of which is against making psychoanalysis an educative activity. He cautions that when psychoanalysis is treated as an educative activity there is simultaneously the creation of aims for progress. And, these aims perform an act of attempting to push through resistance that may only exacerbate the problem of not learning:

Educative ambition is of...little use...It must be further borne in mind that many people fall ill precisely from an attempt to sublimate their instincts beyond the degree permitted by their organization and that in those who have a capacity for sublimation the process usually takes place of itself as soon as their inhibitions have been overcome by analysis. (p. 119)

While the application of psychoanalysis in to the realm of education that is our concern differs from the one Freud describes, this warning does offer us something to consider. That is, while in bringing psychoanalysis to education we do not consider education “therapeutic,” we do, as Felman mentions, propose that education will share with psychoanalysis a transformative process. And, if it is our goal to share in this transformative process, we also become vulnerable to the limitations of the conditions

under which this transformation may take place. One of the limitations that Freud outlines for us here is that the creation of educational aims may circumvent the transformation that we—the analyst or teacher—desire, as the transformative works on its own terms. But, what are we to do in this predicament of educative ambitions that asks for learning to come too soon? What, then, becomes the role of the teacher?

This concern for what then becomes the role of the teacher when educational aims are cast aside comes up against another one of Freud's suggestions, or warnings, which is the warning against the therapeutic ambition of the analyst. That is:

the feeling that is most dangerous to a psychoanalyst is the therapeutic ambition to achieve by this novel and much disputed method something that will produce a convincing effect on other people. This will not only put him into a state of mind which is unfavourable for his work, but will make him helpless against certain resistances of the patient. (p. 115)

We can imagine that the therapeutic ambition of the analyst may also be the achilles heel of the teacher, or the idealized condition of education. That it is the desire or hope of education, the educator, and those being educated, that education holds the possibility transform, affect, those involved—otherwise, what are we doing? But, Freud tells us that there is also a risk in this therapeutic (or I would say educational) ambition: that our desire to prove to ourselves and to others that our educational ideals and our own investments in thinking and learning matter may operate ironically in such a way

where our educational investments may act as filters, or blinders, for what we are able, or unable, to see and learn.

Freud suggests that the most successful place for psychoanalysis is when it resides outside of the place of educative aims and professional ambitions and is, instead, taken as a thing in and of itself, with its own agenda, and outside of the area of research. He warns that when research and treatment coincide, they also oppose one another:

It is not a good thing to work on a case scientifically while treatment is still proceeding...Cases which are devoted from the first to scientific purposes and are treated accordingly suffer in their outcome; while the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds, as it were, without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presuppositions...in avoiding speculation or brooding over cases while they are in analysis, and in submitting the material obtained to synthetic process of thought only after the analysis is concluded. The distinction between the two attitudes would be meaningless if we already possessed all the knowledge (or at least the essential knowledge) about the psychology of the unconscious and about the structure of the neuroses that we can obtain from psychoanalytic work. At present we are still far from that goal and we ought not to cut ourselves out from the possibility of

testing what we have already learnt of extending our knowledge. (pp. 114-115)

It is this warning of Freud's that gets at the crux of my concern, or anxiety, around Felman's approach to trying to create a "generic lesson" from the events that occurred in her classroom. We may read that in the construction of a "generic lesson" she is offering a "scientific approach" that may foreclose the element of surprise which she deems so important. The generic lesson, a presupposition, may assume that we "already possess the knowledge" of what bringing testimonial works to a classroom will do. It creates a construction that anticipates and projects, where a psychoanalytic construction predicates itself on only coming to a place of understanding in retrospect; or at least any new understandings, through deferred action. While there is a parallel between the type of teaching, or experience, that Felman suggests and the psychoanalytic process—both propose to be performative and transformative—we come up against the problem that the analysand comes to the analyst already acting out, or performing, the symptoms or materials that may be used for transformation. And, this is much different than a situation of offering, for instance, a testimonial process, where the situation is more one of intervention on a larger scale. It is not to discount the potential for this type of intervention, or to say that some type of transformative work may be had. But, there is an important layer that is missing in this explication of the teaching process and potential. That is, we cannot assume that an intervention, or offering, will just be generically absorbed and learned from. And, if we are going to draw upon psychoanalysis for considerations of education, we need to give space to one of

its foundational principles: any offer or intervention made by education will come into contact with the already existing internal psychodramas of the individuals. And, while there may be a possibility for reflection on the generic world that we share, that world is lived, experienced, and reflected upon uniquely by each of us.

The problem I outline using Felman's work is not a problem of hers alone, or one that belongs only to the field of psychoanalysis. It is one that may be read through amount of attention, or traction, Rosen's work has received in comparison to other artists. That is, Rosen states at many times that through his work he intends to create acts of disruption. His works can be paralleled to Walker's for their similarities—they both make use of silhouettes, offer a mixture of beautiful and tranquil imagery, and both combine aspects of play and disruption. However, Rosen's works do not seem to generate the same amount of discussion. There are factors of location and subject matter that could account for this difference. Rosen is an Israeli artist whose works have the primary focus on the ongoing effects of the holocaust and Walker is an African American artist whose works have primary focus on, or at least receive the most attention for, race relations. But, we can also ask: might one of the reasons why Rosen's works do not receive the level of attention as Walker's be that that nature of his works take us to a point that creates further resistance? Might his aims to create disruption through his work create a situation where an education of critical self-reflection is asked to come too soon? Might the aims and ambitions of the work—to “disrupt,” “defy” and “make parody” notions of identity—act as anticipatory measures that while are performative, circumvent the work's transformative potential?

A reading of these tensions through Felman and Rosen's works also speaks to the larger problem that the dissertation is trying to contend with through the interweaving layers of psychoanalysis, philosophy, and aesthetics. While these fields of thought approach the problem from different directions, they all coincide on the position that learning is derived from what we do not know and accessing what is unknown requires disruption or intervention. And, this act of intervention, disruption, or learning is simultaneously limited, or even hindered, by current states of our conditions. For psychoanalysis, learning is derived from a critical thought and consideration of the individual's psychodramas and simultaneously hindered by the resistances that these psychodramas create. The focus of philosophical consideration is not so much on the individual psychodramas, but rather through critical reflection and consideration of how the individual exists and is constructed through larger sociocultural understandings and narratives. Aesthetics resides in a space that overlaps these two fields and absorbs the problem of learning from both ends. That is, art and the aesthetic experience can offer a place where we are called to question and reflect upon the collective "we" that we share and our experiences of it through the laborious task of critical self-reflection. But, this possibility for the aesthetic experience is simultaneously rendered vulnerable through both our sociocultural and psychical conditions.

We can read Rosen's works as opportunities that provoke a destabilization of understandings of ourselves and our social conditions. His uncomfortable position of viewer as both participant and observer, may allow for an aesthetic experience where the content of the objects he presents mediates both truth and non-truth, and asks us to

take part in this laborious thinking. However, Rosen's works and their reception also bring questions to whether pedagogy predicated on crisis is possible.

Some difficult questions still remain: How do we think about a theory of learning that simultaneously requires its own deconstruction? What is education if not a forward projecting? And, what is the role of the teacher within an educational framework that pushes back on pedagogy? In the final concluding chapter, I continue to work with these questions as a frame for trying to understand the intersection of possibilities between art and education and what a theory of learning might look like at this crossroads.

CHAPTER FIVE—CONCLUSION: AN AESTHETIC EDUCATION

Education brings the world to the individual, while at the same time asks the individual to situate themselves in relation to the world. The contradictions that exist within the social frameworks of society are then compounded in the difficulty of their recognition and understanding by the contradictions within the individual. Therefore, the problem of education is twofold: the problem of what does or does not remain, or is repressed within social discourse, as well as the problem of narration and repression in the work of the individual. Given this dual contradiction, we must ask: what requires intervention? Is it society that requires intervention, or the individual, or both? Can education operate in this contradiction? Education, and the individual are made sense of from within the societal discourse, but they can also challenge that discourse and put it into question. However, societal discourse will continue to return and make cause for further questioning, challenging, and reflection.

In this conclusion, I reconsider the tensions that have been addressed in the previous chapters. I suggest that collectively, the artists and theorists in the thesis offer us a series of contradictions of education that can allow us to think about the intersection of art and education and difficulties inherent in attempting to construct a theory of learning that simultaneously requires deconstruction. I conclude with some remarks on what a theory of learning that resides at the intersection of art and education may look like.

An Intersection of Tensions

The debates around Walker's work demonstrate the difficulty of navigating the doubling of conflicts between the contradiction of thinking in society and the individual experiencing of these conflicts. The pathologization of Walker and calls for censorship of her images attempts to contain these tensions through an eradication of her works. But, a reading of these debates through Adorno's (2008) theory of negative dialectics asks us to point our attention to these contradictions within, and through which, we make sense of ourselves and society. His work suggests that our cultural framework is built upon, and functions through, its many contradictions. And, in paying attention towards, and reflecting upon, these conflicts changes to our conditions may begin. Reinhardt (2007) suggests that when psychical life is considered, how we think and act in the world, is not only subject to conflicting social conditions, but also our own internal contradictions. While residing in different frames of thought, theories of negative dialectics and the uncanny suggest our understandings of ourselves and our experiences of living in the world are both more and less than we live them to be. And a reading of Walker's works, as well as the debates that have ensued, act as affective pointers to this excess in our contradictions. Britzman (2009) calls attention to the task of education to accept responsibility for this excess that has been left to us. And when Walker's works are read as offering a representation of negativity that is not as perpetuation, but instead as a reframing of negativity as a source for its articulation, we may be starting the process of accepting of the responsibility of the past and attempting to bring this excess into symbolization.

A reading of Boltanski's works allows for a continuation of the discussion around the work of bringing excess into symbolization; however, his works point to the difficulty of this excess as residing in the impossibilities of narrating difficult histories. Boltanski works to create constructions, or objects, of representation that invite the viewer into a struggle with this state of impossibility. I read his collection of historical relics through Britzman's (2011) formulation of Freud's theory of learning. She suggests that Freud turned objections to psychoanalysis into objects of construction that pointed towards obstacles to learning; and that Freud's theory of learning supposes not a shying away from impossibility, but a utilization of impossibility as a resource for its articulation. I suggest that Boltanski's process of creating resembles the one that Britzman lays out for Freud. And that Boltanski's collection of works may offer opportunity for a re-reading of the remnants of the past through constructions that articulate their impossibility.

This redressing of history through creative works, Britzman suggests, may offer history a "second chance" to be attended to. But, in considering education as that which leaves things behind, we are faced with a paradoxical construction of education: that education both creates excess and also may allow for this excess to be redressed. To try and understand this education that both learns and refuses to learn, I turn to Lacan's (2006) discussion on the limits of language, where he suggests that language constructs our understandings of how and what we are capable of seeing. And, artistic works can bring us towards seeing the limitations of our understandings. Boltanski describes this work of bringing us to the edge of what is known as the creation of intermediate narrations and storytelling through truth and lies. Grenier (2010) describes

that Boltanski attempts to disorient, not instruct, the viewer, and that his work is an interweaving of truth and lies that allows access to historical relics that may not be available otherwise. The role of the storyteller and the function of a combination of both truth and lies is also central to Arendt's (2006b) discussion on how historical relics become integrated, and made meaningful, to today's society. Through a state of debate over the world's conditions, through a combination of factual truth and opinion, we can begin to see the world differently. This opportunity for a reimagining of the world's conditions resides in a further balancing of welcoming newcomers into the world and simultaneously protecting the world from the potential destruction that this newness may bring (Arendt, 2006a).

This work of trying to understand the possibilities and limitations of education through a balancing of several tensions is lastly taken up in an examination of the work of Roe Rosen through a consideration of what a call of disruption in education may entail. Adorno (1999) tells us that our current social conditions lack historical referent to the past. This state of "reified consciousness," he claims, leaves us blind to the conditionedness of the present in relation to the past. And, in order to prevent a repetition of historical atrocities, our origins and the fragility of our conditions needs to be addressed. The way to this address, Simon (2000; 2005) and Felman (1992) suggest, is through a process of disruption or crisis through which the past affects the present. Through this process of being affected, our relation to the past and the conditionedness of the present can be acknowledged. And, in turn, new hope toward the future can take place. The aesthetic "we", as Adorno (1997) calls it, that can be

represented in art speaks to the collective of our social conditions not through what is known, but what is a shared state of unknowing and indetermination. And, it is this characteristic of art—of being able to gesture towards what is unknown—that allows for the aesthetic experience. In the aesthetic experience we enter into an engagement with art without a priori construction that allows for art to be subject of knowledge, and not just an object of knowledge, that can allow for critical self-reflection.

Adorno proposes a paradoxical quality of art: that it holds the possibility to bring us to new understandings at the risk of a failure to understand. This paradox allows us to think about the relationship between pedagogy and art, interruption and learning that is a call to bring art to education without assurance of its success. This lack of assurance is not only read through aesthetic theory, but can also be seen in the tensions of bringing psychoanalysis to pedagogy. Freud (1912/1958) makes note of many warnings to the work of psychoanalysis, to which, I argue, education must also heed if we wish, as Felman suggests, for education to share a transformative process with psychoanalysis. First, educational aims may exacerbate the problem of not learning. Through the shared goal with psychoanalysis for transformation we must also recognize the condition that this transformation happens on its own time. Second, our investments in our own ideas, theories, and hopes for education may operate ironically as blind spots to what we can or cannot see and learn. And, third, we cannot assume any act of intervention will be absorbed generically. And, any construction that anticipates learning overlooks a foundational aspect of psychoanalytic learning that is predicated upon only knowing in retrospect.

In many ways, the artists that I am working with in the dissertation all operate through a common approach to producing works that point our attention to the multiple complexities of navigating a series of intersections between the social and the individual where education resides. Walker offers us a negative education, or uncanny insurrection with her work that calls us to reflect on an unspeakable history that has not been told but continues to be acted out in everyday life. Boltanski also speaks to history's residue and the impossibility of remembrance. Through his intermediate narrations, he offers us objects towards which we might encounter questions towards the limitations between past and present, impossibility and possibility, truth and lies. Rosen also creates works that bring us to questions of relation and distance, truth and lies, through his works that implicate, and integrate, the viewer's experience of the works. All three artists may be read as offering us works that call for critical self-reflection of our social conditions, but also gesture towards the complicated task of how the individual resides and negotiates her own world within the world.

The Paradox of Learning and an Aesthetic Education

While any theory assumes construction, to think of a theory of an aesthetic education must not become something forward projecting or prescriptive. At the moment we anticipate we lose the possibility for surprise. However, we also cannot lean too much on the side of deconstruction, for if we do, we have, as Felman puts it, crossed the edge of crisis. To think of an aesthetic education, therefore, we find ourselves in a paradox: we need both structure and crisis, creation and deconstruction. It is a reconfiguration or rethinking of the education we know in order to open a space

for it to be the education it may become. The balance of this oscillation between structure and crisis, or creation and deconstruction, can only be evaluated for its repetitions, or thought about in retrospect, and learning becomes an afterthought of the experience of education. The construction of trying to propose what will be learned through this or that lesson, reading, experience or event becomes problematic, as we will now no longer be able to predict what will be learned, but only be able to report back on what we have learnt.

We are challenged with a theory of learning that asks for us to feel our way through, and one that only anticipates a hope for learning with the risk of failure. It is a theory of learning that allows for a recognition of the multiplicities of histories of learning while it disengages from the theoretical ambitions, educational aims, and a priori constructions. It embraces opinion and the engagement of truth and lies while moving towards a negative dialectic. It is a theory of learning that sees traditional characteristics of learning—as being anticipatory and based on what is known—as obstacles to learning and where the emphasis on the teacher's pedagogy is replaced with the role of facilitator. The responsibility of and for learning relies with a heavier weight on the student, and the teacher's role is one of helping the students to navigate the experience of learning rather than to anticipate how the student may be transformed.

There is a difficulty and sense of irony in writing any theory of education that is based on the intersection of art and education. I worry that I, too, will be writing a generic lesson of my experiences in working with these texts, like Felman's writing of her experience of crisis in her classroom. But, there would also be an irony in letting the

risk of theoretical collapse preclude an attempt at articulation. Instead, I see the dissertation as a collection of unresolved contradictions without the connotation that they are in need of resolve. That if I am going to take the work of the artists and theorists in the dissertation seriously, I need to accept the risk and discomfort that comes along with this thinking. And, that perhaps this place of discomfort in being unable to settle the contradictions is the place where I need to be: at the crossroads of the education and the aesthetic.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W. (1997). *Aesthetic Theory*. (G. Adorno, R. Tiedemann, Eds., & R. Hullot-Kentor, Trans.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Adorno, T. W. (1999). Education after Auschwitz. In *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (pp. 191-204). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Adorno, T. W. (2008). *Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments of a Lecture Course 1965/1966*. (R. Tiedemann, Ed., & R. Livingstone, Trans.) Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Apel, D. (2002). Introduction: The Artist as Secondary Witness. In D. Apel, *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing* (pp. 3-8). New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press.
- Appendix: Confession: English Translation. (Winter 2011). *Mafte'akh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* (2e), 1-8.
- Arendt, H. (2006a). The Crisis in Education. In *Between Past and Future* (pp. 170-93). New York: Penguin Books.
- Arendt, H. (2006b). Truth and Politics. In *Between Past and Future* (pp. 223-259). New York: Penguin Books.
- Art: 21. (n.d.). *Projecting Fictions: "Insurrection! Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On"*. Retrieved July 13, 2011, from Art: 21: <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/clip1.html>
- Boltanski, C. (2002). *Scratch*. Cologne: Walther Konig, Koln.
- Boltanski, C., & Grenier, C. (2009). *The Possible Life of Christian Boltanski*. Boston: MFA Publications.
- Britzman, D. P. (2003). *After Education: Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and Psychoanalytic Histories of Learning*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Britzman, D. P. (2011). *Freud and Education*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Britzman, D. P. (2009). *The Very Thought of Education: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Professions*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Britzman, D., & Pitt, A. (2003). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: an experiment in psychoanalytic research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 16, NO. 6, 755-776.
- Dubois Shaw, G. (2004). *Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- DuBois Shaw, G. (2006). The "Rememory" of Slavery: Kara Walker's The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven. In L. Saltzman, & E. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity* (pp. 158-188). Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press.
- Felman, S. (1992). Education and Crisis, Or the Vicissitudes of Teaching. In S. Felman, & D. Laub, *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (pp. 1-56). New York, London: Routledge.
- Freud, S. (2006). Formulations on the Two Principles of Psychic Functioning. In A. Phillips (Ed.), *The Penguin Freud Reader* (pp. 414-21). London: Penguin Classics.
- Freud, S. (1912/1958). Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psychoanalysis. In The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (J. Strachey, Trans., Vol. 12, pp. 109-120). London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis.
- Grenier, C. (2010). *Christian Boltanski*. Paris: Flammarion Contemporary.
- Hawker, S. (Ed.). (2007). *Colour Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Heiser, J. (2010). What is Appropriate? The role of art in responding to the Holocaust. *frieze* (130), 92-97.
- International Review of African American Art. (1997). Extreme Times Call for Extreme Heroes. *International Review of African American Art*, 14(3), 2-15.
- International Review of African American Art. (1998). Stereotypes Subverted?: The Debate Continues. *International Review of African American Art*, 15(2), 44-52.
- Jewish Museum. (2001). *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagry/Recent Art*. (N. L. Kleeblatt, Ed.) New York: The Jewish Museum.
- Lacan, J. (2008). *My Teaching*. (J.-A. Miller, Trans.) London, New York: Verso.

Lacan, J. (2006). Seminar on the "Purloined Letter". In J. Lacan, *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (B. Fink, Trans., pp. 6-48). New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Pollack, B. (2002). "Mirroring evil": The Jewish Museum. *ARTnews*, 101 (5), 165.

Raymond, Y. (2007). Maladies of Power: A Kara Walker Lexicon. In P. Vergne (Ed.), *Kara Walker: My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love* (pp. 347-370). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Reinhardt, M. (2007). The Art of Racial Profiling. In I. Berry, D. English, V. Patterson, & M. Reinhardt (Eds.), *Kara Walker: Narratives of a Negress* (pp. 109-140). New York: Rizzoli.

Rosen, R. (Winter 2011). Confession. *Mafte'akh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* (2e), 29-35.

Rosen, R. (1997). *Live and Die as Eva Braun, An Illustrated Proposal for a Virtual Reality Scenerio, Not to be Realized*. Jerusalem: The Isreal Museum.

Rosen, R. (Director). (2008). *The Confessions of Roeer Rosen* [Motion Picture].

Saltzman, L. (2006). *Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art*. London, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Saltzman, L., & Rosenberg, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England.

Simon, R. I. (2005). Introduction: Remembering Otherwise: Civic Life and the Pedagogical Promise of History and Memory. In R. I. Simon, *Touch of the Past: Remembrance, Learning, and Ethics* (pp. 1-13). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Simon, R. I. (2000). The Paradoxical Practice of Zakhor: Memories of 'What Has Never Been My Fault or My Deed'. In R. I. Simon, S. Rosenberg, & C. Eppert, *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma* (pp. 9-25). New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

The Israeli Center for Digital Art. (2008). *Interview with Roeer Rosen*. Retrieved February 26, 2011, from <http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/ArchiveVideo.asp?id=295>

Van Alphen, E. (2005). *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Van Alphen, E. (1997). *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Van Alphen, E. (1998). Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory and Trauma. In M. Bal, J. Crewe, & L. Spitzer (Eds.), *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (pp. 24-38). Hanover: Dartmouth.

Vergne, P. (2007). The Black Saint is the Sinner Lady. In P. Vergne (Ed.), *Kara Walker: My Compliment, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love* (pp. 7-26). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Vimeo. (n.d.). (Michael Kurcfeld Interviews) Retrieved October 26, 2011, from vimeo.com/27603455

Wagner, A. M. (2003). Kara Walker: The Black-White Relation. In I. Berry, D. English, V. Patterson, & M. Reinhardt (Eds.), *Kara Walker: Narratives of a Negress* (pp. 90-101). Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.

Walker, K. (2007). *After the Deluge*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.

Walker, K. *Insurrection! Our Tools Were Rudimentary, Yet We Pressed On*. Guggenheim, New York.

Walker, K. (2002). *Kara Walker*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Bank AG.

Wall, D. (2010). Transgression, Excess, and the Violence of Looking in the Art of Kara Walker. *Oxford Journal of Art*(33.3), 277-299.