
Invisibility and In/di/visuality: the relevance of art education in curriculum theorizing

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ABSTRACT This article investigates how representation attaches meaning to bodies, how certain bodies are categorically misrepresented and masked from normativity, and proposes a curriculum theory affording the agency of the misrepresented to de-mask invisibility. Brief historical narratives of three kinds of invisibility are presented as they are manifested in educational practice and visual culture – masking those deemed to occupy lesser physical bodies, lesser bodies of knowledge, and bodies lesser-than-normal. The author argues the relevance of art education as a transformative pedagogical practice that can inform and promote social significance, or what the author terms as in/di/visuality, the agency to reinterpret misrepresented physical or conceptual bodies. In the face of masking practices that unleash the squalls of invisibility and inequity throughout sites of curriculum practice and contemporary visual culture, the exercise of in/di/visuality acts as a watershed, displacing invisibility and affording a greater breadth of inclusion in educational concerns.

Masking Practices and In/di/visuality

Latin American scholar and cultural critic Gerard Aching (2002) speaks of the existence of ‘rigidly bordered visual regimes’ organizing social hierarchies into relations of power and contestation, social visibility, and social invisibility:

These issues concerning ways of (not) seeing and strategies of (in)visibility have in turn led me to explore the historical development and cultural contexts of particular visual regimes (structured ways of seeing) and visual politics (the enforcement or rejection of specific visual regimes) in the texts that I examine ... For if it is at all possible to claim that rigidly bordered visual regimes exist, then these frontiers easily disintegrate when we ask very basic questions about viewing subjects, such as, *who sees, who fails to see, and who refuses to see?* (p. 5)

Aching (2002) employs the terms ‘masking’ and ‘masking practices’ ‘to invoke a broader and deeper understanding of the antagonisms that produce situations of social (in)visibility’ (p. 4). The rendering of social invisibility is an act of power, a masking practice intended to preserve an advantageous power relationship. Such maskings are discursively wrought, demonstrated in written, spoken, or otherwise communicable language vehicles; in a visual regime or visual culture as is prevalent in the West, maskings are effectively manifested in visuality (Pieterse, 1990).

Misrepresented bodies are bodies made socially invisible. However, when the misrepresented and invisible don a mask of their own (re)making, it is also an act of power, a flouting of the power to conceal with the power to dispossess concealment. When a prescribed invisibility is co-opted as a cloak for translated self-concept, invisibility is transformed into a redemptive inscrutability, a cocoon from which new questions emerge to subvert misrecognition and devaluation.

Three Kinds of Invisibility

This article investigates ‘how representation attaches meanings to bodies’ (Thomson, 1997, p. 5), and how certain bodies, once categorically misrepresented, are bodies made socially invisible. A body is a corpus of ideas that have been given a shape, a representation amongst the world of things. There are probably more than three kinds of social invisibility prevalent in contemporary educational practice, but I will focus on only three in the space of this article – the invisibility of those deemed to occupy lesser physical bodies, lesser bodies of knowledge, and bodies lesser-than-normal.

This article also explores the de-masking of mantles of invisibility, and the supplanting of masks of concealment with masks of agency that ‘literally or figuratively’ removes ‘an ideological mask from oneself or someone else in encounters or confrontations between masked subjects and viewing subjects’ (Aching, 2002, p. 6).

My aim is to theorize art education and visual culture studies at the intersection of curriculum theory in ways that

challenge existing social relations ... resist interpretations of certain bodily configurations and functioning as deviant ... question the ways that differences are invested with meaning ... examine the enforcement of universalizing norms ... interrogate the politics of appearance ... explore the politics in naming ... [and] forge positive identities. (Thomson, 1997, p. 22)

The types of invisibility I speak of are all initially discursive essentialisms, wrought through the symbolic interaction of dominant visual regimes within what has come to be a global visual culture. Although discursive forms of invisibility are not manifested physically at the outset, inevitably any kind of invisibility played out in social arenas works to swallow bodies whole.

Drawing upon William F. Pinar’s (2004) reconceptualization of curriculum as ‘ongoing, if complicated conversation’ (p. 188) and a framework for methodologies ‘of subjective risk and social reconstruction, the achievement of selfhood and society in the age to come’ (p. 4), *currere* is defined as the verb form of curriculum. *Currere* is an autobiographical method that invites episodes of narrative reflection and de-masking in education, a method that ‘asks us to slow down to remember even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future’ (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). *Currere* is thus a precedent for elaborating a practice that transforms prescribed masks of identity from places of capture to sites of gestation.

Autobiographically speaking, I have been marked invisible in each of the three ways elaborated in this article. Whether representing a living human and relational body or a living body of knowledge, the anamorphology of that body’s signifiers is often a distortion, the aggregate of symbols constituting a particular social significance from a given point of view at a given point in time. Thus, yesterday’s representations lend themselves perhaps too readily to essentializations; this is how yesterday’s representations are reified as today’s misrepresentations. The marking of invisibility in educational practice layers flesh and blood bodies in broad and swaddling discursive sheaths, bending light away from the agency of anyone so marked to alter his or her occluding signifiers. A misrepresented body is thus masked, even within the contours of familiar knowledge or visible flesh, bone and hair. The marking of living bodies constitutes the social construction of invisibility.

Invisibility as Agency

The de-masking of bodies is also a form of social construction premised on the specters of possibility, ‘the use of the mask, literally and metaphorically, in coming to terms or coping with an environment that has yet to work in their interest’ (Aching, 2002, p. 59). The de-masking of bodies transforms places of capture into sites of gestation and possibility.

As an art educator, my chosen profession addresses the social construction of invisibility as effected through masking practices inherent in public schooling. Arts education practice carries in it the potential to de-mask and disrupt the essentializing cloaks that render the living invisible. I am proposing the practice of *in/di/visuality* as a method that works ‘in between’ masks, creating discursive places ‘for resisting the politics of essentialism’ (Brunner, 1998, p. 7).

The significance of in/di/visuality as a hybridization of art education practice and curriculum theory is not merely as a language game highlighting the agency within acts of individuality, but in the dialectical places it illuminates 'in between' individuality and the visuality of social individuals, places 'in which "the subject-as-[pedagogical] site" ... actively seeks to "undo the [essentialized] proper"' (Brunner, 1998, p. 7).

These in-between places or sites are 'altering aspects' of precedent meaning (Brunner, 1998, p. 7); 'shadows dancing an unquiet self' in between known masks (Brunner, p. 1); places of slippage between the signifier and the signified such that the signified may illicitly become the signifier of the sanctioned, and the ephemeral the reconstitution of the essential; places where 'resistance is performed' (Brunner, p. 13).

Art education practice has already become a catalyst for rethinking research practices, teacher education practice, and curriculum theory. Art educator Graeme Sullivan asserts that studio art practices de-mask the spectrum of critical and creative forms of inquiry as an endeavor in knowledge creation comparable to any other paradigm for doing research (Sullivan, 2005, 2006).

The Postmodern Educator: arts-based inquiries and teacher development (Diamond & Mullen, 1999) is an example of a text where arts-based forms of inquiry are arrayed so as to de-mask that which is concealed by 'the more "rational" modes of inquiry and of teacher education' so as to make the formative experiences of teachers 'more accessible, concrete, imaginable, and affecting' (p. 20). Sullivan (2006) also comments on the utility of certain practices common to art education when adopted by 'the perceptive educational practitioner' (p. 24); he writes:

The role of lived experience, subjectivity, and memory are seen as agents in knowledge construction and strategies such as self-study, collaborations, and textual critiques are used to reveal important insights unable to be recovered by more traditional research methods. (Sullivan, 2006, p. 24)

According to *Curriculum and the Cultural Body* (Springgay & Freedman, 2007), an understanding of the human body 'as meaning' versus 'a container in which we store or put meaning' (p. xx) is masked by the false mind/body dichotomy; this dichotomy is implicated in the goal of curriculum mandates to assuage the impracticality of clumsy, growing bodies and unruly bodies of knowledge by asserting the primacy of a rational and controlling mind. The authors present a book that 'attends to the unspoken questions and practices in education that silence, conceal, and limit bodies' (Springgay & Freedman, 2007, p. xix). By conceptualizing various processes of cultural production across several arts and visual culture mediums as a nexus of inquiry into the constitution of 'the lived body, the social body, and the imaginary', Springgay & Freedman also advocate an engaged pedagogical action that reconstructs embodied understandings of self, experience and public life out in the open for all to see (2007, p. xix).

I will argue that by rethinking our conceptions of arts education practice, we reconceptualize curriculum theory through an arts pedagogical model. I present a curriculum model which fosters the agency to contradict bodies that have been made invisible through either the deficit-model of childhood, the devaluation of embodied knowledge practices, or the historical rendering of disability as social aberrance ... bodies all named, labeled, categorized, stereotyped or otherwise caricatured in the regimes of popular discourse.

As pedagogical sites, the interstitial places represented by the back slashes and border relationships in the printed term 'in/di/visuality' are indicative of the de-masking action of performances or narratives of identity, or 'identity statements' (Brunner, 1998, p. 9). De-masking is, in other words, the 'social agency for the possibility of changing one's material reality' (Brunner, 1998, p. 9). The changing of material reality through performances of gestated identity is akin to the performance of the Cinderella story that transformed pumpkins into coaches, rags into raiment, and a designee of an almost untouchable caste into royalty.

Visuality and Masking in a Visual Culture

Visuality has alternatively been defined as 'how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein' (Foster, 1988, p. ix), and as the subjective 'quality or state of being visual' in an 'everyday space [that] is increasingly dominated by visual images' (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 370). W.J.T. Mitchell recalls Nelson Goodman's (1976)

hypothesis that visual images are pictorial depictions of experience, replete with elements that express their meanings only in relation to all the other elements 'in a dense, continuous field' (Mitchell, 1986, p. 67). The meaning is delivered in a single holistic visual conveyance, to be unpackaged in mind in subsequent time. Similarly, Elliot Eisner (2002) has surmised that the development of any given perception is the product of navigating and finding pathways back and forth across a tensile structure of meanings staked to salient experiences. According to Eisner, the visual arts practices offer a way to 'help us become aware of ourselves', our ideas and beliefs in a most visceral manner and to more easily access, remake, reapply, and reinterpret those meanings in relation to one another (2002, p. 112).

Goodman (1976) is also cited as explaining that text (or by extension, any text-analogue [1]) composed of a finite set of differentiated elements works by discontinuity. Each visual element, each set of characters or events, is but a parcel of the larger conveyance of meaning. The conveyance of meaning is, thus, episodic. There is time for unpacking between frames of insight, making potential deviations of trajectory in the 'reading' an integral component of its induction. The symbols, icons, and depictions that comprise our surrounding visuality may thus be denotative, carrying a direct or literal translation of meaning, and/or connotative, non-literal and loaded with collateral, implied, inferred, and subliminal meanings. In the episodic conveyance of visuality, sometimes the episodes of meaning unfold into understanding in rapid succession, within moments of the initial viewing, and sometimes they are spaced far apart in time, new meaning only being added upon a return visit to the scene or presence. The key point is that the mind, ever in the present, seeks to ameliorate discontinuities in perception by mapping over such episodes an overall sense, or a story, that will package all the loose ends and dangling parts into something memorable and familiar.

Elizabeth Cowie (2007) reminds us of Derrida's notion that when something is represented, there is always something left out of the account and that this discontinuity is central to the meanings we derive. A representation thus 'makes absent' even as it makes present, and 'makes non-sense as it makes sense' (Cowie, 2007, p. 101). The discontinuity in a representation leads to a desirousness to retrieve lost reality and to fill in what has been left-out-of-the-account, resulting both in readings which occur in spite of what has been left-out-of-the-account, and in misreadings *because* of what has been left-out-of-the-account. The more left out, the greater the scope of possible misreadings and the more likely the emergence of stereotyped understandings and oversimplifications based on the preponderance of absences. Stereotypes hew closely to only the most obvious saliencies such that what is left out becomes invisible, almost impossible to accept as credible even when in plain sight. Invisibility wrought from the regulation of discontinuity and the obfuscation of the markers of living and present identity is tantamount to the power to mask other bodies from significance, ultimately devolving into acts of social caricature.

Art educator Kerry Freedman (2003) observes that '[v]isual culture images and objects are continuously seen and instantaneously interpreted, forming new knowledge and new images of identity and environment' (p. 3). Visual culture – experienced 'in classrooms, museum galleries, community centers, people's homes, on the street, and in movie theaters' (Freedman, 2003, p. 2) – includes 'the fine arts, tribal arts, advertising, popular film and video, folk art, television and other performance, housing and apparel design, computer game and toy design, and other forms of visual production and communication' (Freedman, 2003, p. 1).

In a polyglot visual culture that has gone global, the power to consistently caricature certain others as insignificant is constituted by a network of visual regimes (Aching, 2002). Such regimes may produce their caricatures willingly, as in the malicious stereotypes that first fester in the mind of some Hitlerian puppet master before being unleashed as propaganda to the embrace of a bigoted populace. Or, these regimes may produce their caricatures unthinkingly, simply potboiling en masse the thin experience that a dominant and generally homogeneous sociocultural group has had in interfacing with its local minorities.

Masking Practices as a Place of Capture

A squall of invisibility is set into motion through masking practices of the contemporary era, swallowing up those who are identified as lesser physical bodies. The youngster or fledgling adult is

viewed as 'weak physically and spiritually' and requiring rescue to a safe haven, a controlled and well-cultivated children's garden (i.e. kindergarten) to begin their upward climb to salvation (Baker, 2001, pp. 438, 514, 515). There is a conflation between the reality that infants, toddlers, young boys and girls require custodial care for their physical well-being; the misconstrued idea that their natural state is carelessness; and the bias that what our children care about and feel is less than relevant to more significant adult concerns. This composite definition of 'the child' constitutes a masking. In contemporary educational practice in the United States, youngsters are masked to such a degree that K-12 curriculum is organized primarily to address the discursive construct of 'childhood', each youngster being perceived in need of 'development'. Constrained from sight and out of mind, the capability of little boys and girls to represent themselves as individual and differentiated critical thinkers and collaborators in the curriculum-making process goes unseen. Educators seek to protect these lesser bodies from what is perceived as 'adult' influence or responsibility while expecting them to express little more than innocence and the desire for self-satisfying play. Rendering the smallest bodies visible in educational practice requires un-naming the signifiers of the psychohistorical narrative that presupposes 'childhood' as a model of evolutionary deficit.

Masking practices of the contemporary era also rain invisibility on what are identified as lesser bodies of knowledge, knowledge that is embodied, rational and explainable only in part, generated in the exchange between 'mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with the world' (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. 108). Knowledge that is only partially explainable, even if it is wholly recognizable, is entirely uncertain in an educational and research paradigm that privileges the tests and verifications inherent in the sciences. Because of their tendency to resist quantifiable measures and unambiguous representation, embodied ways of knowing are viewed as a miscegenation of rational capability, a sordid admixture of foundational and objective knowledge content with specific bodily awarenesses and processes that are decidedly anti-foundational and more comfortably left unseen (Springgay, 2008). Educators seek to delimit lesser bodies of knowledge from the curriculum, often segregating them to serve as outlets for self-expression and exercises of self-esteem. Rendering embodied ways of knowing visible in educational practice requires unmarking such practices from the taint of speciousness and invalidity in contemporary education and research.

Those who are identified as possessing bodies lesser-than-normal are also swallowed up in an occluding storm. In contemporary educational practice, those lacking the expected pigmentation, physiognomy, testing scores, speech pattern, or gait are masked by K-12 public educational norms into atypical discursive categories such as 'minority' or 'special ed' or 'troubled' or 'inner city' or 'behaviorally challenged', seeing each 'difference' in need of 'mainstreaming'. Typically, educators have sought the integration of these lesser-than-normal bodies into the normal classroom only after they have been purified or redeemed to a semblance of normalcy through a remedial curriculum pathway of in-school specialists and paraprofessionals aimed at rescuing the youngster from congenital or hereditary abnormality. Historically, there has been a biomoral masking at work here, 'prompted through the medicalization of parts of society as unclean' with common schooling serving as a purifying contravention to the influx of 'children of laboring/slave classes' viewed as 'the implicit carriers' of 'potential criminality' (Baker, 2001, p. 434). The purpose of schooling in the early campaigns to systematize common schools in America was defined as 'saving children from Hell and depravity' and 'saving American society from certain children' (Baker, 2001, p. 434). Rendering the bodies that discomfit us visible again requires a reinterpretation, contesting the propaganda of social pathology, irredeemability, disability as aberrance, and less-than-normal skin, bone, or hair.

I submit that art education, reconceived as transformative pedagogical practice, addresses the representations that attach masks to bodies. Art education at the intersection of curriculum theory may be understood as a practice that both informs and engenders the agency to reposition pre-existing social regularities (Rolling, 2007a). I am theorizing in/di/visuality is a publicly held inquiry into our own subjectivities, a transgressive reinterpretation of visual culture regimes and stigmas, an unfolding of embodiments, those ways of knowing that cannot entirely 'be conveyed through language' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 156).

To aid in understanding the term in/di/visuality more fully, the next sections of this research will present brief narrative histories of the three kinds of invisibility addressed in this article as they are manifested in educational practice and visual culture. A history takes shape as a story by sorting disparate facts into a fitting relation. Davidson & Lytle (2000) write that '(h)istory is not "what happened in the past"; rather, it is *the act of selecting, analyzing, and writing about the past*' (p. xviii, emphasis in original). In other words, the facts that populate our histories are meaningless in and of themselves until one renders those facts significant by interpreting them. A more detailed rendering of the term in/di/visuality will immediately follow these three histories, along with a suggestion of the curricular implications within the term.

A Brief History of Lesser Bodies in Education

The conception of childhood that emerged from the Enlightenment purports a model of human biological and social development that has been a key to Western interpretation of its own place in the world. It has been argued that '[t]he developing child is not a real entity, but a discursive construction, albeit a very powerful one' (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 466). In his book *Emile*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau ([1762] 1979) romanticized the innocence and dependence of a child and the child's need for an education presided over by an adult like himself – an adult capable of facilitating learning experiences and providing resources to further childhood development. In doing so, Rousseau was also elaborating on an Enlightenment ideal of staged and hierarchical biological and social development.

However, the fact that children could be both similar to and absolutely different from one another was perceived as a problem rather than a cause for celebration for those who sought an ideal educational practice that could manufacture an ideal citizen and serve as a curative for the ills of society. The desire for social 'disease identification and remedy' (Baker, 2001, p. 494) gave rise to the many projects and pedagogical handbooks of the child study movement, 'the first organized movement to target public school reform in the United States and to deploy the terminology of *centering in or on the child*' (Baker, 2001, p. 428). By the 1900s, scientific beliefs about the development of humans suggested that youngsters grew in stages similar to all other biological organisms. The bodily markers of the young 'were thought to be speakers of the quality of an interior germ' (Baker, 2001, p. 496); consequently, the psychological development of the young was expected to be a recapitulation of what has come to be understood as an evolutionary model, history 'now attached to the visibility of the child's body' (Baker, 2001, p. 497).

Psychology had begun to make use of scientific methods of observation and aggregation of data to investigate problems like [human will] in children, criminality in adults, delinquency in juveniles, and degeneracy in races. It lay at the intersection of a variety of disciplines such as anthropology, medicine, physiology, biology, and history and was not the only discipline therefore to take up a strong belief in the idea that humans developed in recapitulating stages that could be given pedagogical, moral, and intellectual significance. (Baker, 2001, p. 501)

In the aggregation of child-study data on a pupil, '(l)imb length, jaw angle, health, nationality, and moral "virtues and perversions" could be recorded on the worksheets provided' and pedagogical inferences could thus be made about what 'more could be done to help her or him develop' (Baker, 2001, pp. 494, 495). In the study of 'child development', the young are understood to be lesser bodies, bodies necessarily subject to the cultivation of adults if they are ever to become adults themselves, but also bodies that, according to a philosophy of bodily markers, are the tacit predictors of what kinds of adults they will grow up to be.

The construction of races was particularly dependent on a range of scientific activities heavily reliant on physical classification ... The craniology, phrenology, and physiognomy that inhabited Child-study handbooks and research in various forms assumed that the measurement of attributes like head size, jaw angle, and limb length inferred human character and potential ... By the turn of the new century, the techniques of internal measurements had moved inside the head and gained popularity, in reference to intelligence testing especially. The inscription of [the discourse of] science as evidence-gathering thereby acted to normalize opposition of races

throughout the late 1800s, especially by referring to data that gave race what appeared within the discursive matrix to be objective, material, and natural qualities. (Baker, 2001, pp. 496, 497)

As one of the early chroniclers of urban educational systems, John D. Philbrick (1885) is more frank than most about the purpose of schooling as 'the imposition of tasks; if the pupil likes it, well; if not, the obligation is the same' (p. 47). In David B. Tyack's (1974) comprehensive history of American urban education, he offers this snapshot of the late nineteenth-century classroom:

Through an elaborate system of gradation, programmed curriculum, examinations, and rules for 'deportment,' then, the pupil learned the meaning of obedience, regularity, and precision. He learned to 'toe the line' – a phrase that today has lost its literal significance to most people. Joseph Rice, who visited hundreds of urban classrooms in the 1890's, described what it meant in one school. During recitation periods, when students were to demonstrate that they had memorized the text, children were expected, said Rice, 'to stand on the line, perfectly motionless, their bodies erect, their knees and feet together, the tips of their shoes touching the edge of a board in the floor.' The teacher paid as much attention to the state of their toes and knees as to the words of their mouths: 'How can you learn anything,' asked one woman, 'with your knees and toes out of order?' (pp. 55, 56)

English philosopher John Locke advanced the 'concept of the child as a blank slate', a concept of childhood which 'greatly influenced the development of public schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (Spring, 2001, pp. 31, 32). Locke argued for having children learn through rehearsed participation in classroom goals so that '[b]y repeating the same action, till it be grown habitual in them, the performance will not depend on memory, or reflection, the concomitant of prudence and age, and not of childhood; but will be natural in them' (Locke, cited in Gay, 1964, p. 36).

The modern exercise of schooling emerges as a form of social remediation seen in the following observation, once again from Joseph Mayer Rice (1893), 'a pediatrician who had studied "educational science" in Germany' (Tyack, 1974, p. 82):

In city after city, Rice witnessed similar episodes. In St. Louis the superintendent gave examinations to test both students and teachers and observed classes like a military inspector to see if the program was being followed. 'The superintendent here reigns supreme; his rulings are arbitrary; his word is law. But in exercising his license he deprives the child of his liberty ... the years of childhood are converted into years of slavery' ... Children were forced to sit with eyes facing forward; even when they handed material to their neighbors, they stared 'straight in front of them' and groped sideways to pass or receive papers. Pupils popped up and down like automata when they recited definitions: 'things appear as if the two children occupying adjoining seats were sitting upon the opposite poles of an invisible see-saw, so that the descending child necessarily raises the pupil next to him to his feet.' Such recitations were just memorized 'facts' from the textbooks – after all, that was what the examinations tested. (Tyack, 1974, pp. 82, 83)

This legacy continues in the contemporary era of high-stakes testing, many teachers forced to hew closely to the aforementioned nineteenth-century model of teaching-to-the-test because of the threat of being held accountable to the *No Child Left Behind Act* signed into effect by President Bush in 2002. In the attempt to assure predictable outcomes of learning, outcomes that are easy to standardize, easy to test for, easy to measure, and easy to see the evidence of, modern educators and educational policy succeed in making socially visible a bevy of normative narratives or statements that together constitute the Western discourse of 'the schooled child' and its braided tandem – the discourse of curriculum mandates for the best possible education for our children.

A Brief History of Lesser Bodies of Knowledge in Education

The scientific method for the observation, collection, and report of new knowledge has rules first delineated by René Descartes in 1639 in *The Discourse on Method*, and further mapped in Isaac Newton's 1686 publication, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (or *Newton's Principia*). Descartes' method sought solutions that were certain, requiring that the mind first be rid of all preconceptions, and that the problem being observed then be reduced to mathematical form,

employing 'the minimum number of axioms, or self-evident propositions, to shape it' (Van Doren, 1992, p. 204). Descartes invented analytic geometry to further reduce the problem's description to a set of numbers, applying the rules of algebra to arrive at a true result.

Newton enumerated four rules that would become the scientific method, rules that have constituted a remarkably successful model for the creation of knowledge. The first is to admit no superfluity of causes to natural things 'than such as are both true and sufficient to explain the appearances'. In other words, the simpler theory – the one less open to interpretation, less subject to variances or nuances – is the better theory when given two competing theories making the same predictions. The second is that the same natural effects, wherever they are observed in Nature, be uniformly assigned the same causes. The third is that the qualities of phenomena or bodies observed through experiment were universally applicable to phenomena and bodies everywhere. And finally, all propositions inferred by the direct induction of empirical evidence shall be taken as close to certainty, in spite of all other conjecture or hypotheses, until or unless some other observable phenomenon occurs that might refine the accuracy of the proposition or define an exception (Van Doren, 1992, pp. 209, 210).

The scientific method and its application to understanding the properties of natural objects has become the framework and the ceiling for understanding created things as well, since material objects are always the derivatives of natural properties and must be subject to the physical laws universally presumed to govern all things. Scientific methodology is thus taken as the model for any manufacturing or object making, even the making of objets d'art. Scientific historian Thomas S. Kuhn ([1962] 1996) coined the term 'paradigm' in defining the logical-mathematical systems that model scientific thought. Jerome Bruner (1986) describes two dominant modes of thought, the logical-mathematical systems that he describes as a 'paradigmatic' mode of thinking, and a qualitative ecology he describes as a 'narrative' mode of thinking. Merlin Donald (1991) offers this synopsis of Bruner's position:

Narrative imagination constructs stories and historical accounts of events. Paradigmatic imagination seeks logical truth. Narrative skill develops early and naturally in children, whereas the logical-scientific skills that support paradigmatic thought emerge only after systematic education. The difference between these modes of thought run very deep, even to the definition of truth employed by each. In modern culture, the narrative mode still predominates in the arts, while the paradigmatic predominates in the sciences. (p. 256-257)

Ronald N. Giere (1999) describes a polarizing conflict between what are commonly purported to be the only two possible camps of cognitive affiliation: those who are *scientists* and seek foremost a universally applicable and deductive knowledge of the world that removes all messy uncertainties, constructing extensions to elevated pathways raised above the mire; and those who are *humanists* and who seek a collective self-knowledge willing to slog through the muddy ambiguities which are common to the human experience, painstakingly tramping paths where, initially, there are none. Both of these camps employ empirical strategies based on the processing of observed phenomena as evidence of unconsidered possibilities. Moreover, both of these camps are geared toward exploration: While those whose methodology is scientific seek the above-the-fray efficiency and quantitative progression that objectivity is purported to allow, those whose methodology is unsparingly human and subjective are willing to wander off-course more often than not and afford themselves the encounter of unpredicted qualities of experience – the surprise of unexpected fields of play.

On the one side, we find what I would call 'enlightenment rationalists' or 'metaphysical realists,' who are, however, often derisively referred to as 'reductionists' or 'essentialists.' This camp includes most scientists ... The other camp contains mostly intellectuals, some historians and philosophers of science, many sociologists of science, and many students of literature and culture generally. To their enemies, these students of culture ... are merely 'relativists' or 'postmodernists.' (Giere, 1999, p. 1)

Newman & Benz argue that this dichotomy is 'based upon the differences in assumptions about what reality is and whether or not it is measurable' and extends into a debate regarding the means by which humans seek to create new knowledge, 'whether through objective or subjective methods' (Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 2).

Gross & Levitt (1998), in their invective against lesser bodies of knowledge in education throughout their book *Higher Superstition* [2], make crystal clear characterizations of the measured constructs of real science as ‘reliable factual knowledge’ (p. 12), ‘objective truth about the world’ (p. 52), ‘exacting logical analysis of abstract models’ (p. 62), ‘driven by the unyielding contours of reality’ (p. 81), ‘hard-won truth’ (p. 85), ‘rationality itself’ (p. 165). Conversely, Gross & Levitt characterize that which is other than science as ‘muddleheadedness’ (p. 1), ‘insularity and ignorance’ (p. 7), ‘symbolic wish-fulfillment’ (p. 8), ‘weakness of fact and logic’ (p. 8), ‘unprovable and bootless speculation’ (p. 12), ‘trendy doctrine, windy generalization’ (p. 37), ‘tooth-fairy hypothesis’ (p. 47), ‘incoherent’ (p. 51), ‘hallucinatory’ (p. 52), ‘hermeneutic hootchy-koo’ (p. 53), ‘untrammelled relativism’ (p. 84), ‘philosophical styrofoam’ (p. 98), ‘intellectual tinsel’ (p. 100), ‘febrile delusion’ (p. 103), ‘metaphors’ (p. 112), ‘academic inner city’ (p. 136), ‘moonbeams and fairy dust’ (p. 176), ‘unsupported by any evidence’ (p. 211), and ‘pathetic gullibility’ (p. 212).

The allusions reached as a consequence of such vitriol are quickly arrived at: while scientific rationalists are busy engineering cities in the sky, artists and other like-minded humanists are wasting their time hunting and gathering the intangibles of the human experience. Those less than scientific are doomed to remain the denizens of lesser domains, of lesser bodies of knowledge. The general perception is that scientific knowledge supersedes all else in modern cognition, causing all other ways of knowing to disappear into a mandated obsolescence, regarding the arts as an example ‘as nice but not necessary’ (Eisner, 2002, p. xi).

What knowledge is of the most worth? – the uniform reply is – Science. This is the verdict on all the counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is – Science. For that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is – Science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in – Science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is – Science. Alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still – Science. And for the purposes of discipline – intellectual, moral, religious – the most efficient study is, once more – Science. (Spencer, 1896, pp. 93, 94)

Today, good scientific practices and better science education in schools continue to be trumpeted as what are needed most in the world, a panacea for improving all things, systemizing and collapsing the observable world into measurable, controllable, predictable bits, creating a world that can be safely known. Since scientific methodologies are primarily mathematical (Van Doren, 1992) rather than metaphorical, it is not surprising that a world that can be safely known is also ostensibly a world that can be safely measured, statistically tested, and reproduced in artificially simulated conditions. In spite of art educator Elliot Eisner’s (2002) admonition that ‘science is a species of research; research is not a species of science’ (p. 209), scientific knowledge domains are purported to be higher bodies of knowledge, pure and certain because these bodies hold no claim to be valid beyond the empirically tested boundaries. That which cannot be scientifically researched is considered speculation at best, and certainly not reliable as knowledge as it is unlikely to exist as we might like to believe it does and until we prove beyond a doubt that it does.

A Brief History of Lesser-Than-Normal Bodies in Education

In the context of human social interaction, normalcy is constructed systematically, organized as social regularities that problematize those who do not measure up to, or who flout conformity with those exemplars constructed as normal. As Thomson (1997) puts it, ‘the physically extraordinary figure’ such as ‘the cripple, the invalid, and the freak’ is very much ‘as essential to the cultural project of American self-making as the varied throng of gendered, racial, ethnic, and social figures of otherness that support the privileged norm’ (p. 5). In Western scientific discourse, one invariably encounters medians, averages, likelihoods, and patterns constructed as binary axes, polarities of understanding, as *normal distributions*, and *standard deviations*. The concept of establishing norms has a statistical derivation advanced amongst Western industrialists during the early 1800s. Adolphe Quetelet elaborated a conception of the ‘average man’ that saw ‘the bourgeoisie as rationally placed in the mean position in the great order of things (Davis, 1995, p. 27). Quetelet himself wrote that ‘an individual who epitomized in himself, at a given time, all the

qualities of the average man, would represent at once all the greatness, beauty and goodness of that being' (cited in Porter, 1986, p. 102).

Within the dispensation of a rule of averages, it is implied 'that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm' (Davis, 1995, p. 29). In a society where the concept of 'able-bodiedness' as a norm is in operation, normalcy is further entrenched if every deviating or limited body is problematized as a societal defect and marginalized as a 'repository for social anxieties' (Thomson, 1997, p. 6). Public opinion and common sense can, however, become a eugenicist 'tyranny' of normalcy when averages are corporealized and differences are measured either as preordained deviations from the desirable, or as a tragically acquired disability that cripples conformity to agreed constructs of beauty and well-being. Disability studies scholar Lennard J. Davis (1995) writes:

We live in a world of norms. Each of us endeavors to be normal or else deliberately tries to avoid that state. We consider what the average person does, thinks, earns, or consumes. We rank our intelligence, our cholesterol level, our weight, sex drive, bodily dimensions along some conceptual line from subnormal to above-average. We consume a minimum daily balance of vitamins and nutrients based on what an average human should consume. Our children are ranked in school and tested to determine where they fit into a normal curve of learning, of intelligence. Doctors measure and weigh them to see if they are above or below average on the height or weight curves. There is probably no area of contemporary life in which some idea of a norm, mean, or average has not been calculated. (p. 23)

The propaganda of normalcy, and correlating acts and declarations of stigmatization, fixes the desirability of normalcy in the public opinion by systematically stigmatizing alternative behaviors and appearances. Because behavior patterns are fair predictors of future behaviors, the manipulation of public attitudes – such as legislated penalties for nonconformity to norms, public schooling utilizing normalizing and stigmatizing textbook narratives, the media advertisement of desirable behavior and appearances and social rewards for adherence to those models, and the segregation of deviants and undesirables into marginalized social arenas, communities, and vocational tracks – has served as a masking strategy leaving the spotlight only on the norms Western societies continue to hold central. Ashis Nandy (1983) defines the West as being 'a world view which believes in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or progressive over the traditional or the savage' (p. x).

What makes possible the emergence of the normal and the invisibility of those who deviate from publicly accepted norms of beauty, speech, and lifestyle? Paradoxically, the representation of the disabled figure in culture and literature in lesser-than-normal masks 'simultaneously buttresses an embodied version of normative identity and shapes a narrative of corporeal difference that excludes those whose bodies or behaviors do not conform' (Thomson, 1997, p. 7). It is a useful fiction that some are normal citizens of the state, and others marked as exemplars of a tragic failing, still yet to emerge from savagery and the natural, pre-lingual, irrational, amoral and primitive state imagined so vividly in the seminal texts of Enlightenment mythology (Davis, 1995, p. 55).

When the body itself is marked with the socially inflicted stigma of invalidity as a citizen, of illegitimacy as a contributor to history or normal ways of knowing, and as an identity invisible and irrelevant to the public gaze, the body itself is transformed by the normalizing/stigmatizing language game into something akin to a corporealized fingerprint. The discourse of stigma is interpreted as nothing less than 'real' in the court of public opinion, where the language game plays out.

Thus the body has an identity that coincides with its essence and cannot be altered by moral, artistic, or human will. This indelibility of corporeal identity only furthers the mark placed on the body by other physical qualities – intelligence, height, reaction time. By this logic, the person enters in an identical relationship with the body, the body forms the identity, and the identity is unchangeable and indelible as one's place on the normal curve ... this fingerprinting of the body means that the marks of physical difference become synonymous with the identity of the person. (Davis, 1995, pp. 31, 32)

Norms tell stories both of favor and desire; deviations from the norm are always predicated upon those stories. Western society strives to make beliefs of what it sees or thinks it sees with its own eyes, and ideates the preponderance of its constituents as representing the core of those beliefs and ideologies. Any given norm will always be the majority of instances falling within a particular 'bell curve' of empirical sightings. Hence, the majority population rules the center of the roost, and its point of view establishes accepted boundaries of significance and normalcy and the power to confer stigmatization or 'abnormalcy' upon those who do not compare favorably to those in the center, upon those who occupy positions that fall beyond established boundaries.

A common assumption would be that some concept of the norm must have always existed. After all, people seem to have an inherent desire to compare themselves to others. But the idea of a norm is less a condition of human nature than it is a feature of a certain kind of society ... the social process of [invalidating] arrived with industrialization and with a set of practices and discourses that are linked to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions of nationality, race, gender, criminality, sexual orientation, and [any other area of apparent incapacity or shortcoming]. (Davis, 1995, p. 24)

The establishment of intractable norms soothes the anxiety of indeterminability and insolubility. Norms are safe – however, they also make a democratic society nearly impossible. The security of the bell curve is not new to the mindset of public policy makers. In 1908, when Charles W. Eliot – near the conclusion of his term as president of Harvard University – was questioned as to how the decision might be made that certain children go to industrial schools, others to ordinary high schools, and others to mechanics art high schools, Eliot's response was that '[t]he teachers of the elementary schools ought to sort the pupils and sort them by their evident and probable destinies' (cited in Kliebard, 1999, p. 43).

How does an educator or public policy maker presume a destiny? What evidence is plainly evident enough, wholly certain enough to declaim certain probability in the chaos of human existence? Such prognostications can only be based upon previously agreed norms and the position of the boundary markers of a society's borders of 'statistical significance'. Who counts more? Who counts less? Who is utterly invisible? Nearly a hundred years after Eliot's departure from Harvard's halls, determinations of the probable values and quality of students' lives still prevail because of the norms held in common. 'Normalcy' or 'normality' is a discursive contraption that attempts to permanently ensconce the unfortunate denizens of the unacceptable ranges of modern society in an oppositional system that 'preserve(s) the irrational status quo' (Schafer, 1981, p. 41).

Europeans showed impartiality in their belief in the monsters beyond the bell curve of Western normality. They equated the gods of the Indian religions with the devil (Taussig, 1986). Europeans also categorized Africans as heathen, and their folklore and religions as the spawn of devil (Genovese, 1974, pp. 159-284). The powers of the Indian shaman to cure or to kill, African idolatry, and the European belief in magic and witchcraft all blended into a fear of the uncontrollable as a power that must either vanquish or be vanquished (Lea, 1908, p. 462). Finding one of his party, ailing in the grip of the forest climate yet searching for a shaman rather than the expedition's pharmacy, Father Gaspar de Pinell remarked that 'it is more likely that the civilized man will become a savage on mixing with the Indians than the Indians are likely to be civilized through the actions of the civilized' (cited in Taussig, 1986, p. 81).

The idea that anomaly is 'synonymous with danger and evil' is also characterized in Western literature and film in the 'symbolic uses of disability' (Thomson, 1997, p. 36).

That ubiquitous icon of physical anomaly, the monster, exemplifies culture's preoccupation with the threat of the different body. Disabilities do not simply mark evil, but function as menace in such prototypical villains as Shakespeare's Richard III, Dickens's Quilp, Melville's Ahab, Poe's Hop Frog, and Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove. Like the monsters who are their fantastic cousins, disabled characters with power virtually always represent a dangerous force unleashed on the social order. (Thomson, 1997, p. 36)

In *The White Man's Burden*, Rudyard Kipling ([1899] 1998) describes the lesser-than-normal bodies subject to colonialism as 'new-caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child', racially depicting a daunting confluence of congenital physical, spiritual, and intellectual flaws and deviances surely

dooming all non-Europeans to live in poverty and ignorance were it not for the beneficence of the ruling empire (p. 57).

In America, the Western narrative of manifest destiny – a mandate to conquer the fearsome, the sinful, and the ugly, and to subjugate monsters in all worlds, lost, old and new – became a masking practice that is visible at the very beginning of the American saga. Native North and South Americans were declared to be savages, unfit to retain dominion over their own land. In the Constitution, slaves were declared to be domesticated chattel, equal in measure to three-fifths of a man, at best.

Believing that Anglo-American culture [was superior] ... and the only culture that would support republican and democratic institutions, educators forbade the speaking of non-English languages, particularly Spanish and Native American tongues, and forced students to learn an Anglo-American-centered curriculum ... Conquered Indians were exposed to educational programs that emphasized patriotism and loyalty to the U.S. government. As tribal governments fell, Indian schools raised the U.S. flag and forced students to pledge their loyalty to the conquering nation ... federal and state officials attempted to gain emulation by using textbooks that reflected the dominant white culture of the United States and that contained no reference to Hispanic or Indian cultures. (Spring, 2001, p. 169)

Operating within the currency of what Lennard J. Davis (1995) has termed the 'hegemony of the normal', the history of the United States government is replete with instances wherein the proximity of subaltern bodies was meliorated by schooling and/or institutionalization as the initial and/or primary means for the corrective address (Tyack, 1974; Levine, 1996; Spring, 2001).

Historically, disabled people have for the most part been segregated either as individuals or in groups. Much of Michel Foucault's analysis of the modern subject reveals the way marginalized individuals – such as disabled people – have been enclosed, excluded, and regulated. Societies encode their collective prejudices in segregation legislation, such as the common U.S. 'ugly laws' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that banned visibly disabled people from appearing in public places. Similarly, asylums and almshouses that flourished in nineteenth-century America provided custodial segregation as limited aid to disabled people ... Today, disabled people, especially women, tend to be ghettoized by poverty and lack of education, those stigmatic situations that so frequently coincide with and reinforce marginalization based on physical traits. (Thomson, 1997, p. 35)

Today, bodies that are deaf or blind or diseased or lame or are identified as too dark or too bent or too slow or too broken continue to be treated as if the cast of their shadow across the cut-out of the average body was still anathema to the normalized soul.

Outlining the Contours of In/di/visuality

The term in/di/visuality is a way of illuminating a site of gestation in identity formation already at work in those who occupy a visual culture; it may be constructed both as a noun and as the verb to in/di/visualize, as a designation both of social work sites and of transformative social practice. Contemporary public schooling practice in the United States focused on the generation of standards-based evidence of learning, is oriented to overlook the gestation of new identity and selfhood within the seams in between the three kinds of invisibility. Individuality and visibility are opposing forces, the former being a discrete meaning-making tool, the latter being a network of socially situated sites of perceptual gestation.

Educators are not mandated to initiate or engineer the cultural work of in/di/visuality; educators are challenged to recognize in/di/visuality at work and allow it space in the curriculum. The student does the hard part. The initiation and operation of the in/di/visuality brings the individuality and visibility which are already native to each of our students into a dialectical relationship. In/di/visuality is a publicly-held inquiry into the power to mask and/or reinterpret significance, with the self as the tool of the research acting within a nexus of sites of contention. In this public forum, in/di/visuality enables a transgressive reinterpretation of the visual culture regimes that affect the individual both directly and indirectly; in/di/visuality is a form of agency within one's subjectivity as a visually typecast representative of stigma.

As a suffix in the nexus of in/di/visuality, the vast and globalized traffic of visuality is tapped, localized, and drawn into rapprochement with one's own individuality. In an instructional context, art educator Brent Wilson (2005) describes this site of action as the first pedagogical site, 'the vast "territory" containing many informal spaces outside of and beyond classrooms where kids ... both construct their own visual cultural texts and consume the visual cultural texts made by others (p. 18). It is important to consider that long before professional educators come into contact with students, the visual culture has already had a profound influence on the content and shape of youngsters' ideas.

In the central action in the nexus of in/di/visuality, narratives of individuality and narratives of visuality reorganize one another. Self-concepts and sociocultural ideas become dialectical and recombinant mediums, like chemical dioxides, acting together catalytically although constituted initially as opposing forces. Individuality is wielded as a discretionary tool that works to intussuscept sociocultural ideas, interpreting and embodying them visibly in a new site of action, the individual identity. The dialectic between individuality and visuality becomes a portal for 'carnavalesque' slippages, the profanation of the 'proper' borders between the socially sanctioned or popular, and the individually reconstituted or performed (Bakhtin, cited in Brunner, 1998, p. 49). Walter Truett Anderson (1997) states that 'your worldview and your self-concept are always connected, and when one changes so does the other' (p. 11). Conversely, visuality impresses itself upon identities with shaping stories, sociocultural depictions of reality in the news media, entertainment, viral video, advertisements and works of visual art that shape idiosyncratic views of the world. The conversation between individual imagination and various sociocultural depictions may be initiated in what Wilson (2005) describes as the second pedagogical site, the 'conventional art classrooms in schools (or museums and community art classrooms) where teachers direct student artmaking' (p. 18).

As a prefix in the nexus of in/di/visuality, individuality disturbs and reveals the unseen archaeologies of visuality, bringing compounded layers of visual cultural influences to the forefront of one's attention. Wilson's 'third pedagogical site' is theorized as 'a site where adults and kids collaborate in making connections and interpreting webs of relationships ... among the images that kids make for themselves and the images that adults ask them to make' (2005, p. 18). Wilson's third pedagogical site resists the deficit-model of childhood as a mask of concealment and de-cloaks a narrative of identity that privileges the agency of the youngster.

Narrative inquiry, then, is a strategy for resistance. When inquiry and reflection show the ways identities shift and overlap as they resist boundaries of cultural containment, then as a strategy it may help to map or structure sites necessary for rearticulating identity and difference. (Brunner, 1998, p. 52)

Wilson's third pedagogical site is crisscrossed, then, with collaborative and narrative inquiries which navigate

the multiformal power arrangement that is manifested in the visual culture, a navigation that functions to reposition dominant group image-making and the images of non-dominant subgroupings, repositioning the preeminence and position of image-making exemplars in the constitution of the national and individual identities, repositioning meaning and identity within the larger Western visual and popular culture. (Rolling, 2007a, pp. 15, 16)

In/di/visuality, born of reinterpreted autobiography and social narratives, thus becomes 'a strategy for resistance' (Brunner, 1998, p. 52).

Sites of In/di/visuality in Education

The play of in/di/visuality is relevant as a curricular concern because it is simultaneously a way of knowing the world and learning to navigate a way through it; a methodology for depicting and communicating new understandings as they are created; a parlance for reinterpreting the powers that constrain us even as we are subject to those constraints.

Operating pedagogically from sites of social contention, an understanding of methods for supporting student in/di/visuality has curricular implications that place acts of art-making in the center of every curriculum endeavor. Walter Truett Anderson (1997) claims that 'personal

identities would be hard to locate without the network of symbols within which we are defined and the internal monologue with which we continually remind ourselves who we think we are' (p. 263). Psychologist Howard Gardner points out that a transgressing story 'must compete with many other extant stories; and if the new stories are to succeed, they must transplant, suppress, complement, or in some measure outweigh the earlier stories, as well as contemporary oppositional "counterstories"' (Gardner, 1995, p. 14). In the visual culture's theater of multiple selves and simultaneous stories, galleries of reinscribed images become sites for newly inaugurated complexities, for freshly enunciated matrices of identity and self-imagery.

A 'mental image' of self is akin to the narrative of personal memory, images of the self held in mind that have been impressed on us by the experience of our selves as reflected back to us in our passage through the world (Mitchell, 1986, p. 22). Revisited self-imaging in visual culture may be taken, then, as an agent of visibility and social change. Repositioning self-images allows a body of knowledge initially outside the scope of our discourse of identity to be incorporable into our familiar archaeologies. Repositioning is born of slippages and displacements. Diane Dubose Brunner (1998) describes the importance of displacement as a practice in the prevention of the 'creation of new orthodoxy' (p. 58). However, in/di/visuality goes beyond resistance to the active generation of new anomalies of identity and amalgamations of significance. What do educational projects look like when they allow the invisible to become visible?

My job is first to open up curricular spaces where students can picture themselves in the world, no matter whether that picture is pretty or not, locating personal significance along with the agency to reinterpret the signifiers they have thus far embodied; secondly, my job is to open up a space where students can picture a more just and refined world, critiquing the cultural stories we hold to be socially significant or insignificant and exercising their acquired agency to make changes along the way; thirdly, my job is to open up a space where students can practice and expand upon a repertoire of marks and movements that will make visible the self-imagery and stories that they have rendered to be personally and socially significant, capturing the attention of others so that they too may see a possibility previously overlooked or unseen. It is important to re-emphasize that I have been theorizing in/di/visuality as an amalgam of art education, visual culture and curriculum practice that does not rely on the opening of new spaces since slippages and displacement is inherent in practice that opens up access to the 'sites of contention' in between known masks (Rolling, 2008).

In keeping with my job as an educator to open up curricular spaces where students can picture themselves in the world, locating self-image along with the agency to reinterpret the signifiers they have embodied, I have afforded first graders the opportunity to pictorialize some of the rudimentary concepts that were just becoming meaningful to them. In one such class I asked the students the question, 'What is big?' One child responded, 'A dinosaur skull is big'. He was then given the simple tools to visually recount the recent museum visit he was remembering in the context of a color pencil drawing. This drawing became a self-portrait as the boy drew himself standing in a large cap next to his dad, the tallest figure in the drawing, as they both viewed the dinosaur skull along with a few other museum visitors. The student's concept of what 'big' is was tied to his rendering of an experiential, visual/spatial encounter in relation to his own body (Rolling, 2006). The curricular narrative here is: As I stand in the midst of all that we choose to look upon, who am I?

In keeping with my job as an educator to open up curricular spaces where students can picture a more just and refined world, I facilitated a political cartooning exercise for fourth graders in the wake of the 2004 presidential election (Rolling, 2008). I began by asking students to name and pictorialize an injustice in the world today that he or she wanted to help make better. I explained a political cartoon to be a commentary on current events that expresses an opinion and serves to persuade others by its appearance in the public conversation. I further explained that political cartoons are drawings representing current public figures or important social issues symbolically and often satirically, and that art was very much about the ideas my students thought were important. This exercise culminated by posting our opinions in an open gallery on the World Wide Web through our school's website. One student poignantly rendered a hapless Iraqi civilian in the midst of explosions from a United States military assault, apartment buildings and cars ablaze

in the background, with a caption reading, 'Here we go again: the terrorist bombing'. The curricular narrative here is: Observing that which we typically leave unseen, who are we?

In a third instance and in keeping with my job as an educator to open up curricular spaces where students can practice and expand upon a repertoire of marks, movements, and modelings that will make visible the self-imagery and stories they have rendered to be personally and socially significant, I sponsored the 'Who I Am' storytelling project for a small group of third and fourth graders in my final year as a full-time elementary school teacher. In this project, personal family artifacts, heirlooms and family stories were to serve as the inspiration for art making, historical research, and the development and performance of self-image and family identity. One student drew upon a jar of sand physically carried from the beaches of Barbados when her great-grandmother immigrated to these North American shores; in homage, the student created a three-dimensional timeline of clay figurines, each representing the maternal figures in her family, each passing the jar down to their daughters, each miniature jar holding grains of sand from the original jar (Rolling, 2007b). The curricular narrative here is: What understandings are yielded in the second and third look at what has already been seen?

The aforementioned exercises in in/di/visuality all took place in sites of art education, typically an off-site point of reference (Rolling, 2006) for most curriculum theorizing. In the narrative of these instances we see an art education practice less interested in self-expression and learned techniques than in critical self-refinement as one is seen by the world, community-refinement as one sees and critically engages the world, and sight-refinement as one critically navigates the contending meanings and ideas in a world steeped in visuality. Summarily, my argument is that a reconceptualization of art education also reconceptualizes curriculum on all sites of contemporary educational practice, practices beset on all sides and sodden through and through by the swells and surges of a visual culture.

Our students – though disabled, though darker-skinned, though differently-minded – may become visible even in a perfect storm of occluding imagery, positioning their bodies and ideas to withstand each successive squall, displacing the torrents of three kinds of invisibility like watersheds in a tempest. Reinterpretive masks or masks of agency are at first just as invisible as those previously rendered invisible; it is not easy to see at first that that which was invisible has been utterly reinscribed. The Cinderella standing here before us cannot possibly be the same person who was heretofore unseen. We may have just missed 'the masquerade ... which makes possible the rearticulation of identity' (Butler, 1993, p. 241).

Notes

[1] In his writing on the act of interpretation Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1976) suggests that there are multiple phenomena that, although not text, are analogous to text in that we treat them as the objects of our interpretation. He writes: 'Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must, therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory – in one way or another, unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense' (p. 153).

[2] The catalogue of salient phrases in Gross & Levitt's text was compiled by Thomas F. Gieryn (1999). A more extended version is found on pages 354 and 355 of Gieryn's book, *Cultural Boundaries of Science*.

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