Critical Response and Pedagogic Tensions in Aesthetic Space

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Abstract

This study investigates teacher and student enactment of the Critical Response Protocol (CRP) to support the interpretation of meaning from contemporary visual art in a museum gallery setting. This study focuses closely on one, situated enactment of CRP to more deeply understand its general value, its effective use and the form of learning that it may support or constrain. Learning is theorized as sociocultural, and revealed in shifting identities of participants situated within discourses (Gee, 2008). The theoretical framework for the study is Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) (Norris and Jones, 2005; Scollon and Scollon, 2004) with methodological tools drawn from critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996; Fine and Weis, 2005), educational critique (Eisner, 1998), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2008) and cultural studies (Bourriaud, 2002; Ngai, 2005). Discourse is conceived as action, and data emerges from a site of engagement to delineate a specific nexus of practice, raising research questions rooted in researcher participation. The identified nexus of this study is an encounter between a 10th grade student and his English teacher practicing CRP before a large contemporary painting as part of a larger creative writing assignment. The activity surfaced within a six-year engagement as an aspect of an art museum-based literacy program called Artful Writing. During that time, a digital audio of the episode was promoted to practitioners and students as a model of successful CRP practice. Data include observations, audio recordings, interviews, photos, collected correspondence, materials and student work.

Analysis of this enactment of CRP follows a trajectory of data (de Saint-Georges, 2005) and is organized into three layers. The first analysis focuses on evidence of critical thinking and cognition, the second attends to discursive language and shifts in power and identity, and the final analytic turn explores the non-linguistic mediating tools of space, time, distance and social construction of emotion. The study reveals unexamined tensions between teaching goals of critical thinking, critical literacy and aesthetic processes. Evidence is found of the student demonstrating forms of higher order thinking (Tishman, 2002) in moments of participation, yet the student's response is curtailed by his

frustration with the artwork and to some demands of CRP. Intending to support critical literacy, this CRP practice was constrained by both teacher and student assumptions surrounding aesthetic response, the artist's intention and artistic voice, and by a persistent, normative classroom discourse valuing calm, sequenced and reasoned interpretation. Opportunities to move critical investigation into the affective charge of the artwork which provoked issues of racial representation, incommensurate histories and discomfort, are resisted or unanswered (Boler, 1999). The study concludes with an attempt to redesign a CRP approach within a suggested pedagogy of critical aesthetic engagement, understood as emplaced action (Ellsworth, 2004), marked by an aware, embodied experience of relational movements (Ahmed, 2004; Hubard, 2010) that negotiate meanings and mediating discourses.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

I don't get art, man. This means nothing. -   Anton, grade 10

The exasperation expressed above by high school student Anton is a good place to start this research. This is a study focused on understanding talk in an art museum—specifically talk centered on trying to figure out what an immense painting of thousands of chickens *means*. The image is crazy. Using Ngai's (2012) broad, contemporary aesthetic categories, this exaggerated yet realistically rendered painting would fall under her notion of "zany," an artwork marked by movement, by manic activity, both comic and dark. As an art museum educator, my charge is to facilitate and support the engagement of visitors with art in the galleries. In Anton's remark, I hear frustration with the painting and with his class activity. For art museum educators, Anton's is not an unusual response, but notable for its openness. Through this candid response directed at his teacher, Anton offers space and an implied invitation for further discussion. This research grows out of questions surrounding activities of aesthetic and critical viewer response raised during my practice as an art educator working in museums and working with classroom teachers in the museum setting. It is informed by art education and literacy education research.

This study seeks to understand how teachers can support learners as they begin to articulate meaning in works of art. More specifically, it seeks to understand how a particular classroom-based teaching method—the Critical Response Protocol (CRP)—supports and/or constrains learners as they respond to works of art in a museum gallery

space. CRP is a framework of questions that are meant to scaffold and prompt students in forms of critical thinking around phenomena requiring observation, analysis, interpretation and judgment, while honoring personal associations and affective or aesthetic experience. It falls into a genre of classroom and museum questioning strategies, influenced by constructivist pedagogy, designed for practitioners to help move learners through forms of thinking as they actively build their unique understanding or literacy from works of visual art (Feldman, 1973; Housen, 2002; Tishman, 2002).

In this study I am both participant and researcher. First drawing from critical ethnographic approaches and action research, I came to understand this work within a theoretical and methodological framework of Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA). MDA brings a research focus on action and demands researcher participation, and an ongoing process of reflection as data emerges and is found to be significant to participants' lived experience. MDA requires filtering layered data to allow micro analysis of an emergent nexus of activity—activity that is socially mediated by tools, signs, practices and spaces (Jones and Norris, 2005). As a participant immersed in the research site, my careful and regular reflection became essential to the study. This recurring pattern of reflection and questioning became points on what I came to see as a research trajectory, a path that helped me sift through the layers of practice I found. The result is a study that spans six years and follows three facets of analysis each focused on a single encounter within an art museum, between a teacher, a student and a painting of chickens.

This project of research and story begins with teachers and students moving from their language arts classrooms to engage in classwork within an art museum setting. It grew from the experiences of the collective participants and a shared sense of curiosity about definitions of literacy, and exploring deeper opportunities that working in and through works of art might provide. I found myself in the center of this work—a convener—inviting English teachers and their students to reimagine the pedagogy of the galleries, toward intentions of literacy learning and aesthetic experience.

During 2005, the Weisman Art Museum based at the University of Minnesota piloted a new museum-based education program designed for grade 4-12 language arts teachers and students. The program's goal was to integrate the study of art objects and processes of interpretation and meaning-making with the study of writing, building both verbal and visual literacies. The program, called Artful Writing, allowed the art museum educational team to partner with several collaborating high school English teachers. One collaborating teacher, Ms. B[1], brought not only great enthusiasm to the program design, she brought an active interest in critical pedagogy and a strong preference for a teaching approach she calls Critical Response or the Critical Response Protocol (CRP) which was central to the over-all design of Artful Writing teaching materials and workshop experiences.

Immersed in the project activities, my inquiry began with questions of my own practice as an educator working in an art museum. Throughout the development and enactment of Artful Writing, I worked within a small, core group of reflective participating teachers (Schön, 1987), as critical friends. In the midst of this activity and

[1] The names of the teachers, student and school featured in this paper have been changed.

experience, a four-minute piece of recorded data surfaced as a rich document of a participating teacher working with her student in the art museum galleries, using the CRP tool. Recorded by the teacher, Ms. B, as part of her classroom practice, the audio document was circulated by those of us involved in Artful Writing as a valuable exemplar of teacher practice. My work focuses on a close analysis of this recording—an episode of Ms. B and her grade 10 student, Anton, engaging in CRP around their experience of a painting in the museum's gallery, to find "a way into it". As an ordered protocol of questions, CRP has great currency with educators, and since the start of this program, has been specifically promoted and embraced as a useful tool for scaffolding students' critical thinking practices, deepened engagement and literacy (Beach, Campano, Edmiston, and Borgmann, 2010; Thompson and Barniskis, 2005). Through a deep, micro analysis of this one resonant CRP enactment, the purpose of this study is to deepen understanding of this strategic questioning tool for teaching and learning, particularly when centered on interpreting meaning from works of original art presented in art spaces such as an art museum gallery.

In reflection, our collaborative group responded to and valued the organization and clarity CRP offered the discussion of a gallery painting, and the engaging dynamic between teacher and student. CRP relates to trends of critical thinking and questioning strategies used in current museum gallery teaching and CRP and close variations of this tool are increasingly being promoted through school district websites, trainings and through networks of teacher professional development as a strategy of effective teaching not only in art and literacy education, but across subject areas (Perpich Center for Arts

Education, 2006). As a museum educator and a trainer of pre-service teachers through the University of Minnesota, I'm an active participant in this promotion, and this further motivates my desire to understand this tool more deeply and question its careful use in classrooms and in art spaces.

Like a found stone that I've been compelled to turn over and over my hand, this short recorded exchange between Anton and Ms. B continues to trouble and fascinate me, situated in the initial context of that museum visit and continuing to ripple out into new spaces and transform in meaning. By bringing forward a theoretically layered analysis of this recorded episode of museum-based educational practice this study helps to reveal opportunities, constraints, assumptions, habits and relational gestures that both shape and are shaped by the gallery learning activities.

Participants and relationships: A zone of identification

The setting for the study was the Weisman Art Museum on the campus of the University of Minnesota. In 2005, I coordinated a program which invited 32 language arts teachers to serve as co-designers and to pilot new museum-based art and literacy teaching resources. Of these participating teachers a core of eight became lead designers on the project. I came to understand my participation and positioning within this collective practice as entering into a "zone of identification" and to understand my participating colleagues as co-researchers, helping to determine what this research would be about (Norris and Jones, 2005, p. 202). We shared goals of deepening student engagement in learning though encounters with art, critical thinking and practices of critical literacy. Key teacher participants in this study consist of Ms. B who as co-

researcher openly shared with me her own action research and promoted ongoing reflection. As co-researchers we shared questions and the data collected and regularly engaged in reflective discussions about the Artful Writing project and our own activities within the collaboration. The focus of this study, CRP, was determined to be meaningful and warranting further inquiry, through the reflective activities of participating teachers. An additional group of five teachers also feature significantly in my understanding of the Artful Writing project and CRP use. This core group assisted me in the development of research questions through shared reflection. These close relationships moved from professional to personal, from participant to co-researcher, offering times of shared insight and times of discomfort and disagreement. Throughout, I wrestled with my positioning, my influence and bias as I sought to define my own identity as a new researcher while navigating this site of engagement.

Ms. B emerged as a dynamic participant. I did not know her before the Artful Writing project and was advised to invite her to the planning group by one of the other teacher participants. Ms. B was well-known by most of the language arts teachers and had assumed a leadership role in the district and through the Minnesota Writing Project, our local site of the National Writing Project. It was Ms. B who introduced CRP to the group and to the development of Artful Writing. Her influence on the resources and workshop experiences and on my own perspectives was profound. As part of her own classroom practice, Ms. B recorded herself talking to Anton in the museum using CRP. Surprised by its power, Ms. B first circulated the audio clip through our network of Artful Writing participants. She then shared it with colleagues in her school district and

broadcast it through other professional networks. The audio clip became popular with teachers, and our Artful Writing group sought permission to include the recording in our teacher resource kit and online as an exemplar of teacher practice and student meaning-making.

Processes of shared reflection, navigation and analysis

The Artful Writing project was shaped by our groups shared practitioner questions about visual literacy and meaning making by students encountering original art objects in an art museum gallery setting. These questions were: 1) How can teachers help students build meaning from works of art rather than passively "receive" it? 2) Is critical thinking supported through student inquiry into meaning and critique of visual art? And 3) What does visual literacy practice look like? These initial questions provided the shape of the classroom materials and a reflective inquiry that would develop into this research project.

Concepts of visual literacy are current in the field of art museum education, emerging from general educational trends and broadening the concept of literacy to move beyond written language to include other modes of communication, particularly noting a "visual turn" in contemporary communication (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; New London Group, 2000). Visual literacy approaches are also informed by a concern for expanding critical analysis of contemporary art, media arts and popular visual culture in art education (Duncum, 2004; Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2003). The art museum offers space for student interpretation and meaning-making. Traditionally conceptualized as critique, this interpretive work focused on art, parallels the interest in transactional

meaning-making shared by literacy educators focused on reading (Housen, 2002; Rosenblatt, 1994).

Central to the development of Artful Writing were questions about literacy practice, and the learning processes effective in supporting interpretation and creation of written text and visual images. This work was deeply influenced by metacognitive classroom practices, particularly *Artful Thinking* (Ritchhart, Palmer, Church, and Tishman, 2006; Tishman, 2002) an initiative coming out of Harvard's Project Zero. Two of the participating teachers received training through Project Zero and this background informed the development of Artful Writing (along with a contemporary collaboration between Minneapolis Public Schools and the Perpich Center for Arts Education's *Artful Teaching and Learning* project), aligning it with an emphasis on critical thinking and literacy skills, and through writing activities conceptualized as "performances of understanding" demonstrating student interpretations of the visual artworks.

Throughout the study notions of literacy and literacy learning intersected with my grounding as an art educator. Borrowing concepts and approaches from the field of literacy studies offered potential insights into arts learning and practices of interpretation, yet I find it difficult to fully account for some art images as communicative "text." This language-based metaphor helps to reveal some aspects of how art—particularly image—might be found meaningful and might use formal conventions, but it also fails to capture some of the unique aspects of an encounter with material art objects in real time and space. Along with interpretive tools borrowed from the field of literacy learning, I also wrestled to redefine and understand aesthetic experience, not in opposition to a critical

response, but as an important aspect of a holistic, embodied response, or what Dewey (1934) considers "experience." Although rooted in classroom learning activities, it is the act of interpreting meaning from original works of art displayed in art museum space that remained central to this study.

Critical Response Protocol (CRP)

The Critical Response Protocol emerged as a key aspect of Artful Writing and through use by the pilot teacher and beyond, became central to teacher professional development workshops, influencing teacher practice in classrooms and in the art museum beyond the scope of the Artful Writing project. The early recording of Ms. B and Anton demonstrating use of CRP continues to play a role in this resonance for teachers. The steady interest in CRP and the continued circulation of the audio clip Ms. B and Anton among participating teachers is significant and suggested CRP as an important subject of study. My research focuses closely on this one, situated enactment of CRP to more deeply understand its general value, its effective use and the form of learning that it might support or constrain. A lot happened during this four-minute exchange and continues to resonate as the audio is offered to practitioners as an exemplar of CRP practice (Perpich Center for Arts Education, 2006; Beach et al. 2010; Petkau, Toft, Nutter, Thompson and Borgmann, 2005). This study hopes to complicate the perceived simplicity of the questioning strategy and teacher facilitation, through digging into the levels of activity within what I have come to conceptualize as "a nexus of practice" (Scollon and Scollon, 2004), and bringing multiple theoretical perspectives to enrich my interpretation and change how this meaning-making strategy is understood and used.

Because of the richness of this small piece of data and the influence it has and continues to have, I find it worthy of a careful micro analysis. Deeper understanding of this situated exchange can potentially change how the tool is made useful in classrooms and gallery spaces.

Design of the Study

The design for this study draws from a framework of critical ethnographic study (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005) combined with methodological strategies aligned with mediated discourse analysis (MDA) (Norris and Jones, 2005). The research design emerged from my participation within Artful Writing and this "emic" stance offered me a unique access to life worlds of participants and the contexts that surround this situated practice of CRP (Jones and Norris, 2005). The research study is situated within my participation in the Artful Writing project at the Weisman Art Museum, starting in 2005 and ending in 2012, when I left the museum. Ingrid de Saint-Georges (2005) offers a conceptualization of research as a temporal trajectory of action to offer a perspective on practice and relationships, and I draw from this idea to help frame an understanding my research process. The notion of my research trajectory, help map moments in my reflective participation and articulate my shifting relationships to participants and the data that emerged. This study focuses on a specific episode of practice—Ms. B and Anton in front of a painting in May of 2005. The unit of analysis is first conceptualized as a bounded teaching episode (Eisner, 1998), then a discursive encounter (Fairclough, 2001), and finally a nexus of practice (Norris and Jones, 2005), each offering slightly different ways to describe the four-minute audio data of Ms. B and Anton. The following figure

offers a visual overview of the shifting questions and layers of analysis that make up my research trajectory.

Fig.1. Research Trajectory and Evolving Questions

Trajectory of Research	Questions Shaping the Analysis	Theoretical Frameworks	Tools used for Analysis
Initial Shared Inquiry of Artful Writing Participants	1) How can teachers help students build meaning from works of art rather than passively receive it? 2) Is critical thinking supported through student inquiry into meaning and critique of visual art? 3) What does visual literacy practice look like?	Metacognition; Visual Literacy; Action Research informed participation	Individual and participant reflections
First Layer of Researcher Analysis	1) How does CRP support critical thinking and meaning making? 2) How is CRP used in the classroom and in the art museum? 3) What is the role of the teacher facilitating CRP? 4) How does CRP compare and connect to other questioning protocols?	Metacognition; Visual Literacy; Critical Ethnography	Observation; Interview; Narrative; Educational Critique
Second Layer of Researcher Analysis	1) What situated identities do Anton and Ms. B perform and what social positions do they take up using CRP in the museum space? 2) How does the negotiation of both macro and micro levels of discursive power shape the learning activity? 3) How does a teaching and learning strategy like CRP support and constrain critical literacy and the practice of student voice? 4) What intertextualities are found in this specific artwork (the painting by Douglas Argue) and how do they relate to Anton and Ms. B?	Critical Ethnography; Critical Socio-cultural learning; Critical discourse analysis; Critical Literacy and Critical Art Pedagogy	Critical discourse analysis and re-transcription; Interview
Third Layer of Researcher Analysis	1) What mediational means does the work of art/art space present through constructions of space and time, and how might this relate to teaching and learning? 2) When emotion is understood as a socially	Critical Ethnography; Mediated Discourse; Social Semiotics; Relational	Mediated Discourse Analysis; Multimodal Analysis; Observation;

	constructed action, how does this semiotic layer complicate understandings of aesthetic engagement and critical literacy practice?	Aesthetics; Embodied Learning	Interview

Critical ethnography seeks to describe experiences, recognizing the partial and unique perspective of the researcher, and attending to a critical problematizing of discursive structures and systems of power. Fine and Weis (2005) have described their practice of critical ethnography as "compositional study" finding a metaphor in the visualization (and necessity) of both positive and negative space in research and its presentation. It demands that the researcher constantly question assumptions and interpretations and continuously shift positions within the research (p. 68), a principle also shared by MDA. Connected to this critical perspective is my relationship to the participants I am studying. I have a long and important relationship of reciprocal care with my participants, particularly with the teachers whom I've known and worked with as colleagues for several years (Noddings, 1984). I argue that this intimacy provided me with a unique and valuable perspective on these episodes of teaching (Eisner, 1998; Guba, 1987), even as I shifted to include a wider researcher perspective.

As a postmodern feminist (Fine and Weis, 2005; Lather, 1986) I value the collaborative and long-term relationship I have developed with Ms. B and hold this as keeping with ethical research practice. Norman Denzin (in Christians, 2005) uses the term "feminist communitarian" to describe a research ethic built on the notions of community transformation, and of the guidance of participants in shaping the study and determining its value (p. 150-151). Critical ethnographic case study is essentially

reflexive and relational. Shaped by critical theory, it is openly ideological and makes central the connection of my research back to anti-oppressive educational labor (Kumashiro, 2000). Starting from a critical ethnographic approach, the tools of ethnography, observation and participation support a deepened exploration of the discourses at work within educational sites and into an analysis focused on activity and social semiotics. Mediated Discourse Analysis offered an emergent design, which allowed me to surface meaningful areas of study to explore this data as rich and complex sociocultural action.

Throughout this qualitative study, I am the instrument of analysis (Eisner, 1998) again highlighting the need for me to be actively reflective and reflexive, aware of my positioning and critical stance. Field notes, email exchanges, group interviews, member checks, student work, photos drawing and recordings inform the context of the CRP practice. The ethnographic data is transformed into narrative descriptions and accounts that help further situate and surface concurrent discourses active in the focal episodes.

The methods I used to analyze the data changed as my research questions emerged and shifted over time. I start with a narrative approach using Elliot Eisner's (1998) framework of educational critique to organize my analysis, with a goal of interpreting and evaluating the CRP tool and teacher facilitation as demonstrated through the episode with Ms. B and Anton. This method also seeks to tease out themes, features and qualities that resonate beyond the unique episode. Reflecting on these themes led to new questions of power and relationship, shifting my analytical perspective and leading me to draw on tools of critical discourse analysis. With this careful analysis of language,

I was able to better understand how power circulated through the encounter and influenced social positioning, and identity. But further questions emerged specific to the space of the encounter—the art museum, and the main provocateur—the painting. To better account for these key multimodal aspects, I used tools of Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), shifting my perspective on the encounter to one of action—a nexus of practice—situated in space and in time navigated by the interaction of discourse, mediating tools and habitus. These three conceptual shifts follow my research path and correspond with salient moments of reflection and questioning. The design of my research emerged through identifying an area of focus (CRP) of value to participants within the site of engagement, collecting data, surfacing questions, and articulating multiple analytical tools and perspectives to deepen and change understanding.

Overview of the chapters

The following chapters map out my research journey. Following this introduction, Chapter two digs deeper into the site of engagement (Norris and Jones, 2005) which is within the rich context of the Artful Writing project, specifically situated among teachers exploring critical thinking, arts integration and multiple literacies. It's from this site that CRP was developed, practiced and first promoted by participating teachers, including me (Beach et al., 2010). This chapter helps situate the initial research questions which centered on questioning methods (Housen, 2002) and cognition (Tishman, 2002).

Chapter three takes up these questions in an initial analysis of the central data. This data—primarily an audio recording of the use of CRP by Anton and Ms. B in response to a painting in the museum galleries—emerged as highly significant to

participants in the study and beyond. Framing this initial analysis is an understanding of learning and cognition that is individualized, marked by the development or attainment of skills. My analysis relies on transcription and ethnographically informed narrative (Eisner, 1998) with attention paid to demonstrations of critical thinking as evidence of learning.

The limits of the first analysis raise questions that provoked me to explore assumptions of cognition and also attend to the social relations between teacher and student. In Chapter four, I dig into this epistemological shift–a socio cultural understanding of learning (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991)—and draw together a review of theory that situates my research within post structural fields of critical literacy (Lewis, Enciso, and Moje, 2007), cultural theory and arts education (Duncum, 2007; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001, 2003; Gee, 2005) offers a theoretical framework and informs a second analysis of the data.

Chapter five offers a re-transcription of the exchange between Ms. B and Anton, focusing on their language and shifts to emphasize the stanzas (Gee, 2005) that emerge. Stanzas are an analytic tool to trace topical and intentional shifts that may break or flow through the narrative. With a focus on discourse and circulating power, this analysis attends to a different layer of the data than previously explored. Here, the identities that Ms. B and Anton take up in their exchange are understood as potential moments of learning as they work to actively negotiate the meaning of the painting. While revealing

aspects of relationship between teacher and student, this analysis raises new questions about the artwork and the art space as active mediators.

Chapter six offers reflection on discourse as activity (Norris and Jones, 2005). It leads into a third analysis, that looks beyond language to consider the mediating roles of not only teacher, language, CRP, and the art work, but of the socially meaningful constructions of distance, time, space (Stenglin, 2009) and emotion (Boler, 1999). Teasing apart these mediating constructions as they circulate through the nexus of practice helps to make visible the complicated dialogic relations and account more fully for the embodied (Hubard, 2007), aesthetic response. The goal of MDA research is a new understanding of practice that can work to change "the nexus," in this case, to change and deepen practitioner understanding of CRP and its use to support student meaning-making. In this final chapter, the topic of aesthetics and aesthetic experience is explored in light of insights surfaced throughout the research, and I move to suggest shifts and cautions to CRP use that works toward a productive tension between aesthetics and ideology. In describing a process and naming it *Critical Aesthetic Engagement*, I seek to build on the affordances of CRP and argue for a more fluid and situated inquiry that recognizes the essential role of relational movement, embodied perceptions and constructed emotion that shape and are shaped by a situated interaction with a work of art. I close with thoughts about the continued "legs" of this recorded data, as it has been made public as an exemplar of practice far beyond its original emplaced context.

This study's critical and embodied focus on the sociocultural aspects of learning brings a new approach to understanding museum-based art interpretive discussions,

filling an identified need in art museum educational research (Vallance, 2007). It seeks to reveal hidden aspects of interdiscursive relationships between teachers, learners and institutions—aspects that shape opportunities to participants to learn. Further, a close study of the discourses enacted in these art museum-based learning activities will deepen our understanding of the potential for teaching and learning through direct, physical encounters with artworks, within gallery spaces. This study has implications for redefining the educational relationship between school classrooms and art museums, and for strengthening shared practices and inquiry of art educators and teachers of literacy.

The trust of participating teachers and students made this research and larger project possible. Without their creativity, curiosity and hard work, I would have little to study. The passion Ms. B brought to her classroom and to Artful Writing was not lost on her students, or me. It is significant that Ms. B enthusiastically practiced the same openness to critical inquiry that she hoped to instill in her students, even when that risked being uncomfortable. She trusted the value of reflective work and the care of her colleagues and students. It is with respect and great care that I explore her practice and the schooling experience of a young man—her student, Anton. The next chapter will provide insight into Ms. B and her deep desire to infuse arts processes and performance pedagogy into her English classroom and to introduce her students to art spaces that challenge their perceptions.

Chapter Two: A Site of Engagement

It's like…It's like people draw stuff from their point of view but then expect us to understand what their point of view was. - Anton, grade 10

This chapter focuses on the genesis of this study through the Artful Writing program and sessions at the Weisman Art Museum, offering a description of the participants and various contexts for their practice. This opening phase of the research maps onto MDA methodology as establishing a site of engagement (Norris and Jones, 2005). The unique intersection of time and space that allowed for the collaborative development of the Artful Writing project drew together teaching and art practices from schools and museums, and the mediational means of teacher networks and works of art. The experience of Artful writing offered a "real-time window" (Norris and Jones, p. 139) and enabled a shared focus on the actions of teaching in the art gallery. Rather than a traditional "site" of research articulated mainly as space, this concept recognizes the temporal aspects that shape the focus of the study—the mediated action of participants. This site is marked by my direct participation in a trajectory of action, while attending to patterns of connection and valued practices occurring within the art museum galleries. In the Artful Writing program, CRP emerged as an important questioning tool to support student meaning-making—particularly as exemplified in the recorded practice of Ms. B and her student Anton. CRP's resonance is partially due to a current discourse of critical thinking and metacognition, situated within a genre of questioning strategies meant to elicit the construction of deeper thinking by students.

Artful Writing

This study began with my participation in the Weisman Art Museum's Artful Writing project, starting in 2004. Based in Minnesota, this program drew from the national and local currents in arts and museum education, and the professional teaching networks established around active pedagogic research and innovation. It emerged in a uniquely rich environment for creative teacher collaboration. Programs such as the Perpich Center for Arts Education's *Artful Teaching and Learning*, and *Arts and Schools as Partners s*upport teacher action research and reflective practice and provided models of teacher leadership and connections for collaborating participants. In a similar way, The Minnesota Writing Project has established a strong network of teacher consultants, those who have experienced and explored process-focused writing pedagogy and worked to develop and support a growing field of teacher leaders, engaged in reflective work and a broader professional discussion of teacher practice. Both Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools include comprehensive art education curriculum and programming to support art integration across subject areas to support student engagement and academic success. Of these, the Annenberg Foundation-funded Arts for Academic Achievement (established in Minneapolis schools in 1997), stresses the training of classroom teachers as co-learners of art forms, opening many non-arts teachers to the potential of arts learning as a "critical link" for students and for broader school reform efforts (Ingram and Seashore, 2003) and along with related Perpich Center initiatives led to *ARTFUL Teaching and Learning,* a US Department of Education-funded series of resources focused on arts integration across the curriculum (PCAE, 2006; Thompson and Barniskis,

2005). These efforts, in place for more than 15 years, have worked in concert to support opportunities for high quality arts teaching and learning (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, and Palmer, 2009) and they directly influenced not only the name and form of the Artful Writing project but my own development as an educator and researcher. Ironically, increased political rhetoric about the importance of teacher quality to ensure student success undervalues or completely ignores established and working networks of support and teacher professionalism such as these. I am fortunate to have participated in theses formative and innovative arts learning experiences within a community of professional educators.

In 2005, the 32 teachers who joined in the design and piloting of the Artful Writing project were solicited by open invitation through these various networks of teacher professional development, given first drafts of the Artful Writing materials and bus funding to support their classroom visits to the art museum. The piloting teachers were all language arts teachers working with students in grades 4 through12, and were from the Twin Cities metro area. Half worked in urban and half in suburban public schools. In addition, a core group of six teachers—recognized as professional leaders among their peers with various areas of expertise in literacy and arts— were contracted to help with initial design and writing of the project and materials and helped to facilitate workshops with the pilot teachers. The following "big idea" was articulated to guide the program's materials and activities:

> Students will learn that both art and writing are based on communicating ideas. Both provide meaningful opportunities to heighten perception, engage emotions, deepen thought and broaden one's understanding of the world. (Petkau et al., 2005)

The piloting teachers agreed to try Artful Writing materials and museum workshops with their students and participate in summative evaluation through the Center for Applied Research in Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota. The questions that framed this evaluative survey focused on teachers' perceived value of the classroom resources and museum workshops to support literacy learning and teacher comfort level in working with the art museum as a partner. Findings indicate that the pilot teachers found the majority of the eighteen activities valuable for teaching literacy goals and that they gained comfort working in the art museum (CAREI, 2005). Of this initial evaluation, the pilot teachers unanimously cited the *Perceive* questioning activity and *Perceive Card* tool as a useful way to start each of the writing prompts and to frame meaning-making discussions in the art museum galleries. For participating teachers, the Perceive tool (a version of CRP) emerged as a significantly positive aspect of the program.

The Perceive tool is a slight adaptation of the Critical Response Protocol, introduced by collaborating teacher Ms. B, who was part of the Artful Writing development group. During 2004-2005, when Artful Writing was under development, we had concerns about formally naming our tool "critical response" because that name is associated with the work of dancer Liz Lerman (Lerman and Borstel, 2008) and her approach to generating shared audience critique of modern dance. And although Lerman's work is an influence on our local version of CRP, our questions and intentions for their use differ. The Perpich Center for Arts Education was also beginning to promote this somewhat "open source" reflective tool, first officially calling it *The Critical*

Response Protocol (appendix 1), presenting it as a series of sequenced questions in 2006 (PCAE, 2006). Artful Writing's Perceive tool differs from CRP as it is not necessarily a linear sequence of questions, but presented in a four-square format of question areas and specifically intended as preparation for each visual art-based writing prompt. The Perceive Card is slightly looser in its approach—a cause of much debate among the teacher-participants who championed the value of sticking closely to the sequence of questions (as scaffold and to delay judgment) and others who stressed using the question areas as a guide or map and following student response rather than slowing response down. The Perceive Card also included more, expanded questions in each of the four question areas than CRP.

A free, digital version of the Artful Writing Resource Kit was published online in 2007, and many teachers asked permission to reproduce the Perceive Card file as a classroom poster. In response, that same year the museum produced a printed Perceive poster to add to the available classroom materials. After the initial piloting group of literacy teachers, art specialists were eager for the materials and subsequent training workshops developed, including short sessions focused on the Perceive/CRP tool, which continue today. My research journey begins at the rich, local professional context –"the ARTFUL diaspora" (Thompson and Barniskis 2005, p. 148)—working in the art museum to develop Artful Writing, while surfacing questions about art learning, the value of the *Perceive* tool and how teachers might use it with students to support a process of critical and creative response to works of art. I will dig deeper into the Perceive and CRP tools, but this traces a bit of their generation and close relationship, emerging from professional

practice, actively adapted to teacher intentions, and a significant part of the Artful Writing project. One of the reasons the Perceive Card and CRP continue to have such currency with teachers is because of an ongoing interest in teaching practices based in theories of cognition, processes of inquiry and values of critical thinking skills. Another is the perception that CRP is a structure that one can easily follow and apply in teaching practice. My research into the Artful Writing project and into teacher and student meaning-making begins grounded within theoretical frameworks of cognitive studies, critical thinking and working within constructivist pedagogies in art museum sites.

Currents of constructivism, cognition and learning in museums

During this initial phase of my research, questions surfaced around my practice as an art museum educator. Within an emerging profession, (Eisner and Dobbs, 1986), art museum educators are challenged to articulate theoretical positions and practices that help learners look critically at, interpret meaning in, and formulate judgments about works of original art displayed in art spaces. Museums have theorized their unique learning affordances as constructivist (Falk and Dierking, 1992; Hein, 1998). Unlike formal schooling, the museum offers an informal site where free-choice learners may experience objects and build their own understandings, following their own interests. Further, many art museums in the past decade have developed programming that specifically focuses on critical thinking (Burchenal and Grohe, 2007; Tishman, 2002) and visual thinking (Housen, 2002, 2007; Yenawine, 1998) as unique outcomes of encounters with art objects and though constructivist meaning making activities. The goals of critical thinking directly support many contemporary school learning goals, and the alignment of

these currents with museum-based approaches inform the Artful Writing program and materials.

Since the founding of public art museums in late eighteenth century Europe, two interpretive camps in public art museums emerged. In the extreme, one focused on aesthetic experience—the immediate, physical, sensory, often contemplative encounter between viewer and artwork or object—with an attitude that the art "speaks for itself." The other interpretive position argued that added information about the artwork, artist, or cultural history is essential in helping learners understand, appreciate and experience the artwork (McClellan, 2003). With this assumed binary, most museum spaces and interpretive activities work to find a balance that supports direct sensory or aesthetic experience (good lighting, space to move around artworks, quiet) and to offer scholarly, contextual information (labels, recordings, tours) to deepen understanding. Enduring liberal humanistic and democratic assumptions run through these interpretive stances, which are both practiced in degrees today. Art museum learning outcomes relate to understandings of universal aesthetic values, creative (dominant) cultural progress, moral uplift, and the acquisition of good taste and habits of desire and consumption—forming institutional practices that serve as "civilizing rituals" (Duncan, 1995). In early traditions of art museum teaching, educators or curators worked to provide accessible, scholarly information, usually through gallery lectures and publications, which presented interpretations for the audience. Pedagogy focused on communicating an understanding of the artworks formal and expressive qualities, the artworks place within a grand narrative of art history, and information about the artist's life and creative intentions.

Creativity emerged as a learning goal in art museum programming of the 1950s and 1960s, with many institutions experimenting with visitor art-making or improvisational performance in the galleries. But the educational value of such expressive experiences was questioned, particularly by those working in formal schools (Kai Kee, 2011). Not until the 1970s, with the broader influence of postmodern literary theory and a more conscious embrace of constructivist learning theory (Falk and Dierking, 1992), were museums as institutions challenged to consider more deeply the influences and perspectives visitors brought to their encounter with art (Mayer, 2006) and consider bridging sensory interpretive activities (learning to look) with critical thinking.

Museum Visitors, Audiences, Participants, or Learners?

Today, the power rift continues within museum staffs: Who has the authority or expertise to interpret what an artwork means and determine its value? What is the role of the museum "expert?" What is the cultural relevance of art museums? Postmodern institutional criticism of art museums was first provoked by contemporary artists—traced to Duchamp—questioning the nature of art and the varied enterprise of cultural display. Since then, twentieth and twenty-first century artists have used the conventions of fine art and museum institutions as both vehicle and content for their artwork. Performance and conceptual aesthetics have troubled the division of artist and art object and have profoundly complicated and implicated the viewer/audience (learner) as a participant central to the meaning and value of their work (Fraser, 2005; Kester, 2004). Beyond contemporary art practices, postmodern theory has worked to support the emergence of art museum educational practice from an "uncertain profession" (Eisner and Dobbs,

1986) toward consciously developing pedagogies to facilitate learning experiences for diverse visitors (educators pushing to shift this institutional identity from "visitors" to learners, participants, or users), moving from didactic informational delivery to various strategies of dialogue (Burnham and Kai Kee, 2011; Mayer, 2007), questioning (Barrett, 2002; Housen, 2002), and inquiry (Erickson, 2005; Feldman, 1973; Geahigan, 1999) in which participants negotiate the active construction of meanings.

Within constructivist museum pedagogy, postmodern shifts in meaning might also influence practice; further complicating processes of inquiry—from outcomes of comprehension towards engagement in subjective interpretation. Meaning might no longer be fixed or frozen within art objects or determined by the artist's intentions. There is a conscious pedagogical shift to support the process of inquiry as the educational content of the museum experience. With varying assumptions of objectivity and subjectivity in these constructivist pedagogies, learning relies on the active participation of museum audiences to connect new information and understanding to prior knowledge and/or to develop new thinking skills (Falk and Dierking, 1992; Hein, 1998; Housen, 2002).

In this constructivist and cognitive framework that shaped my initial stance as a researcher, learning is conceptualized as a process of acquisition of particular content knowledge or the development of particular skills. Art learning defined as cognition appeals to many art educators as a justification of educational value, and is often used to underpin advocacy for arts integration across academic disciplines (Efland, 2002; Housen, 2002; Tishman, 2002). An emphasis on cognition in art learning helps to counter

popular belief that art education (and aesthetic experience) is purely expressive play, or, in the extreme, emotional fluff lacking the intellectual rigor or importance of an academic discipline, and does not warrant investments in public education. Arthur Efland (2002) stresses the vital importance of consciously teaching the processes of meaning- making and engaging the imagination of learners as a core cognitive act or power, and central to art education. He asserts, "Deepening the wellspring of the imagination and the role it can play in the creation of personal meaning, and in the transmission of culture, becomes the point and purpose for having the arts in education" (p. 153). In contrast, Eisner stresses the unique value of aesthetic experiences while embracing an argument for arts in the support of creative habits of mind, drawing connections to studies in metacognition from Harvard's Project Zero.

Questions about the nature of cognition and aesthetic learning led to two significant national art education efforts that underpin the experience of the teachers and students involved in Artful Writing. First the establishment of Harvard's Project Zero by Nelson Goodman in 1967, dedicated to researching arts cognition, and the later development of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), a K-12 curriculum popularized nationally throughout the 1980s with the support of the Getty Foundation. DBAE defined four disciplines—content areas of art education: studio production, art history, art criticism and aesthetics. Emerging from earlier calls for "aesthetic education"—a layered concept variously defined as engaged essential experience (Dewey, 1934), as philosophical activity (Goodman, 1991; Parsons and Blocker, 1993), as essential cultural content (Smith, 1991), or as liberating practice (Greene, 1995)—DBAE challenged the

studio-heavy practice of school art teachers to include the classics, history and masterworks. It influenced art curriculum in schools and in teacher training. DBAE argued for the cognitive and academic rigor of art learning. Elliot Eisner, an early proponent of DBAE, stresses that the thinking that occurs in arts processes is unique and valuable to an artistic way of knowing (Eisner, 1987; 2002). Eisner is clear to articulate that arts learning and studio practices offer ways to question, explore, and understand the world.

Questions of aesthetics

As an art teacher initially trained in DBAE, I always questioned the separate discipline area of aesthetics and was unsure how to tease it apart as its own entity. Aesthetics as a field of activity seems to encompass and underpin all of art education—studio making, experiencing and interpreting artworks historically and critically. In the field of art education, aesthetics is a loaded concept and area of contention. For many teachers, aesthetics is understood as the affective, emotional engagement of their students—subjective, personal, and pleasurable. For others it denotes a canon of the great works of Western Art or the abstracted principles of design, visual style, or taste. No fan of DBAE, Kevin Tavin (2007) suggests critical art educators, embracing a visual culture approach to content, must address the useless discourse of aesthetics by striking-through the word (~~aesthetics~~) to signal a break with enduring liberal humanist assumptions which perpetuate cultural hegemony that naturalizes and internalizes aesthetic experience. Tavin's critical approach draws from a language of representation and to a socio-cultural

notion that "responding to images is primarily a process of socialization and signification, always connected to the material conditions of the world" (p. 43).

Paul Duncum (2007) shares Tavin's passion for critical art pedagogy but suggests that aesthetics, as such a layered concept, has already broadened beyond modernist art discourse and is remarkably current across contemporary, everyday culture. Therefore, Duncum contends that rather than dismissing concepts of aesthetics, this is the time (and art education is the place) to take up and wrestle with diverse understandings of the term and inquire into aesthetic experience. I agree with Duncum and appreciate the provocation Tavin offers. Questions about aesthetic response and understanding aesthetic experience in relation to critical literacy goals is central to this research project. Through my research trajectory, aspects of aesthetic activity mark the most resonant and often most invisible aspects of the data, always a catalyst for new questions.

Notions of interpretation and meaning-making are shaped by ongoing debates surrounding the existence and/or nature of aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience as defined by John Dewey (1934) is a cohesive, embodied response and transformative encounter with a physical art object, resulting in new understanding. For Dewey, deep perception of material art objects in the world is essential to support personal learning and vital existence. Louise Rosenblatt (1991) poses a related theory of transaction between author/artist and reader/audience through her focus on reading response. She describes reading and interpreting meaning as an act of transaction between reader and text, resulting in understandings that take form along a continuum of aesthetic or poetic understandings to the efferent, seeking meaning. Although there is suggested a binary of

the emotional and the intellectual, Rosenblatt suggests they are connected. Further, Maxine Greene (1995) argues that such attention to aesthetic spaces and experiences is central to support imagination and notions of possible breakthroughs and the unexpected, offering the basis for critical pedagogy. Looking for ways to understand and harness the power of aesthetic experience in art education inquiry, the Artful Writing activities took the form of creative "studio" challenges, linking student response to an existing artwork to their own writing —as a performance of understanding. The ideas of Dewey, Rosenblatt and Greene all feature in the curriculum of critical literacy and art education undertaken by Ms. B through her use of CRP. Belief in the emancipatory aspects of imagination, student voice and empathy surfaced in our shared discussions and plans to engage students in responding to art as inspiration for their own creative written production.

Review of influential questioning strategies used in museums and classrooms

DBAE highlighted the need for art museums to be partners for schools, supporting rigorous inquiry into art history, art criticism and aesthetics. Of these, art criticism—encountering original art objects and engaging in a process of interpretation and judgment greatly changed the expectations of school touring activities. Looking for ways to scaffold student critical inquiry, several question-based approaches have surfaced for use in schools and museums, facilitated by constructivist educators. It is from these strategic questioning tools and current teacher practices that the Perceive Card and Critical Response Protocol developed and were found useful to the majority of Artful

Writing teacher participants. The most recognized framework for conceptualizing the pedagogy of art criticism is a four-stepped model articulated by Edmund Feldman—Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Judgment—and promoted through DBAE (Feldman, 1973). Many teachers have worked to implement Feldman's model, with its visible parallels to Bloom's (1956) classic taxonomy of higher order thinking, as a recited, stepped procedure. Frustrated teachers and other critics of this procedural practice have found that the tidy stepped progression often stunts meaning-making rather than supports it. Some suggest that students might need to be developmentally ready (Efland, 2002; Housen, 2002) to tackle the highest order activities—interpretation and judgment—found in Feldman's model. Harry Broudy (1972) articulated a variation called "Aesthetic Scanning" for teachers of DBAE, basically redefining Feldman's levels to focus on (in sequenced order) exploring a work's sensory, formal, expressive, and technical properties. Broudy's approach sought a way to more directly recognize the material aspects of the artwork—that aesthetic experience—and assumed a level of affective response.

Some practicing these stepped procedures have noted problems, including students engaging in shallow description or in a limited formal analysis. Others experience students hitting a metaphoric wall at the interpretive stage, unable to make associative leaps, and stuck at responses that describe expressive elements (Venable, 1998). In both art classrooms and museums the climactic judgment question: "So…do you like this? Is this good art?" is generally met with anemic shrugs rather than critical, impassioned transformation. It is my experience that many of my teacher colleagues

working in both schools and museums find it hard to really come to any shared or meaningful critique with these stepped questions without scaffolding a more detailed process of interpretive reflection. The number of practitioner-focused articles (Erickson, 2005; Geahigan, 1999; Hubard, 2010; Yenawine, 1998) and texts focused on facilitating meaning-making (Barrett, 2002; Burnham and Kai Kee, 2011) confirm this, too.

George Geahigan (1999) conceives of interpretation as a process of critical inquiry and suggests a classroom practice of critical discourse that challenges students to question, formulate, and test hypotheses about the meaning and value of works of art. Geahigan's notion of critical discourse is focused on a process of inquiry that remains rooted in rationalist logic. Geahigan's (1999) focus on developing critical skills reveals an underlying assumption that knowledge is contingent on observing the real world (the real art object), then using rational thought to discern facts, inferences, and judgments (Cervetti, Pardales, and Damico, 2001). Erickson (1979) also draws from traditions of inquiry and stresses the importance of historical and cultural information, and the role of the instructor in supporting student inquiry into deeper understanding of art content.

Rika Burnham and Elliot Kai Kee (2011) conceptualize experience as *interpretation* and their organic approach to teacher/student conversation privileges the questions of students and notes the influence teachers have in setting the form of the interpretive experience as conversation, discussion, or dialogue. In recognizing this "teacher power" they argue that rather than jeopardizing constructivist learning, such teacher intervention—providing background information and answering student questions, might deepen engagement and interpretation. Similarly, Olga Hubard (2010)

highlights the power of teachers' questioning strategies to open up student responses or to direct them towards learning goals, cautioning teachers to attend to the quality of their questioning strategies.

Terry Barrett (2002) argues for a teacher as facilitator, and the questions pertinent to his facilitated inquiries surface from the unique works of art themselves, rather than drawing from a set protocol. Another strict constructivist facilitator, Philip Yenawine (1998), champions Abigail Housen's (2002) Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) approach, a very brief set of simple questions that illicit student response and are used by Housen to reveal developmental aesthetic staging. For the past decade, VTS has proven to be very popular and influential in the practice of teachers working in museums and in schools. The teachers developing and many of those using the Critical Response Protocol have used VTS for years, and it is important to understand how these two tools relate and differ.

A critique of Visual Thinking Strategies

VTS is an approach developed from Housen's (2002) theory of staged aesthetic development—a theory grounded in her observation of diverse viewer responses. From her study of art viewers' responses, she articulates five stages of aesthetic thinking skills, from novice to expert. Stage one viewers are accountive, making concrete observations. Stage two viewers begin to construct a framework based on their prior experience to understand the artwork. Stage three is reached through activities of classification and comparison, drawing from art historical conventions. Stage four is interpretive, interactive, and is less concerned with art historical context than with immediate

associations and relationship with the artwork. Stage five is re-creative or imaginative. Housen (2007) describes this fully developed stage:

> Transcending prior knowledge and experience, this viewer gives himself permission to encounter the work in a childlike openness. A trained eye, critical stance, and responsive attitude are his lenses as the multifaceted experience of the artwork guides his viewing. A familiar painting is like an old friend, known intimately yet full of surprise, deserving attention on a daily level, but also existing on a more elevated place (p. 175).

Housen's study has found that most viewers, regardless of age, are at stage one or two. To move a learner through these stages of aesthetic development, Housen suggests the practice of VTS to develop visual thinking skills. VTS is a cycle of three questions: *What is going on here? What do you see that makes you say that? And what more can you find?*

Significantly for my study, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts was a partner museum site for early VTS research working with students from Byron, Minnesota, in the mid-1990s. Working with students in grades two through six, Housen's early VTS study found that students engaged in the art discussion interventions scored higher on literacy tests. Further, generalist elementary teachers involved in her study appreciated learning a way to support "art talk" in their classrooms. Housen claims a causal link in the Byron study and others (Burchenal and Grohe, 2007), but these literacy claims have been challenged (Hetland and Winner, 2008), critiquing the design of the studies and questioning that the correlation of test improvements with the study group might be due to an overall increase in talking in class, rather than caused by the VTS intervention. Still, VTS is celebrated as an easy to learn technique to engage students in talking about art and is linked to increasingly valued goals of literacy learning.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts continues VTS programming and partners for district-wide staff development training with Minneapolis Public School second grade teachers. Nationally, many art museums now offer VTS "tours," teacher workshops or use the aesthetic stage theory in other program development. VTS does some things very well. What the strictness of the strategy enables is a focus on the direct engagement of learners as meaning-makers, forcing the teacher to step back, question, listen, and paraphrase—a shift from traditional *Initiate, Response and Evaluate* (IRE) classroom discourse (Cazden, 2001) and the lecture-based art museum tour. VTS groups can talk and talk, and build on each other's comments. While working in the museum, I could tell when a group of elementary students had experienced VTS. They were familiar with looking at visual art as an activity, were generally open to looking, taking turns, and ready to talk. On one observation a group of 8-year-olds noticed and speculated about one painting for more than 30 minutes. Are these practices engaging and developing the aesthetic skills Housen theorizes?

Some groups challenge the format. In one instance a fifth grade student directly asked the teacher to confirm the time and place the artwork (a photograph) was made. To learn this information would ground the discussion in a deeper way, but the teacher denied contributing her understanding to the group. There was a sense of the teacher being inauthentic, keeping a secret from the students, and the discussion ended not in intrigue, but frustration. In another situation, a classroom of third grade students did not agree on the identity of a wild animal realistically represented in the reproduction of a painting. Instead, one child named it a car, leading the group to spin off an imaginative

story of the car character that lacked any further visual connection to the image. Did the lack of recognition reveal a lack of social capital more than a developmental gap? Does it matter that this image was not intended to represent a car? Are we doing a disservice if we don't help guide students beyond their prior experiences? In strict VTS procedure, the teacher is not to "fund" in any information, but if asked, should direct the student to seek ideas from fellow students and toward further self-initiated investigation.

This counters my understanding of Vygotsky (1978) that describes a "zone of proximal development" as that space (and moment) between what a student knows and what he or she can learn with the support, or scaffolding, of a more advanced peer. In this instance, when the student raises authentic questions, I find it disingenuous to deny one's own participation, and support of the student if possible. Even a teacher/facilitator is not neutral. It seems a teachable moment. Cheryl Meszaros (2006) has argued that this strict constructivist approach results in the "evil *whatever*" interpretation, overly privileging the uncritical response of individuals and denying the responsibility of museums (and educators) to be critically aware of their interpretive work and the cultural assumptions that form and are formed by them. This relates to responses I've collected from teachers of middle and high school students involved in Artful Writing who describe limitations they found using VTS with older students. Many agreed that there were moments when it felt like "wheel spinning"—when students observed and questioned but never felt any sense of insight or shared success in meaning-making and lost interest. It dissolved into the "whatever" interpretation.

The VTS questions—What's going on? What do you see that makes you say that?—support generative observation and evidentiary reasoning, but scaffold no other forms of thinking or response. The VTS teacher does select developmentally appropriate artwork (generally starting with images that are representational and suggest a narrative) to introduce to a group of students, and through designing this exposure, skills will be built. Choice of artwork is significant. I have been trained in VTS, and in my practice it is most problematic to use the strategy with artwork that is culturally different than the experience of the students, particularly if the questioning cycle serves to produce or reproduce misinformation or representations that might marginalize or oppress related cultural groups, such as with religious art or objects associated with ritual use.

Housen's theory and practice suffer from contradictions. In her theory of visual thinking, learners attain progressive stages of aesthetic development. These stages map out a range of response from novice to art savvy veteran, and as such trace assumptions from traditional aesthetic discourse. Housen notes that most art viewers of any age stay in level one and two of aesthetic development. To demonstrate the highest development (and one would assume level of visual thinking), one must demonstrate an understanding of the discourses and ideologies of Western art historians and art world critics. "Critical awareness" is understood as a higher level developmental stage, but the VTS protocol does not explicitly scaffold that learning stance nor recognize it explicitly as discursive social construct. The social and cultural construction of thinking as an aspect of developmental characteristics is under-examined in current VTS theory and practice. The teachers who developed the Perceive Card and the Critical Response Protocol all had

training and experience using VTS. It emerged from their practice, and it is significant that both include the VTS reasoning questions within them, and privilege student response.

Metacognition and Thinking Routines

Reasoning is one of four forms of higher level thinking that cognitive psychologist Shari Tishman (2002) cites as regularly practiced when interpreting meanings from works of art. In her work with Project Zero, Tishman investigates Artful Thinking, noting that artworks can challenge viewers to reason, shift perspectives, surface problems and make metaphors. Tishman believes that the ambiguous and open nature of many works of visual art lend themselves to supporting the active practice of these critical thinking skills. Her focus remains on individual cognition and development sparked by encounters with artworks towards goals of transfer. Her contention is that by making these thinking forms visible, explicit and habitual—by practicing metacognition with students—transfer to other situations and subject areas is more likely. This builds on the theory of thinking dispositions and the value of cultivating "mindfulness" in teaching and learning articulated by Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis and Andrade (2000). In their view, critical thinking is more than a set of skills. It is a *disposition* to think critically that is learned and tested through everyday use "in the wild." Their studies indicate that students need to have more than the developed abilities to think critically. Learners also need to have a motivation to do so, and, most interestingly, the sensitivity to know when this form of thinking is of value. Working through Project Zero, David Perkins and his colleagues (2000) find evidence for a concept of thinking dispositions

and benefit in the practice of cultivating "mindfulness" in teaching and learning. This is interesting in its link back to use, to social interaction. The implication is that if teachers and learners are mindful of their disposition to critical thinking— their abilities, motivations and sensitivities—this metacognitive stance might allow for deeper interpretive experiences, and their critical thinking skills might transfer more readily to other areas of inquiry. Students can form habits that help them tune into situated use. Perkins et al. (2000) also note three high-leverage practices for teaching mindful critical thinking skills: looking closely, exploring possibility, and introducing ambiguity. All three are practiced when learners are challenged to make meanings from works of art. Within this cognitive framework, the naming of these forms of thinking and working to make them visible and routine might be argued as a strategy in support of Lisa Delpit's (1988) call to explicitly instruct students in the tools and codes needed for academic success within a dominant culture. The work on metacognition coming out of Project Zero is a direct influence on several of the central Artful Writing teacher-designers, including Ms. B, the key and initial advocate for including the Critical Response Protocol in the project.

The CRP tool and the Perceive Card

Ms. B introduced the Critical Response Protocol (CRP) to the Artful Writing design process by sharing the curriculum plans for her spring 2005 high school English course *Writing as Performance.* When asked why she felt so strongly about using the critical response approach with her students, Ms. B replied,

> I'm interested in the intersections between literature and the arts and the means by which we construct or make meaning from "texts" whether they are literal or visual or social or what have you. It [Critical response] slows down the response process and creates a safer environment for thinking and meaning-making to happen. There's great value in deferring judgment, and having a slower, deeper process by which we engage in a "text" and construct meaning. (E-mail reply, 5/4/2005)

She remembers being taught a stepped response strategy by one of her teaching mentors, related to methods of Reader Response approaches (Rosenblatt, 1994). As a performing artist, Ms. B was also was inspired by the work of dancer Liz Lerman (Lerman and Borstel, 2008). Lerman's conception, named Critical Response is a related framework in that it works to draw out critical feedback from an audience experiencing contemporary dance, but uniquely different in its form as a post-performance dialogue and emphasis on engaging a creative community practice. Lerman's Critical Response is rooted in a dialogic relationship with audiences, structured around the shared experience of live performance, and is understood as a key aspect of a larger, shared creation. Ms. B's approach is also rooted in creative activity, but is both used as a practice by the classroom group and individually. Like Reader Response approaches, CRP conceives of a transaction between the artwork as text and the student viewer. And like VTS, CRP is also a sequence of questions:

- What do you notice?
- What does it remind you of?
- What emotions are raised?
- What questions are raised?
- Speculate what it might mean.

But in contrast to VTS, the facilitating teacher is active and visible in helping navigate, provoke, and co-construct meanings that emerge. She might ask additional questions

nested within each sequence to help clarify or probe responses. The protocol does not claim to foster a complete rational inquiry or full interpretation, but offers students an explicit process that offers, according to Ms. B, “a way into it.” A description of CRP (emphasis in the original) from the Artful Tools Online site states:

> This tool engages and empowers all participants by setting them up for success. THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS when people begin by describing or stating what they see and notice. Each participant has room to grow, connect, question, and draw meaningful insights from the work. Collectively, the community benefits from the whole, with meaning-making occurring through the sharing of all participants' insights. (PCAE, 2006)

This description is similar to that used for VTS and harkens back to the “whatever” interpretation, but it differs in that there are no wrong answers in *noticing* but also stresses that these *noticings* are a starting point and shared as part of collective meaning-making, supporting a process of active negotiating, in which responses are considered stronger or more meaningful for the group.

Ms. B is adamant that CRP be taught and used in a strict sequence when responding to a text. In her classroom, the notion of a text to be interpreted includes printed language, recordings, visual work, art, performance, and a form of interaction or episode. She often shared with teachers how this tool can be used to analyze a scuffle in the hallway, or a current event. Ms. B stresses that CRP starts with slowing down and deferring judgment. As a teacher, she wants students to tease student observations from judgments or opinions, supporting their ideas with evidence. She feels this opens possibilities for negotiating and for embracing ambiguous or multiple meanings. A firm sequence to the CRP questions also allows the protocol to be more easily memorized and made routine within her classroom discourse. The sequenced use of the questions was

debated among the Artful Writing design group, but all agreed that the tool was useful for instigating the art and creative writing response activities.

In 2004-2005 when Artful Writing was under development, *Critical Response* was the common name Ms. B used for the technique. But as the name was also in public use by dancer Liz Lerman, the Artful Writing team decided use the Perceive name to adapt the tool for use in the program. Significantly, the group debated (and continues to debate) whether the questions needed to be in a firm sequence—presented as a protocol. One of our collaborative teachers shared her technique of drawing a four square on the board and using this format to capture student responses as they emerged in real time and sort them as observations, questions, reminding or emotional responses, leaving off the speculation. In this use the teacher was less concerned with slowing down responses and more concerned with supporting their fluidity and generation. And this highlighted the spiral nature of students' insight, with less of an attempt to tease apart observation from interpretation. This adaptation of the CRP questions led to the differing design of the Perceive tool. In the Artful Writing Classroom Resource Kit, the Perceive tool is presented as a card with four question areas, organized visually in a four-square and each with a small icon (Petkau et al., 2005). The tool includes more questions than the sequenced CRP, rephrasing and extending (perhaps complicating) some of the questioning areas.

The instructions ask the student(s) to look closely at the art image—as reproduction in the materials or as an original in the museum—before reading any information about the artwork (found on the back of reproductions in the printed kit, in a

different window on-line, or found on a label near the art in the museum). The card is designed to work with the Artful Writing materials to support initial looking and thinking, and to counter habits of seeking textual information—to be told what it means—before exploring one's own association and possibilities.

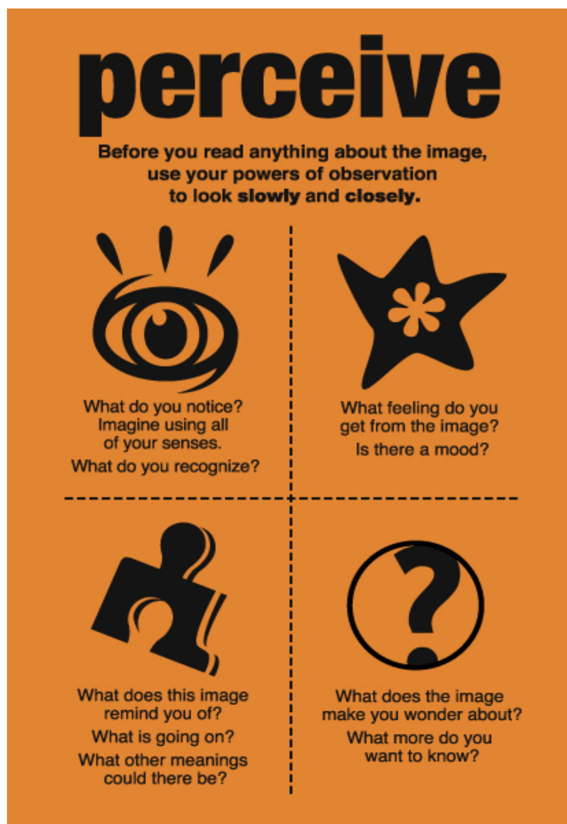

Fig. 2. Perceive card from the Artful Writing Classroom Resource Kit. (Petkau, Toft, Nutter, Thompson, Borgmann, 2005).

Designing teachers believe the perceive step might help students become more active in their observation and meaning-making, which in turn would improve students' creative writing. This study focuses on the use of CRP by Ms. B and her students, but the broader context and analysis draws upon our design team's shared negotiation and adaptation of the Perceive tool and the Artful Writing collaboration.

A zone of identification: Initial questions and data collection

Our Artful Writing planning meetings were monthly gatherings during the first year, then smaller groups engaged around specific topics or workshop plans. Meetings generally took the form of a roundtable, with open sharing of content ideas, the results of testing possible prompts with students, and critical discussion of the developed resources. These meetings were also nested within active email exchanges and continued discussions. Three of the core teacher participants were mentor teachers and coaches in reflective protocols and action research as part of their district-level work. These skills supported the reflective nature of the collaborative design of the Artful Writing resources. Because the CRP and Perceive tools were so resonant for these core teachers and for the large group of piloting teachers, my initial research questions surfaced around these strategies. How is CRP used in the art museum? What kinds of critical and aesthetic thinking skills does this protocol support? How do teachers and students use the CRP questions? Does CRP offer "a way into it" for students—a way to start an interpretive process?

At this time I shifted from being a participant focused primarily on my own action research in the project to a researcher studying the activities of this uniquely engaged group of teachers and students. I began collecting deeper field notes based on the pilot teacher visits to the museum, the teacher training sessions, and the planning meetings with the Artful Writing design team. I notified my teacher colleagues of this switch, and as we already shared this reflective practice, it didn't seem to change our relationships. In fact, two teacher participants who had engaged in their own action research projects were

excited to share data and broaden their own investigations. My focus on the museum site offered a complement to their work rooted within their classrooms.

Ms. B's Writing as Performance class was one of the first groups I observed. Ms. B used digital recorders to capture student response and thinking, and to further leverage a tool like CRP for metacognitive practice and to support students' creative work. One bit of data that resulted from her class's second visit to the art museum was a four-minute audio recording of student Anton encountering a frustrating painting and his use of CRP facilitated by Ms. B. It was one of several captured versions of the CRP/Perceive tools in use, but immediately was seized upon by teachers as an authentic and valuable exemplar of CRP. It is an audio clip that has since been published online by Ms. B (PCAE, 2006), included in the on-line Artful Writing Materials with permission of both teacher and student, shared with in-service and pre-service teachers (by myself and other teacher trainers). In addition, transcriptions have appeared in arts learning and literacy publications promoting this CRP tool (Borgmann, 2008; Beach et al., 2010).

In the words of Ms. B, the recorded session that day in the museum with Anton was "hot" (field notes, 5/17/05). The resulting four-minute audio recording became a significant artifact and key data that served to help surface this episode as the nexus of practice and focus of my research.

Summary

This chapter focused on a detailed description of the Artful Writing program and its participants. The development of this program and the reflective practice of participants were framed by a shared experience of arts integration and value in arts

processes. The practice of CRP emerged in response to perceived limitations of VTS and through a collegial network of practice. The participating teachers shared a belief in the power of art processes and experiences to challenge and deepen student thinking. Artful Writing was informed by literacy and art educational practice, and hoped to bridge the institution of the school with that of the art museum. As a site of engagement, the Artful Writing project benefited from a rich network of teachers experienced in arts integration and practiced in action research. From the start, the participating teachers met to reflect and learn from each other and about their own practice.

Next, I describe and begin to analyze this exemplary episode of CRP. Captured as audio clip, field notes and photographs, this four-minute episode between Ms. B and Anton within the art space offers much to explore. I approach it narratively and draw upon an analytical method based on artistic critique, finding a parallel between my interpretive analysis and the activity of CRP itself.

Chapter Three: First Analytic Layer: CRP as a Scaffold for Critical Thinking

So let's do critical response to it. Let's practice this, because this is the way into it, Ok?
- Ms. B

I present this first layer of analysis as a descriptive narrative, then take up a form of critique—Eisner's (1998) educational critique—to frame my analysis of the episode. It struck me as appropriate to use a critical protocol from art educational research to analyze teacher and student use of CRP in the art museum. Also included in this critical analysis are episodes of group reflections made by Ms. B and other teacher colleagues in the Artful Writing group, between 2005 and 2011. These participating teachers came to know the audio well and many used recordings of this episode in their own practice.

Through a reflective lens of mediated discourse analysis (MDA), this is the stage in my research trajectory in which I narrow my research to investigate a particular "nexus of practice" (Norris and Jones, 2005), an experience where there is action found within the site of engagement, and where there is perceived an intensity of social effects. This is the first layer of my micro analysis of the actions of Ms. B and Anton. As the resonance of this episode continued to grow with participating teachers, the audio clip of Ms. B and her student transformed from recorded data, or student documentation to "teaching tool" (teacher interview, 2011). Reflecting back, I can see how bounded this analysis is by a theoretical grounding shared by participating teachers and drawn from currents in classroom practice, particularly around notions of cognition and critical thinking. Yet this

first pass at the data grew out of the reflective practices of the Artful Writing participants and allowed for a useful articulation of practice and of relationships—a view on an initial layer—provoking new questions to surface. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

Questions that frame the initial analysis

1) How does CRP support critical thinking and meaning-making?

2) How is CRP used in the classroom and in the art museum?

3) What is the role of the teacher facilitating CRP?

4) How does CRP compare and connect to other "questioning" protocols?

A Nexus of Practice: Ms. B's class in the art museum

On a rainy Tuesday afternoon May 17, 2005 eighteen students from Minneapolis' East Senior High School[2] took the city bus to visit the Weisman Art Museum. The museum is an extroverted, steel-clad, Frank O. Gehry-designed building sitting in the middle of the campus of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The museum's six galleries exhibit mainly objects of 20th century American art. The students came as part of an elective English class, *Writing as Performance*. Ms. B designed and taught the spring semester class with the part-time assistance of Dara, a visiting theater artist and performer who helped to facilitate the museum visit and photograph the students at work. I noted the energy of both women. They came bounding into the museum, after guiding the group of students across the University campus. Ms. B had the dynamic presence of a performer and a poet—confident, animated, and sincere. It was clear from the ease of conversation, laughter and engagement that she and Dara had a strong rapport with the

[2] The names of the teachers, students and school have been changed.

students. The class was made up of seven girls and 11 boys, in grades 10 through 12, the majority were students of color.

East High is an urban public school located in what is recognized as a culturally black neighborhood, with a percentage of inhabitants living in poverty that exceeds that of the larger city. There is little commercial investment in the area, with the last big department store and major grocery chain closing and moving out in 2004. Small local businesses struggle. Crime is highest in this area of the city. Like their public elementary and middle school neighbors, East High students score lower on standardized tests and fail to graduate more often than their peers at other schools in the district. According to district statistics, more than 70% of East students identify as African American and more than 80% receive free and reduced lunch support. Under the rules of No Child Left Behind, East High has not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) demonstrated through standardized testing, starting in 2004-05, resulting in mass transfers, radical reorganization, and, in 2012, recommended closure. East High was and is generally perceived as a failing school—a bad school—and often held up as an example of the racially, geographically, and culturally drawn academic achievement gap.

Ms. B is a single woman in her 30s and teaches at East High. Like most of the faculty, she is white. Her training is in English language arts, with a focus on creative writing and theater. She is a writer herself and embodies a "teaching artist" identity. She promotes a pedagogy centered on creative process writing that stresses supporting and developing the individual voices of her students within the community of her classroom. A deep concern with social justice drives her work. She often connects local performing

and literary artists into her classroom. Ms. B is a strong personality, passionate and charismatic. Her laugh is infectious and her intensity sets an emotional tone in her classroom that can quickly swing from playful to serious. She is attentive and engaging.

Ms. B recognizes the political nature of her work and regularly expresses concern about the challenges of racism, poverty, and violence she sees many of her students face and that plague the neighborhood and school. Although she lives in St. Paul, Ms. B is very active in her church, which is near East High. She is a familiar presence in the neighborhood, and is acquainted with many of her students and their families outside of school. Ms. B is active in supporting the creation of a successful after- and out-of-school group of teen spoken-word poets, which draws participation from East and from students across the Twin Cities. She coordinates and helps to find funding for the group's travels to perform at community events and poetry slams locally and nationally.

Ms. B says that she has worked to create a classroom environment where students feel safe to speak frankly. In fact, that is the goal of this English course: to share students' voices. When asked about her teaching philosophy, Ms. B cites a quote attributed to Dr. James Comer: "No significant learning happens without a significant relationship." She knows each of her students well, some in school and out. She actively circulates among her students, is aware of the group dynamics and constantly checks in. In the museum, she guided and challenged students to engage in the response and writing activities. To start the day's museum activity, Ms. B asked the gathered group, "Now, *why* are we here today?" drawing from them an articulation of their understanding of the assignment and larger project. She explained to me afterwards that she tries to ensure the students are

clear about the reason for their work and how it connects with the larger creative processes of the classroom. The reason they are in the museum today, Ms. B and her students clarified, was to "see the work of other artists" and "to bring their own understanding" to this and "to connect to their own creative work". Emphasis was placed on exploring the galleries, making personal connections to artworks, practicing CRP, and finding ideas or inspiration for their own creative student projects.

Throughout the semester, students were challenged to critically read poetry, analyze works of literary, performing, and visual arts. They were also challenged to create and perform their own poetry, often in response to studied texts. Collaborating with the visiting performing artist Dara, Ms. B deeply integrated theater, movement, music, and visual art into this English elective. The class made their first visit to the museum a month earlier in March with a similar assignment, and most of the students appeared comfortable, talkative and curious in the galleries, pressing to break away and explore on their own or with a classmate.

Ms. B and a few students carried digital recorders. Dara had a camera to document the students' process, and as a semester-long participant in the class, was another adult co-teaching presence in the class. I observed from the entry to the main galleries and participated by answering a few questions about the space, the bathrooms, and the scope of the current exhibitions (mostly 20th century American artworks, photographs, and an exhibition of prints). Use of the digital recorder was common in Ms. B's class. The students regularly recorded their responses, ideas, and discussions, then used these collected audio clips as raw materials, to support rough drafts of spoken word

or lyrical compositions. Acts of recording reinforced the performative nature of the English elective and made an assumed audience real for students. There were not enough recorders for each student so they shared. In this way Ms. B, perhaps inadvertently, set up a sort of communal and collaborative production studio within her classroom. While this production studio format was not directly planned, Ms. B was intentional in framing the class activities around arts and writing processes. She would later find resonance with the work of Hetland and Winner (2008), who articulated eight studio habits of mind observed in arts classrooms, particularly a habit of reflection. Students were responsible for the audio and written texts they produced while they also participated in the working processes and documentation of their peers. Additionally, the collected recordings and final productions worked together as a form of digital portfolio assessments used by Ms. B.

In the galleries, most of the students quickly scattered, moving with confidence and focused on their assignment. I noticed a few pairs paused and gestured to works in recognition as they walked past, and most of the students headed toward a newly opened exhibition of prints that was not on display during their first fieldtrip. Some students talked in pairs or small groups; others worked alone. The museum was open to the public, but remained relatively quiet that day. During their two-hour visit, Ms. B's students were joined by a solo parent with a lively toddler and a few individual college-aged students who cycled through the space. In addition that day, two university work-study student guards were on duty. Wearing staff T-shirts and carrying walkie talkies, each took their turn sitting at the front desk while the other walked through the gallery spaces watching

that visitors stowed backpacks, didn't touch the artwork, used pencils, and ensured that Dara turned off her camera's auto flash. For Ms. B, recording and documenting students working offered welcome evidence of student learning and production.

Meeting Anton

Anton was a 15-year-old African American boy in 10th grade and a student in Ms. B's class. When I first saw Anton, he was on his own, standing in front of a large painting—*Untitled*, by Douglas Argue— about 20 feet from me. The painting takes up one of the entry walls upon turning into the galleries from the front door. The painting is positioned at the end of the long entry way, so viewers are guided by the exhibition design to approach the artwork directly from the front.

It is unclear which classmate Anton was originally meant to be working with, and he was no longer holding a clipboard, paper, or pencil. Ms. B noticed Anton alone, looking at the painting. Sensing some frustration, she walked over to check on him. They stood for several minutes, close to each other and to the right of the artwork. Ms. B held the digital audio recorder between them as they talked. Dara noticed them and took a few pictures of them with the artwork. Anton gestured towards the painting, and I could hear him exclaim loudly and with a laugh, "Hell this is crazy, man!" Then they parted. Anton continued the assignment by joining three other students in the neighboring gallery as they recorded their responses.

Ms. B returned to me, holding the recorder, excited by her exchange with Anton and satisfied with the gallery activity so far. She told me that Anton was hesitant to come to the museum this time, and refused to come on the class's first fieldtrip earlier that

semester. Anton had expressed fears about taking the city bus because of some contact with gangs. He also felt threatened with being shot if seen traveling out of his East High neighborhood. But Ms. B and Dara, along with some student friends, talked Anton into coming to the museum this time. Ms. B described Anton as a very creative student, smart, funny and generally liked by his classmates. Yet his grades were low and he was not deeply engaged in school or focused on graduation. Ms. B was excited because she captured Anton talking deeply about the painting and, along with Dara, documented other students using CRP and connecting with artwork in the museum. Two days later, Ms. B sent me the digital audio files of the visit, including four minutes of audio of Anton talking with her about the painting by artist Douglas Argue.

The audio clip of Anton and Ms. B was immediately fascinating. Quickly, Ms. B shared it with the Artful Writing design team and pilot teachers as an exemplar of CRP use. She also shared it with a network of colleagues in her school and through the Perpich Center for Arts Education. Believing in its value as a model of practice, I asked if the recording could be included in the Artful Writing classroom materials; permissions were granted. The teacher response to this resource was overwhelmingly positive. The recording offered a demonstration of CRP that succeeded in generating student meaning-making and of a teacher's facilitation of the tool with a student who expressed frustration. The candid recording was and still is recognized by practitioners as authentic and interesting (interview notes, 2010).

Taking up an educational critique of Ms. B, Anton, and CRP

In my first analysis of this observed and recoded exchange, I draw from Eisner's (1998) concept of "educational criticism," appreciating an inquiry-based approach that draws interpretive parallels to genre of the art critique and to the general framework of CRP. It is fitting to use this approach because as Eisner puts it, quoting Dewey from *Art as Experience* (1934), "the aim of criticism is the re-education of the perception of the work of art" (Eisner, 1998, p. 85). In critiquing this episode of CRP use, I bring my experience in art teaching and the art museum context and an understanding of Ms. B, her students, and their work—an analytical perspective Eisner calls "connoisseurship" (p. 63). In addition, I draw on the shared reflective discussions of participating teachers, from the initial days of the event and recording and from our on-going discussions captured in recent interviews to shape my critique.

Eisner breaks this critical analysis into four dimensions: description, interpretation, evaluation and thematics—identifying resonant themes or qualities from the unique episode that might ring true and inform the broader educational field. My description begins above, and now will follow further into interpretation with a transcription of the audio recording and my evaluation of the exchange, then articulate any themes, or "naturalist generalizations" (p. 103) that underscore the resonance of this unique recording for other teachers working in the field. Educational Critique offers a narrative format of inquiry that relies on my insider perspective as both teacher and researcher, with my experience and specialized knowledge of art and art teaching. This

approach seeks to surface qualities about specific educational experiences that ring true and reveal resonant themes that may inform a shared field of practice.

Interpretation: First transcription

1 Anton: I don't GET[3] art, man, it just means nothing. It's like…It's like people draw stuff from their point of view but then expect us to understand what their point of view was—how we supposed to—

2 Ms. B: Do you think they—do you think that they expect you to understand?

(*another student walks behind them and makes a distracting joke noise towards Anton)*

3 Anton: Well no. But we supposed to gain our own point of view but there's NOTHING TO GET! 'CAUSE… He dumb.
(*Indicating the student who passed behind him joking*)
—I, I represent myself.

4 Ms. B: That's right. Do you think that artist represents him or herself?

5 Anton: Yeah.
6 Ms. B: Ok.
7 Anton: Right.
8 Ms. B: So—

9 Anton : But I don't get it! Like, what does it mean? What is—what are we supposed… like, like they should at least have some type of explanation of what is going on. I be readin' 'em (*label to the right of the work*) and it's not an explanation of what is going on.

[3] Initially I transcribed this as "I HATE art, man" and was not corrected until 2010 by Ms. B, who also checked my transcription with Anton. It is right at the start of the recording and difficult to hear as he turns into the microphone with this sharp statement. The statement is said with emotion, and that tone influenced my initial misinterpretation of the recording. It's significant that I used the more emotionally charged "hate" transcription when sharing this recording with teachers since 2005, and wonder about the difference this highly modal word made in the multiple presentations of this teacher and student exchange over the years.

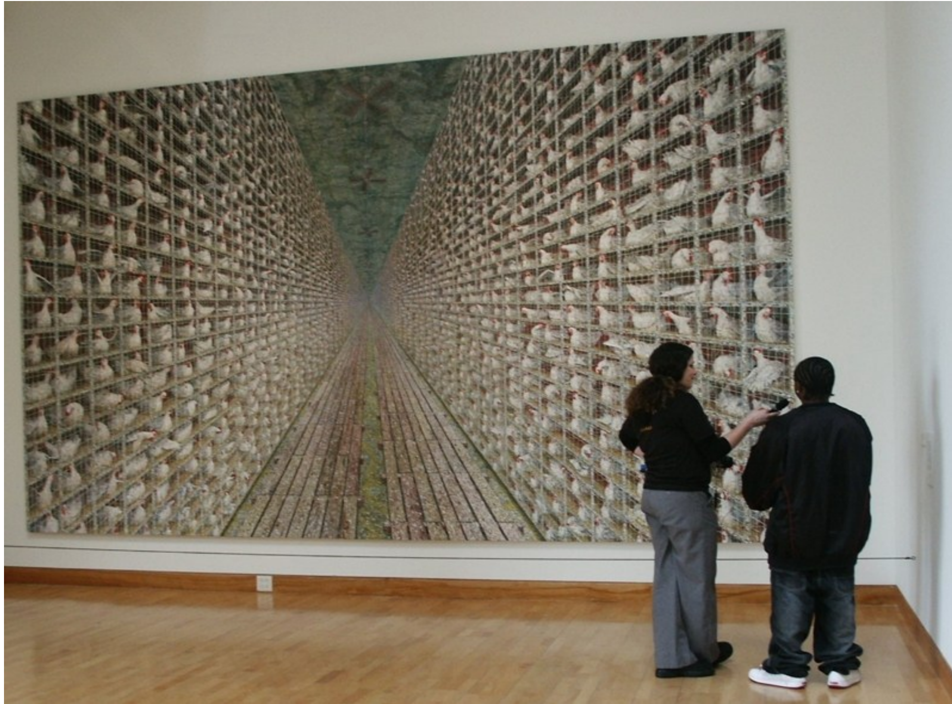

Fig. 3. Ms. B and Anton in front of an untitled painting in the Weisman Art Museum. Ms. B holds the recorder and microphone in the style of an interview May, 2005. Douglas Argue, *Untitled.* 1991-1993, Collection of Gerry Cafesjian, on loan to the Weisman Art Museum.

10 Ms. B: 'Cause why? Do you think there's just one right answer?

11 Anton: But he DREW it! It should be SOME answer. It HAS to be one answer!

12 Ms. B: So let's do critical response to it. Let's practice this, because this is the way in to it, Ok?

13 Anton: Ok, Critical Response, let's go.
(Break edit cut in the audio)

Anton is frustrated. Faced with this strange image—an untitled painting of chickens—he is unsure about the artwork's meaning and is unable to find an answer in the museum's wall text. Ms. B pushes him, challenging his assumption that the artwork has one right answer. Anton reasonably insists that (like the artistic projects of the students' work in the class) the artist must have some intention behind the creation of this image. There must be a meaning, and the artist must be presenting his personal views. Anton is troubled by the ambiguity of this artist's work, and Ms. B offers that CRP is a tool that can help. She reminds him that he knows this tool and invites him to practice it with her, as she records. It is significant that he knows the CRP questions as part of his classroom routines and recalls them throughout the exchange. Through the imperative "let's go", Anton asserts a willingness to take on an interpretation of Argue's painting.

14 Ms. B: Go ahead. We know that the artist's name is Douglas Argue, so…

15 Anton: Ok. Douglas has problems.

16 Ms. B: Ok, is that a judgment or is that an observation?

17 Anton: Ok. Yeah. It's an observation.

18 Ms. B: You observed that he has problems?

19 Anton: Yeah.

20 Ms. B: How did you get there?

21 Anton: 'Cause he drew a lot of chickens.

22 Ms. B: Ok. Now pretend I'm a blind person or the person on the other side of this mic: they don't have the advantage of seeing this piece of art.

23 Anton: Ok.

24 Ms. B: So describe it so that they can see it.

25 Anton: Ok…It's like a long hallway of cages with chickens in them, a lot of chickens. Yes, a L—O—N—G hallway and it's like never, it seems like it's never-ending. Ceiling fans on the top of the…art or whatever…and there are just a lot of chickens. That's all there is too it… Stacked on top of each other… and side by side all the way down the hallway,… on the walls….(*softer voice)*

26 Ms. B: What are the colors?

27 Anton : White 'n' red and the color of chicken. (*Laughs*) Not cooked chicken. Chicken. LIVE chicken. Um kay. What else is there to say?

28 Ms. B: Is this a little picture?

29 Anton: No. It's a very, very, very big picture. It's about, I'd say, 10, 12 feet tall. But probably even taller than that. Yeah, it's about the same length-wise.

30 Ms. B: Are the chickens then like, life-size?

31 Anton: No. Yeah. They about life-size, but not (*hesitates*)…not quite.

He started his critical response with humorous judgment, stating, "Douglas has problems" connecting to his initial frustration with the idea of intention, artistic statement and his understanding of an artwork as a personal representation. With this move, Anton used humor to gently resist the teacher's attempt to draw him into measured use of the CRP. Ms. B responded in a sparring way asking "is that a judgment or an observation?" and "You observed he has problems?" signaling that she was not put off by his resistance and sought to move his focus from the character of the artist back to the observable details of the painting. She asked Anton to support this observation: "How did you get there?" This move is similar to the VTS reasoning question pairing "What's going on?" with "What do you see that makes you say that?"—a sequence Ms. B is familiar with and that challenges students to articulate visual evidence for their interpretations. This offers

a demonstration of how VTS practice might be nested within the broader CRP question strategy, and how teachers trained in VTS have pushed beyond and adapted that initial strategy.

Ms. B countered Anton's humorous judgment by challenging him to describe the painting in vivid detail. Leveraging the presence of the microphone, she asked him to describe it as if to a blind person or "the person on the other end of this mic." With this invitation there is a shift in his tone of voice and he began in a narrative style to tell the story of what he saw—"It's a LONG hallway". He slowed down and pulled back to consider the observable evidence. With a further push by Ms. B, ("Is this a big painting?") Anton considered and articulated the scale and his relationship to the work with his body (life size) as a unit of analysis. He paused, measuring the scale of the image and the chickens to his own body—"They about life-size…but not (*hesitates*)…not quite." In his hesitation and reassessment you can sense his thinking and repositioning. Although some might critique the teacher for not performing a pure constructivist exchange in the VTS fashion, this guidance by Ms. B served to push the student deeper—and reflected the teacher's intuitive response to facilitate the student's extended perception. It is also clear that although CRP is a sequence of simple questions, there are additional questioning areas nested within, adding a complexity in practice that might be missed by those just viewing the protocol form. Ms. B was present and participating as an active guide, scaffolding Anton's response with clarifying and added questions. With these interventions and invitations, Anton adjusted his thinking. These were key observations and responses under the broad area of "noticing" that worked to support

Anton's response for other CRP areas. This move by Ms. B succeeded in shifting Anton into separating observation from his interpretation, helping to collect evidence that will aid his reasoning (Tishman, 2002).

The microphone not only served to capture and document Anton's responses, it was also part of the routine, working to "raise the stakes" on the exchange, adding imagined and real audiences to Anton's performance of CRP. The student's investment in the activity seemed to change with the insertion of the microphone, shifting to a form of interview framed by CRP. Through the device of interview, Anton is recast as a source of information and insight for an imagined "people on the other side of this mic who don't have the advantage of seeing this piece of art." The recorder was used as a tool to focus Anton into the role of reporter and "eye witness" and challenged him to carefully and accurately articulate visual details.

32 Ms. B: Ok. What's the next question for critical response?

33 Anton: Uh…What does it remind me of? Umm….It reminds me of….(*Two-second pause*) Slavery! When, um, they was comin' over in a boat and all those people, they had all those black people, or Africans in the boat.. all on top of each other and like, yeah. (*Softer*) On the boat, in the bottom of the boat, chained up and really couldn't move, had to lay down, could only stay in one position, because if they move they would move somebody else. It just reminds me of being stuck with a whole bunch of your kind…entrapped.

34 Ms. B: How does it make you feel?

35 Anton : It makes me feel…Ummm-unh (*sound indicates "I don't know" followed by two second pause*)… Makes me happy that I'm not a chicken. I….W-what's next? What else is there to say?

With a question prompting memory, Anton demonstrated two more sophisticated thinking skills. First, he surfaced a metaphoric association with slavery. The tone he used

to articulate his connection with slavery, after a significant pause, suggested he was surprised by this idea and that it occurred to him suddenly. He followed his recognition of slavery with a fluid and long description, visualizing the hold of a middle passage slave ship with shackled bodies, "chained up" and restrained, "could only stay in one position, because if they moved they would move someone else" in shared suffering. Anton's vivid, embodied description moved his perspective from outside the painting to an imagined experience within a metaphoric space. Tishman cites both metaphor-making and perspective-shifting as two forms of critical thinking that her research finds to be particularly motivated by encounters with works of art (2002). For Anton, this invitation to memory and association evoked his longest response. His voice lowered and was almost meditative as he added each new detail to this imagined experience.

Ms. B did not ask any reasoning-focused follow-up questions about this metaphoric interpretation but perhaps sensing the emotive turn of his response moved him by directly asking him the next CRP question, "How does it make you feel?" Anton wrestled with this a bit and shrugged off the question indicating he didn't know or couldn't say. He then pulled out of the close description of enslaved Africans and back to a literal recognition of the image as chickens, with sarcastic humor—declaring that he was happy that he's not a chicken and further pushing to change the topic with a hurried "What's next?" But the vividly described metaphor of African American slavery was profound, and even though it is not directly mentioned again, echoed through the rest of Anton's responses. The acts of metaphor-making and perspective-shifting that Anton demonstrated in this section of the CRP activity were sophisticated, high-level modes of

thinking advocated in the cognitive approach of Tishman's artful thinking (2002) and celebrated by Efland (2002) as central to the value of art education.

With a move back to the literal description of chickens the CRP continues:

36 Ms. B : What are the questions it makes you ask?

37 Anton: Um..who needs this many chickens? There's about a thousand chickens. Probably even more than a thousand. Why would you need this many chickens? Or is this supposed to be like a slaughterhouse or something where they kill chickens? A slaughterhouse where they kill all the chickens and do what they do with chickens…

38 Ms. B: Do you think the artist might be making some sort of a commentary on…?

39 Anton: Trying to make a statement?

40 Ms. B: Yeah.

41 Anton: Yeah. Like this is what, this is what it is before you eat it. Like, this is what they have to do, or not do but, this is how chickens get held to…to get slaughtered.

42 Ms. B: Do you think that the artist really liked chickens…or?

43 Anton: He probably vegetarian. Just trying to let people know that uh,.. you enslavin' chickens (*pause)(Laughs*) Hell, this is crazy man! (*more quietly*) This is crazy.

44 Ms. B: Why is it crazy?

45 Anton: Cause I'm sittin' here talkin' about a thousand chickens.

46 Ms. B: What's wrong with that?

47 Anton: They're chickens. I'm probably going to eat chicken tonight for dinner. I AM eating chicken for dinner tonight.(*small shared laugh*) It's not going to change anything.

48 Ms. B: (*With a slight laugh*) Nope?

49 Anton: OK. What do I have to do now?

This final CRP questioning area asked Anton to surface questions about or questions found within the artwork. His was, “Who needs this many chickens?” This cycled Anton back to more observed evidence and led him to a new association drawn from his prior knowledge—that this might be like a slaughterhouse. Interestingly Ms. B pushed him here to consider if the artist was making a statement, a link back to his initial frustration with the unknown and unknowable position of Douglas Argue. From this suggestion of a chicken slaughterhouse, Anton moved to reason that Argue is probably a vegetarian and that the image might express a political position that “you enslavin’ chickens.” By using the term *enslaving*, Anton recalled the slavery metaphor and reopened the possibility that this image may not just represent chickens. There was tension and absurdity in this layering of slave and chicken: Anton expressed, “Hell this is crazy, man!” reaffirming that he is now talking about chickens, then: “I’m sittin’ here talking about a thousand chickens,” and once again restating “They’re chickens.” He further asserted that this image would not have an impact on his eating habits. As a communication of a political statement, Argue’s image of the plight of chickens did not persuade Anton to change. Further, if that is the criteria of success for this painting and the agenda of the artist, neither Argue nor the artwork was successful.

Anton ended this exchange asking his teacher, “What do I have to do now?” raising the question of what follows CRP. It might be continued as a deeper inquiry, using the initial responses as guides, particularly the questions that surfaced. In this case there was no further investigation of the painting of chickens or of the artist Douglas Argue. Anton used this experience like a warm-up process for looking at other works of

art, and this practice led him to work in collaboration with his fellow students and to discuss more artworks in the museum spaces.

What is the educational value of CRP?

It is significant that the student was familiar with this sequence of questions. He was so familiar, that he needed only a bit of prompting to recall the basic routine of questions. CRP was a thinking routine that the teacher had established and that students were asked to "practice" towards the goal of making habits that support the transfer of critical thinking into other areas of the students' life—for use "in the wild" (Perkins et al., 2000). Tishman (2002) explains that we use thinking routines every day to solve problems. For instance, you lose your keys and in order to find them, a smart thing to do is to think about the last time you saw them. Next, think about where you have been between then and now, and retrace your steps. Through experience and practice, you develop the *sensitivity* to know that this is a line of thinking that might offer help as you puzzle out the location of your lost object. The "smart" behavior becomes normalized and automatic. One way to understand CRP is as a routine that offers students tools to begin, a way to enter into a process of critical inquiry.

Anton's experience with the painting of chickens can be argued as evidence of a learner who possessed sophisticated critical-thinking skills, had the motivation to use them, but lacked the sensitivity to know that they were required or useful at that critical moment in the art museum (Perkins et al., 2000). They were not yet a habit. In the view of Geahigan (1999), the activity of critical response meets his call to engage personal

response and prior knowledge to enter inquiry. What Anton enacts is not a complete or deep critical inquiry into this particular painting of chickens, but it offers a start.

For Ms. B, supporting this initial meaningful and active critical engagement was directly connected to her teaching goal of building literacy in every student. She remarks:

> It [critical response] creates multiple ways for people to enter the "text". It challenges people to see and describe and take note. In a world where we are being bombarded by images and information constantly, this tool is asking us to slow down and honor something in a deep, meaningful way. It also invites our own memories and lives into the interpretive, literacy process. That sort of invitation acknowledges and engages the whole person, not just their intellectual self.

Ms. B valued the connections she believed CRP supported between the prior and embodied knowledge of her students to the texts they studied. She valued the structure and restraint (slowing down) that CRP offered as procedural rules—rules she felt afforded space for students to contemplate.

The practice of CRP offered both order and flexibility to start the fluid inquiry process and prompted viewers to formulate questions relevant to their investigation. Judgment might come at any time, as might emotional response, new metaphoric associations, or detailed description, but Ms. B's routine of CRP worked to slow and order those responses, reinforcing metacognition—students' awareness of their thinking. Ms. B's routine practice of critical response in her classroom helped to make student thinking visible every day. The repeated, mindful use of this approach created an expectation of dialogue, negotiation and questioning that transferred beyond the classroom, serving to infuse the learning climate of the art museum. It offered a metacognitive vehicle, instilling a habit that might aid in the transfer of critical thinking

to other disciplines. Through investigating ambiguous works of art using CRP, students practiced living with questions and developing the sensitivity toward engaging in critical thinking and meaning-making.

In Ms. B's practice, student thinking and understanding was made even more visible through the use of recordings and students' written and performed work. This was a powerful strategy. The recordings captured the process of thinking and the process of inquiry for students to notice, study, and share their ideas in later reflection. By documenting and recording she could "show students how brilliant they are." Ms. B felt it gave students proof—a real digital document—that motivated them to actively engage and persist in inquiry and creative production.

Through her practice with critical response, Ms. B created a mindful teaching space that looked to support the development of a skilled, motivated, and sensitive disposition for critical thought. Individual voice was honored in the class process and shared through regular activities of reflection. Ms. B was excited by the transformative and emancipatory possibilities she found in the CRP approach. She stated,

> Critical Response allows every person entering the room to be successful in her or his own way, bringing their own voices and individual experiences forward in the process. This is a powerful message to send people, all people—learners—everywhere! At every age! To communicate to someone that whatever they enter the room with is all that they'll need to be successful, is a radical notion in education, and is a tool necessary for not just surviving in high-poverty urban areas, but thriving within the dynamics of such communities, in this world! (Email correspondence, June, 2005)

Critical response, when used as a starting point to a process of interpretation, is a valuable tool for both teacher and students to use. It has the potential to engage the imagination and illicit deep, personal interactions with works of art that transform

viewers and activated meaning from within a work of art. Keys to its success are fluid questioning; a facilitator who listens closely and follows viewers' insights; the internalization and practice of the question framework as a repeated, visible, thinking routine; opportunities to practice critical response with diverse works of art and text; and opportunities to discuss multiple personal perspectives with a community of learners. For teachers of art in the classroom or museum setting, CRP builds on and clarifies existing questioning strategies such as Feldman's model and VTS. In this enactment, CRP was a useful tool to help Anton notice and articulate more detail in the artwork, find metaphoric connections, reason out possible meanings and shift perspectives and distances in relation to the image's associations. This enactment of CRP offers evidence of a student working to develop the abilities, motivations, and sensitivities to actively construct meaning from a work of art rather than just receive it.

What essential features of this episode resonate?

In the exchange between Anton and Ms. B, the thematic challenge of classroom routine is paired with a resonant theme of frustrated learner. A majority of teachers have responded positively to this audio clip finding it to sound authentic, many nodding or chuckling with recognition at the interaction of the student and teacher. From the start of "I don't GET art, man" to the close "What do I have to do now," Anton represents a type of frustrated art learner and a teaching challenge that is recognized and shared. Because the recording captures an interaction between one student and one teacher, the CRP framework is clear and easy to follow. The demonstration that Anton knows the questions—it is a routine that he can call up with the help of his teacher—offers evidence

for the value of thinking routines as a teaching strategy for struggling learners. These are salient qualities of the experience evidenced in the recording that give this clip power as a teaching exemplar. Ms. B and Anton have rapport, share humor and serious ideas. As a teacher, she routinely challenged him to respond and articulate his thinking.

Another theme that surfaces is that of *student voice*. The process orientation of Ms. B's class and the use of CRP to elicit student thinking were designed to support individual student expression and address the marginalization of students, particularly students of color. Voice is an aspect of the writers' workshop approach that can be uncritically employed (Lensmire, 2000). Student voice is held as the impulse for a writers' workshop pedagogic model that seeks to reveal or discover a student's true (fixed) expression. In contrast, in critical pedagogy, voice is valued as an outcome of informed inquiry, through an articulated conscious position. In the case of Anton, both assumptions of voice are in play. The classroom assignment operates around creative production, and the idea of artistic voice (intention) is both held up and denied in the activity. At the same time, Anton's use of voice reveals navigations and shifts in positioning as he works to find "a way into it" as his teacher suggests. The interaction between student and teacher (and artwork) is a struggle of voice and power. Critical pedagogues recognize the differential of power between student and teacher yet the primary focus remains on questioning power outside of the classroom. The moment Anton (adolescent black boy) names the institution of slavery is a moment that resonates with Ms. B and subsequent teachers who hear the audio (mostly women, mostly white). These teachers are moved at the depth of his description and the clarity of his

imagination. As Anton voices this powerful image of racism, a new level of struggle and tension between teacher, student and artwork is introduced. Anton's voice is understood as evidence of engagement and of sophisticated, personal expression. As one teacher explained,

> I think one of the reasons we all love this clip so much is that he reveals so much of himself. And he reveals himself to be sensitive and insightful and a complicated thinker, and a master of metaphor. And what I wonder *every* time I hear this is why was that locked up? Why did you have to dig for that? And why does he put it away when you're done with the conversation? (interview, 2011)

Lensmire (2000) reworks the definition of voice as an active project of the classroom, involving the labor of appropriation, social struggle and an ongoing sense of becoming- not fixed or finalized (p. 75-76). Anton's revelation is tied to the CRP question of memory, provoked as much by the CRP as it is the image before him. But how does Ms. B's interaction support or constrain the project of Anton's voice? What assumptions are made about Anton's voice based on a fixed notion of him as a student or a particular type of student? Within the demonstrated social struggle of Anton's voice, what actually is revealed or hidden? This notion of voice pushes me to rethink my understanding of learning, to one of identity. The pedagogic project of voice is one of enacted identity.

These new questions emerged and demand a reframing of my research beyond a focus on cognitive skills and teaching method, to attend to aspects of social positioning and identity enacted by Ms. B and Anton in this situated exchange. Rather than a comparative study of various enactments of CRP across a variety of teachers and students participating in Artful Writing, my research takes a new path rooted in the emplaced practice of Ms. B and Anton. I came to understand this emplaced practice as the "site of

engagement" calling for deeper analysis of discourse, identity and situated, sociocultural action.

Summary

This chapter offered a descriptive narrative account of one section of data, gathered around one episode of learning in the art gallery. A particular exchange between Ms. B and her student Anton in front of Argue's painting of chickens was one of several observed and recorded. Recognized as rich data by Artful Writing colleagues and participants, this episode between teacher and student offered documentation of the practice of CRP within the context of the museum, and the audio recording became a valued artifact shared with educators beyond our project. The shared value placed on this episode by practitioners convinced me of its resonance as a nexus of practice, and set in motion cycles of analysis that unfold throughout the study.

This first analytic pass seeks to frame a critique of teaching practice (Eisner, 1998) and is shaped by my initial research questions focused on the use of CRP as a teaching tool or method to support or elicit demonstrations of critical thinking. Through the narrative account, I sought to richly describe the context of the learning activity and the interaction, then to analyze aspects of teaching practice and learning as demonstrated through Anton's responses.

This chapter is the first layer of micro analysis, rooted in an investigation of constructivist methods in the museum. Following a framework of higher order thinking skills (Tishman, 2002) Anton was found to demonstrate four distinct areas of cognition:—observation, problem finding, perspective shifting and making metaphor—

responses linked to following the CRP questions. But more is going on here. What about the things that Anton doesn't say? Is learning more complicated than a timely demonstration of individual skill? J. P. Gee (2008) introduces the idea of big "D" Discourses, ways of being that mark participation within a social encounter. Within Discourses, learning can be understood as tied to shifts in participation and to the identities individuals take up (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Conceptualizing learning as a performance of relational identities—rather than a demonstration of ability—led me to focus attention on the macro and micro Discourses that flow around and through Ms. B and Anton in the museum gallery. The next chapter reviews the theoretical shifts that informed this period of reflection and offers an overview of literature and concepts that work to frame subsequent layers of analysis.

Chapter Four: Reflecting on Theories of Power and Learning

OK, critical response. Let's go. - Anton, grade 10

Along with new questions comes a need for a theoretical shift embracing a critical sociocultural framework for teaching and learning. In this chapter, I dig more deeply into theories of sociocultural learning, critical discourse and dialogism, and visual culture that underpin subsequent analyses. A theoretical understanding of learning as an individual's acquisition (cognitive attainment) or development of defined skills and fixed knowledge does not fully capture the dynamic interaction between Ms. B and her student. Nor does it adequately account for the complexity of the art object or the emancipatory intentions of the learning activity that is at the center of this episode. There is an ebb and flow of tension between teacher and student. There is more going on here than a student demonstrating his critical thinking skills. There is the intention of the teacher and the humor of the student as they interact. There are demands made by teacher, student (and artwork) as they meet and engage in CRP. In this chapter I draw together theories of power and learning that help me rethink the episode between Anton and Ms. B and further problematize a deeper layer of analysis.

What is thinkable is shaped and shapes the social world through circulating negotiations of social power and constructions of discourse (Foucault, 1995). Gee (2008) introduces the idea of big "D" discourses—those with the structural power to position certain kinds of subjects, and socially construct figured worlds (Holland et. al., 1998) that

legitimate some and exclude or oppress others. Individuals take up identities within a Discourse, but Gee (2008) explains:

> The key to Discourses is "recognition." If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity), here-and-now, then you have pulled off a Discourse. (p. 27)

Gee argues for the need for students to acquire a critical meta-language, through practices of critical discourse analysis to recognize Discourse patterns and articulate alternate identities that challenge positioning. Gee states, "we must prepare student to be self-fashioning and shape shifting" (p. 166). Discourses are ubiquitous and normative, and therefore often assumed to be truths and taken for universal, empirical versions of reality. Critical sociocultural theory emerges out of concepts of social cognition and activities of participation in dialogical relation to circulating power and Discourse. Additionally, Ms. B's pedagogy aims for a critical engagement. Through an arts and writing process approach, her intention is to empower and to counter systems of oppression. I will explore her work as critical pedagogy drawing upon tools of critical discourse analysis. Shifting to this critical framework, I'll look for ways to draw insights from research in both literacy and art education, adding new facets to my study of Anton and Ms. B.

Power and Discourse

Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) theorizes a complex, multidirectional circulation of power—networks of socially, culturally, and historically situated technologies that discipline and dominate bodies, creating stable and enduring civil structures and constructing what is knowable and known. Individual agency is

constricted and shaped by technologies of power that become institutionalized through the construction of discourse. Yet, it is important to note Foucault's concept of power as productive. In *Power/Knowledge* Foucault (1980) remarks:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things; it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression." (p. 119)

For Foucault, power is not fixed, but dynamic and in motion, dispersed through networks of discourse, activated across the whole social body.

As discursive social and cultural formation, power is constantly in production, and Norman Fairclough (2001) builds on Foucault's idea of networked power, articulating a dialectical relationship between discourse and subjects, arguing for possibilities for agency—as subjects are disciplined by discourse, they also interact as producers of discourse. This offers the potential to alter the reproduction. Fairclough's methodical approach to critical discourse analysis seeks to reveal hidden dominant macro discursive forces to support potential opportunities for discursive agency on a local level. Fairclough's critical focus on discourse and power, situated in constitutive notion of social practice, opens rich possibilities for insight into teaching and learning in museums, much of which remains unexamined in contemporary museum educational literature (Fritsch, 2007; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Meszaros, 2008).

Art museums are particular technologies of power, harnessing particular discourse. In contrast with Foucault's (1995) well-known analysis of the prison as a modern panoptic mechanism to isolate and control individuals, the museum's power

reverses the weight of individual surveillance to enact technologies of public exhibition which also serve to discipline bodies. The museum is described as a “heterotopia,” a space where time is suspended and a representation of utopian truth is conjured and removed from the everyday lives of visitors (Foucault, 2003). The museum powerfully constructs and legitimates through archival evidence. It disciplines not only individual and civic bodies but forges normative understandings of time, space and cultural value. Museums as technologies of dominant Discourse create “norms”—what is legitimately known and knowable of the world—through institutionally constructed representation, rationally argued via collected visual evidence. Audiences in this traditional humanist museum are called to sense, reason and comprehend this legitimate knowledge. Social distinctions of class, ethnicity, race, and gender along with constructed notions of taste are central to the social and cultural productions of art museums. Carol Duncan (1995) describes the social behavior of visitors in art museums, shaped by capitalist ideology, as “civilizing rituals.” Engaging in the physical ritual of art museum visitation offers the possibility of class distinction and mobility through acculturation, at the same time reifying the structure of elitism. Her attention to the disciplined, performative aspects of museum experience opens up an understanding of social museum experiences as ritual activity, repeated, encoded, and disciplined consumer behavior.

Bourdieu and the social construction of lived worlds

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “cultural capital” offers a way to conceptualize ideas of taste and cultural values through the interested behaviors of dominant, middle, and lower classes. In *Distinction* (1984), studying social and class

structures in France, Bourdieu found that those who possess the cultural capital that reflects knowledge of fine art and high culture (dominant class) or a desire to attain greater cultural capital (middle class) are generally the audiences attending art museums. They share beliefs (as unreflective doxa) that museums are valuable places and art creation, collection, and display are worthy endeavors. Their appreciation of and participation in museum learning is part of a particular dominant class "habitus" and reflects their desire for social distinction and recognition of hierarchical "taste." Those who do not possess the appropriate amount (or form) of cultural capital are most likely to find the art museum a place irrelevant to their lives and will have no interest to pursue art or the art world (p. 283).

Habitus forms an embodied practice of everyday social life that is practical and pre-reflective. The power relationships in social worlds are central to the structure of habitus and work to support social order, through misrecognition of structured domination. For educational research, Bourdieu's theories establish links between the "macro-level patterns of social class inequality and unequal distribution of cultural capital" and "micro-level processes of pedagogy, evaluation and curriculum" (Swartz 1997, p. 202). Bourdieu offers a neo-Marxist language to help understand complex class interactions around the value, exchange and accumulation of symbolic "cultural capital" and related symbolic violence that work to perpetuate hegemonic inequalities. His social investigations surface motivations beyond material economics to help reveal pre-conscious dynamics of social positioning, identity, and varying desires for distinction.

For Bourdieu, the conceptual possibility for resistance and change rests on the mismatch of habitus and the varying opportunity structures open to participant influence that might make up social fields (Swartz, p. 217). Critical reflection can make mismatches visible, expose institutional misrecognition and may promote interested action by participants in social fields.

Interestingly, Mathewson and McKeon (2002) use Bourdieu's social theories to investigate the role power plays in the educational engagement of art museums and schools, offering new insight into enduring challenges of collaboration between school-based educators and museum educators. Through an implicit focus on power dynamics, their study draws from sociology to reframe issues of practice around Bourdieu's concepts of misrecognition and the conflicting habitus of educators working in schools and those affiliated with museums. They find that the dominant discourse of museum-school collaboration fails to recognize inherent inequality between the social relation of school and museums. To address this struggle the authors advocate a cognitive strategy that intentionally seeks to reveal the areas of hidden power at play, opening them to critical questioning. Making the museums' technologies of power visible—revealing the construction and relation of social fields, of class and economics, of race, gender and the politics of representation—could potentially open situated opportunities for critical engagement and moments for tactical surprise that can resist, or alter circuits of power. Assumptions about the cultural value of art (of paintings) and conventions of an artist's personal expression (that the artist represents himself) thread through the habitus of Ms. B and shape the form CRP takes on in the museum. Do the tensions that surface in the

exchange between Anton and Ms. B (and Anton and the painting) reveal a mismatch of cultural capital? Are there moments when intentions of critical reflection would have worked to expose these areas of mismatch and pushed learning further? Bourdieu's social theories offer an additional lens to consider the influence of class and culture on museum educational activities within a sociocultural orientation.

Museums, Cultural Production and Agency

Tony Bennett (1995) extends a Foucaudian framework to study the history and politics of museums, noting the role they continue to play in formations of political and social, cultural and class identities, and in promoting the stability of hegemonic relationships. He describes the physical representational power of museums as an "exhibitionary complex"—a specifically modernist impulse to represent and fix through visual discourse what is real and true—a technology of world-making. Kratz and Karp (2006) have also focused their cultural study on the constructive practices of exhibition, calling them the "slow productions" of world-making; they offer critical examination of the colonial enterprise of cultural collection and categorization. Kratz and Karp advocate for the expansion of museological research towards better understanding of the "fast productions" of museums, which they define as the social interactions and temporal events that are played out by individuals engaged in activity within the institution. I agree, and suggest that museum educational practices—socially and culturally situated interpretive activities—are just such "fast productions." Art museum educational research informed by cultural theory can deepen understanding of both micro and macro interactions of power and agency at work in art-learning activities.

Extending the idea of individual agency through fast production, I find resonance in Michel de Certeau's (2002) distinction between normative strategies and creative tactics employed by social actors in everyday life to creatively navigate, negotiate, and resist (if temporarily) imposed structures. I see parallels between de Certeau's definition of strategies and the legitimated slow production of museums. Both are spatial practices that constitute and reinforce institutional discourse. In contrast, a tactic is a fast production. It is temporary, intentional, and agentic. In the dynamic flow of everyday life that de Certeau describes, "A tactic boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order to suddenly produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer." (p. 37). A dialogic triangle is suggested among the strategic "language of a place," (the normative discourse) with the tactical agent, and "the hearer," framing participation in an activity of fast production. Related to Fairclough's (2001) argument for agency, subjects are not just shaped by dominant power but through the actions of daily survival; they find opportunities and moments to creatively and critically disrupt, resist and move through the norm. These ideas of strategic resistance offer new ways to think about Anton's enactment of CRP with his teacher.

At the macro Discourse level, disciplined objects and images are invisibly constructed by the institution. Paintings selected by experts and hung in art museums are impressed on society as important, *meaningful*, and shared as a public good. Museums construct the subjectivity of audiences, within a rhetorical gesture of democratic education (Preziosi, 2003). The theories of Foucault demonstrate the essential historic situation of technologies of power. The democratic and revolutionary impulse of the first

public art museum in the late 18th century (the Louvre) was to make princely collections (those from the royalty of France and pillaged from defeated countries) physically accessible to lower classes. This powerful modern technology of archive and representation endures and echoes through contemporary institutions (McClellan, 2008). Art museums offer a particular form of museology, one that serves to exhibit cultural objects, traditionally featured as evidence of human creation representing Western European conceptions of aesthetics as universal truth and beauty. Framed by liberal humanist aesthetic ideals and connoisseurship, this traditional role of the art museum casts it as a secular temple (McClellan, 2008). How did Argue's painting fit into this art museum's Discourse and contemporary understanding of aesthetics? The painting—this object of frustration and contemplation—is not a static source of information, but is itself a complex production and producer of Discourse.

Identity and learning

The developmental learning theories of Vygotsky (1978) expanded understanding of cognition by conceptualizing mental development as essentially situated within sociocultural activities. Development of the individual occurs in and through relationship to social worlds. Learning occurs only through social interaction and through the exploration and use of "mediating tools and signs" endowed with symbolic, shared meaning through their social use. Wertsch (1998) stresses the importance of Vygotsky's focus on the social mediation of speech, (as language in *use*, rather than a formal, linguistically-neutral notion of language). An individual's mind is in continuous development, shaped by the ongoing interaction of the social world and through essential

forms of play, as the individual also shapes the social world. There is no neutral facilitation of learning. Vygotsky argued that individual cognition is co-constructed through social interaction. In her approach to learning from artwork, Housen (2002) draws from Vygotsky's social co-construction of cognitive development in her notion of five developmental Aesthetic Stages. Housen proposes a strict facilitation of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to help learners develop higher Aesthetic Stage development. VTS asks teachers to refrain from influencing students with art discourse, leaving discursive participation to peers and the visual information encountered. The strictness of the VTS protocol may work to deny the learning describe in Housen's highest Aesthetic Stages as it relies on culturally specific discursive participation beyond the VTS protocol.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociological conception of the interaction of development and learning, centers on the idea of a "zone of proximal development"—a space of social encounter that challenges and supports individual development and makes learning possible through the guidance of others who practice a more developed understanding. Vygotsky explains, "Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 88). Rather than a linear progressive process of learning, Vygotsky's notion is of a spiral process, enmeshed in social activity.

Diaz and Flores (2001) draw from these ideas to conceptualize teachers as social mediators who can support student success or failure through the sociocultural activities of schooling. They found that unexamined attitudes and beliefs about poor and minority students, particularly pervasive "deficit" conceptions, led to perpetuating a sociocultural

construction of student failure. Recognizing the sociocultural and sociohistorical nature of this view of learning, teachers can counter this discourse and work as mediators across learning communities, redesigning social interaction to create appropriate zones of proximal development and recognize ways to effectively scaffold student learning. In this conceptualization of learning, viewing the teacher as social mediator recognizes the power of Ms. B to scaffold and also to discursively shape her students' experiences.

Lave and Wenger (1991) focused their work on understanding the social dynamics of learning through conceptualizing a "community of practice". In the social dynamic of a learning community, there are levels of participation. Conceived as a circle, newer members are granted "legitimate peripheral participation" and occupy the outer and bordering spaces of the community. Through social activity and practice, individuals are recognized and repositioned, moving out of the periphery and into more central positions. This introduces the powerful idea of learning emerging through shifting identity and offers a way to conceptualize the power and leadership role of Ms. B as she interacts with her student and the strategic movement of Anton as he navigates the classroom Discourse of CRP, his role as student-artist and his charge to get "into" the art.

Moving the notion of cognition beyond the individual to be partially contingent on situated structures, recognizes the power of situated social processes to influence identity and shape what is possible to learn or know (Wortham, 2001). As a learner moves through the world, his or her identity is in a sense both performed and produced by the lived social interaction. For Stanton Wortham, spoken language is a powerful structuring system at work though interaction, serving to represent possible information

and position participants. The identity of learners is invited or constrained through social interaction. Wortham (2010) offers the study of a ninth grade classroom and follows patterns of speech between teachers and students to trace the development of a “bad student”, an identity that is seemingly invisibly constructed over multiple interactions within a classroom. The power of the teacher and fellow classmates in constructing and positioning the focal student (in unintended but negative ways in this study) is revealed through careful attention to subtleties of classroom speech and interaction over several years. What is possible to learn and who is supported as a learner is structured through the complex social ecology of the classroom. As Ms. B works to position her students as “artists” both through her classroom activities and moving out of school into the public site of the museum, how does this new learner’s identity play out in the gallery?

Barbara Rogoff (1995) also views the learner’s development as ongoing and emergent. She extends Vygotsky’s social learning space into a conception of three concurrent sociocultural activity planes. The social learning activities Rogoff describes are “participatory appropriation,” connected to personal developmental; “guided participation,” connected to interpersonal development; and “apprenticeship” which is connected to community development processes (p. 139). Rogoff stresses that all three planes of activity are simultaneous and mutually constitutive, and that this conception offers a way for researchers to map out learning as a layered and ongoing process. Rogoff offers a way to bridge learning from the individual to a learning community. I wonder about Anton’s strategies of resistance and compliance within the CRP activity and how they map onto Rogoff’s planes, and particularly across institutions.

Central to the concept of sociocultural learning is an understanding of identity as emerging and positioned within communities of learning (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 1998). Rather than a fixed notion of identity, or consistent categories, identity is an ongoing, shifting and dynamic process, both shaped by and shaping social interactions and the mediating tools (language, symbols) of that interaction. In critical sociocultural research then, shifts and repositioning of identities is an area of struggle, where agency might be practiced as learners engage in discourse communities. Moments of positioning and repositioning identities within learning communities—such as classrooms, homes, work places, or online forums—are moments of potential learning, marginalization, oppression or agency (Holland et al., 1998; Gee, 2008).

Carol Lee (2006) takes a neo-Vygotskian approach to frame an investigation into students' literacy reasoning–questioning the discourse of literacy that finds some forms of communication more academically legitimate. In this interesting study, Lee found that cultural modeling using the discursive community of familiar popular culture as a starting point—a familiar literacy genre—served to create a zone of proximal development for her secondary students supporting and bridging their engaged interpretation of new material drawn from the traditional curriculum. I see interesting parallels between this study in the discipline of language arts and art educators who argue the value of including visual culture into the art curriculum. Visual culture educators (Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr, 2001; Duncum, 2004; Freedman, 2003) argue the importance of drawing from every day, popular, and commercial images to provide a similar cultural model of

familiar visual genres to scaffold engagement in new or diverse forms of art and image study.

Bakhtin and dialogism

Rogoff (1995) draws the idea of "appropriation" from Mikhail Bakhtin (1986Ba) and his understanding that "words people use belong partially to others, and they appropriate words from others and adapt them to their own purposes" (in Rogoff, 1995, p. 153). Bakhtin introduces the idea of heteroglossia, an important conception of the dialogic, social use of words and language, including works of art. Inherent in heteroglossia's social movement is a necessary "addressivity" or "the quality of turning to someone [as] a constitutive feature of the utterance, without it the utterance does not and cannot exist" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 99). For Bakhtin, the utterance was the functional and meaningful unit of language, challenging structural linguistic analysis that sought to isolate language into formal, neutral elements. An utterance is socially formed and might work to call utterances from the past and generate future utterances. It is a link in the ongoing "chain of communication," the dialogic reality of discourse (p. 100). Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic and sociocultural nature of discourse offers possible moments of individual agency within ongoing discourses of power, and beyond Bourdieu's recognition, raises the creative potential of remixing and creative agency.

Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia highlights the multi-voiced nature of language and dialogic nature of meaning or sense-making. This offers a way to think about Argue's painting and how it influences the activities of Anton and Ms. B. Rather than communicating the fixed meaning, definition, or value of the text (or art object); teachers

and students are involved in situated yet shifting negotiations of meaning. Bakhtin's dialogism offers a way to reconsider the relationship between the artwork and Anton. Argue's painting is perceived by teacher and student but it also *addresses*, invites, and frustrates them in a communicative chain. The subject of study is a complex affair, involving intersecting voices across cultural and institutional spaces and across time. In given moments and places, some of these voices dominate, some are marginalized and others are silent. Yet within structures of power, it is in this ongoing interaction, between active and evaluative speakers, that meaning is continuously made.

In his literary analysis of novels, Bakhtin introduces the notion of "chronotope" as a visualization of the intersection of space and time that serves to organize narrative understanding. He states:

> The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shape the narrative." (In Morris, 1997, p. 187)

I find this an interesting concept to consider in connection with art museum educational research because of the peculiar heterotopic (Foucault, 2003) technologies of museums which shape and are shaped by understandings of historic time and hierarchies of place. Chronotopes are constructions that represent specific ideologies and therefore serve to shape discourse. Yvonne Vadeboncoeur (2005) used the concept of chronotopes to visualize the institutional narrative landscape of an "alternative" school site. She focused on understanding how chronotopic knots of time and space worked to shape student identities and learning opportunities. In her study, she argues that re-conceiving the temporal and spatial dimensions of schooling, allowed and supported students in

positioning and legitimizing identities that challenged social norms and offered them a critical perspective of their perceived and performed difference. Again, in this work the central notion of identity emerges as a performative positioning and repositioning with and through complex and shifting social worlds.

Focusing on classroom learning and shaped by critical race theory, Patricia Enciso (2007) draws closer attention to the complex concept of history as an interpretive frame for sociocultural education research, cautioning against an unexamined notion of a common or neutral history and calls for the critical questioning of any narrative's past. Drawing from Bakhtin, Enciso (2007) argues that mediational means—objects, signs, words—carry interpretive concepts of value and meaning from the past to the present and have the opportunity to strengthen narrative (chronotopic) knots or loosen them. This concept can apply to the consideration of an individual artifact, a work in the art museum's collection, and also to the mediating construction of pedagogy being enacted. Both are cultural productions subjected to the social and historical power structures in which they were created.

Enciso, further, raises the idea of "incommensurability" (p. 54) as a concept to address and perhaps alter historic narratives that restrict, resist, or silence counter, alternative or unknown perspectives. The opened and unresolvable concept of "incommensurability" provides a way to visualize the inequities and power relations at work in the past, present, and to be contended with in the future. Ellsworth (2004) uses this notion to articulate the pedagogic strategy found in the United States Holocaust Museum. Through architecture, objects and display historical horrors are not meant to be

resolved but held open and witnessed anew. Numerous narratives rooted in racism surround exhibited art objects within the historically colonial enterprise of the art museum. Enciso argues that to effect social change in teaching and learning, students and teachers need to not only analyze and challenge the future possibilities, but also have a deeper and broader understanding of the past that has served to shape the present. How might this concept of unexamined, invisible, or incommensurable values of history help to understand the racial dynamics within the interaction of Ms. B, Anton and the artwork, as well as the critique of the audio clip as an exemplar of practice? Perhaps Anton's resistance to CRP questions that demand reasoned and personal response to slavery are resisted not only as uncomfortable but held to be deeply incommensurate.

Kevin Leander (2002) drew from Bakhtinian ideas of space and focused on bodies and movement within discourses of power finding what he described as "a school within a school" (p. 203). Leander's interest is in exploring power and particularly "silencing" within a learning community intentionally established within and in contrast to the existing high school discourse. I find interesting possibilities and connections to investigating the contrasting chronotopes that shape and are shaped by classroom and museum spaces, and conceiving their social fluidity. Leander studies participants' bodies in space, engaged in dialogic discourse, which highlights often hidden or misinterpreted interaction of silencing. He argues, "Silencing involves not simply expelling speakers or coercively closing down discourses, but producing, dividing and articulating multiple social spaces so as to produce silenced positions." (p. 232).

Leander (2002) offers a study of how students use silence strategically as a form of resistance in classroom Discourse exploring what Holland et al. (1998) describe as the figured world of the particular classroom. Within figured worlds, participants relate through positional identities. With this understanding of the social learning space, identities are mediated by tools and language (a version of Vygotskian “serious play”), and constructed dialogically through participation in discourse through established structures and moments of agency. Holland et al. (1998) draw from Bakhtin, arguing that the dynamic of shifting positionalities opens “space of authoring,” and learning, but temper ideas of agency:

> In the making of meaning, we “author” the world. But the “I” is by no means a freewheeling agent, authoring worlds from creative springs within. Rather the “I” is more like Levi-Strauss’s (1966) bricoleur, who builds with preexisting materials. (p. 170)

This activity of the bricoleur links to the idea of identity as intentionally improvisational and hybrid, if not totally agentic. Like de Certeau’s tactician, the dialogic relationship between discursive power and those participating within the social system—whether by contributing or intentionally withholding comment—offers the participant (acting as bricoleur) possibilities to remix the communicative chain. As Anton slips from one who is resistant to direction to one who is, at times, directing the activity, what is his dialogic relationship with the classroom discourse imported into the museum activity? How does the work of art enter into and contribute to possible acts of bricolage by student or teacher? Artist Douglas Argue’s image of chickens draws its grand scale and conventions of representation and exhibition from the traditions of European Renaissance painters, but his choice of subject surprises and in its repetition borders on the absurd. Argue as

bricoleur uses this unexpected juxtaposition of these preexisting conventions to remix an image that provokes engagement and new space for viewer meaning-making.

Defining and differentiating Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogies

It is essential for me to tease apart the various uses of "critical" employed by participant and used throughout diverse theories. Critical thinking, the theory of sophisticated forms of cognitive activity, is held as desired developmental outcome for individual students. Related to critical thinking is a pedagogic focus on practices of metacognition, or thinking about thinking (Perkins et al., 2000; Ritchhart, et. al, 2006; Tishman, 2002). For teachers, critical thinking and metacognition are cast as learning activities across discipline areas and generally held as important aspects of deeper, holistic learning and marks of intelligent behavior. Critical here modifies the idea of individual thinking or cognition and is not necessarily affiliated with theories of social cognition.

In contrast, critical pedagogy (Apple, 1993; Ellsworth, 1989, 2002; Giroux, 1995) and within that category, critical literacy (Freire, 1972; Shor, 1992) seek to address enduring structures of hegemony and oppression and raise the consciousness of teacher and learners, which then will lead to socially just action. In critical pedagogy and critical literacy practice the work of education is necessarily and unapologetically political. *Critical* here signals an epistemological shift, to an understanding of knowledge as essentially rooted in discourse and ideology. Further, the meanings of texts is always multiple and contested, legitimated or silenced within structures of sociocultural power. Cervetti, Pardales, and Damico (2001) explain:

> Students of critical literacy approach textual meaning making as a process of construction, not exegesis; one imbues a text with meaning rather than extracting meaning from it. More important, textual meaning is understood in the context of social, historic, and power relations, not solely as the product or intention of an author. Further, reading is an act of coming to know the world (as well as the word) and a means to social transformation. (p. 6)

The idea of aesthetic experience is reintroduced within discussion of critical art pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2004; Garoian, 2001) or as a process of dialogic art praxis (Meban, 2009). Each of these educational researchers looks to contemporary critical art practice, dialogic processes (Kester, 2004, Lerman and Borstel, 2008) that seek to actively engage audiences (learners) in the creative practice of meaning-making. Greene (1995) suggests that in the open and ambiguous spaces found in art processes lay possibilities for recognition of power and for imagining new, more just futures. She speaks of this work as “repair” (p. 111), a metaphor I appreciate for its implied labor, engagement, and working with oppressive discourses.

Along with the influence of contemporary artists and art practices on art pedagogy, are arguments critiquing the limitations of legitimate art content, opening art to encompass the creative productions of non-Western cultures, and of contemporary visual communication, in all forms. Patricia Stuhr (1995) suggested an art pedagogy intent on social reconstruction, an educational practice that would engage teachers and students in actively practicing democratic action to re-constructing their world to be more just. She focused her study on the performative, creative practice of an American Indian pow wow as an appropriate and important focus of study for art and to explore marginalized cultural expression. Stuhr argues for expanding the boundaries of art

content beyond the Western canon and to the living practiced creative traditions found in students' lives and communities.

A similar argument is made for connecting art and aesthetics to the lived, creative, and visual practices of students by advocates of Visual Culture (Duncum, 2004; Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2003). These art educators argue that the scope of artistic practice needs to include the study of general visual culture, from film and video to commercial product design and the social use of multimodal digital texts. It is a place where art educators and literacy educators intersect (Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Kress, 2010; New London Group, 2000), and should keep in metadiscursive dialogue. My interest in studying the potential for CRP to mediate and support the practice of critical literacy connects here, through an understanding of artwork as mediating text, visual and multimodal. It's through this connection that I also conceive of the practice of art interpretation as dialogic and part of a broadened notion of literacy practice. Critical literacy is a stance focused on revealing and challenging hidden or normative aspects of discursive power. Using the lens of critical sociocultural literacy theory, I argue that the facilitated dialogic practice of Critical Response questioning in the art museum might open up moments of literacy learning through co-constructed meanings, and it might also constrain or suppress other meanings. I seek to investigate teacher practice of Critical Response attending specifically to negotiations of power and to complex performances of identities across activity systems. Further, a close study of the discourses enacted in such a learning activity will deepen understanding of the opportunities for teaching and learning in interpretive visual arts spaces.

Summary

This chapter explores a shift in my understanding of constructivist learning, from one of individually developed and demonstrated ability to a social and cultural construction. Discourse is circulated by power, and shapes social interactions and what counts as knowledge. I draw from critical literacy research, socio-cultural learning theory, and visual culture studies to reframe my research. The activity of CRP engaged in by Anton and Ms. B is layered by the Discourses that shape the institutions of school, classroom, art museum, and aesthetics, to mention just a few. These take the form of texts and might be revealed through a close analysis of language.

Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to reveal hidden assumptions and structures of power that lie underneath our daily activity and institutions. The Discourse of the classroom is imposed on the Discourse of the art museum. In the next chapter I bring a reorientation to learning, and specifically to Anton's response, to reanalyze the data—the salient exchange between teacher and student. Following a research trajectory, this second pass brings a different angle, focusing on a new set of questions that emerge from my concern with power, social positioning and identities as indicators of learning.

Chapter Five: Second Analytic Layer: Discourse, Power, and Identity

Makes me happy that I'm not a chicken. I, w-what's next? – Anton, grade 10

In this chapter, I make a second analytical pass through the data to reconsider potential moments of teaching and learning. I do this at a new angle, attending to the language used and to the discourse and power that shape and are shaped by the interaction of Ms. B, Anton and the artwork as text. Meaning-making in the art museum is more than an execution of cognitive skill. Those skills are socially constructed, understood and valued; therefore, Anton's demonstration of them was essentially connected to his social positioning and participation, not just evidence of his innate developmental abilities. CRP is a socially constructed and practiced tool that mediates the classroom and art discourse as it circulates through the encounter. Among Anton, the artwork, and Ms. B there was tension and struggle as meanings were perceived, articulated and resisted.

Through this second analysis I focus on the moments of tension and struggle to explore how power and the identities taken up by teacher and student reveal potential moments for teaching and learning. I want to explore how both Ms. B and Anton relate within the macro Discourses of schooling and classroom, and those of museum and art world. Underpinning this second analysis is a significant redefinition of learning from a process of skill building to one of identity formation and related performances of agency (Gee, 2005).

In my first transcription and analysis of Ms. B and Anton, I worked to capture the spoken exchange between the two in a narrative way, as if writing the script of a play. I was investigating thinking as formative skill, looking for demonstration of thinking categories and focusing on how the CRP questions related to specific cognitive activities determined to be "critical" or "higher-order". To frame my analysis, I drew from Eisner's process of educational critique, using my insider position and deep contextual knowledge as a participant to inform the areas of my inquiry and interpretation. This analysis surfaced evidence of Anton's thinking and shifts in attitude demonstrating activities of reasoning, problem finding, metaphor-making and perspective-taking—high-level thinking found to be associated with meaning-making activities focused on works of art (Tishman, 2002, p. 9). The initial analysis also helped to reveal how Ms. B used CRP as a part of her curriculum and how the practice of CRP was enacted as a routine within her classroom, and transferred into the activities of the museum through her facilitation with Anton. Thematic aspects that resonated with teacher participants, namely the interaction of teacher and frustrated art learner, of hidden or suppressed potential led me to reconsider the constructed relationship of participants, to reflect on their exchange as struggle for social position. In my initial focus on learning as a demonstration of cognitive skill, the particular situated-ness of the encounter, the provocation of the artwork, and the racial association found by Anton all raised questions prompting further analysis and attention to how discourses of power circulate through the art space and transferred classroom activity, and how it is revealed in the spoken exchange between teacher and student.

Questions that frame the second analysis

1) What situated identities do Anton and Ms. B perform and what social positions do they take up using CRP in the museum space?

2) How does the negotiation of both macro and micro levels of discursive power shape the learning activity?

3) How does a teaching and learning strategy like CRP support and constrain critical literacy and the practice of student voice?

4) What intertextualities are found in this specific artwork (the painting by Douglas Argue) and how do they relate to Anton and Ms. B?

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers both a theoretical stance and a group of methodological tools to support this analysis. My first move was to re-transcribe the encounter, looking beyond natural dialogue to a closer, linguistic analysis, attending to initiation, pauses, word choice, shifts in topic and modal emphasis. I draw from Gee's (2004, 2008) theory of CDA and method of notation, breaking the linguistic data into clauses and stanzas with / marking a comma-like pause, and // signaling a stop in the speaker's thought. To trace the influence of macro-level power on this situated exchange, I also draw from Fairclough's (2003) critical approach, and focus on modalities in language which offer evidence of positioning and relational identity within discursive realms (p. 117-139). Considering the painting as a text, I bring this linguistic methodology to a critical analysis of its communication and meaning within this museum-based practice of CRP.

Fairclough's (2003) notion of "intertextuality" revealed through CDA offers a way to conceptualize multiple meanings found in response to the artwork, and within it. Intertextuality troubles any notion of "unique" expression and authorship by recognizing that meanings within texts are constructed from existing and shared references and languages. The intention of an author or artist and notions of individual expression and voice are complicated through recognition of sociocultural intertextual meaning-making—complications and tensions that reveal themselves in the mixing of messages circulating in this encounter between an assumption of the artist's individual voice and the transactional (critical) nature of response and meaning-making. Fairclough's methods add a way to bring the artwork as visual text (and the artist as author) into the critical analysis of the exchange between Ms. B and Anton.

Artwork as discursive text

I begin by using the theoretical perspective and tools of CDA to interpret the macro-level institutional norms of the art museum and the visual text—the work of art—as a form of discourse. The normative art museum Discourse is one of collected and preserved treasures and masterpieces, objects of great beauty and value created by artistic genius. It is high culture—still predominantly white, European culture. The museum buildings' architecture is significant. It is unlike most buildings, meant to immediately signal innovation and creativity, the reception of the distinctive architecture helping to construct and shape the institution's identity. The museum Discourse is a physical manifestation of the university's institutional Discourse in which it is situated. To enter

the museum, a visitor must enter and cross the large university campus designated by green lawns and large academic buildings.

The exhibited work of art was one of the first artworks seen upon entrance to the museum. The large painting drew viewers to it through its visual form and impressive detail. The artist Argue used the language of representational art, drawing from the visual conventions of Italian Renaissance to depict a mathematically patterned and convincing rendering of receding and deep space on a two-dimensional surface. In the image, a geometric pattern depicts rows of stacked metallic cages, each containing a white leghorn chicken actively posed and gazing in a different direction. Other realistically depicted details are wooden planks on what would be the floor, each detailed with wood grain, nails, and bird feces. Fans are included on what would be the ceiling, and with shading and directional brushstrokes they are given the illusion of spinning. There is no visible end to the receding space—no door or light, or wall—the colors blur and cool. There are no human figures depicted, but they are implied by the walkway and fans. The images of painted chickens are rendered in layers of paint strokes. These painted layers mimic realistic textures and add to the optical impact of the work. These realistic details paired with the lifelike scale of the image and its placement on the wall, lure viewers closer and closer.

To the right of the painting, on a side wall, was a printed museum label that contained a short identifying text. The label noted the name of the artist who painted the picture, the title ("Untitled"), the date it was made, a list of the materials from which it is made and ownership of the paining. In the gallery, approaching viewers are reminded of

their physical proximity to the artwork by a low elastic guard band stretched across the bottom of the exhibition wall. This band served to communicate to viewers not to touch or get closer than two feet to the work. This physical line installed by the museum opposes the artist's powerful image that works to seduce viewers in.

The painting directly references classic academic European paintings of the Italian Renaissance through conventions of one-point perspective creating the illusion of a deep, dimensional space, and through the layering of paint colors to render animals in motion and objects with realistic detail. Through the massive scale the artwork further draws from the art genre of history painting, traditionally held to be one of the highest achievements in academic artistic tradition, showcasing the mastery of the artist to depict epic narrative. Where this painting disrupts normative conventions is in its subject choice. The painting is of thousands of chickens squawking and flapping around in metal cages, a subject counter to the high narrative traditions of epic academic history paintings. This intertextual juxtaposition of a technically fine, detailed painting in a traditional form and seemingly common or ugly subject matter is unexpected and ambiguous. Creatively, it resists a grand aesthetic narrative while it plays within it. Viewers entering the museum gallery spaces are intrigued by this work. Placed near the entrance, the formal details work to draw them in close and the imagery is recognizable but puzzling. Sturken and Cartwright (2001) argue that such visual play with the assumptions and conventions surrounding fine artworks might open interpretive possibilities and create "space for the different subjectivities, identities, and pleasures of audiences" (p. 58) to emerge. It depicts an epic struggle between an invisibly maintained

structure of a caged and ordered existence and the agency displayed by the unique identities and actions of the individual and animated chickens.

The student in this analysis, Anton, is drawn to this painting and it sparked his curiosity and response. When he was unable to find a satisfactory explanation of this artwork on the wall label copy, or a sense of what the artist meant to communicate, he expressed frustration. The label next to the painting of chicken reads:

> *Douglas Argue (American, born 1962)*
> *Untitled, 1991-1993*
> *Oil on canvas*
> *The Gerard L. Cafesjian Collection*
>
> *To create the illusion of space on a flat canvas surface, Doug Argue used the technique of one-point perspective, where everything in the painting becomes smaller and smaller and seems to converge at a single point in deep space.*

This label offered the basic “tombstone” or identifying information in the convention of museum practice and then offered a few lines of commentary authored by an unnamed and official museum expert. The brief label commentary described how the artist technically created the form no explanation of why. The label focused on the formal, structural qualities of the image and according to Anton, does not adequately explain “what is going on.” It did not delve into possible meanings. Underpinning Anton’s frustration was his expression that the institution of the art museum (and the artist) was withholding key information from him. He did not find any indication of the artist’s intentions. The artist withheld a title from the work, offering no name or language referent. Although Anton was doing his part—following instructions, reading the label provided—museum and artist failed to give him what he desired or needed to understand the artwork.

Re-transcription and re-analysis

In the transcript that follows, I break the episode into stanzas following an analytical approach suggested by Gee (2011) to more clearly identify major shifts in the exchange. I identified and named each stanza for a prominent discursive theme it conveys, then, used these units to organize my analysis. I have also taken lines and broken them into clauses to better understand where there are shifts in themes and topics and how those are developed by Anton or Ms. B. I find that these breaks help to better represent the rhythm and mark significant changes in modality and intonation.

The first stanza surfaces a thematic understanding suggested by both student and teacher, yet somewhat contradicted by the CRP activity's rational of supporting multiple, student-centered meaning-making. Anton was frustrated that the meaning of the artwork and the communication from the artist is unclear and unknown. The reason Anton was in the museum was to find inspiration for his creative writing—classwork that was framed around notions of artists' voice and individual expression. It was understandable that he looked for such clarity of expression from the artist Argue. Yet while Ms. B set the creative assignment, she also worked to disrupt Anton's understanding of the artist's intention as "one right meaning." Anton revealed his frustration with these mixed messages and about the role of art as a means of expressive representation. As a student artist he was charged to articulate his own specific artistic statement through his own work, suggesting that the artists' intentions reflect the most valued meaning. He assumed the same held for the painting before him.

Stanza 1: Demands of representation

Anton

1. I don't GET art, man/
2. it just means nothing//
3. It's like…It's like people draw stuff/
4. from their point of view/
5. but then expect us to understand what their point of view was//
6. how we supposed to/

Ms. B

7. Do you think they/
8. do you think that they expect you to understand?

Anton

9. Well no//
10. But we supposed to gain our own point of view but//
11. there's NOTHING TO GET! 'CAUSE//
12. he dumb//
13. I represent myself//

Ms. B

14. That's right//
15. Do you think that artist represents him or herself?

Anton

16. Yea//

Ms. B

17. Ok//

Anton

18. Right//

Ms. B

19. So—//

In this initial exchange, there was a type of sparring between the teacher and student marked by quick turns and single word replies. Anton invited Ms. B to hear his complaint about the artwork and she assumed her teacher identity to provoke and coax his continued

engagement. She did this through continuous questions to cue student reply and kept Anton talking, probing possible causes for his frustration with the work of art and possibly his assignment.

Anton

20. But I don't get it!
21. Like/
22. what does it mean?
23. What is—
24. what are we supposed/
25. like/
26. Like they should at least have some type of explanation of what is going on.//
27. I be readin' 'em and it's not an explanation of what is going on.//

Ms. B

28. 'Cause why?
29. Do you think there's just one right answer?

Anton

30. But he DREW it!
31. It should be SOME answer.//
32. It HAS to be one answer!

The classroom discourse structure of teacher initiated talk (I), followed by student response (R), with that response then evaluated by the teacher (E) or IRE (Cazden, 2001) is seen throughout the encounter, transposed from school to gallery. The form of CRP questioning practiced here fits into the familiar IRE pattern. Together, through the transfer of this discursive structure, teacher and student constructed and maintained the normative power of the classroom. One critical intention of CRP was to turn the practice of questioning over to students, thereby disrupting normative classroom practices and power. In this practice of CRP, teacher power was maintained by both student and teacher, and the CRP was practiced within the familiar structure of IRE. The student used

much modality, strong expressive words and speech styles to communicate his agitation and resistance to the teacher's activity, the museum, and the artwork. He responded to her with, “I *don’t GET* art, man!” The student's awareness of his subjectivity in deference to the power of the teacher is revealed in his protestations of effort, “I be readin’ em” (the label), in his attempts to “get” the meaning of the painting. In his frustrated exchange with the teacher, the student revealed his assumptions about art and his agency within the structured discourse—“we *supposed* to gain our own understanding” and his assumptions about how art discourse *should* work—“But he DREW it! It *should* be SOME answer. It *HAS to be* one answer!”

Anton expressed his frustration with the informational support of the museum. The label did not express the artist intent, nor did it contain an artist’s statement. The painting provoked his attention. He was unable to pin down the intention of the artist or a sense of his message. In the framework of Anton’s class, artists “represent themselves” and he was unable to recognize or understand the artist Argue’s assumed position or message. Aspects of African American vernacular English (AAVE) appear in the style of the student's speech—“I be,” “how we?” “we supposed,” “he dumb,” “ I represent.” Following AAVE speech conventions, “I am” is phrased as “I be;” the verb “are” is dropped; and the student draws on a vernacular meaning for “represent.” Later on, the student shifted mid-response and used the dropped verb “What is—what *are* we supposed?” speaking in a style that shifts into conventional dominant American English construction. This stylistic agency might reveal a shift in his subjective interaction with

the teacher and the painting. The student appeared open to expressing his frustration to the teacher but initially resisted her attempts to draw him into an active interpretation.

The teacher established control of the exchange using a classroom pattern of IRE. Rhetorical questions like “Do you think that artist represents him or herself?” and ironically “Do you think there’s just one right answer?” are seemingly automatically delivered, as if she were sparring with the student. Ms. B drew out the students’ assumptions and worked to assert her instructional power through this series of leading and yes/no, “one right answer” questions. These moved Ms. B, for the moment, into control of the exchange, as she directed student practice of CRP.

Stanza 2: Asserting participation/ tension around judgment

Ms. B

33. So let’s do critical response to it.//
34. Let’s practice this/
35. because this is the way in to it, Ok?//

Anton

36. Ok/
37. Critical response//
38. Let’s go//

Ms. B

39. Go ahead//
40. We know that the artist’s name is Douglas Argue, so—/

Anton

41. OK./
42. Douglas has problems.//

Ms. B

43. Ok/
44. Is that a judgment or is that an observation?

Anton

45. Ok/
46. Yeah/
47. It's an observation.//

Ms. B

48. You observed that he has problems?//

Anton

49. Yeah.//

Ms. B

50. How did you get there?//

Anton

51. 'Cause he drew a lot of chickens.//

On turn 33, the teacher suggested a new activity, one that she and the student will perform together, but which she closely directed. She says, "Let's do," "Let's practice this". It is significant that through Anton's imperative reply, "Let's go", he not only signaled his prior history of CRP classroom practice, he asserted a willingness to participate in the CRP activity with his teacher and to take on the interpretation of Argue's painting. Directive power moves back and forth between the two here, as they work to position themselves within the protocol and address Argue's painting. Following Anton, Ms. B. invited him to continue with her instruction to, "Go ahead." The teacher started him off with a reminder of the "critical response" questioning process they used in previous classes. In this complex interpretive situation, Anton's creative use of his "member resources" or MR (Fairclough, 2003)—understood as his internalized assumptions, values, knowledge of language, and representation—aid him through an effective construction of humor and skepticism, working to ensure that CRP is not done

to him, and through interaction with his teacher, allowing him to assert his power. Resisting Ms. B's direct instruction, Anton found a creative, subversive tactic—a softer way to communicate his continued frustration. Yet he maintained his interaction with her and asserted his participation. Anton tempered his initial emotion but continued to express his frustration with artwork—it is disturbing and absurd—targeting a critique of the artist. When guided by the teacher to respond, the student declared, "Douglas has problems." The artist's power to dictate meaning through the visual is doubted and mocked. Anton used the artist's first name in a modal way—mocking him—and declared him to be mentally ill, which, according to Anton was a logical and observable fact, proven by his obsessive visual *over wording* of chickens. At the same time Anton resisted the painting's ambiguity, he further positioned himself as an outsider to art and museum discourse, while positioned deeply within the discourse of his writing classroom.

Ms. B focused on challenging Anton to reason out his "judgment," by backing it up with visual evidence, which he cleverly did. Rather than exploring Anton's flippant judgment, Ms. B pushed him to engage in CRP—in noticing and in evidentiary reasoning. She asked, "How did you get there?" which demanded evidence to back up his claim. Ms. B framed "a way into it" as a rational inquiry that differentiated fact from interpretation, and observation from judgment.

Stanza 3: Valuing noticing and reporting out

Ms. B

52. OK. Now pretend I'm a blind person/
53. or the person on the other side of this mic//
54. they don't have the advantage of seeing this piece of art.//

Anton

55. OK//

Ms. B

56. So describe it so that they can see it. //

Anton

57. OK//
58. It's like a long hallway of cages/
59. with chickens in them/
60. a lot of chickens.//
61. Yes/
62. a LONG hallway//
63. and it's like never/
64. it seems like it's never ending.//
65. Ceiling fans on the top of the/
66. art or whatever//
67. and there are just a lot of chickens.//
68. That's all there is to it.//
69. Stacked on top of each other/
70. and side by side/
71. all the way down the hallway/
72. on the walls—//

Ms. B

73. What are the colors?

Anton

74. White/
75. and red/
76. and the color of chicken. //
77. (Laughs)
78. Not cooked chicken//
79. Chicken.//
80. LIVE chicken.//
81. Um kay.//
82. What else is there to say?

Ms. B

83. Is this a little picture?

Anton

84. No.//
85. It's a very, very, very big picture.//
86. It's about/
87. I'd say, 10, 12 feet tall.//
88. But probably even taller than that.//
89. Yeah//
90. It's about the same length-wise.//

Ms. B

91. Are the chickens then like/
92. life-size?

Anton

93. No.//
94. Yeah.//
95. They about life-size/
96. but not/
97. not quite.//

In this section, Ms. B changed tactics. Working to move Anton into detailed description and "noticing," she used the microphone as prop and asked Anton to pretend to describe the work to someone who can't see it. The student capitulated and responded by describing. Still, he revealed a lingering resistance —"there are just a lot of chickens. That's all there is too it"—while allowing the teacher to prod him directly to more closely observe aspects of scale and color. In turn 82, the student responded with his first question back, "What else is there to say?" asserting again his participation and agreeing to continue. As Anton continued his description of the work to focus not only on the image of the work but its physical scale, there was a change in the quality of his vocal tone. From line 84 to 90 and again from 93 to 97, the pace of Anton's responding phrases was more hesitant and chopped indicating an activity of adjustment. He was engaged in

reassessment of observations and in checking the accuracy of his mental measurements: "They about life-size, …but not…not quite." The level of his voice became softer as he engaged in these adjustments, seeking to report this information accurately to his imagined listener.

Stanza 4: Imagining slavery

The next stanza marks the most fluid and unprompted part of this CRP activity. Ms. B asked Anton to remember the next question in the sequence, and he recalled this from his classroom experience. This question of memory led Anton to articulate a slavery metaphor.

Ms. B

98. OK.//
99. What's the next question for critical response?

Anton

100. Uh/
101. What does it remind me of?//
102. Umm/
103. It reminds me of—
104. (2 second pause)
105. Slavery.//
106. When, um,/
107. they was comin' over in a boat/
108. and all those people/
109. they had all those black people/
110. or Africans/
111. in the boat/
112. all on top of each other/
113. and like/
114. yeah.//
115. On the boat/
116. in the bottom of the boat/

117. chained up and really couldn't move/
118. had to lay down/
119. could only stay in one position because if they move they would move somebody else.//
120. It just reminds me of being stuck with a whole bunch of your kind//
121. Entrapped//

Ms. B
122. How does it make you feel?//

Anton
123. It makes me feel/
124. Uh-nuh (indecisive)//
125. Makes me happy that I'm not a chicken//
126. I—/
127. w-what's next?

Anton's notable pause and recognition of slavery was expressed as a surprising discovery. What followed between lines 106 to 121 was a long chain of clauses elaborating on a detailed and embodied description of a slave ship. It was fluid, earnest, and as one colleague described, "meditative." From this image of caged chickens, Anton constructed a metaphoric interpretation of the painting based on prior experience (Fairclough's notion of a member resource) of slave ships imagery. In speaking with Anton about this part of the recording two years after the event, I asked him if there was a particular remembered image of slavery that he connected with the Argue's painting. He said it brought to his mind an illustrated book by Tom Feelings titled *Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo* that he'd seen in middle school. He said he remembered a similar sort of angled image drawn to look three-dimensional.

CRP provoked this intertextual visual reference from Anton. As Anton was answering this question, Ms. B remained silent and listening. Her silence signaled her

engagement and acceptance of his response as appropriate and interesting. Perhaps sensing his move into this embodied and emotive description she followed with the direct question, “How does it make you feel?”

In line 124 Anton decided he could not (or did not want to) answer this question. He shifted out of his expressive, emotive metaphoric consideration of the painting and doubled back to the safety of humor, gently resisting the teacher’s direction. Perhaps he could not find the words to express this moment of feeling. Or maybe he was unsure if the question was asking how *it—the painting*—made him feel, or *it—slavery* made him feel, or *it—the CRP activity in the museum.* Perhaps he was wary of the risk in sharing or representing his feelings so directly to his teacher, particularly when the representation of the artist remained uncertain. Anton did have a complex, affective response to this artwork, but he resisted this question and pulled back from his imaginative and evocative description. This question failed to elicit or help scaffold any further richness of the student’s affective response.

Stanza 5: Decoding the image as statement

Anton pushed to move on to the next question of CRP and leave questions of feeling behind. He turned the question to Ms. B, knowing she would respond and move to the next sequenced question. With this initiating question, Anton succeeded in shifting the focus from an articulation of his emotions to an interrogation of the artwork and the intentions of artist Argue. He pulled the encounter back to a critical distance and focused his questions on the artwork as representational image and communicative text.

Ms. B

128. What are the questions it makes you ask?

Anton

129. Um/
130. Who needs this many chickens?//
131. There's about a thousand chickens.//
132. Probably even more than a thousand.//
133. Why would you need this many chickens?//
134. Or is this supposed to be like a slaughterhouse or something where they kill chickens?//
135. A slaughterhouse where they kill all the chickens/
136. and do what they do with chickens//

Ms. B

137. Do you think the artist might be making some sort of a commentary on—/

Anton

138. Trying to make a statement?

Ms. B

139. Yeah//

Anton

140. Yeah//
141. Like this is what/
142. this is what it is before you eat it.//
143. Like/
144. this is what they have to do/
145. or not do/
146. but this is how chickens get held to/
147. to get slaughtered.//

Ms. B

148. Do you think that the artist really liked chickens/
149. Or—?

Anton

150. He probably vegetarian//
151. Just trying to let people know that uh/
152. you enslavin' chickens.//
153. (*Laughs*)

154. Hell/
155. this is crazy man!//
156. This is crazy.//

Ms. B
157. Why is it crazy?

Anton
158. 'Cause I'm sittin' here talkin' about a thousand chickens.//

Ms. B
159. What's wrong with that?

Anton
160. They're chickens//
161. I'm probably going to eat chicken tonight for dinner.//
162. I AM eating chicken for dinner tonight.//
163. It's not going to change anything.//

Ms. B
164. Nope?

Anton
165. OK.//
166. What do I have to do now?//

Starting with line 137, Ms. B asked Anton to consider a possible intention of the artist and his purpose for creating the artwork. This initiating prompt seemed to contradict the teacher's earlier challenge to Anton questioning his demand of one "right" answer. Yet, the idea that artists make statements, which they use their artwork to express their personal voice and "point of view" is imbedded in the creative writing process and critical projects that Ms. B's critical literacy curriculum comprised. There was an unexamined tension here between the desired practice of CRP as a post-structural tool of active, transactional interpretation, and the enduring norm of individual creative process

that assumes originality, expressive voice, and the primacy of authorial intention. This tension offered an opportunity to deepen the criticality of response for both teacher and student, but seemed to pass unnoticed. The stanza marked a return to Anton's original claim, "But he DREW it! It should be SOME answer. It HAS to be one answer!" The reframing of Argue's work as political statement offered an analytical path for both Anton and Ms. B that seemed observed, rational, evidenced and open for clear judgment. Once Argue was positioned ideologically as a vegetarian activist, Anton was able to take up a clear critical position, reading against him and judging his work unsuccessful in its intention to change his eating behavior. Coming to the end of the CRP questions, Anton was supported as he sought to wrap it up and move on.

Yet the resonant metaphor of slavery troubled this literal reading and resurfaced in turn 152 "you enslavin' chickens," and perhaps also underlines Anton's emotive utterance from 153-156 when he exclaimed with a laugh that *this* (artwork and/or activity of interpretation) was crazy, highlighting the absurdity of a comparison of chickens to slaves and slaves to chickens. In that moment he was reminded of his position as interpreter, student, and that the artwork demanded and evoked more for him than a narrative of chickens and image of vegetarian beliefs.

Relationship of teacher and student in a transposed classroom

Teacher 1: *No matter what/*
you're the authority /
and he's the resistant young person.//
I mean/ the power dynamic remains and it's overlaid with race//

Ms. B:	*I'm authority of a process/* *Not of the art//*
Teacher 1:	*At first though/* *you have to push him to do this thinking//* *That's what I mean when I say authority//*
Ms. B:	*Oh, got it/* *got it/ got it//*
Teacher 1:	*You're the director/* *at first//*
Teacher 2:	*That's the role of you as teacher//*
Teacher 3:	*Power isn't always negative//*
Ms. B:	*Yeah/* *cause look at his power//*
Teacher 1:	*You're both just doing your job//* *[Shared awkward laughs]*

(Participant teacher discussion group, May, 2011)

The four teachers above are revisiting the audio clip of Anton and Ms. B. Each has become very familiar with it and has used it in some way as a teaching tool with both educators and students. Beyond a focus on the cognitive attainments of Anton, issues of power, authority, and the role of teacher are questioned. There is a discomfort here as these practitioners attend more closely to the relationship between student and teacher within the systematic discourse of classroom education. There are jobs. Like the majority of teachers in the Artful Writing program these are white, mid-career female teachers working with students in urban or alternative school settings, and dedicated to critical pedagogy and learning through creative processes.

For Anton, the discourse with the teacher may have been normative, but his discourse with the artwork and within the museum was not. He expressed frustration with the painting and the artist, and was reluctant to join in the class assignment. Anton put down his clipboard and pencil well before this recorded exchange. He stood alone in front of the Argue painting gesturing his frustration. He was not on task. This signaled Ms. B to intervene. Anton reacted to this situation by creatively altering his member resources—his assumptions of art, his understanding of the classroom activity and his role—to find a temporary solution, adjusting his positioning through humor.

The teacher's position of power within the understood discourse of the classroom was transferred to the art museum space. Ms. B had good rapport and Anton's ease of response—slipping into and out of AAVE, and the gentle humor of his resistance signal that they know each other and have an engaged relationship. When Anton signaled his frustration he was well aware that she would respond as his teacher. Ms. B used her teacher power to reassure and clarify the activity for Anton. She challenged him to use the CRP as a form of shared practice, reminding him that it was something known, something they had practiced before, reminding him of their classroom routine. Ms. B exerted her power with the intention of provoking Anton's continued, even if frustrated, interaction with the painting of chickens. She offered CRP as "the way into it" a way to support her student's critical engagement in meaning making. This exchange was one of struggle—to position themselves as teacher, learner and artist within many intersecting discourses and agendas.

Limits of CRP

Ms. B regularly expressed concern about the challenges of racism, poverty and violence she saw in the lives of her students. As a teacher, she was on a mission, driven to support student success through her teaching and worked to stay aware of the political and social positions her pedagogy enacts (Apple, 1993). Ms. B developed the curriculum of her writing course to engage students in culturally relevant and critical literacy (Freire, 1972; Shor, 1992) as well as creative production, designing links to art, music and spoken word poetry. She also sought to create assessments of student learning (like the recording of CRP) that were qualitatively different from standardized skill testing, yet captured and documented student learning. As a critical educator, she struggled with her own understanding of power and her desire to share authority and support the agency of her students. In one reflective interview, Ms. B shared a critique she received from a thoughtful colleague in response to hearing the recording, challenging her insistence to Anton that there was not a "right" answer. It centered on the act of *demanding* answers, something she does regularly in her role as teacher, but questioned Anton's right to do so when confronted with the painting. She tried to relay the criticism to a small group of Artful Writing participants in 2011.

Ms. B: I'm going to try and repeat what he [a fellow teacher] said//
it's absolutely legitimate to um/ to /
demand a right answer/
when people demand answers from you as a minority//
—I think this is where he was coming from/
and he's like/ so. Yeah/ um/ Yeah, I dunno.//
I felt like I'd failed him [Anton] as a teacher when I heard this/
that I needed to give him something/
you know what I'm saying? //
It was just/

Teacher 2: Well it's very complex/
You know you can look at it/
in a variety of ways//
But the kid/
he has a reason to not expect to be right or heard/
because his experience might have told him that he's not right or heard/
but he doesn't necessarily have um/
Am I making…?
Why are you smiling like that?

Ms. B: We're all white women in this room.

Teacher 2: Yeah/
we're all white women/
I know/ I know//

Teacher 3: It gets back to the power play and the luxury of art to uh/
play with meaning in that way/
when he's coming from a reality that is very framed.

Teacher 1: And the luxury of elevating process to content//

The teachers wrestled here with issues of power found in the act of teaching, and particularly the experience as white women working with mostly students of color. They recognized their reflective limitations while receiving critical feedback from other educators who have heard the circulated audio recording, long after the Artful Writing project and the original event in 2005. In continued circulation, Anton and his teacher risk increased decontextualization and representation as stereotypical inner city school participants—white teacher and at risk black youth. This interpretation lays bare enduring issues of race and inequitable schooling, issues Ms. B struggled to address and hoped to mitigate. The process of inquiry that CRP supported was pitted against a classroom discourse of answers deemed correct or incorrect. For these teachers there is luxury, unaccustomed pleasure and value in considering unanswerable questions. The

interpretive and creative processes are not necessarily efficient and aligned with determined outcomes and measures. What some might find as inefficient, these educators consider a luxurious practice to savor. The creative process they hope to employ in their work and practice with students is slow and open, offering the possibility of a temporary shift of power, marked by an awareness of relational power and sharing in the identity of active learners.

The demand that CRP frames in this museum activity is one of representation. The artwork was assumed to have meaning, or meanings worth investigating. Anton's assignment was to investigate the artwork and find his own meaning but "there's nothing to get." The artwork is purposefully ambiguous. Ms. B supported the notion of multiple meanings—more than one right answer—while at the same time emphasized (demanded) the expression of individual student voice, artistic performance and conscious representation. Argue's painting does not work that directly. The painting that drew Anton's attention was opened to possibility by initial CRP associations, but then as Anton worked through the sequence, narrowed into a solution: The artist is making a statement. CRP both supported the imagined metaphor of slavery, but also guided Anton to read this work as a failed vegetarian plea, resolving his original frustration that "It has to be one answer." Central to how CRP is utilized in this episode was Ms. B's firm belief in the importance of deferring judgment in this process. Did this deferral serve the critical understanding of this work, or did it work to distance and calm the student –ironically to find a "right answer" after all? There was a hint toward combined critical and aesthetic richness in Anton's first judgments—"He DREW it. There should be some answer,"

“There’s just a lot of chickens!” and “Douglas has problems,” that were not explored through the ordered CRP approach. CRP focused on the response of the viewer/reader and did less to directly support the exploration of what the text or artwork demanded, nor did it elucidate the relation between the two.

Limits of CDA

Discussing the limitations she found in methods of critical discourse analysis, Trainor (2005) points out that in its focus on intentionality in language use, it might fail to fully reveal metaphors at work , at the “nexus of ideology and emotion” (p. 146). Following her analysis of classroom discussions of race, Trainor added individual student interviews to dig more deeply into white students’ resistance to recognizing institutional racism. In her thoughtful research she argues that use of only a critical discourse analysis of classroom conversation deemphasizes the affective and “offers us no way to view discourse as having multiple and conflicting, private and public, meanings, and no way to see how racist discourse resonates or persuades” (p. 153). This research into readers racialized responses to literature raises and frames many of the same questions found in critical art pedagogy focused on understanding students’ identity constructions. Her careful study helps me reflect on the metaphor of slavery that seems to permeate Anton’s engagement, perhaps from before he named it.

Jennifer Trainor’s articulation of tensions between discourse (ideology) and emotion is similar to the unsettling dualities found in Argue’s work. It also calls up problematic tensions between ideology and aesthetics (Duncum, 2008). Argue’s painting of chickens is funny and dark. It is realistic and seductive, yet impossible and cruel. He

depicts order and chaos, individuality and conformity. CDA, with its focus on language, in this analysis worked to privilege the recorded speech of teacher and student and falls short as a tool to fully explore the discursive complexity and aesthetic activity of the painting in the gallery space. There were relational moves made between student and teacher that were not highlighted or captured through direct language, but rather through silence and tactics of resistance. The artwork and the gallery situated teacher and student within the experience and provoked response. These moves require another form of analysis, one that I will take up in the next chapter.

There is much irony in this discourse episode. First, the visual text—Argue's painting—revealed itself as a metaphor of power, identity, and subjectivity. Next, the teacher who was focused on empowering student voice and drawing out multiple interpretations through open-ended questions asserted her power in the situation, directing the student into a sustained exchange through rhetorical and yes/no questions. CRP offers a scaffold or a grid. The student who was struggling with both the painting and the classroom discourse asserted his agency, creatively constructing a range of utterances, using tactical humor to navigate around both obstacles. Finally, the institutional powers of the museum and university remained largely invisible and un-surfaced in this exchange.

I keep turning to that demand, "How does it make you feel"? and to the emotional register of Anton through the exchange. In what way was the artwork demanding and provoking Anton? To explore my deepened questions about the intentionality of the artwork and artist, as well as teacher and student, I need to shift

again, and find a new perspective to take on this episode of CRP to more deeply understand the intersections of ideology and emotion and to anchor the educational activity more visibly in the discourse and space of the art museum, understanding Anton's encounter as aesthetic as well as critical.

Summary

This second analysis used CDA as a method help reveal how power circulated through the exchange between Ms. B and Anton in the gallery space. There was an established rapport between student and teacher, rooted in classroom Discourse. Anton struggled to enact the identity of artist/and critical respondent that Ms. B's activity demanded. Within the classroom Discourse, Ms. B encouraged Anton to become a dialogic participant, using CRP as a sort of ruled game, particularly with her additions of imaginative prompts using the microphone. Anton shifted as a narrator of the artwork to future imagined audiences, then taking up as a witness to slave history. Each of Anton's repositioning moves, cast him in a slightly different role and opened opportunity to learn—opportunity that evidenced in responses found to demonstrate critical thinking.

Ms. B continued to hold both her teacher and artist identities through both classroom and museum. CRP is revealed as a known practice in the classroom and introduced into the museum space. Anton moved between moments of compliance and resistance within the episode, completing the CRP activity. Anton articulated opinion and insight about the possible meanings of the artwork, some of these constrained by the sequence and boundaries of the CRP questions, others supported by the framework. Throughout, Ms. B' s position was one of engaged teacher, facilitating Anton's use of the

protocol and in response to his answers, extending the protocol with additional questions that fit within the overall CRP framework and enriched it success.

Anton's moments of resistance are marked by emotive modes of language, tactics revealed in vocal tone, humor, and evasive remarks. Ms. B worked to engage Anton in the CRP activity through a playful challenge—a back and forth that revealed their working relationship and the constructed boundaries of appropriate exchange and understanding of social roles. Anton deflected the teacher's request for him to articulate his personal feelings with humor and skill, still complying with the established norms of the classroom and the CRP activity. The mobilization of humor is a significant strategy used by Anton. What might attending more closely to such emotional shifts throughout the episode reveal? Methods of critical discourse analysis worked to cast new light on the actors through close attention to specific use of language, but open up further questions about the struggle over areas of emotion and a deeper understanding of the affective charge of Anton's slavery metaphor, as a young black man relating to his teacher who is a white adult female. Further, CDA was insufficient to fully include aspects of the art space and the artwork as more that a "fixed" text. The artwork was a dynamic part of the activity here, interacting with teacher and student, while influencing movement and relation.

These limitations lead me to shift again and take a third pass through the nexus, re-gathering the data in further analysis. I turn to methods of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) to specifically attend to the social constructs of relational space, time and distance that circulate through the interaction. Discourse is understood not just as text and

language but embodied action. Position and identity are actively produced, relational and performative. Emotion, too, might be analyzed by means of social mediation, mobilized within discursive action. This space of active discourse might offer new insights for teachers of critical literacy and arts learning.

Chapter Six: Third Analytic Layer: CRP and Mediated Action

Hell this is crazy, man!   – Anton, grade 10

In this chapter, I bring a third strategy of analysis to bear on the interaction between Ms. B and Anton in the art gallery. I envision each of these analytical shifts as a new angle of light raking across the seemingly familiar scene. My initial analysis worked to illuminate and describe the contours of the episode of Ms. B and Anton as a nexus of overlapping, valued practices around constructed notions of cognition and teaching methods, raising issues of discourse and power. My second analysis took up these issues and, with a filter of critical discourse analysis (CDA), focused on the circulation of power between student and teacher and the identities they took up within the learning activity. Additional questions emerged about the discursive complexities of the artwork and gallery space that seemed to fall beyond the prevue of CDA tools. Also troubling were assumptions surrounding CRP and its use in critical literacy and aesthetic inquiry. To more fully address the artwork and CRP tool as mediators of this activity—exploring discourse as action—I turn to mediated discourse analysis (MDA).

MDA theorizes active discourse as emplaced social interaction mediated by semiotic tools (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). By attending to the relational activity of discourse and the construction of mediating tools (beyond a notion of text) in use, I want to bring the artwork more fully into the interaction analysis, considering it as a representative image/object but also as an active and material mediator. To organize this

analysis I use each question of the CRP tool, in the sequence it was used to address Argue's painting. The pedagogy of CRP and the aesthetic experience of Argue's painting are analyzed through activities of space, time, distance and emotion. Each of these dimensions is explored as active semiotic means that are produced and circulated through the specific, emplaced interaction of Ms. B. and Anton.

Following the trajectory: Surfacing new questions

1) What mediational means does the work of art/art space present through constructions of space and time, and how might this relate to teaching and learning?

2) When emotion is understood as a socially constructed action, how does this semiotic layer complicate understandings of aesthetic engagement and critical literacy practice?

Mediated Discourse Analysis

Mediated discourse analysis (MDA) offers critical framework for deeper analysis of Ms. B and Anton's interaction with Douglas Argue's painting. MDA offers a method to help tease apart and make visible the mediating tools—such as space—that actively shape and are shaped by teacher, student, and artist in this interaction. The active social construction of meaning underpinning MDA pushes discursive modes and mediating tools beyond conventions of language, or even image, to also include layers of histories of participation across time, bodily movements (distance), and emotion. Context and meanings—mediating constructions—expand around the specificity of an emplaced

interaction and provoke attention and deliberation in researcher analysis and interpretation. Data is re-conceptualized as “gathering the contours of interaction in order to be studied and the kinds of discourses and meditational means that cycle through it” (Norris and Jones, 2005, p. 202). The metaphor of “contours” is helpful to help navigate and define contextual dimensions. This re-analysis is also an act of re-gathering—attending to the contours and how the data reveals relational movement.

These contours include the recorded speech, but also the gestures, movements in and through space, exhibition design, timescales of the activities, and histories of the actors. It offers a way to visualize context as an actively defined edge rather than a flat backdrop. The tensions and struggles within the data are given new relief through an analysis of the mediating tools of space, time, distance, and emotion. I imagine switching on an additional angled spotlight.

Careful analysis of the recorded data requires a complex understanding of the social actions in which teacher and student are engaged and the “expanded circumference of discourse” (Filliettaz, 2005, p. 101). The analysis seeks to reveal the complexity not only of transcribed speech, but also of the situated and mediating objects, spaces, cultural and historical experiences that shape the social actions of teacher and student. Drawing from the work of Scollon and Scollon (2004) in this third pass at collected data, my unit of analysis is clarified as an interaction of social actors within a situated context—in this case a particular teacher and student on a school fieldtrip to an art museum. Spoken language forms one discursive mode or system of representation (Norris, 2004), but not the only one. Like other systems of representation, social actors construct and change the

systems when they move through and across neighborhoods, homes, schools and city spaces. MDA offers a way to conceptualize complex actions and social meaning-making beyond language. I am interested in the macro-level, institutional discourses that shape this interaction but also in understanding the interaction of individual actors and the modes they draw from in this unique encounter with this specific exhibition of visual art. What did my previous analysis miss? Because of an emphasis on mediation as discursive, emplaced action MDA is particularly helpful in reconsidering the role Argue's painting plays in activating Anton's embodied critical response.

The collected data surrounding this particular nexus doesn't include video. Embedded as participant and observer at the time of this episode, its significance as nexus was not yet known and video was not an established practice. Audio recording and still photography however, were part of the class norms of capturing teacher and student response, and used to inform and inspire student artists as they developed their own creative work. As a researcher, I observed the activity and recorded field notes. Yet, even if I had video documentation, the data would always remain partial, lacking potentially meaningful details occurring out of the recorded frame. Recognizing these inevitable limitations, I turn to my notes, photos, recorded speech, interview notes, and participants' memories as data, along with my earlier narrative and transcription to explore this expanded context focused on discursive activity.

Within this exchange, as a nexus of practice, I look for moments of embodied and modal shift in the interaction of teacher, student, and pedagogic tools including both CRP and the artwork. Four interactive semiotic modes surfaced as particularly interactive and

significant: space, time, distance and emotion. I organize this analysis around the initial interaction of Anton and the artwork, then through the sequenced CRP (that also sequence the interaction) to pull forward the interdiscursive mediation of the artwork and CRP through embodied action.

Anton and the artwork: Mediating space

An emphasis on "emplacement," the semiotic specificity of location in space and time (Scollon and Scollon, 2004), reaffirms my central interest in the art museum as an essential feature in the analysis of this specific use of CRP. Scollon and Scollon (2004) stress the geosemiotic nature of any interaction, reaffirming complexities that surround our promotion of CRP as a learning protocol or model as de-contextualized, transferable practice into future interactions of teachers and learners. As a social actor moves through space he or she also moves through time. Students and teachers coming into the art museum to work, bring their histories of interaction and established classroom discourse. Reflecting back to Bakhtin's (1986) concept of the chronotope, the immersive structure of time/space is dialogic—shaping meaning while it is shaped by social actors. Considering space as a social semiotic medium, I also draw from the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to help analyze the communicative modes used in the built environment of the gallery, and to consider the virtual spaces created in Argue's painted image. Discourse as action implies movement and an interconnection with time, another semiotic medium. I'll begin with a focus on the specific situated space of this interaction.

The Weisman Art Museum is built on the urban campus of the University of Minnesota, and the building demands attention. Designed by Frank Gehry, it is situated

on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. The museum is sheathed in stainless steel and composed of unexpected geometric shapes. The front of the museum is not immediately apparent, and entry into the museum is from the north side and a walkway that connects with the student union. Ms. B and her students arrived by city bus having traveled across the city, to a stop next to the student union. From there, they climbed a set of stairs to the front plaza of the union and, merging with passing university students, continued walking into the museum's doors. As previously explored, the discourse of art museums as public institutions is rooted in the European enlightenment and dedicated to representing and displaying cultural productions deemed to be of value, for the common good. They are associated with dominant Western cultural histories of colonization, economic, and political dominance. This macro discourse infused the Weisman Art Museum, with the added discursive association with schooling at the University of Minnesota. The representations created through museum exhibition are generally held to be suspended in space and time, and their authorship is institutional, rational, and scientific (Bennett,1995). Like the university, the traditional museum's power of address is institutional (not individual) and fortified through the discursive power of rational positivism. The institutional space conveys legitimacy to representations it exhibits. It is an act of discipline that requires a form of violence, demanding images that comply to be seen or to remain unseen. It establishes normative "truths."

There is no large atrium or entryway area of the museum. Upon entering the set of glass doors, there is a small gift shop to the immediate left, and reception desk straight ahead staffed by a university student attendant. A large pop art painting hangs over the

reception desk. The ceiling of the gallery space is expansive and lit by skylights. All interior walls of the museum are painted white. Between the shop and the desk is an entry hallway that marks the start of the gallery space. Once turning into the entry hall, there is a clear sense of path-venue (Stenglin, 2009). The space is long, and taking up the entire facing wall is Argue's 12-foot painting. Ms. B and her students entered the galleries walking up this hallway. Although all the other students continued into the following four galleries, Anton (who did not come on the previous class fieldtrip to the museum) had his movement arrested by Argue's prominent painting. The placement of the painting at the end of the hallway allowed the viewer's experience of the image to unfold in a way that linked and contrasted their lived, embodied experience of linear space with an embodied experience of spatial illusion. The social semiotics of space greatly shaped the interaction between Anton and the artwork, as well as between Anton and Ms. B.

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006) conceive of the action of an image, its address to a viewer, as a "demand" (p. 117). Using a variety of communicative signals and codes, image producers direct viewers and frame interaction through their actions. The image becomes a "frozen action" (Norris and Jones, 2005), an additional mediational mode interacting within a nexus of practice. How Argue's painting demonstrates its prominence is through its physical size and materiality, and through the illusions and imagery it conveys. Because it is 12 feet tall and wider still, the painting towers over the viewer. Upon approach, the detail of the painted layers and representations—of chickens, feathers, wood, metal, feces—are recognized then dissolve into layers of brushstrokes at the canvas's surface. The painting works like a magnet, so much so that the museum has

installed a short barrier. A thin, black rubberized band runs about one-foot from the ground across the width of the painting. Viewers who walk up too close are cued by the brush of this barrier at their ankle, a physical reminder to keep back and not to touch the artwork. The real space of the gallery is experienced through sensory perception. Clean surfaces, cool temperature, silence, and neutral smells counter the imagined chaos found in the painted space composed by artist Argue. He uses tunneling one point perspective—a contrived mathematical grid that has no clear endpoint—to create an image of deep space stacked with caged chickens. It is not difficult to imagine the sound and stench of the birds. Argue presents this subjective perspective as one that demands that a viewer share its positioning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

When Anton exclaimed on turn 30-32, “But he DREW it! It should be SOME answer” and argues, “it HAS to be one answer,” (a stance Ms. B initially works to counter), he struggled with the interactive demands of the painting set into motion by artist Argue. The artwork must have some reason. Anton returned a demand to the artwork and to its producer. The artwork, as active agent, shaped and positioned Anton’s body within it (centrally), as an implied, dominant participant. Anton’s resistance and frustrated reaction was provoked by this embodied relationship and the tensions it produced. Anton was unclear what stance—physical, ethical or critical—Argue insisted he take in this hybrid space, yet he keenly felt the artwork’s insistence in implicating him in its imagery. The artwork’s demand is further layered within a broader framed activity of classroom fieldtrip and the constructed and historic classroom assumptions of art, artists and aesthetic response carried into the gallery space. Ms. B works to challenge

Anton's notion of one correct interpretation, meaning or answer, while simultaneously framing the day's activity around seeking artistic intention, artistic statement, and individual voice.

Visual technologies of representation raise critical issues of communication centered not only on *what* has become the object of looking, but also *who* is actively doing the looking. Feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey drew insights from psychoanalysis revealing the gendered power of the "gaze" to objectify women through film representation (in Olin, 1996). In critical theory, concepts of the gaze are central to revealing issues of dominance and objectification through the power of address. But the actions of gazing, like any social address, might be met with a returned gaze in a dialogic act. Margaret Olin (1996) notes the impact of the literary theories of Bakhtin (1986), particularly the notion of heteroglossia or multi-voiced dialogic discourse, to support the possibility of a shared gaze, or a play of power. In applying this idea to a photograph of a woman who looks out at us, Olin explains, "We are asked to be her partner, to offer her "respect," which means literally 'a returned look'" (p. 327). The gaze is an important concept that underpins visual discourse and the potential for dialogic relationship. Bakhtin (1986) has inspired a sociocultural reconsideration of the passive or disinterested art viewer to one of demanded or invited action, an aesthetic approach embraced by many contemporary artists seeking to "re-enchant" the formalist reductionism of modernist art (Gablik, 1993). Labeled "relational aesthetics" (Bourriaud, 2002) or "dialogic art," these contemporary artists take up and manipulate space as a creative medium for artists to explore and cast viewers as related participants. Although not a performance artist, Argue

is aware of creating special relationships and critiquing historic assumptions. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe this visual gesture as a *relational* action:

> Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level…This visual configuration has two related functions. In the first place it creates a visual form of direct address. It acknowledges viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual 'you'. In the second place it constitutes an 'image act'. The producer uses the image to do something to the viewer. It is for this reason that we have called this kind of image a 'demand', following Halliday (1985); the participant's gaze, (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her (p. 117-118).

In Argue's painting, one chicken, at eyelevel, gazes out directly at the viewer, signaling a demand to look (and respect). Like an actor breaking the third wall, this image works in a comic way (fig.3). Anton does not mention this detail in his CRP response, but Argue's gazing chicken is visually flippant, intertextually linking with a raft of cultural representations of chickens from brooding to manic. The irreverence and awareness of Argue's chickens surfaces through the humored frustration Anton displayed in his response to the artwork and artist ("Douglas has problems"). Argue's untitled, gallery-emplaced painting overtly works to engage and shape embodied interaction with viewers, a relationship that is intentionally ambiguous (understandably, Untitled), rather than rooted in the communication of any specified narrative content.

Fig 4. Detail of gazing chicken. Douglas Argue, *Untitled.* 1991-1993, Collection of Gerry Cafesjian, on loan to the Weisman Art Museum.

The constructed art space includes the illusionary depth of the virtual room rendered in paint by Argue, and physical gallery space inhabited by Anton and Ms. B that seems to radiate out from the canvas. Unnervingly, they are simultaneously looking into and standing in the artwork. Edward Soja (in Vasudevan, 2011) offers an understanding of special experience as a "trialectic of spaciality," articulating the interacting layers of "perceived space, conceived space and lived space" (p. 1160). Conceived space is fixed in its abstracted conception, while perceived spaces are informed by direct sensory experience with the potential to lead to lived space—a space opened with possibility. Argue constructs a conceived painted space, and in concert with the perceived space in the gallery works to frame the relational, lived space of his audience. There is spatial tension and social tension, spatial struggle and the social struggle between actors. Argue creates an uncomfortable, unnerving experience, and Anton was drawn to stand in front

of the painting, and walk from side to side, gazing up to the ceiling. He then stepped back to take more in. Anton walked closer to see paint strokes and to read the official, but untitled informational label. Tension is an intended mediating emotion created through the artistic mediums of space and paint. This artwork is more than an image mounted on a wall. Its emplacement in the gallery is specific and adds to its meaningful experience. The same image graphically reproduced as a smaller poster, or perhaps transferred into the pages of a magazine, or projected on a digital screen, would offer completely different possibilities for experience and critical response. The emplacement of the physical painting is essential to its perceived meanings.

The person on the other side of this mic

Laurent Filliettaz (2005) notes that actors such as Anton and Ms. B engaged in interaction are imbedded in larger timescales, and their actions are both "emanations from the past and prefigurations of possible futures" (p. 104). Beyond the macro timescales (sophomore year, class time, and fieldtrip block) threading through the nexus, much of the framework of CRP relies on the construction of preferred tempos and shifted time. CRP structures a student's positioning that requires a measured slowing of time, and shifts later to required memory. Each of the CRP questions reconstructs a sense of time within the relational activity space, and works to reveal its alignment with an individual cognitive, developmental framework of learning. Deferring judgment in CRP and slowing one's pace of engagement is a tactic to avoid closing down multiple interpretive possibilities by jumping too quickly to a conclusion. The working assumption in CRP is that speed, impulse, or immediacy might derail a deep inquiry process. Slow

and steady wins the race. In explaining the value of CRP for use in the classroom, Ms. B explains:

> It [CRP] slows down the response process and creates a safer environment for thinking and meaning making to happen. There's great value in deferring judgment, and having a slower, deeper process by which we engage in a "text" and construct meaning." (field notes, 2005)

The deeper and safer engagement Ms. B sought is also appropriately calm as a classroom practice and in the enlightened tradition of rationalism—disinterested—altering emotion that circulates through the nexus. Through the control of speed, the immediate subjective is tempered by the objective, factual observation precedes opinion and interpretations. Through her facilitation of the CRP routine, Ms. B intervened with the protocol when she sensed Anton's frustration threatened to move him completely away from engagement. She worked to calm and direct her student into careful, measured "noticing," towards a deeper engagement and constructive process of "getting" the artwork. Across her general classroom discourse, CRP was used to support a slowed process of interaction and reflection between students and text. With groups of students, CRP's slowing worked to allow space for multiple responses to be given "equal time" and for more potential perspectives to emerge and be evaluated by the group. In the specific interaction under analysis, Anton resists the move towards a slower process of response.

In nexus, rather than seek the one "right" answer, Ms. B reinforced the idea of possible multiple interpretations to which Anton replied, "…we supposed to gain our own point of view but there's NOTHING TO GET!" By shifting speed, slowing the process of perception down, Ms. B believed Anton might find more to consider and

counter his impulse for quick understanding. Depth, care, and thoughtful labor are associated with and valued through this construction of slowed time and measured pace of classroom discourse, and it is transferred directly to temper the confounding painting.

When introducing CRP to Anton in the gallery Ms. B suggested on turn 34, “Let’s practice this, because this is the way in to it, Ok?” She used a discursive and established pattern—one that is slower, sequenced and repeated—to which Anton reluctantly agreed, signaling a familiarity with the required action and a desire to get it over with quickly, “Ok, Critical Response. Let’s go.” Anton’s impatience with and resistance to the pace Ms. B and CRP required, was signaled as he pushed back and asserted his participation. His frustration was further demonstrated in his early use of humor—“Douglas has problems”—which was delivered as a summary statement. Ms. B responded quickly to challenge Anton’s assessment, and move to separate “observation” from “judgment.” She continued to push him into a slower “noticing” action by suggesting Anton direct his observations to a future, imagined audience occupying the virtual space “on the other side of this mic”. This new tactic, this tweaking of the CRP approach, succeeded in directing Anton into the desired slower, descriptive action by using the audio recorder in a new, mediating way. His observed response was necessarily simplified for this imaged audience in a virtual space. He had a justification for naming obvious details, like naming colors. Anton pretended to share his visual advantage by describing this artwork to a listener in virtual space. With this tactic –a new awareness of the microphone—there was a marked and immediate shift in Anton’s tone to a lower, slower modality. Through this

device of imaginative play, his voice shifted to narrate the visual details he observed for his distanced listener.

Anton had moments of speeding back up in turns 67-68, “And there are just a lot of chickens…That’s all there is to it,” and in turn 82 “What else is there to say?” yet was drawn back into the slowed, paced description by Ms. B through her use of prompting questions (Is this a little picture?) which fit within the CRP framework and established classroom Discourse. In Anton’s description of the painting, his moments of hesitation were telling. As he considered his body in relation to the painted image, he engaged in an activity of bodily measurement, sizing up the painted image in relation to his own “about life size but not…not quite”. His vision traced the edges of the canvas, looked to the real and imagined ground and sized up the chickens depicted on the far sides of the image, those meant to be closest to the viewer. Attending to the artwork’s scale and thereby the mediating relational space is key to Anton’s demonstration of perspective shifting, and later, metaphor-making—two key critical thinking skills noted by Tishman (2002). The attention to scale and to relational space was supported through an added prompt and a necessary one—one demanded by the artwork. Ms. B does not simply parrot the sequenced protocol questions but navigates between the CPR tool and the demands made by Anton and the artwork.

The practice of CRP to slow and notice detail, as well as the charge to report observations to an imagined audience, aided Anton in focusing on his own presence in space, his vantage point, on naming, noticing and taking inventory—less on deciphering the possible intention of the artist Argue. The assessment of scale is not a specific

question of CRP. It falls generally under an interest in careful observation—but prompting Anton's observation though such directed sub-questions might have been missed by another facilitator. I believe Ms. B's direction to attend to the work's scale and relational space worked to physically position Anton in a more deeply engaged aesthetic relationship. Once positioned in the "almost life size but not, not quite" space, the next question suggested a perspective shift into Anton's memory.

What does it remind me of?

Ms. B quietly prompted Anton to recall the next question for CRP. He tentatively replied "What does it remind me of?" The word "slavery" is uttered by Anton with emphasis, as if a sudden insight. Anton followed with a very fluent run of descriptive stanzas, re-describing the hold of a slave ship through a narrative of the bodies chained within it. His voice lowered. Anton connected his prior knowledge of the middle passage to his embodied experience of Argue's painting of chickens. Anton mediated his experience interdiscursively through imagined violence and torture. He called the discourse of the American slave trade into interaction within the artwork. Critical and aesthetic distances were again in motion. Anton was a spectator while describing bodies participating in an imaged past—enslaved in the virtual space. He described the physical, sensory experience in turns 106-121: "chained up and really couldn't move, had to lay down, could only stay in one position because if they move they would move somebody else." He named the experience—"entrapped," while facing the canvas, having moved within three feet of the painted surface.

With Anton, a memory became a mediating emotive object. His imagined metaphoric association was highly sensory. The metaphor of slavery is resonant and incommensurate, remaining open and unresolved. It's the point in the audio recording where other teachers listening, from 2005 to the present, generally signal their appreciation for the powerful association, one that seems to surprise many of them. It is immediately heavy. The silly chickens that gaze out at viewers are, from that point, associated with a horrific history of torture and human suffering. The tension between the demanding and seductive image and the ideology of dominating violence is articulated and uncomfortable. To follow the metaphor is to position us—the viewers—as participants who hold power over those trapped. The position of viewer became not just of spectator, participant or even witness, but of conspirator. The metaphor of African American slavery is made by a young black man—one who has been labeled "at risk" of not completing school and who plays a role in a larger debate of institutionalized racism in public schools. Anton is still speaking into the microphone, still to an imagined audience, and also to his white teacher, Ms. B. Ms. B, responding to Anton's affective shift, took the initiative to move to the next CRP question, one that demanded that the respondent articulate an emotional state. "How does it make you feel?" becomes a demand, requiring Anton to articulate and respond to his teacher in that moment. With the microphone held between them by Ms. B, Anton attempts to comply, but then in turns 123-125 pulls back. Does this question demand a response to the artwork? Or to the still unknown position of the artist? Or to the horrors of slavery and his sense of history? Anton mobilizes humor to respond to this demand.

Happy that I'm not a chicken. What's next?

There is an assumption that emotion is something that happens within individuals, before or without thought. It is held as an opposite to rational, critical thought and to dispassionate logic. In this analysis, I work to defy that assumption and highlight the strategically constructed, thought-filled nature of emotion that flows through the interaction of Ms. B, Anton and the artwork. CRP is a tool that seeks to call out emotion and affective response as one discrete form of response—one of the questioning areas. In asking, "How does it make you feel", it lays the assumption that emotion works only from the inside out, immediate and emanating from an individual, rather than strategically used or constructed within social activity. Emotion doesn't tease apart easily from discursive distance, time, and space: all are in motion produced in relation to practices within nexus. Anton, in his response to this question mobilizes humor, a trait and tactic for which he is known in the classroom. He cracked a joke, "happy that I'm not a chicken." This response gets him out of a jam. He was caught in a vulnerable position and the mediating tools of humor and speed ("What's next?") work to reposition him in relation to the artwork, and within the metaphor of slavery that infused the interaction, while still in compliance with the CRP activity and classroom practices. Sara Ahmed (2004) describes socially constructed emotion as "the flesh of time" and notes how it becomes attached to or sticks to objects, and works to "register the approximation of others" (p. 202). Anton is not sure of his position or that of Argue in this troubling, sticky image.

The demand of CRP, for Anton to report his personal affective, aesthetic response, is too risky or perhaps, too difficult. Patricia Calderwood (2005) articulates the risk of such personal response which, along with the tension of the image and unclear ideology, might offer some explanation for the resistance demonstrated by Anton:

> I fear that I have undergone extensive and rigorous training to guard against being slightly moved, or, more dangerously, deeply moved during reading, especially during a reading that takes place in a public space. One becomes a text that might be read by others. Their readings might enrich, but also might violate or diminish. If one's feelings are one's vulnerabilities, then perhaps this is the deepest danger of reading aesthetically. One can be harmed when others know what moves her…One of the most effective defenses against an aesthetic reading is the intellectualization of the process. (p. 8)

Anton resisted being read. He resisted being vulnerable. Responding to the emotion mobilized during his reflective memory of slavery, and the CRP demand to represent his strong metaphor of slavery, once called into the interaction, persisted and re-emerged even when he worked to push it into the background.

When Anton's evocative and sensory articulation of the slavery narrative emerged, it was brought close—witnessed. Anton placed himself there. When Ms. B asked him to report his feelings, the tensions between mediating tools, discourse, and habitus collided, placing Anton in a positional bind. As if assessing the risks, Anton pushed to lessen the current racial charge and his approximated affiliation through constructed humor and move to pivot to a more critical distance. He made the shift from a focus on his production of an imagined slave ship—his own "text"—to a safer stance, that of the artwork as the text being read. Once back into CRP, Anton appeared to take

refuge in the distanced intellectualization of the process, reiterating that the image is of chickens, (not humans).

Megan Boler (1999) suggests that when encountering discomfort, students might assume a stance as either spectator or witness and that moving towards witnessing (as action) is the path toward critical engagement with difficult yet important issues of power and justice. She poses a "pedagogy of discomfort" that counters the safer, distanced project of inquiry which offers only a first step. The pedagogic address made by Argue's artwork to Anton worked to construct discomfort. Anton's initial frustrated experience is related to the violence he later articulated as an association of Argue's chickens to slavery. The brutal racist possibilities (perhaps witnessed at first contact with the ambiguous painting), are not discounted by museum wall text, nor by Ms. B, enabling Anton's fear of complicity, perhaps leading him to the frustrating uncertainties of, *Is Argue racist? What is his stance? What is my relation to this image, this scene, this space? How should I react?* After the inquiry into his personal feelings, Anton seems to pivot, to re-assert and differentiate human slaves from the chickens depicted. Through declaring that he's happy to not be a chicken (or the imagined enslaved) he, thereafter, shifted to firmly stay in the realm of direct statement.

What questions does this make you ask?

A critical distance was maintained as Anton moved on to question in a cool way, "Who needs this many chickens?" and followed with the recognition of the image as a possible poultry slaughterhouse. At this safer, intellectual distance (Boler would consider this repositioning as spectator), Ms. B called the artist Argue back into the exchange in

turn 137 asking Anton, “Do you think the artist might be trying to make some sort of commentary on…” From this vantage—an overview of the image as direct representation and with the artist cast as political commentator—Anton wrestled with ideology. He reasoned that Argue was “probably a vegetarian,” and that his intention behind the work was to change viewers’ eating habits. Argue’s message was revealed as, “you enslavin’ chickens.” After having just experienced the tension of a narrative of African American slavery, this association with chicken farming struck Anton as absurd. He exclaimed, “Hell, this is crazy, man!” Perhaps responding to the incommensurabilty of these narratives, placed side by side, along with the push and pull of both the artwork and the CRP questions, Anton demonstrated his desire to claim a disaffected position outside of the artwork. His distanced position is stressed in turns 158-162, by the statement “I’m sittin’ here talkin’ about a thousand chickens,” and “They’re chickens.”

That Argue’s painting might equate an ideology of chicken production and slavery caused great tension. In his initial frustration, Anton was unsure how to critically read the demanding painting and its inherent tensions. Does he read *with* the painting (and Argue) or *against* it? Anton did surface multiple possibilities, but he fell short of digging into areas of discomfort, the aesthetic aspects of his experience, and exploring the unresolved tensions and questioning the ambiguous ideology within the artwork. Ironically, through CRP Anton arrived at one finalized answer: the resolution he demanded at the start. He speculated that Douglas Argue was making a statement against chicken consumption, and that intended message was unsuccessful, as Anton was not moved to change his chicken-eating habits. With Argue’s ideology pinned down, Anton

is comfortable to oppose and dismiss it. I'm left wondering what Ms. B or any teacher might have done within the CRP approach to work more productively through the discomfort and tension found in Anton's initial judgment of the artists and of the articulated slavery metaphor. As a strategy for supporting students' critical literacy, CRP proved uneven here. Anton's consideration of the artwork was greatly influenced by the classroom framework, and the assumptions it carried into the museum experience.

Mediating distance and time, along with emotions such as compliance, humor and horror are produced and circulated through the space. Contemporary art spaces and artworks often intentionally address viewers as participants and seek to engage audiences in activities of negotiated meaning-making. These relational artworks are active, socially layered, material, embodied, multimodal and sensory, each inviting viewers into unstable and ambiguous interaction, disrupting "knowing." It is a critical art pedagogy rooted in designed and lived space and time. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2004) describes this as a "pedagogy of self in motion" (p.7) a "smudging" of identities through critical engagement with the uncertain and the unknowable. CRP offers one path of inquiry into such complexities, but it is not the only way nor perhaps the most critically engaged. Teachers might add CRP to their repertoire of teaching strategies, but need to recognize their relational participation and movement along with their students. They should be mindful of what sort of response each question assumes, what sort of positioning and emotion the artwork might demand, and follow the movement of responding students. Ms. B's adherence to the protocol sequence works to keep the process moving, but sets up an assumption of accumulation of information, insight leading to a final interpretation.

It is the way in and it leads you somewhere, reinforcing the idea of one answer. What shifts would make the protocol less ridged, yet still support student experience of shifting distances and critical connections?

Summary: What do I have to do now?

Returning to the questions that framed this analytic layer, the mediational means of space and time, along with distance and emotion, are revealed as actively constructed and mobilized through the CRP tool and the "frozen action" of Argue's artwork. These means work to structure the action as they circulate through and are manipulated in the interaction. The slowed practice of noticing served to draw support for Anton's articulation of the artwork's details, while also stepping (or sliding) back and assessing the whole painted image. Through this first question area of CRP, Anton started to articulate an awareness of his body emplacement. He stepped momentarily into the virtual space of the painting then moved outside of it, assessing the whole. Within the real and virtual spaces of the museum gallery, Anton and Ms. B are pulled in and pushed away by the emplaced experience of the artwork as they pull and push at each other. Both teacher and student brought their shared history of positioned relationships and classroom practice to dynamic interaction with the intentionally relational and demanding work of art.

The "affective charge" of Argues painting is ambiguous, troubling, and very present as it circulates throughout the whole encounter. Anton and Ms. B each reveal their histories with each other, calling upon past relations through classroom Discourse. Anton is known for his use of humor, and it is masterfully used as a tactic of resistance

within appropriate boundaries of established classroom Discourse. Just as the CRP tool, emotion works to both structure and orient the interaction. As Ahmed (2004) argues,

> Focusing on emotions as mediated rather than immediate reminds us that knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feeling and sensation; knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world. (p. 171)

The tension that begins this interaction and weaves through in different forms can be traced back to a visual instigation and an active address made by the work of art to Anton. There is an inherent mismatch between the playful attraction of the image (through all its technical, material, and illusory devices) and repulsion to its depiction of violence and control. The image mediates aesthetics and ideology—a tension Duncum (2008) suggests is an essential aspect of effective, critical pedagogy in art education. I return again to wrestle with a working concept of aesthetics in all of its many definitions and philosophical, modernist baggage. In the final chapter of this study, I describe a shifted CPR approach to one of "critical aesthetic engagement" in an attempt to address the key and complex mediated interaction of space, material, emotion, and multimodal artwork with habitus, and discourse within a nexus of practice.

Chapter Seven: Changing the Nexus: Critical Aesthetic Engagement

Of all human creations, works of art are most likely to resist fixed boundaries, even as they resist one-dimensionality. There are no fixed boundaries between illusion and reality, between the visible and the invisible: illusion awakens us to aspects of the taken-for-granted we never were aware of before; art, many have said, makes visible what was never visible before. Most significant for me is the capacity of an art form (when attentively perceived, when authentically imagined) to overcome passivity, to awaken us to a world in need of transformation, forever incomplete. Beyond the experiences of consummation and integration, beyond the disruptions and contradictions, there is always a receding horizon, always some unrealized possibility. (M. Greene 2007, pp. 160-161)

[…] as children are making "text-to-self" connections—what the aesthetic response has been reduced to in many school based pedagogical settings—are we preparing teachers adequately in order to be able to interpret the fantastical imaginations of children?*(Vasudevan, 2011, p. 1167)*

The goal of critical research practice and specifically MDA is to instigate change—"to produce a heightened awareness of the problems and possibilities that the nexus of practice presents" (Norris and Jones, 2005, p 203). In this chapter I focus on synthesizing what I've learned from my layered analysis to assess the value and limitations of CRP as practiced by Ms. B, and I suggest ways that the practice might improve. In the passage above, Maxine Greene, a vocal advocate for the value of aesthetic learning, articulates a vividly spatial metaphor for art that seems to refer to Argue's painting. In response, I couldn't help but conjure the image of Anton and Ms. B working towards attentive perception and authentic imagination. I heard in Greene's

quote, Ms. B's persistence and desire to counter passivity, and I imagined Anton wrestling with disruption and contradiction.

The goal of CRP—the reason it developed from the practice of teachers—is a desire to support the active negotiation of meaning from some phenomena. The focus of negotiation was originally conceived as a literary text, and CRP owes much to reader response theory, along with inquiry methods linked to Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking. A framework of higher order thinking came infused with a stepped hierarchical approach in fixed, necessary sequence. Reader/Response suggests a theory of transaction between reader and text, and a binary positioning of aesthetic and efferent stances. In practice, as Lalitha Vasudevan notes above, teachers' methods seeking to support readers' responses often simplify into a tidy binary opposition of efferent and aesthetic responses by students. Both the assumption of developmental sequence and the constraints of "text-to-self" persist in the enactment of CRP by Ms. B and Anton in the gallery.

Conceiving of space, time, distance, and emotion as mediating means both structuring and structured by the interaction, allows these assumptions to surface and brings lived, sensory, embodied, aesthetic experience into dynamic relation with the critical and contextual. Rather than a ladder of inquiry to climb, or discrete stances to assume, the process of critical (and aesthetic) response is best understood as situated, un-finalized and threaded together by a web of relational moves. Rather than privileging the viewer or artist in this transaction, a positive change to the nexus involves attention to the space of connection and interaction between both—a sensitivity to the relationship and a

more complex understanding of aesthetic response. In this chapter I dig into multiple, post-structural concepts of aesthetics.

The term “aesthetic” is defined in various ways and recognized simultaneously a noun and adjective. Assumptions of “aesthetic” work, activity and response thread through Ms. B’s class framework and that of CRP, complicating the practice of Ms. B and her student, the work of Douglas Argue and my analysis. Anton is charged with responding to artwork as preparation for creating his own creative writing and spoken performance. The framework of transactional *aesthetic response* is important to better understand the CRP tool in action. To help situate the painting by Argue, an understanding of *relational aesthetics* offers a foundation for analyzing how the art might “work” in our data. Finally, bringing a more vernacular, everyday understanding of aesthetics and its relation to ideology is useful to inform ideas of aesthetic experience and critical pedagogy. In this chapter, I tease apart three related but nuanced postmodern uses of “the aesthetic” in an attempt to draw together an understanding that might push or shape CRP into an even more fruitful practice.

I imagine this new practice as *critical aesthetic engagement* and work to synthesize insights from my layered inquiry toward a shifted use of CRP. The tool of CRP is opened to support embodied experience and relational moves. On further reflection, I suggest a continued trajectory of research to explore issues of racism and questions of representation inherent in the interaction that linger through the publically circulated four-minute audio-clip-turned-exemplar. I want to be clear that I, like my participants, find value in CRP as a tool to frame both teaching practice and support

learners to engage in interpretive activity. Yet I caution it as a fixed model of "best" practice. Practice is always situated and notions of "best" are contingent on that emplacement. My interest is in building on this practice to help recognize and strengthen opportunities of aesthetic experience that merge life worlds while opening students to deepened inquiry and creative participation.

Aesthetic experience, aesthetic response and emotion

Wrestling to understand aesthetic experience within sociocultural theories of learning and critical pedagogy, I return to John Dewey (1934) who conceived of learners as active meaning-makers transformed by experiences of the social world. Dewey focuses on the connection, the "consummation" (p. 339) between the lived experience of the viewer and the materiality of the art object. In *Art and Experience* (1934), Dewey explains the centrality of lived experience to all learning and argues for the unique nature of art learning:

> Experience in the degree in which it *is* experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events…Because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. Even in its rudimentary forms, it contains the promise of the delightful perception, which is the aesthetic experience. (pp. 18-19)

For Dewey, meaning was not fixed within the artwork, nor within the viewer, but constructed through an immersed, embodied, interactive experience. Dewey held such social and aesthetic experience as central to all learning, and predicated on active perception as a more vital state, informed by the particular material artwork—in contrast

to mere recognition, which is abstracted from the lived world. Dewey's thought influenced CRP and its adaptation, the Perceive Card. Both CRP and the Perceive Card tool attempt to bring aesthetic experience as articulated by Dewey more fully into critical inquiry.

In the realm of literary criticism, Louise Rosenblatt's (1994) influential theory of a transactional response in reading notes a similar dynamic of exchange, conceptualizing a range of possible responses. Rosenblatt describes an active response continuum, ranging from aesthetic (affective, sensory, poetic), to efferent (informational, reasoning) stances. In post-structural thought, the burden of meaning shifts from author to reader. Rosenblatt suggests that neither is privileged, that it is through their transaction that meaning is made. Still, the theory plays out between two poles, which proved easy to over-simplify when informing teacher practice looking to support readers' response. Lewis (2000) critiques the binary tendency in teacher application of Rosenblatt's transactional theory and argues for a complex connection, the continuum and the interdependence of responses. Interpretive response is a socially situated activity, and through transaction, both readers and texts shape and are shaped by the interaction.

Another influence on the practice of participating teachers and the development of CRP is Greene (1995) who builds on a Deweyan notion of experience to further articulate the essential role of imagination, towards emancipatory and critical pedagogy. Through experiences with works of art, and particularly through training within the aesthetic practices of particular art forms, Greene believes learners build a capacity for creative production and imagined possibilities. The practice of imagining future listeners and

surfacing the metaphor of slavery by Anton, fall into the kind of creative engagement Greene advocates. Affective states are folded into Greene's notion of aesthetic experience. In all of these transactional, transformational formations of the aesthetic, there is, in teacher practice, a tendency to oversimplify, or romanticize them as emanating from subjective, personal emotional response. Recasting emotion as a *thing* that is produced within an aesthetic interaction—as much informed by the text as the reader—shifts the aesthetic experience as something not relegated to one fixed position, but rather actively circulating dialogically in the lived space between art and viewer. In considering the CRP approach, the role of emotion surfaces as an aspect of aesthetic response that is not fixable and knowable, but instead part of the moving whole of the interaction. The question "How does it make you feel?" is problematic as a productive, developmental step. It might work to constrain (threaten) perception and end generative inquiry.

Ellsworth (2004) describes the interaction between the aesthetic and efferent response as a source of new unforeseeable knowledge:

> In aesthetic experience and in the experience of the learning self, explanation and poetry pass into and out of each other. Rational deliberation passes into and out of emotional sensation. Facts and findings, codified curriculum, and singular, unrepeatable, ephemeral experiences of moments of learning pass into and out of each other…The work or gift of aesthetic experience within and to education is not that it will teach us this different species of knowledge—this knowing that encompasses explanation. While art gives the potential for us to experience this other way of knowing, our experience of it does not come to rest in any certain knowledge or learning of it. (p. 16)

Ellsworth articulates Dewey's transformative experience as learning, but stresses the essential open-endedness of the experience, and with that comes great challenge for teaching practice. With no fixed outcomes, the shape of classroom activity must shift to

allow for such uncertainty. Persistent assumptions of knowledge permeate classroom discourse and activity. Even though Ms. B sought to reassure and support Anton in his investigation of multiple possible meanings, the interaction was shaped by historic classroom discourse and a shared valuing of artistic voice which worked to find and fix a meaning that the student believed Douglas Argue intended.

Relational Aesthetics

Contemporary aesthetics, informed by post-structural theory complicates traditional modernist assumptions of artists, paintings, and museum gallery spaces. Rather than a sole focus on the materiality of the art object, the relational space between art object or artist's gesture and an audience is understood as a dynamic, constructive medium of potential aesthetic experience. In this contemporary understanding of art and artistic practice, aesthetic experience (or meaning) doesn't reside in the object/image, nor is it finalized as the artist's intention. The aesthetic value of the artwork is created in the relational space among artist, art objects, art gestures, and the audience as active participant (Bourriaud, 2002, Illeris, 2007; Kester, 2004). Space then, is best understood as a powerful mediating tool taken up by artists—a new artistic medium. In our case, both real (the gallery) and virtual (the illusory hallway) spaces are harnessed by Argue in his art work.

Andrea Fraser (2005) theorizes the particular mediating power of the institutional space of the museum or gallery. Rather than a neutral backdrop for artistic activity, Fraser articulates a broad, critically discursive practice of contemporary Western art focused on art institutional critique, from within those same art institutional spaces. The relations of

power that structure the creation, sale, promotion, circulation of artworks, serve to reshape what those works are—from traditional forms/objects to reactions of conceptual, non-objective art practices that seek to trouble institutional norms. Douglas Argue's painting shares these aesthetic concerns of relation and institutional critique. He consciously creates a painting on canvas, displayable only in a large gallery. He creates this work in the tradition of Renaissance realism, and academic history painting, yet depicts flapping chickens and denies the image a clear celebratory narrative. Douglas Argue's artwork—painted canvas object and image—works as a "frozen" gesture, uniquely and intentionally emplaced within an embodied, art museum gallery space (Stenglin, 2009).

The artwork invites, demands, and relies upon interaction and the social construction of meanings. Argue's aesthetic is active, and is informed also by what Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) has called "relational aesthetics" or a broadened contemporary range of art practices whose artistic media include socially mediating experiences. Kester's (2004) articulation of contemporary "dialogic art" also draws from relational intentions with a stronger emphasis on moving beyond galleries to the mediation of other areas of emplacement in public life. These contemporary aesthetic concepts draw influence from Bakhtin who articulates a notion of aesthetics as the shaping of meaning in *action*—a dialogic relationship of creative potential, a co-construction that is open and never fully finished or resolved (Illeris, 2007; Kester, 2004, p. 118,). This also echoes earlier theories such as Dewey's that advocates the educational potential of working in the social connective space between art and life.

Bakhtin introduces three aspects of creative activity that underpin theories of relational aesthetics: answerability, outsidedness and unfinalizability (Holquist and Liapunov, 1990). Creative work is necessarily engaged in dialogic activity, and the embodied positions of participants navigate this aesthetic space by negotiating and recognizing boundaries of others. Actors are created through interaction with others from the outside. And this interaction—this dialogic context—is never finalized. It can reach into the past and toward the future, indefinitely. Contemporary relational or dialogic aesthetics draw from Bakhtin's ideas to articulate a conscious mediation of space and engagement. This is a significant shift from a modernist focus on the production and presentation of finalized objects. Instead, aesthetic action is a process of a co-production of situated representations and experiences within social worlds. Argue's untitled work offers fuzzy connections to both of these aesthetic frames. His painting is both a finished object and an open-ended experience. The influence of contemporary, critical art practice and postmodern theory present a continuing challenge to the discourse of museums and open the institution to productive tension and struggle (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). Contemporary art practices that mobilize strategies of relational engagement offer platforms to explore and articulate critical aesthetic pedagogies that complicate assumptions of personal and pleasurable response.

Rather than reflecting any fixed aesthetic experience of the artists, relational artworks stimulate participants to "create themselves" through the interaction (Illeris, p. 717) through the shifting of performative positions. This movement and identity work can be understood as potentially agentic and as learning. Ellsworth (2004) asks,

> ...what knowing is possible in such transitional spaces between artworks and viewers, pedagogies and learners? What can we "know" from the felt reality of relation out of which categories and identities emerge but within which they remain unnamed? What is the *pedagogical component* of the experience of the learning self? (p. 153)

Ellsworth recognizes the relational medium of contemporary artworks and spaces—their affordance of open-ended, sensory provocation toward the viewer/participant, as pedagogic address. Contemporary aesthetics also maps onto the theoretical and art educational interests that fall under a designation of visual culture. More than an expansion of the art teacher's canon to include popular works, visual culture is also aligned with post-structural practices of looking, participating and with activities of critical meaning making. Visual culture studies (like relational aesthetics) is contingent on social semiotics. To wrestle with questions of relational space and mediation, a new analytical shift was needed.

Aesthetics and ideology

Paul Duncum (2007, 2008) reminds critical art pedagogues of the central charge of addressing ordinary, everyday aesthetics. This notion of "aesthetic" has to do with appearance or what one might think of as style (2008, p. 123) Aesthetic is an adjective here, describing the surface of things, and the effect they have on us. Duncum is particularly interested in the tension that exists between aesthetics—the surface, sensual, material aspects of something and ideology, or the critical positioning inherent in the construction, presentation or use of the object. Duncum notes that works of art often create tension between their visual seductiveness and their disagreeable or violent representation (p. 127-128)—qualities of tension that are present in Argues work.

Looking to art education, Duncum argues against a form of critical decoding that would strip or work to ignore the aesthetic aspects of an art object. Rather, he advocates keeping the aesthetic visible and working to deepen understanding of the how these qualities work to engage or form viewers into preferred positions. The practice of aesthetics becomes a strategy of obscuring and promoting ideology. Duncum (2008) argues,

> As art educators, we need to move beyond an innocent view of aesthetics as magical experience to understand how aesthetics is used to draw us into and make acceptable the arguments that visual imagery offers about the way society is structured and lived. Aesthetics as it is commonly used outside our specialist area, avoids the idealist, transcendental baggage of modernism, and is rather understood to arise from the contexts of people's everyday contact with visual images. (p. 132)

Thinking about Anton's experience in the gallery, his experience was in relation to the sort of tension Duncum describes. The painting is highly seductive, realistic, and spectacular. It is also overwhelming and tragic. It is about power and ideology, and takes the aesthetic form of realistic, epic painting. Caution against romanticizing aesthetic experience and personal pleasures reminds us that we are constructed daily as aesthetic subjects through a bombarding of consumer messages and complex imagery. Working with a concept of aesthetics that bridges both a notion of surface qualities and mobilization of emotion might prove useful—working to strike a balance in critical pedagogic practice that reveals power, yet is able to dig deeply into the tense workings. Lensmire notes:

> Conflict penetrates deep into the discourse of critical pedagogy. Unfortunately, it does not penetrate to the level of face-to-face (or in your face) interactions in the classroom. Somehow, the sweaty, painful struggles over meaning that

> characterize life in society are left at the classroom door of critical pedagogues. Within, the sharing and questioning of student voices leads, it seems, to cool conflicts of interpretation, rather than heated confrontations between actual people who, in expressing themselves, find themselves at odds. (Lensmire, 2000 p. 69)

Reflecting on Anton's critical insights, when the tension between his aesthetic embodied metaphor met with the frivolity of depicted chickens, he defaulted to a less risky place that offered cool, distanced solution to questions of the artist's ideology.

CRP and inquiry

Turning to the CRP tool, it is important to synthesize what the layered analysis revealed. It offers a ready framework for an activity of interpretative inquiry based on several assumptions about aesthetic response and about inquiry processes in classroom practice. Vasudevan (2011) wonders about the viability and practical use of classroom inquiry tools to support embodied and aesthetic engagement:

> What kind of supports do teachers need to truly inquire with their students outside of a prefabricated rubric? Such a question does not preclude the need for moments of predictability or benchmarks; the trouble exists when the instrumentalist narrative dominates to the point of pushing curiosity to the domains of the afterschool or the extra-curricular. (p. 1170)

The caution here is against a protocol or tool that is in itself too ridged or implemented in a fixed way such as to limit imagined possibilities and engagement. The CRP questions focus on different aspects of response—observation, memory, affect, questioning, and reasoning—with an emphasis on moving from close noticing to the distance of critical assessment.

The tacit understanding is that CRP structures a process and that it is sequenced to support deeper insight (or higher order thinking) and a march toward resolved knowledge. This is a contradiction in the presentation of the activity by Ms. B. Her belief in the value of the sequenced structure actually may work to reinforce a tacit understanding of singular, preferred, knowing—the right answer at the end of the protocol. The implied development is from self to the world. The source of this assumption—taxonomic cognitive activities—also tangles with the emphasis placed on discrete cognitive abilities in the practice of teachers and expressed as a value in school curriculum.

I argue that a process of critical (and aesthetic) response is first and foremost, situational. It is unique and emplaced, requiring a process that is active, not stepped and linear. It follows an unpredictable flow. Sianne Ngai (2005) holds that aesthetic judgment is always prior to any critical inquiry. It might be distanced or suppressed, but it still works to shape interpretive work. The first question in CRP asks students to notice, and this is framed as a deferral of judgment. What value might there be in holding or collecting those early judgments? Ms. B reacts to the risk of losing the engagement of her student. Her reaction when faced with his frustration is to calm and slow the activity. There is value in this shift to a deliberate and close investigation of the artwork's qualities. The protocol does not suggest the range of this noticing, but it was greatly enhanced in Alton's case through additional questions and prompts by Ms. B, such as imagining an audience to speak to, that helped her student persist in observing and articulating his embodied perceptions. These key aspects, however, are not part of the

simple protocol, but were added by the teacher as a facilitator guiding her student's perception.

The second question asks the student to connect the text (art) to self through memory. The protocol stresses that there are no wrong answers. Noticing and observation preceded this step. It might be that an extended activity of looking allows for more associations or connection to emerge. What didn't happen with this question is a connection back to the critical tension of the artwork. Slavery was called up and presented as a rich area of tension and critical literacy practice. But CRP is not set up for such an emergent pathway. And Ms. B followed the protocol, perhaps thinking it would.

Following the text-to-self question is a directive to assess an emotional state—how does it make you feel? This question fell flat. It is the most problematic question in the protocol. First there is confusion as to what "it" is. Is it the painting? Or the metaphor of slavery? Or the activity of inquiry? Is it possible that it's all three? The Perceive Card qualifies this question, "What is the mood or tone?" shifting the affective risk away from the student and onto the artwork. This shift would work as an opening to talk about the everyday aesthetic moves made by the artist and revealed in the artwork. With a more conscious understanding of relational aesthetics, the interaction of viewer/participant in with any affective charge of the artwork might prove a more useful area of inquiry.

The fourth CRP question is about questions, and meant to support the student in instigating his or her own authentic inquiry. In Anton's case he mused "Who needs this many chickens?" This question might work to open up possibilities within the inquiry, or

also be used by the student to direct the inquiry toward a conclusion—what clue do you need to know to arrive at the answer? For Anton, with the direction of Ms. B, he followed this question back to a resolved response, one that demonstrated reasoned logic yet remained on the surface of the deeper and persistent tension of issues of slavery and relational power. How might teachers work to support student generation of questions that are meant to remain "open?"

Olga Hubard (2011) notes the difference between factual and interpretive inquiry. She suggests that sequenced approaches serve to close possibilities and suggests teachers familiarize themselves with the traits of an open-ended inquiry. Aspects of CRP: questioning, observation, reasoning, association, and speculation are all also traits found in factual inquiry. Traits that are found in interpretive practices are 1) flexibility of sequence and a support for web-like moves; 2) support for metaphor and analogy; 3) acceptance of uncertainty and contradiction; 4) deep consideration given to each insight as they emerge; and 5) the mindful support of the process of meaning-making as the goal (p. 175). Hubard's distinction in types of inquiry is helpful and offers a way to rethink the structure and facilitation of CRP to support interpretive outcomes more aligned with goals of critical literacy. Redesigning CRP as interpretive inquiry places more onus on the teacher to facilitate the process and respond to student moves. It's something that Ms. B began to do intuitively, and perhaps with an awareness of the impact of structure and the activities they imply. CRP use can be even more effective at engaging students in surfacing meanings rather than waiting to receive them. In the next section I attempt to play with a revised CRP approach that brings in relational aesthetic practice, works to

internalize traits of interpretive inquiry and to support a dialogic dynamic of aesthetic and critical experience.

Critical Aesthetic Engagement: Changing the nexus

My hope is that this critical play with CRP, although complicating, is useful to teachers. Towards that goal I suggest a modified CRP practice that I call *Critical Aesthetic Engagement*. It leans towards the fluidity of the Perceive Card and opens the process to more active facilitation by the teacher. I conceive of this inquiry practice as necessarily emplaced action (Ellsworth, 2004), marked by an aware, embodied experience of relational movements that negotiate meanings and mediating discourses. The Perceive Card is a modification of CRP that is teased apart into areas of inquiry, but is designed in four-square, and can be stressed not as sequential but as possible points in a network. As a tool, the Perceive Card needs to be thoughtfully and actively facilitated to allow for an authentic sequence of interpretation to emerge. A student jumps to judgment, moved by strong emotion (for example, "Douglas has problems") that response might be more valuable to capture and keep present, rather than to defer, and perhaps avoid. There is opportunity in the tension held, used to open deeper possibility. With a more fluid framework, unanticipated questions can follow unpredicted responses. The whole practice is more dialogic between teacher and student(s). Strong emotion offers opportunity for critical work, reveals shifts in relational distance, and sets up space within a "pedagogy of discomfort" that allows the movement of students from positions of spectating to those of witnessing (1990).

Still, as a starting point, detailed observation (marked by mindful spatial shifts) has value. As embodied activity, Dewey stresses vivid perception, not just recognition. He describes a careful, intimate, sensory activity of the particular, rather than the surface register of concepts or categories. I find the question prompting student memory and personal association valuable, but recognize that such association and metaphors might emerge at any moment in the process. Teachers should work to find ways of deepening engagement in these moments of metaphor. Perhaps that's through additional questioning or perhaps by not pressing the pace of inquiry.

In *Places of Learning,* Ellsworth (2004) articulates the idea of experimental pedagogy that works critically and creatively as a "hinge" to expand and challenge "mind/brain/body" experience. I believe it also serves as a compelling description of the potential to leverage aesthetic response in dialogic relation to critical concerns. She states:

> It [pedagogy] must create for us a relationship to the outside, to others, to the world, to history and the already thought in a way that keeps the future of what we might think there open and undecided, and this would make it impossible for an artist, designer, architect, or teacher to anticipate what form a learning will take or how it will be used. It would also make it impossible to conjure a learning…In excessive moments of learning in the making, when bodies and pedagogies reach over and into each other, the pedagogical address and the learning self interfuse to become "more" that either intended or anticipated. (pp.54-55)

Ellsworth advocates for an aggressive component to pedagogy that works to "tear learning selves away from curriculum's static objects of mourning, out of their loyalties to knowledges that are inert, noncontemporaneous, and already configured" (p. 165). She frames her analysis around the awareness of a pedagogical address—an invited

experience for students or visitors to engage in a dialogical process of knowledge construction shaped by particular social and political perspectives. Ellsworth explains, “This makes "learning" not simply voluntary and idiosyncratic, but relational—an assumption of particular relations of self-to-self and between self, others, knowledge, and power” (p. 17).

To address issues of relational aesthetics, bringing an additional tool such as the Walker Art Center’s *Elements and Principles of Today’s Art* (2009) into the activity might help support practitioner awareness towards deeper embodied response (available online at http://schools.walker.org:8083/arttoday/). In this free online educator’s tool, aspects of relational aesthetics—the mediating actions surfaced in this study—space, time and performance are called out as “elements and principles,” aspects of the artwork that might be manipulated toward aesthetic ends. The Walker tool offers support, particularly for non-art teachers and students—into art world Discourse shaping contemporary art. Also included are suggested mediating aspects of appropriation, and hybridity. Each of these is rooted in contemporary, critical aesthetic practice and, as a support to interpretive inquiry, offer help to facilitate a critical and relational shift in the dynamic between artwork and audience. For teachers, these tools articulate the embodied and relational aspects of aesthetic and critical experience—in this case with contemporary art. When considered with a less sequenced CRP of open-inquiry, the Walker materials challenge assumptions and work to broaden a repertoire of noticing to include not only the art work or gesture, but its dynamic of interaction—viewers/participants engaged in meaning-making. Recognizing the relational discursive action of engaging with art, Charles

Garoian (2001) argues for audiences to "perform" their own meaningful understanding of the museum as space, and the works within it.

For Garoian, this embodied understanding is constructed from interaction with scholarly information, but also is significantly built from prior knowledge and the museum as a situated social context. Garoian recognizes the power of such dialogical artistic encounters embodied in the performance of artists and viewers. He advocates for teachers to promote in students an intentionally critical stance as *mindful performers* of the museum, to help reveal exhibition strategies and content that might normally be hidden. Sensory aspects of artworks and exhibitions work in complex ways to surface the subjectivity of participating viewers, linking public and private narratives, and constructing the dynamic of visual culture.

Critical Aesthetic Engagement requires, then, a teaching practice of action and shares the traits of interpretive inquiry. CRP questions are broken from their sequence and allowed to map onto student responses in an authentic way. The Perceive Card offers an adaptive map of questioning zones that offers a more open support for both teachers and students. Emotion is not relegated to one response area but understood as a constructed, embodied mediating tool, which circulates through engagement. Teacher facilitation can work to interact, develop, or explore how emotion moves through the inquiry. Mediating constructions of space and time, along with performative practices, can be made more visible and offer insight into tensions between aesthetics and ideology. The Walker Art Center's Art Today tool offers support for both teacher and students. Still, the teacher is central in this approach. The tools of the Perceive Card and the

Walker resources can help prepare and support embodied and open inquiry. But the key is an active, dialogically based facilitation by the teacher to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities in any given interaction.

The site of engagement found in this study is a specific intersection of time and space that allowed for the circulation of art teaching practice among a group of practitioners. This work was influenced by practices found in schools, universities, museums through networks of practitioners working with the Perpich Center for Arts Education, the University of Minnesota and National Writing Project. In the unique site of the Artful Writing project, from its start-up design in 2004 until today, the teacher participants that feature in this site and in this research project constitute a dynamic community of educators engaged in reflection and inquiry, open to providing critical professional support for continued development. The actions of Ms. B and Anton are one manifestation of this ongoing collaboration and practice, and offer evidence of the value of such shared professional work. Institutional support for this kind of sustained professional network is crucial and succeeds in helping to move teachers into positions of deeper and more effective practice.

Further questions and digital afterlife

After living with this data for the past eight years or so, and engaging in my microanalysis, there are still many questions and avenues for further study. The four-minute exchange between teacher and student reveals racial tension and struggle left under explored, particularly through the lens of critical race theory. I was troubled by my own “whiteness” and that of the participating teachers and an inherent tension between a

desire to enact critical pedagogy along with persistent racist practices of "colorblindness". In analyzing the construction of emotion and advocating the productive value of discomfort, this is one area that is open to further labor. Participant action research and comparative analysis were a part of the overall experience, but range beyond my focus on one particular episode. As the digital recording of this episode is public and being used in professional development with teachers, there is further potential to study the implication of such modeling, distribution and appropriation of CRP. The audio recording is subject to a "digital afterlife" (Soep and Chavez, 2010) where its meanings continue to be negotiated and circulated.

Rooted in the lived context of Ms. B's class, Anton's responses and work carry one set of meanings, but when broadcast out as an exemplar of practice, they open to reinterpretation and representation of stereotypes which become problematic. Beyond an exemplar of CRP as a pedagogical tool, this clip unfortunately and inadvertently may work to perpetuate a mythological representation of the resistant urban Black (male) student and the crusading White woman educator committed to saving him. Does Anton's finding of an association to slavery become a moment of "oooh!" for liberal White educators taken as evidence of critical pedagogy? Does he inadvertently place himself in a position of needing to articulate the incommensurate Black experience of slavery to White educators? Through the representations of recording, my transcription and our publication of this exemplar, Anton and Ms. B are further removed from their original context and relationship, and each becoming simplified and distorted. Pulled from one context and inserted into another, Anton risks being reproduced as the

struggling, gang- related, angry young Black man, rather than the unique, insightful student at work in Ms. B's class. It's an implied "*See, any kid can do this*"! Ms. B is out there, too. She's an engaged teacher, she's supportive, or she's overly dominant.

Within our group of participating teachers we struggled with these issues of race, identification, and representation. Can CRP be a neutral strategy of critical thinking? If you read the transcript, but didn't hear the clip, would you know the race of the participants? Do markers or identifications of race inadvertently reinforce myths of racial differences in 'intelligence?' And does this cognitive theoretical approach treat the complexities of learning as colorblind and lead to the complicated urge to "colormute" (Pollock, 2004)?

Ms. B shares her memory of finding Anton in front of the painting:

> I remember the ah-ha moment, when I was like "this is freakin' brilliant!" *He* is. I mean, I knew that about him [Anton], and I had moments like this *all the time* with my students as we do, but then I had this [audio recording] and was in working relationship around this project [Artful Writing], that maybe we could turn this into something. And then the next layer when it became a teaching tool, … the way it's been disseminated, the way it's been transcribed, you know it's like there are so many different ways…And this is super-cool for me, just personally for me, because I'm participating in it there. But um, there's been a lot of critique, from people, and you know like when the negative voices stand out to you, they just expound on what you think poorly about yourself. (Interview 5/17/2011)

One critique has come from a respected colleague and friend, an African American artist and teacher who expressed her distaste for this exemplar. Visibly hurt by this, but committed to critical reflection, Ms. B continues,

> I still don't fully get it, except that out of context it looks like a simplified tool of White privileged people that shows how to move African American students in poverty from A to Z in fast motion. (Interview 5/17/2011)

A teacher colleague participating in this discussion, also a white woman educator, empathizes, yet pushed to further explore this uncomfortable critique.

Teacher 1: And that's where you both become representatives in this larger, racial dynamic around learning. And then, what I was saying earlier, it's hard to keep him from being representative of young black men. Talking about because of the power dynamic, and that you're the questioner and he's the reluctant learner, "*as are they all" (sarcastically)*…do you know what I mean?

Ms. B: But he asks "who needs this many chickens?"…

Teacher 1: I know, I know, I know.

Ms. B: But that it becomes an association with slavery, you know…

Teacher 1: Yeah.

Ms. B: Whatever, whatever, we don't need to stay here. (Interview 5/17/2011)

This critical turn in the reflective discussion, focused on enduring racism, troubles Ms. B. She argues through the perspective of racism stressing Anton's engagement and recognition of chickens, yet can't fully distance from the episode's loaded yet underexplored association with slavery. Ms. B remains eager to engage in reflection, risking vulnerability to better understand the dynamics of her teaching practice. Ms. B signals her resistance to the racial critique and is pained by the possibility that her intentions at critical pedagogy and anti-oppressive education might actually reify racial dominance or be interpreted or used in that way. She cares for Anton. And she is committed to her engagement in this difficult ongoing work, voluntarily meeting with our reflective group as the focus of critique.

My work is implicated in these critiques as well, and it unsettles me to share these worries of my unconscious complicity in racial injustice and to think of inflicting pain to my colleagues. Teaching is messy work, and critical reflection is difficult. I am reminded of Ellsworth's (1989) insight addressing utopian myths of critical pedagogy and her own teaching struggles. She acknowledges the deep difficulty around anti-oppressive teaching and argues that perhaps the best she can hope for is:

> …a sustained encounter with currently oppressive formation and power relations that refuses to be theorized away or fully transcended in an utopian resolution—and to enter in to the encounter in a way that own[s] up to my own implications in those formations and [is] capable of changing my own relation to and investments in those formations. (p. 308)

Ms. B's established classroom discourse is transferred into the art museum pedagogic space, but is shaped and in turn shapes the multimodal and aesthetic discourse of the museum. As used by Ms. B, Critical Response Protocol is a teaching strategy that attempts to support student critical engagement through reasoned critical distance and also seeks to support emotional engagement. Based on sequenced questions, it attempts to organize learner responses into tracks of thinking. In this practice, the CRP sequence distinguishes (and favors) evidential reasoning and distanced personal memory over immediate emotional response.

My initial questions of inquiry remain, but they have shifted to focus more closely on surfaced issues of context, pedagogic space and teacher intention. My interest in a careful analysis of teacher/student relationships and negotiated power has been refined around concepts of socio-culturally constructed emotion. Ms. B expresses her desire to support the critical engagement of students—to slow down and step back—as they

structure meaning-making practices around the perception and creation of art. In this practice, “thoughtfulness” is emotionally constructed as deliberate, measured, calm and slow. Additionally, Ms. B states that the sensory qualities found in the investigation and production of multimodal artworks outside of classroom space is central to her pedagogic strategy. This desire to leverage the aesthetic qualities of material artwork and art space—to set an emotional tone of critical engagement as essential to critical literacy—reveals a practice that is more complex than the broadly held emphasis and value of critical distancing.

This research suggests that teacher and student practice of CRP within the context of the art museum can support generative student responses, yet it also constrains what insights are possible through its assumed focus on and value of reasoned logic. Although CRP does acknowledge the emotional potential of artworks and invites student to articulate their emotional response, the inquiry framework can work to constrain—or perhaps “tame”—such engaged responses. It is significant that in the situated case studied—participants’ use of CRP in the museum—it is further contextualized within a broader curriculum of creative writing that seeks aesthetic engagement. The experience of students working in Ms. B’s class at the museum do so as an aspect of idea generation for their own creation, as part of a broader studio process. As such, the affordances and constraints of CRP work within a network of aesthetic learning strategies that cut across museum and classroom discourse, designed to engage students in artistic production. In this initial analysis, the context of aesthetic learning (both in the museum and in the classroom) is surfacing as key to both critical engagement and critical literacy practice.

Summary and final reflections

My research trajectory has tumbled through three layers of micro analysis, focused on one four-minute episode of a teacher and her student in front of a large, strange painting. In this chapter, I pull together accumulated insights from my reflective practice and questions to articulate a deepened understanding of CRP as it was used in this early exemplar of practice. My goal is to recognize the value of the practice of CRP while suggesting improvements and cautions for educators, to move CRP-informed practice towards a practice that is more fluid, nuanced and mindful of relational experience—to change the nexus. What requires further discussion is the concept of aesthetics in mindful, relational activity. Student response is not discretely efferent or aesthetic. This research project has revealed the central importance of movement within critical pedagogy—offering another view of Ellsworth's (2004) idea of "pedagogy of self in motion" (p.16-17).

This study brings together the concerns of critical literacy and arts educational research. It is informed by both fields. Interpretative approaches drawn from literary critique offer a start but fail to account for the multimodal aspects of works of art. Through a deep study of one teacher and her student using CRP, I hoped to better understand both the value of the teaching practice and offer possibilities for improvement. Through a theoretical framework of mediated discourse analysis, I recognized a trajectory of data that revealed the activity of Anton and his teacher Ms. B as a nexus of valued practices, identified by participants. As my relationship with the participants and data shifted, so did research questions and tactics for analysis. The first

analysis focuses on evidence of critical thinking and cognition, noting evidence of specific thinking skills. The second looks to sociocultural aspects of learning and attends to discursive language and shifts in power and identity between student and teacher as they engage in CRP. The final analytic turn explores the non-linguistic mediating tools of space, time, distance, and social construction of emotion. Unexamined tensions between teaching goals of critical thinking, critical literacy and aesthetic processes are revealed.

Evidence is found of Anton demonstrating forms of higher-order thinking (Tishman, 2002) in moments of participation, yet the student's response is curtailed by his resistance to the artwork and to some demands of CRP. Intending to support critical literacy, this CRP practice was constrained by both teacher and student assumptions surrounding aesthetic response, the artist's intention and artistic voice, and by a persistent, normative classroom discourse valuing calm, sequenced, and reasoned interpretation. Opportunities to move critical investigation into the affective charge of the artwork which provoked issues of racial representation, incommensurate histories and discomfort, are resisted or unanswered (Boler, 1999). The study concludes with an attempt to redesign a CRP approach as interpretive inquiry (Hubard, 2011) within a suggested pedagogy of critical aesthetic engagement, understood as emplaced action (Ellsworth, 2004), marked by an aware, embodied experience of relational movements (Ahmed, 2004; Hubard, 2010) that negotiate meanings and mediating discourses.

I am heartened that my research into this particular enactment of CRP use is supported by the participants in which it emerged. The openness and passion for reflection practiced by Ms. B, along with the direct and authentic participation of Anton

gave this work value and possibility. I am grateful for their generosity. Supporting student engagement in works of art, and learning to facilitate “art talk” (Cotner, 2001), is essential to effective critical literacy and art educational practice. CRP offers an attempted hybrid approach, drawing from Reader Response, stepped inquiry and Visual Thinking Strategies. As a tool it is limited by the mindful use of both teachers and students. My hope is that this study serves to challenge simplistic notions of aesthetic response and critique, making visible assumptions and traits for teachers to navigate towards deeper critical aesthetic engagement.

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Appendix A

From the Artful Writing Teacher's Guide (2005), about the Perceive Card:

Artful Writing's
Big Idea

Students will learn that both art and writing are based on communicating ideas. Both provide meaningful opportunities to heighten perception, engage emotions, deepen thought, and broaden one's understanding of the world.

Why is the process of perception the starting point for all other activities?

The PERCEIVE card guides the essential underlying process of careful observation or perception. This pop up card is intended for use with the accompanying visual art images, but this process may be useful with other forms of text and as a guide to student reflection on their own work, or the work of peers.

Artists and writers use their powers of observation to notice things that others might not notice.

Artful Writing is centered on works of visual art. The images offer rich puzzles to investigate. The PERCEIVE cards guide students into a work and help them begin to build meaning. By practicing the habit of increased perception — slowing down to look before judging — students find evidence to help build their interpretations and opinions and gain an awareness of, and confidence in, their own thinking. Students learn to tease apart observations (the facts, the evidence, what they see) from interpretations (reasoned conclusions supported by evidence; what they see that makes them say that).

We have adapted this process from other successful sequential, critical approaches with which you may be familiar. Ours places emphasis on sensory response, emotional connection, and connecting with personal memory. Increased observation or sensory perception—taking time to notice things that others might miss—is an essential practice in visual literacy and a valuable skill for all learners and creative thinkers.

Here are the PERCEIVE steps:

1. What do you notice? Imagine using all of your senses. Describe what you see.
2. What feelings do you get from the image? Is there a mood?
3. What does the image remind you of? What is going on? What other meanings could there be?
4. What does the image make you wonder about? What questions are raised?

These questions lead to the viewer's thoughtful speculation about what the artwork might mean.

Getting started requires only the image or text being investigated and the viewer's prior knowledge and experience. It provides the steps to begin to tackle any artwork, no matter how daunting!

Working through the perception process can be done individually, but it can be particularly effective as a guide to facilitate group discussion. Sharing perceptions, responses, and questions about a single work can be dynamic and rewarding whether the dialogue is between partners or in the facilitated discussion of a larger group. Puzzling out meanings from a rich image, students build on each other's ideas.

Use the steps to facilitate the investigation of a dense poem, work of literature, or an artwork in any other discipline.

Make this inquiry strategy a habit in your classroom.

Appendix B

For more information about Artful Tools—including background, updates, and exemplars—visit Artful Online:
http://opd.mpls.k12.mn.us/ArtfulTools.html
This version adapted and developed by the Perpich Center for Arts Education. May be reproduced for educational use.

Critical Response Protocol Overview

When to Use It

1. Presenting teacher, artist, or student(s) wants a group of responders to deeply investigate an artwork, text, lesson, or performance.
2. A community needs safe space for all voices to come forward at the beginning of a shared inquiry—a class, a seminar, an artist residency.
3. An artist or teacher wants to find out about the prior knowledge of a group of learners.

Presenter Duties

Presenting teacher or artist presents an artwork/lesson/performance—their own or someone else's.

Responder Duties

Observers describe without judgment. They make connections with the work to their own lives and share any emotional response the work elicits in them. Observers raise questions and speculate on the meaning or understanding they might construct from the work.

Analogous Activities

- Shared deconstruction/reconstruction of experience
- Making meaning
- Shared inquiry in Junior Great Books
- Paeideia or Socratic discourse
- Surfacing the "wisdom of the crowd"
- Critique
- Collaborative Assessment
- Understanding Experience

Related Tools/Protocols

- Descriptive Review
- Looking at Student Work
- Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)
- Artful Writing Perceive Card (Weisman Museum)

Critical Response

70-85 minutes

Getting Started 10-15 Min.

Facilitator introduces all participants to each other if needed and explains steps of protocol. We can better understand any complex work or experience when we slow down and first pay attention to what we notice, remember, feel, and wonder about it.

1: What do you notice? 10 Min.

Facilitator: Ask the group to describe what they see/hear without judgment. If judgment emerges, ask for evidence on which the judgment is based: *What did you see that makes you say that?*

Responders: Answer using descriptive terms, without making judgments about the quality of the work or offering personal preferences: *I notice that . . .*

2: What does it remind you of? 10 Min.

Facilitator: Ask the group to consider how they can connect this work to their own life: What do they recall when they consider this work?

Responders: Respond with any memory, experience, story, music, or other work that this example triggers. When people access and share their prior knowledge they build more connections to the work. There are no wrong answers or associations.

3: How do you feel? 10 Min.

Facilitator: Ask the group to share what feelings the work evokes in them.

Responders: Describe your feelings in one or two words. People tend to better remember those things that they can connect to an emotion. Again, no wrong answers.

4: What questions does it raise? 10 Min.

Facilitator: Ask the group what questions the work triggers.

Responders: Raise any questions about the work: *I wonder…*

5: Speculate 10 Min.

Facilitator: Ask the group to speculate about what the work helps them to understand. What do they think was the artist's intent?

Responders: Respond with what meaning you take away: *I speculate that . . .*

Respond/Open Dialogue/Reflect 10-20 Min.

Presenter: If you presented your own work, reflect out loud on the process, respond to any of the questions raised (if you want—you don't have to answer every question), or comment on anything surprising or unexpected that you heard. During this time the other participants are silent.

All Participants: Participate in an open dialogue about the work in question. This is time for everyone present to share new ideas for next steps and respond to one another directly about what they heard, what they still wonder about, etc.

Responders: Reflect on how the protocol went and how it affected your understanding. Discuss implications for the work in question. Consider where and when this tool might be useful. Possible questions:

- What habits of mind does it draw upon?
- What is gained or lost by withholding judgment?
- How might the combined perceptions, connections to prior knowledge, emotional responses, questions, and speculations differ depending upon the size and make-up of the group?

Appendix C

Interview protocol used to frame 2011 group reflection:

Teacher Participant Group Interview Framework and Questions

Researcher: Judi Petkau

Study Title: An Analysis of the Critical Response Protocol as a Strategy for Critical Literacy Learning in the Art Museum

Interview planned for March, 2011

The sequence below is a planned framework, and the researcher will shift to follow the group discussion, inviting and leaving space for participants to raise unforeseen concerns, questions or responses that may prove salient. Not all of the questions may be used, but form the general inquiry that the researcher will follow. Participating in this recorded group discussion are the three teachers featured in the three transcribed episodes.

1. Present transcribed text and recording of teaching episode #1. *Single student and teacher in the museum using Critical Response.*

   What do you notice about this exchange?
   What does it remind you of?
   Is there anything significant about the teacher or student's relationship?
   Is the space of the art museum or presentation of the artwork significant? If so, how? If not, why not?
   Did learning occur? If so, describe. If not, why not?
   Was critical literacy practiced in this exchange? Explain.
   Has your understanding of the Critical Response Protocol changed since the time of this recording? If so, how?
   For you, what is the meaning of this episode of museum-based teaching?
   What is important to know contextually about this episode, beyond the clip?
   What questions does this raise for you?

2. Present transcribed text and recording of teaching episode #2. *Group of Alternative Learning Center students and their teacher in the museum using Critical Response.*

   What do you notice about this exchange?
   How is this episode similar and different than the previous clip?
   Is there anything significant about the teacher or student's relationship?
   Is the space of the art museum or presentation of the artwork significant? If so, how? If not, why not?
   What do you think was the goal of the teacher's learning activity? Explain.
   Was critical literacy practiced in this exchange? Explain.
   Did learning occur? If so, describe. If not, why not?
   What is important to know contextually about this episode, beyond the clip?
   What questions does this raise for you?

3. Present transcribed text and recording of teaching episode #3. *Museum educator and teaching artist introducing painting and poem*

   What do you notice about this exchange?
   How is this episode similar and different than the previous clips?
   Is there anything significant about the teachers/students relationship?
   Is the space of the art museum or presentation of the artwork significant? If so, how? If not, why not?
   How did the text of the poem feature in the activity?
   What do you think was the goal of the teacher's learning activity? Explain.
   Was critical literacy practiced in this exchange? Explain.
   Did learning occur? If so, describe. If not, why not?
   What is important to know contextually about this episode, beyond the clip?
   What questions does this raise for you?

4. Open general discussion of the use of the Critical Response Protocol by teachers in art museum settings and critical literacy.

   Is CRP useful in the art museum? If so, why? If not, why not?
   What learning does this protocol support?
   Does CRP restrict or constrain other forms of student response?
   Does CRP support or constrain critical literacy? Explain.
   What does critical literacy practice in an art museum look like?
   How do CRP activities in the art museum space compare with CRP activities in classroom spaces?
   How do networks and levels of power shape teaching and learning in these episodes?
   What insights do you think are important for teachers working in museum settings?