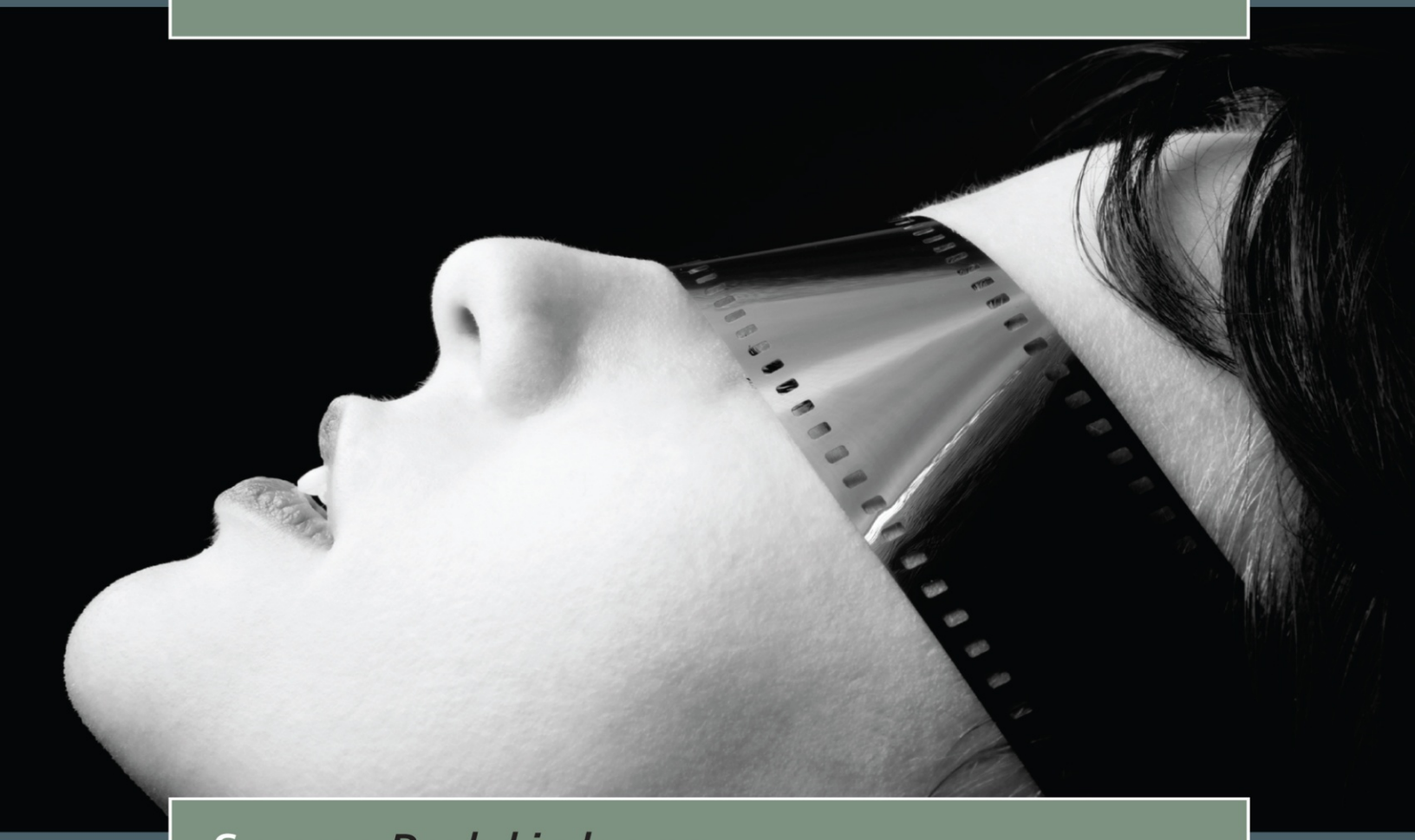
BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis

James Trier (Ed.)



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Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis

BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Volume 3

Series Editor:

George W. Noblit, *Joseph R. Neikirk Distinguished Professor of Sociology of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA*

In this series, we are establishing a new tradition in the sociology of education. Like many fields, the sociology of education has largely assumed that the field develops through the steady accumulation of studies. Thomas Kuhn referred to this as 'normal science.' Yet normal science builds on a paradigm shift, elaborating and expanding the paradigm. What has received less attention are the works that contribute to paradigm shifts themselves. To remedy this, we will focus on books that move the field in dramatic and recognizable ways—what can be called breakthroughs.

Kuhn was analyzing natural science and was been less sure his ideas fit the social sciences. Yet it is likely that the social sciences are more subject to paradigm shifts than the natural sciences because the social sciences are fed back into the social world. Thus sociology and social life react to each other, and are less able separate the knower from the known. With reactivity of culture and knowledge, the social sciences follow a more complex process than that of natural science. This is clearly the case with the sociology of education. The multiplicity of theories and methods mix with issues of normativity—in terms of what constitutes good research, policy and/or practice. Moreover, the sociology of education is increasingly global in its reach—meaning that the national interests are now less defining of the field and more interrogative of what is important to know. This makes the sociology of education even more complex and multiple in its paradigm configurations. The result is both that there is less shared agreement on the social facts of education but more vibrancy as a field. What we know and understand is shifting on multiple fronts constantly. Breakthroughs is to the series for works that push the boundaries—a place where all the books do more than contribute to the field, they remake the field in fundamental ways. Books are selected precisely because they change how we understand both education and the sociology of education.

Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis

Edited by
James Trier
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Of course, I also want to express my great appreciation to Trey Adcock, Amy Senta, Jason Mendez, Ashley Boyd, Tim Conder. and Joseph Hooper for the carefully crafted and thoughtful chapters that they contributed to this book. Each one's approach to detournement is unique, engaging, provocative, and pedagogically powerful, and I think their chapters and mine come together well to form a collective (provisional) reply to the question, "What is detournement?" I look forward to reading their future published work about creating detournements in their current academic contexts. I am sure each will take detournement in new directions.

JAMES TRIER

1. THE INTRODUCTION TO *DETOURNEMENT AS PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS*

> In the broadest sense, Debord's whole conception of society is founded on *detournement*.
>
> — Anselm Jappe, 1999

While preparing to write this introduction to *Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis*, I read a great deal about the Paris-based avant-garde group called the Situationist International (SI) because the theory and critical practice of detournement is most often associated in academic writing with the SI. I eventually realized that what I was writing based on the research I was doing about the SI was actually material that went far beyond the purposes of this book, and so I conceptualized another book that will follow this one, a book provisionally titled *Situationist Theory and Education*. In that book, I will discuss the Situationist International's origins, main figures, creative works, writings, history, and post-demise afterlife in academic scholarship and popular culture. Doing that will entail discussing dada, surrealism, the Lettrists, the Lettrist International, psychogeography, the dérive, unitary urbanism, detournement, architecture, painting, cinema, "scandals," the Spectacle, May'68, and more. I will also explain how the concepts and critical artistic practices of the Situationists have shaped my thinking, teaching, research, and scholarship as an academic in the field of Education. "Detournement" will figure importantly in that book, too, but it won't be the central focus like it is in this book. But enough about "that book." What is *this* book about?

Obviously, it is about detournement. Not so immediately obvious is what "detournement" means.[1] For now I want to provide the most frequently cited—and partial—definition of detournement given by Guy Debord, the leader of the Situationist International. Debord (1959) stated generally that detournement entails "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble" (p. 55). Though Debord used the word "artistic" in this general definition, three years earlier he and his friend, Gil Wolman, had defined detournement without such a qualifier, stating, "Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations" (Debord & Wolman, 1956, p. 9). These two definitional statements about detournement—partial and general as they are—enable me to state that each of the authors in this book has written a chapter about how he or she incorporated

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 1–37.

detournement into one or another kind of pedagogical situation. So that is what this book is about—the roles that detournement played in pedagogical projects.

To set up the chapters in this book, I will discuss a graduate course that I teach called "Cultural Studies and Education," which is offered in the Culture, Curriculum and Change (CCC) strand of the Ph.D. program in our School of Education. This is a course that all of the contributing authors took at one time or another over a span of several years. It is through this course that I introduced the contributing authors to Guy Debord's theories of the Spectacle and detournement, and the detournements that the authors discuss were conceptualized and created as part of this course. By discussing the main elements of my course, I will be attempting to convey to readers the main ideas that the authors were working with when they designed and created their detournements. Also, by describing how I incorporated detournement into my own teaching practice, I am writing the kind of chapter that all the contributing authors have written.[2]

So, first I will describe what I call the "mosh pit," which had the purpose of creating a situation that enables the co-construction of knowledge by everyone in the course. Then I will explain the "short circuit" pedagogical approach I took to achieve one of the course's main purposes, which was to involve students in reading a selection of critical social theory texts. Next, I will discuss the important role that Stuart Hall's work played in the course, particularly his analysis of "transcoding" as a strategy for interrogating and challenging stereotypes. Then I will discuss Guy Debord's analysis of "the Spectacle," which will set up the main section in this chapter about the anti-spectacular tactic of detournement. I will then briefly explain the role that Naomi Klein's (2001) book *No Logo* played in the remainder of the course. In the last part of the chapter, I will introduce the contributing authors' chapters by highlighting the kind of detournements they made and the pedagogical projects they designed and taught around their detournements. Finally, I will explain what I consider to be the "cultural studies" aspect of my course.[3]

THE "MOSH PIT"

To set the stage for a participatory seminar, I introduced students to what I call "mosh pit" pedagogy. I explained that a mosh pit, associated with punk and grunge live gigs, is a space that typically forms close to the stage where a band plays and where people engage in a spontaneous, performative act that, looking at it from the margins, seems to be a whirl of seemingly chaotic yet spontaneously patterned movement in which people are basically moving into one another, brushing by one another, sometimes slamming into one another, stumbling and falling and getting up, careening into and off of one another again, all in a sort of circling, crisscrossing, suddenly about-face fashion—all taking place, of course, during some loud, sped-up, short song (say, the Sex Pistols' "God Save the Queen"). I further explained that in the analogy, the "song" would be composed of the print readings and film(s) assigned for the week, the "mosh pit" would be formed by our gathering in the

classroom (a room fully-loaded with a lot of technological offerings and internet access), and the spontaneous performative act would be this (I am quoting from the syllabus here):

> Each week, to get into the discursive mosh pit, you are to post an image, video, or web link to our course Sakai site, or you can bring in some text that articulates with an aspect of a reading or film for that week. By "text," I mean a video, a DVD, a music CD, a visual image, a print text, or whatever else you might think of. The articulation that you see between the text you post or bring in and the text we've read (or viewed) for the week need not be some grand connection: any level and degree of articulation is perfectly fine. The idea is to illuminate some particular (or general) aspect of a reading or series of readings.

To demonstrate to students what I was asking them to do, I showed some YouTube videos that I had uploaded about Slavoj Zizek (see next section) to the next seminar's discussion page on Sakai (the electronic content management site for the class).[4] For example, I had embedded a documentary titled *Zizek!* (Fiennes & Zizek, 2006); scenes from *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*; several videos featuring Zizek being interviewed on talk shows or giving lectures at universities (there are hundreds of such videos on YouTube); and videos showing Jacques Lacan. Each of these videos figured into my introduction of Zizek and his "short circuit" interpretive method. Through my examples, the students acquired a better sense of what I meant by articulating a text that they have found with some element in the required readings (the required readings for that seminar were selections from Zizek, 1992a and 2006). The students also got a sense of the powerful pedagogical potential of YouTube (see Trier, 2007a, 2007b), particularly the ease with which it enables users to access videos relevant to their interests (and to save the videos on their hard drives for future uses). I should add that the students ended up relying a great deal on YouTube to accumulate videos that went into making their detournements.[5]

A PEDAGOGY OF "SHORT CIRCUITS"

One main purpose of the course was to study in depth some of the core concepts and theories (mostly from a Marxist tradition) that have been central to both cultural studies and educational discourses, which I discuss below. First, though, I want to explain the approach we took, which I call a pedagogy of "short circuits." This is a method that I have adapted from the work of the Slovenian philosopher, Lacan-explicator, and Marxist Slavoj Zizek. In the preface to his book *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Zizek (1992a) explained the subversive "reading" procedure that he engages in to interpret Lacanian theory through popular culture:

> A reading of the most sublime theoretical motifs of Jacques Lacan together with and through exemplary cases of contemporary mass culture: not only Alfred Hitchcock, … but also *film noir*, science fiction, detective novels,

> sentimental kitsch, and up—or down—to Stephen King. We thus apply to Lacan himself his own famous formula "Kant with Sade," i.e., his reading of Kantian ethics through the eyes of Sadian perversion. What the reader will find in this [Zizek's] book is a whole series of "Lacan with …": [Lacan with] Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang, Ruth Rendell, Patricia Highsmith, Colleen McCullough, Stephen King, etc. (If, now and then, the book also mentions "great" names like Shakespeare and Kafka, the reader need not be uneasy: they are read strictly as kitsch authors, on the same level as McCullough and King.) (p. viii)

Years later, in the foreword to his book *The Parallax View*, Zizek (2006) explained what happens through engaging in this subversive, critical reading procedure: "A short circuit occurs when there is a faulty connection in the network—faulty, of course, from the standpoint of the network's smooth functioning. Is not the shock of short-circuiting, therefore, one of the best metaphors for critical reading? Is not one of the most effective critical procedures to cross wires that do not usually touch: to take a major classic (text, author, notion), and read it in a short-circuiting way, through the lens of a 'minor' author, text, or conceptual apparatus …? If the minor reference is well chosen, such a procedure can lead to insights which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions" (p. ix).[6]

To introduce students to this short circuit reading procedure, I assigned these two brief Zizek readings (for the second seminar), and I also showed some segments of a film titled *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (Fiennes & Zizek, 2006).[7] The uniqueness of this film is not only Zizek's fascinating short circuit interpretations of a wide range of films, but also how Zizek is filmed on either actual or mock-up movie sets from the very films he is analyzing. For example, one segment of *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* is from *The Matrix* (1999), when Morpheus is explaining to Neo the choice between the red pill and the blue pill. Suddenly, we see Zizek in the scene in place of Neo, sitting across from Morpheus. Zizek explains to Morpheus (and to us, the viewers):

> But the choice between the blue and red pill is not really a choice between illusion and reality. Of course, the matrix is a machine for fictions, but these are fictions which already structure our reality. If you take away from our reality the symbolic fictions that regulate it, you lose reality itself. [Suddenly, the setting changes, and Zizek occupies and speaks from the same "white space" that Morpheus and Neo are in during the film when Morpheus explains "the desert of the real" to Neo.] I want a third pill! So, what is the third pill? Definitely not some kind of transcendental pill which enables a fake, fast-food religious experience, but a pill that would enable me to perceive not the reality behind illusion, *but the reality of illusion itself*.

Scenes like this from a few dozen movies comprise *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, and I made copies of the film available to the students and encouraged them to

watch some or all of the film outside of class for the purpose of deepening their understanding of Zizek's short circuit reading method. (The entire film is also now available on YouTube.) I also explained that this short circuit approach that Zizek takes to teach his readers about Lacanian theory was also the method we would take for engaging in our own theoretical explorations.[8]

CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY SHORT CIRCUITED WITH POPULAR FILMS

How this played out in my course is that over several consecutive seminars, I engaged students in this procedure of short circuiting and crossing the wires of "major" critical social theory texts by "reading" them with, alongside, and through "minor" texts, which were all popular films (readings and films are taken up as assigned texts outside of the class). For example, we read the theory and method of dialectics (Ollman, 2003) and Marx's (1867) conceptualization of commodity fetishism with *I Heart Huckabees*; Lukacs' (1971) theorization of the concept of reification (as well as Timothy Bewes's analysis of reification) with the films *The Matrix* and *Anamatrix*; Horkheimer and Adorno's (1947) critique of the culture industries with the film *Network*; Althusser's (1971) theorization of repressive and ideological state apparatuses with the documentary *Berkeley in the Sixties*; and the roles that consent and coercion play in Gramsci's (1988) conceptualizaton of hegemony with the documentary *Manufacturing Consent*. To culminate these short circuit seminars, we read Guy Debord's (1967) *The Society of the Spectacle* and made as many articulations as possible between Debord's concepts and insights with those we had analyzed in these theoretical readings and films.

The purpose of short circuiting "classic" social theory texts with cinematic texts was to discover how the texts could synergistically bring out clarifications of and a multiplicity of meanings in one another. The written assignment that I gave for each short circuit seminar was the following:

> After you view the film and read the print text, select a scene that you will analyze through one or more passages from the print reading. First, describe the scene in a paragraph or two, as if you were writing for a reader who has seen the film (so you need not summarize the plot) but who only vaguely remembers the scene you are analyzing, so you have to first describe it. Then, analyze the scene through the selected passages from the theoretical reading, specifically articulating words, phrases, and clauses from the print reading with elements from the film scene. Post your short circuit analysis to Sakai, and be sure to read all the posts prior to our next seminar.

It would be well beyond the main purposes of this chapter to explain how each "short circuit" seminar unfolded from week to week,[9] or even to discuss all the short circuit articulations made between just one film and a print text during one seminar. Therefore, I will give one illustrative example of a specific short circuit articulation, and again, I will draw on *The Matrix*.[10]

As mentioned, one seminar calls for short circuiting Lukacs' chapter on reification with the film *The Matrix*. The segment of the film that students typically focus on most begins when Neo meets Morpheus, who describes Neo as someone who has always felt that "there's something wrong with the world." Morpheus adds, "You don't know what it is, but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad." Morpheus then describes the matrix: "The matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work. When you go to church. When you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." Morpheus tells Neo that he is "a slave," adding, "Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind."

In another scene soon after this one, Neo undergoes the violent process of being physically freed by Morpheus and his crew from the matrix. After Neo has broken through the gooey embryo and yanks the metal quasi-umbilical cord from his mouth, he gazes upon a vast, dark landscape of innumerable towers of countless incubation pods that are completely separated from one another, each containing an unconscious human kept alive by dreaming the simulated "reality" created by the matrix. And in a scene that occurs after Neo is rescued, Morpheus explains to Neo that sometime in the past, the machine world overthrew the human world and began using humans as their sole sources of energy to perpetuate their existence: "There are fields, Neo. Endless fields where humans are no longer born. We are grown." Morpheus then expands on his earlier description of the matrix: "The matrix is a computer-generated dream world," and the "dream" is what we believe to be our waking "reality." It is this process of dreaming that keeps the humans alive and causes them to generate energy. Morpheus says the matrix was "built to keep us under control, in order to change a human being into this"—at which point he holds up a "coppertop" Duracell battery in his hand.

The image of a human being wholly transformed into a battery-like energy source is a perfect visual representation of reification, which means something like "thingification." Timothy Bewes (2002) provides this explanation: "Reification refers to the moment that a process or relation is generalized into an abstraction, and thereby turned into a 'thing.'" Bewes adds, "In Marxist theories of labour, reification is what happens when workers are installed in a place within the capitalist mode of production, and then reduced to the status of a machine part" (pp. 3–4), i.e., a thing.

These segments from *The Matrix* articulate with several passages from Lukacs, including one in which he explains how the worker—the producer of all the "energy" for the capitalist machine to sustain itself—is totally separated from other workers and from himself or herself. Lukacs explains that

> the subjects of labor must likewise be rationally fragmented. On the one hand, the objectification of their labour-power into something opposed to their total personality … is now made into the permanent ineluctable reality of their daily

> life. Here, too, the personality can do no more than look on helplessly while its own existence is reduced to an isolated particle and fed into an alien system. On the other hand, the mechanical disintegration of the process of production into its component parts destroys the bonds that had bound individuals to a community in the days when production was still organic. In this respect, too, mechanization makes them isolated abstract atoms whose work no longer brings them together directly and organically; it becomes mediated to an increasing extent exclusively by the abstract laws of the mechanism which imprisons them. (p. 90)

This passage articulates with the imagery of the matrix in a few ways. The humans who are imprisoned by and generate energy for the matrix represent the workers (i.e., "the subjects of labor") within the capitalistic mode of production that "imprisons them." Just as the matrix has separated the human bodies into individualized pods and has forced the humans' sleeping minds to dream a simulated "reality," workers are "rationally fragmented" and turned into "isolated abstract atoms," and in this "permanent ineluctable reality of their daily life," each worker's "personality can do no more than look on helplessly while its own existence is reduced to an isolated particle and fed into an alien system." Lukacs's phrase "look on helplessly" identifies the passive role that the worker is forced to play, and in another passage, Lukacs explains that when "labor is progressively rationalized and mechanized," a worker's "lack of will is reinforced by the way in which his activity becomes less and less active and more and more *contemplative*" **(**p. 89**,** italics in original). In *The Matrix*, this contemplative condition is perfectly represented by the dreaming humans in the pods.

This is merely one example of dozens of short circuit articulations that the students and I made between the films and the theoretical texts, and what is important to emphasize is that the students and I discovered that by reading the theoretical material with and through the films, we came to deeper understandings of the main elements of the theoretical readings (and the films, too) than we otherwise would have.

STUART HALL: ENCODING/DECODING, REPRESENTATION, AND CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

Another main purpose of the course was to explore Stuart Hall's work on representation. Hall (who died in February of 2014) was one of the founding figures and enduring influential theorists of British Cultural Studies, and he played an important role in my course in that the authors of this book's chapters drew upon Hall's work (some explicitly, others implicitly) in conceptualizing and making their detournements. An important reading that I assigned early in the course (before the series of short circuit seminars mentioned above) is Hall's (1980) essay "Encoding/decoding." Hall explains that the term "encoding" means the process of trying to

construct and control an intended meaning or set of meanings of a text, whether the text is a film, a television show, an advertising image, a written work, a song, and so on. Of course, no matter how much we attempt to determine and control the meaning of a text, nothing can guarantee that the text will end up being "read"—i.e., interpreted, understood, or decoded—in the way that we intended. In Hall's theorization of this process of encoding and decoding texts, he identifies three kinds of readings that we, as "decoders," can engage in or enact: *preferred*, *negotiated*, and *oppositional* readings. An arguably simple explanation of these readings goes like this: A preferred reading is one that sees (interprets, understands) a text in the very way that the maker of a text designed and intended it to be seen. A negotiated reading is one that sees contradictory or otherwise problematic and objectionable elements in a text, which brings about a reading in which some elements are interpreted in the preferred way but other elements are interpreted in an oppositional way. An oppositional reading is one that rejects most or all of what a preferred reading accepts, resulting in a reading that can indeed "read the signs" but refuses to follow their direction.

Though I have more to say about Hall's work, it is important to mention that I also assigned students to view a DVD from 1997 titled *bell hooks: Cultural Criticism & Transformation*, which features bell hooks explaining her pedagogical engagement with popular culture in her teaching. In this passage, she describes a pedagogical approach that resonates with Zizek's short circuits and with my own teaching of this course:

> Students from different class backgrounds and ethnicities would come to my classes and I would want them to read all this meta-linguistic theory of difference and otherness and they would say, "Well what does this have to do with our lives?" I found continually that if I took a movie and said, "Well, did you see this movie? And how do you think about it?" and I related something very concrete in popular culture to the kind of theoretical paradigms that I was trying to share with them through various work, people seemed to grasp it more, and not only that, it would seem to be much more exciting and much more interesting for everybody. Because popular culture has that power in everyday life. (p. 2)

I assigned hooks' talk in part as another example of an academic advocating for incorporating popular culture texts into one's teaching, but I was mainly interested in having the students hear her critiques of several Hollywood movies—critiques that were good examples of no-holds-barred "oppositional" readings. Among the films she totally demolishes because of racial and gender representations are *Kids* (1995), *Smoke* (1995), *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995), *Hoop Dreams* (1994), and *Waiting to Exhale* (1995)—a film she ends up describing as "a typical Hollywood shitty, uninteresting film, the script written by white people, all marketed as being a film by and about blackness" (p. 15). Hooks also critiques the sexism in certain forms of rap and the racism she sees in the career of Madonna.

Along with Hall's "Encoding/decoding" essay, I also assigned for the second seminar selected chapters from Hall's (1997) book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*.[11] Hall provides this important "constructionist" definition of representation:

> Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning. Already, this definition carries the important premise that things—objects, people, events in the world—do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is us—in society, within human cultures—who make things mean, who signify. Meanings, consequently, will always change, from one cultural period to another. (p. 61)

Along with providing a working meaning of representation, Hall also discusses the pervasive practice of stereotyping. Hall's analysis of stereotyping became very important for the students in the course as they conceptualized and made their detournements, as can be seen in their chapters. In his analysis, Hall discusses the practice of "transcoding," which means "taking an existing meaning and re-appropriating it for new meanings (e.g. 'Black is Beautiful')" (p. 270). One type of transcoding—which Hall also calls a "representational counter-strategy"—is "reversing the stereotypes." The example Hall develops is the blaxploitation (black + exploitation) film trend of the 1970s in U.S. cinema, which he states was a "more independent representation of black people and black culture in the cinema," made possible by "the enormous shifts which accompanied the upheavals of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s" (p. 256).[12] Hall sums up by saying that the main pitfall of the strategy of reversing the stereotype is that it does not escape "the contradictions of the binary structure of racial stereotyping" (p. 272). In other words, one stereotype was replaced by another—an opposite and relatively "better" one, but a (still problematic) stereotype nevertheless.

A second strategy that Hall describes for countering a stereotype is constructing "positive" images of the group being stereotyped. This approach has the intent of balancing out the negative images with positive images, and in terms of race, Hall states that the strategy "greatly expands the *range* of racial representations and the *complexity* of what it means to 'be black,' thus challenging the reductionism of earlier stereotypes" (pp. 272–273, italics in original). Though Hall does not mention it, the successful television series *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) is the epitome of this strategy. However, the construction and circulation of positive images, though laudable for several reasons, "does not necessarily displace the negative" images, and like the reversing of stereotypes, it "challenges the binaries—but it does not undermine them" (p. 274).[13]

Though Hall is critical of the two strategies discussed above, he does not dismiss them as having no role to play in combatting stereotypes. Rather, he argues that they are not as effective as a third strategy, which involves contesting a stereotype from within. In a filmed lecture from 1997 titled *Stuart Hall: Representation and*

the Media (see footnote 11), Hall uses a segment from the film *Hollywood Shuffle* (1987) as an example of this third strategy of subverting a stereotype from within. *Hollywood Shuffle* is a satire about a young black actor named Bobby Taylor, who deals with the struggles of being asked to play stereotyped characters by fantasizing about other scenarios. One such fantasy is "Black Acting School." In the scene, Bobby plays the role of Jasper, an escaped slave who is on the run with two other slaves, and this comical dialogue takes place:

Jasper	[Sounding like the "Stepin' Fetchit" character] I don't know why we's leaving massa's house. He's been good to us. He feed us on Saturday, clothes us on Sunday, and then beat us on Monday, or was it Tuesday? I don't know.
Slave 1	Jasper, I doesn't wants to go! I's a house nigger, Jasper!
Slave 2	Jasper, don't you wants freedom? We goin' to the Promised Land.
Jasper	The Promised Land? Cleveland?
Slave 2	No Jasper.
Jasper	Baltimore?
Slave 2	No Jasper, the Promised Land!
Jasper	Oh, the Promised Land. Minnesota?
Director	And "cut."

At this point, Bobby and the other two actors break from their stereotyped roles, with Bobby smiling and looking directly into the camera and greeting an imagined audience by saying with an English accent, "Hi. My name is Robert Taylor, and I'm a black actor. I had to learn to play these slave parts, and now you can, too, in Hollywood's first Black Acting School. It teaches you everything." Bobby walks over to a white acting teacher who is instructing two black "students" in "Jive Talk 101," and then to another group where another white instructor is teaching "Walk Black" to a group of black students. Robert then addresses the commercial audience: "You, too, can be a Black Street Hood, but this class is for dark-skinned Blacks only. Light-skinned or yellow Blacks don't make good crooks. It's Hollywood's first Black Acting School. It teaches you everything." Then a TV ad voice states: "Classes are enrolling now. Learn to play TV pimps, movie muggers, street punks. Courses include Jive Talk 101, Shuffling 200, Epic Slaves 400. Dial 1-800-555-COON." Hall explains that this segment from *Hollywood Shuffle* embodies the counter-representational strategy that entails "taking images apart" by going "inside the image itself," occupying "the very terrain which has been saturated by fixed and closed representation," and trying to turn the stereotypes "against themselves." The goal is "to open up, in other words, the very practice of representation itself" in order to "subvert, open, and expose" the stereotype "from inside" (Hall & Jhally, 1997, p. 21).

I pointed out to students that this subversive strategy of challenging stereotypes through transcoding meanings from inside the representation has affinities with the

practice of detournement. To set up my discussion of detournement, I will briefly describe the Situationist International (SI), which is the group that is routinely referred to as having first named and theorized "detournement." I will then provide a description of what Guy Debord (leader of the SI) theorized as "the Spectacle" because detournement is, by definition, an "anti-spectacular" critical practice. It is worth pointing out here that in my course all the texts and films mentioned so far in this chapter preceded the appearance of the Situationists and their writings about the Spectacle and detournement.

THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

I introduced the students to the Situationist International partly by assigning them to view a documentary about the group titled *On the Passage of a Few People through a rather Brief Moment in Time*, accessible on the Ubuweb website.[14] The documentary explains that the Situationist International was a Paris-based artistic and political avant-garde group that formed in 1957, went through three distinct phases during its existence, and dissolved in 1972. The SI gained some notoriety for sparking and fueling student protests at the University of Strasbourg in 1966 with the publication and circulation of its polemical pamphlet *On the Poverty of Student Life*, which was subtitled *Considered in its economic, political, psychological, sexual, and particularly intellectual aspects, with a modest proposal for its remedy* (written by SI member Mustafa Khyati). The SI's "modest proposal" was subversion in the service of the revolutionary project of dismantling Capitalism. In 1967, Guy Debord, who cofounded the group and eventually became its leader and principal theorist, published his book *The Society of the Spectacle*, which became a kind of *Communist Manifesto* for radicalized students throughout France. A year after Debord published *The Society of the Spectacle*, student protests at the University at Nanterre and in Paris at the Sorbonne mushroomed into a massive wildcat strike which saw over ten million workers—two-thirds of the entire French workforce—walk off the job, occupy factories, and protest in the streets, demanding the right to control all aspects of their labor and lives. Debord and several members of the SI were among those who occupied the Sorbonne and battled police in the streets, and the SI published an account of its role in the events in a book titled *Enrages and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May'68* (Vienet, 1992 [orig. 1968]). In the aftermath of May '68, however, the SI's cohesiveness began to unravel, and in 1972, Debord formally dissolved the group with the publication of the book *The Real Split in the International*.[15]

THE SPECTACLE

After the students viewed the documentary about the situationists, I assigned Debord's (1967) book *The Society of the Spectacle*. To introduce the book, I pointed out that though it is Debord's most developed analysis of "the Spectacle," Debord

had been using the term "spectacle" (and its various forms) since the mid-1950s. The term appears several times in the visionary founding document of the SI that Debord wrote in 1957 titled "Report on the Construction of Situations of the International Situationist Tendency." For example, Debord explained:

> The construction of situations begins beyond the ruins of the modern spectacle. It is easy to see how much the very principle of the spectacle—nonintervention—is linked to the alienation of the old world. Conversely, the most pertinent revolutionary experiments in culture [such as detournement] have sought to break the spectator's psychological identification with the hero so as to draw them into activity by provoking their capacities to revolutionize their own lives. (in Knabb, 2006, pp. 40–41)

Debord also wrote about the spectacle in the script of his 1961 film titled *Critique of Separation,* as in this passage, which critiques the role that media—particularly cinema in Debord's time—play in serving ruling powers:

> Official news is elsewhere. The society broadcasts to itself its own image of its own history, a history reduced to a superficial and static pageant of its rulers—the persons who embody the apparent inevitability of whatever happens. The world of the rulers is the world of the spectacle. The cinema suits them well. Regardless of its subject matter, the cinema presents heroes and exemplary conduct modeled on the same old pattern as the rulers. (in Knabb, 2003, pp. 33–34)

References to and discussions about the spectacle also appear dozens of times throughout the twelve issues of the SI's French-language journal *Internationale Situationniste*, which appeared from 1958-1969. I explained to students that if they were to read the articles that appear in Ken Knabb's (2006) edited book *Situationist International Anthology*, they would discover that Debord and his situationist friends used the term "spectacle" in three different yet related ways.

One way is as a singular noun with the article "the"—i.e., "the spectacle"—which means "the Capitalist system in its totality." Along with the two quoted passages above, other examples include "the world of the spectacle" (1960, p. 80), "the society of the spectacle" (1962, pp. 112–113), "the machine of the spectacle, the machine of power" (1963, p. 161), "the reigning spectacle" (1964, pp. 180–181), "the global spectacle" (1965, p. 198), and so on. I also told students that in my opinion it would have been helpful to readers if Debord had capitalized the term "Spectacle" when he used it in this totalizing sense, so that the overall system would always have been written as "the Spectacle"—i.e., as singular and capitalized. (And from this point on in the chapter, I will put this capitalization idea into practice, unless I'm quoting, and when the small-"s" spectacle is used, it refers to the second and third ways that Debord and the SI used the term.)

A second way that "spectacle" is used is to identify particular kinds of spectacles within "the global Spectacle." In such cases, it typically is an adjective, a noun

modified by an adjective, a plural noun, or part of a prepositional phrase, as in these examples: "the theatrical spectacle" (1958, p. 50), "the entire cultural spectacle" (1960, p. 74), "the spectacle of possible war" (1962, p. 100), "the spectacular terrain of the enemy" and "spectacular ideas" (1962, p. 109), "spectacular consumption in developed capitalism" (1963, p. 133), "the artistic spectacle" (1963, p. 143), "the spectacular history of the rulers" (1963, p. 152), "the industry of vacations, of leisure, of spectacles" (1964, p. 182), "the diverse forms of spectacular publicity and propaganda" (1964, p. 183), "the spectacle of all social life" (1966, p. 191), "the American spectacle of everyday life" (1966, p. 200), "a new spectacular literature" (1966, p. 224), "spectacular pseudointellectuals" (1966, p. 238), "the great spectacle of protest against the Vietnam war" (1967, p. 251), "the latest spectacular fashion" (1967, p. 273), and so on.

A third way that "spectacle" is used is as a verb (spectacularized), or as a verb-like noun (spectacularization), to identify processes that transform something into a spectacle, as in these examples: "The ruling ideology sees to it that subversive discoveries are trivialized and sterilized, after which they can be safely spectacularized" (1957, p. 26); "The world of consumption is in reality the world of the mutual spectacularization of everyone, the world of everyone's separation, estrangement and nonparticipation" (1960, p. 390); and "Capitalist society, in order to streamline its own functioning, must above all continually refine its mechanism of spectacularization" (1960, p. 390).

Debord uses "the spectacle" in these three ways throughout *The Society of the Spectacle*, but he mostly uses it in the first way. I pointed this out to students before they read Debord's book, but I also mentioned that, as Anselm Jappe (1999) has observed, "Debord's writings are not easily susceptible to paraphrase" (p. 5). This insusceptibility is greatest in *The Society of the Spectacle* because of Debord's aphoristic style in the book (the style is reminiscent of Nietzsche's). The book is composed of 221 numbered passages or "theses," as Debord called them. The theses vary in length, from just a single statement to a few paragraphs, and I alerted students to the fact that Debord does not offer a definitive definition of "the Spectacle" in any one thesis. Rather, he builds his meaning thesis by thesis, so that readers must read the whole book to get at any meaningful sense of the totality of what Debord means by "the Spectacle." One more point that I made with students is that though Debord's theorization of the Spectacle is "not easily susceptible to paraphrase," we would nevertheless consider some selected paraphrases by scholars who have written insightfully about Debord and the SI. For example, Greil Marcus (1989) wrote in his excellent book *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*:

> "The spectacle," Debord said, was "capital accumulated until it becomes an image." A never-ending accumulation of spectacles—advertisements, entertainments, traffic, skyscrapers, political campaigns, department stores, sports events, newscasts, art tours, foreign wars, space launchings—made a modern world, a world in which all communication flowed in one

> direction, from the powerful to the powerless. One could not respond or talk back, or intervene, but one did not want to. In the spectacle, passivity was simultaneously the means and the end of a great hidden project, a project of social control. On the terms of its particular form of hegemony the spectacle naturally produced not actors but spectators: modern men and women, citizens of the most advanced societies on earth, who were thrilled to watch whatever it was they were given to watch. (p. 99)

Marcus' paraphrase was helpful for identifying specific spectacles that contribute to the global Spectacle, and for emphasizing the "great hidden project, a project of social control" that is central to Debord's theory. But Marcus' statement that in the world of the Spectacle, "all communication flowed in one direction, from the powerful to the powerless" was especially important because it caused us to consider whether or not the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0 (particularly websites like YouTube but also the many ways that users can generate content and upload and circulate it, as well as to form virtual communities that often have political agendas that have real world effects) would have caused Debord (if he were still alive) to alter his view about the "one direction" flow of "all communication." Some students argued that Debord's thesis no longer held up, whereas others argued that it was too soon to tell and that the Spectacle's power to control and dominate might very well play out with the Internet in the near future, too.

We also analyzed Jappe's (1999) paraphrase of Debord's conceptualization of the Spectacle (what appears here in brackets are the numbers of the theses being quoted):

> Debord's analysis is based on the everyday experience of the impoverishment of life, its fragmentation into more and more widely separated spheres, and the disappearance of any unitary aspect from society. The spectacle consists in the reunification of separate aspects at the level of the image. Everything life lacks is to be found within the spectacle, conceived of as an ensemble of independent representations …. "Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle" [25], and individuals, separated from one another, can rediscover unity only within the spectacle, where "images detached from every aspect of life merge into a common stream" [2]. Individuals are reunited solely "in [their] separateness" [29], for the spectacle monopolizes all communication to its own advantage and makes it one way only. The spectacle speaks, "social atoms" listen. And the message is One: an incessant justification of the existing society, which is to say the spectacle itself, or the mode of production that has given rise to it. For this purpose the spectacle has no need of sophisticated arguments; all it needs is to be the only voice, and sure of no response whatsoever. Its first prerequisite, therefore, and at the same time its chief product, is the passivity of a contemplative attitude. Only an individual "isolated" amidst the "atomized masses" [221] could feel any need for the spectacle, and consequently the spectacle must bend every effort to reinforce the individual's isolation. (pp. 6–7)

In discussing Jappe's passage (which quotes several of Debord's theses), the students and I were able to articulate it with our previous viewing of the film *The Matrix* by substituting "the matrix" for "the spectacle," which revealed the great resonance between Debord's concept of the spectacle and the cinematic sci-fi representation of a world of near total separation and passivity—"the Desert of the Real," as Morpheus calls it. In doing this, we simultaneously also made an articulation between Debord and Lukacs (recall the previous discussion about *The Matrix* and reification).

We also made connections between *The Matrix* and specific passages from Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (which are also connections that simultaneously articulate with Lukacs). In some instances, certain passages by Debord resonate quite closely with the film's dialogue. For example, Debord wrote: "The spectator feels at home nowhere, for the spectacle is everywhere" (thesis 30), which is echoed in Morpheus's statement, "The matrix is everywhere" and his observation that Neo feels "there's something wrong with the world." Other passages by Debord seem like descriptions of the matrix. This can be illustrated by mentally substituting "matrix" for "spectacle," and "human batteries" for "spectators" in these passages (these are merely a few of many possible examples):

> The Spectacle [matrix] is hence a technological version of the exiling of human powers in a "world beyond"—and the perfection of separation *within* human beings. (thesis 20, original emphasis)
>
> The Spectacle [matrix] is the bad dream of modern society in chains, expressing nothing more than its wish for sleep. The Spectacle [matrix] is the guardian of that sleep. (thesis 21)
>
> Spectators [human batteries within the matrix] are linked only by a one-way relationship to the very center that maintains their isolation from one another. The Spectacle [matrix] thus unites what is separate, but it unites it only *in its separateness*. (thesis 29, original emphasis).

Though the students and I also articulated *The Society of the Spectacle* with some of the other films and theoretical readings, I am going to now turn to a discussion about detournement.

Detournement Defined by Debord and the SI

I introduced detournement to students by pointing out that though detournement is typically associated in much of the academic literature with the situationists, Guy Debord and Gil Wolman conceptualized and practiced detournement when they were members of a small avant garde group called the Lettrist International (1952–1957).[16] I also assigned students to read an article that Debord and Wolman published in May of 1956 (just before the SI was founded) titled "A User's Guide to Detournement,"[17] which appeared in the Belgian surrealist journal *Les Levres Nues* (*The Naked Lips*). In the article, Debord and Wolman explained that the process of

making a detournement—i.e., to *detourn*, or the act of *detourning*—entailed reusing artistic and mass-produced elements to create new combinations or ensembles:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations …. [W]hen two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed …. The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (Knabb, 2006, p. 15)

I also presented several passages by scholars of the SI who elaborate on Debord and Wolman's definition. For example, Elisabeth Sussman (1989) highlights the discursively "violent" quality of detournement, stating: "*Detournement* ('diversion') was [a] key means of restructuring culture and experience …. *Detournement* proposes a violent excision of elements—painting, architecture, literature, film, urban sites, sounds, gestures, words, signs—from their original contexts, and a consequent restabilization and recontextualization through rupture and realignment" (p. 8, original emphasis).

Another valuable definition that emphasized the "criminal" connotations of the term "detournement"—connotations intended by Debord and Wolman—comes from Thomas Levin (1989), who wrote a chapter titled "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord" and provided this definition: "In French, *detournement*—deflection, turning in a different direction—is also employed to signal detours and to refer to embezzlement, swindle, abduction, and hijacking. The criminal and violent quality of the latter four connotations are closer to the SI practice of illicitly appropriating the products of culture and abducting or hijacking them to other destinations" (p. 110, footnote 6). In discussing detournement with students, I emphasized Levin's statement about the *illicit* character of detournement. Debord and Wolman described detournement as "the first step toward a literary communism," a phrase that refers to the plagiaristic aspect of detournement. They also stated that detournement often clashes "head-on with all social and legal conventions" by ignoring copyright in its appropriation of textual elements and objects to make new combinations. They explained that when it comes to making a detournement, it is "necessary to eliminate all remnants of the notion of personal property," and they explicitly celebrated and encouraged this transgressive practice by quoting a favorite line written by one of their literary heroes, Isidore Ducasse (aka, the Comte de Lautreamont, 1846-1870), who declared in his novel *Les Chants de Maldoror*, "Plagiarism is necessary, progress implies it."

Though Debord and Wolman stated that anything can be used in the making of new combinations, this does not mean that they thought that any new combination that is made is a detournement. I highlighted this point with students through an important observation made by Ken Knabb (2003), who (somewhat) clarified what detournement is and is not, from a situationist perspective:

> Detournement has been widely imitated, but usually only in confused and half-conscious ways or for purely humoristic ends. It does not mean merely randomly juxtaposing incongruous elements, but (1) creating out of those elements a new coherent whole that (2) criticizes both the existing world and its own relation to that world. Certain artists, filmmakers, and even ad designers have used superficially similar juxtapositions, but most are far from fulfilling (1), much less (2). (p. viii)

Along with this quote, I also used selected passages by academics who define detournement in a way that Debord and Wolman would have totally rejected. One example is Edward Ball (1987), who wrote:

> What the situationists held out as a populist revolutionary politics has now been turned into commerce, is a roaring success, a standardized format throughout the leading capitalist nations. We are now living in the society of the *detourniste*. Detournement has become axiomatic to profit-making, and like surrealism, a mass phenomenon. The cult of the displaced object has developed the contours of an industry in design, in clothing, in architecture, even food—in short, in every marketplace of postwar capitalism. Everything that was once made now reappears as a fragment in the hands of the [*detourniste*]. What could not be converted into cash flow used to be expendable, but this problem has been solved: thanks to detournement, everything may stay in the stream of the economy, even the expendable. (p. 36)

Working off these quotes (and others),[18] I explained further to students that for the situationists, detournement is by definition an *anti*-spectacular practice whose purpose is to attempt to challenge some aspect of the Spectacle in one way or another, through means that varied in their degrees of directness or indirectness. (Therefore, Ball's understanding is a perversion of the SI definition of detournement, though one can imagine that Ball would likely characterize his own definition as a detournement of detournement.) Debord and Wolman were explicit about this fundamental anti-spectacular purpose when they stated that they conceptualized detournement as having the potential to be "a powerful cultural weapon in the service of a real class struggle," and that it was "a real means of proletarian artistic education" (p. 18). I also explained that for Debord and Wolman, the "proletariat" included not only industrial wage laborers like those addressed by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, but also nearly all other workers in any contemporary (i.e., Capitalistic) society around the globe. As Debord (1967) later stated in *The Society of the Spectacle*, the proletariat comprises "the vast mass of workers who have lost all power over the use of their own lives" as a result of Capitalism's "extension of the logic of the factory system to a broad sector of labor in the 'services' and the intellectual professions" (thesis 118). The overall effect of "the triumph of an economic system" founded on such a logic is "*the proletarianization of the world*" (thesis 26, italics in the original). So for Debord and Wolman in 1956, and for the SI

in all of its writing, the term "proletarian" referred to an almost universal condition characterized by an absence of much (or any) control over one's labor or over what social benefits one's labor would bring. One more explanation I gave is that in terms of education, we can think of the reductionist high-stakes testing, the assault on "teacher tenure," and the entire neoliberal agenda of so-called "educational reform" as having the goal of "proletarianizing" the everyday experiences of teachers. And we can generalize Debord and Wolman's conceptualization of the "proletariat" to include all those who are most marginalized by and within our educational system on the basis of their race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, language, and so on.

One more important point I made with students is that for Debord and the SI, the opposite of detournement was called "recuperation." In the article "All the King's Men" (1963), Michele Bernstein (Debord's wife at the time) wrote "Power creates nothing, it recuperates" (in McDonough, 2002, p. 154), meaning that the Spectacle never consciously creates anything that is threateningly subversive of its domination; on the contrary, it works relentlessly to depoliticize or to de-radicalize—i.e., to recuperate—anything subversive of its authority and control. Sadie Plant (1992) has explained that the term recuperation "carried a stronger meaning than terms such as 'integration,' [and] 'co-option' … for although each of these expressed the way in which dissenting voices can be rendered harmless by their absorption into the spectacle, the notion of recuperation suggested that they are actually subject to processes of inversion which give an entirely new and affirmative meaning to critical gestures. Represented in the spectacle, the vocabulary of revolutionary discourse is taken up and used to support the existing networks of power," usually through being used by "the domain of the advertising industry" to sell commodities (pp. 75–76). Plant stated that for the situationists "recuperation was synonymous with the processes of commodification and spectacularization on which the spectacle is dependent" (p. 79). She added that from the perspective of the Spectacle,

> Anything which resists the alienation, separation, and specialization of the spectacle must be brought within the confines of commodity exchange; challenges to the commodity form must be made to assume the vacuity and equivalence necessary to the reproduction of commodity relations. The situationists argued that collapse of the marvelous into the mundane or the critical into the counterrevolution are never signs of natural destiny or apolitical degeneration. On the contrary, such shifts are effected in order to remove the explosive content from gestures and meanings which contest the capitalist order. Turned into commodities, works of radical art and political criticism support the system of relations they despised. (p. 79)

One question about recuperation that I posed to students is this: "Were the situationists naïve enough to believe that their detournements and their writing were immune to recuperation?" The answer is that they were not. For example, in a 1964 article titled

"Now, the SI" that appeared in their journal, they wrote: "It is quite natural that our enemies succeed in partially using us … [and] like the proletariat, we cannot claim to be unexploitable in the present conditions; the best we can do is to work to make any such exploitation entail the greatest possible risk for the exploiters" (in Knabb, 2006, p. 175). As for what they meant by making "any such exploitation entail the greatest possible risk for exploiters," situationist Raoul Vaneigem (2001) wrote in his 1967 book *The Revolution of Everyday Life* that though the Spectacle recuperates revolutionary works and desires, there is always a "risk for the system" (i.e., for the Spectacle): "The endless caricaturing [by the Spectacle] of the most deeply-felt revolutionary desires can produce a backlash in the shape of a resurgence of such feelings, purified in reaction to their universal prostitution. There is no such thing as lost illusions" (p. 168). In other words, recuperation can become risky for the Spectacle: imagine the clueless teen wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt who one day becomes curious about Che, reads about the history of U.S. military aggression in Cuba, Central America, and Latin America, and becomes a politically radicalized activist fighting against U.S. military aggressions world wide.

Along with introducing Debord and Wolman's conceptualization of detournement, and the SI's definition of recuperation, I also presented students with some selected examples of detournements that members of the SI produced.

Detournements by Debord and Other SI Members

After introducing students to detournement through the articles and quoted passages discussed above, I next presented examples of SI detournements during a couple of seminars. I also uploaded to our "mosh pit" several links to webpages where SI detournements could be found,[19] and I made selected academic readings (which are cited in what follows) about specific detournements available on Sakai. My purpose in this section will not be to analyze in great detail any of the SI's individual detournements. Instead, I will describe most of the forms that their detournements took, and I will provide resources for interested readers to pursue on their own (these resources are what I made available on Sakai). In doing this, I am essentially mirroring what I did with my students during the course.

Comic Strips. One type of detournement that was a favorite of the SI's involved comic strips. In an article titled "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action Against Politics and Art," SI member Rene Vienet (1967) wrote, "Comic strips are the only truly popular literature of our century," adding that the development of situationist comics was one method of "detourning the very propositions of the spectacle" (in Knabb, 2006, p. 274). Detourning comics mainly entailed rewriting the text in the speech balloons or the captions of the comic strips. For example, the most well-known comic strip is titled "The Return of the Durutti Column,"[20] and one particular frame that has appeared in many publications is a screen shot from a Hollywood western titled *A Thunder of Drums* (1961). The frame features two

cowboys on horseback, riding in the desert. One wears a black cowboy hat, the other wears a white one. Here is the rewritten dialogue, which appear in speech bubbles:

White Hat	What's your scene, man?
Black Hat	Reification.
White Hat	Yeah? I guess that means pretty hard work with big books and piles of paper on a big table."
Black Hat	Nope. I *drift*. Mostly I just drift.[21]

A few dozen comics appeared throughout the run of the SI's journal *Internationale Situationniste*, twelve issues of which were published between 1958-1969. Though a facsimile of all the issues of the SI's journal was published by Editions Champ-Libre in 1975, it is in French, so for those who only speak English, the best source is *Enrages and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, May '68* by Rene Vienet (1968). Published within weeks of the May-June '68 events in France, the book is the SI's account of its participation and its theorization and interpretation of what took place during the uprising. Richly illustrated with a few dozen images, it includes several detourned comics, and the 1992 translation by Autonomedia provides English translations.

Photographs. Along with detourning comics, the situationists also detourned photographs, typically ones that they appropriated from newspapers or magazines. (They also did this with advertisements.) One method of detourning photos was either to add speech bubbles or to add a caption to a photo. The best analysis of the purposes and ways that the SI detourned photographs is Kelly Baum's (2008) article "The Sex of the Situationist International." According to Baum, "Readymade photographs of nude and semi-nude women are one of the leitmotifs of Situationist visual production. They embellish everything, from its collages and artist books to its films and publications" (p. 23). Baum acknowledges that the SI "most certainly reproduced the gender biases of their time," but she argues that the detourned photos were not "a frivolous addendum to or a curious departure from an otherwise progressive political and philosophical agenda." Rather, the "images of women were in fact one of the many platforms from which the Situationists launched their rebuke to capitalism and spectacle" (p. 24). To make her case, she reproduces several detourned photos from the SI's journal and brilliantly builds her persuasive argument.

Maps and Space. Debord and his fellow LI and SI members detourned maps as part of an adventurous spatial practice that they called the *dérive* (or "the drift").[22] Debord (1958) generally defined the dérive as "a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiences …. In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, to let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and

the encounters they find there" (p. 62). The purpose of a dérive was to discover new "psychogeographical" sensations. Debord (1955) defined "psychogeography" as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether conscious or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals" (p. 8). One type of dérive involved creating "psychogeographic maps" based on previous dérives. (The best known such map is titled "The Naked City," and it serves as the front and back cover of Ken Knabb's *Situationist International Anthology*.) David Pinder (2005) explains that these "maps are composed out of segments cut from existing maps of the city to show particular areas. Between these segments are red arrows that point toward some places, away from others, and that link and curl around locations." Just as dérives were disruptive of the functionalist and sanctioned uses of urban space, the "maps disrupt cartographic discipline and order; their broken and fragmented appearance refuse the coherence imposed by the spectacle. They challenge urban meanings and the representational regimes by means of *détournement*" (p. 153).[23]

Painting (Art). Another kind of detournement was what SI co-founder and Dutch painter Asger Jorn called "modifications," which were inexpensive oil paintings that Jorn bought at flea markets and modified with his own painted additions. Karen Kurczynski (2008), who has written more insightfully than anyone about Jorn's practice of detourning paintings, explains that the found paintings were made by technically skilled but wholly unoriginal amateur painters who imitated scenes derived from the popular genres of their day: "French peasant scenes, British picturesque landscapes, German Romantic landscapes, neoclassical nudes, Orientalist scenes, battle scenes, military portraits, petit-bourgeois portraits, erotic portraits, Baroque-style mythic heroes, Symbolist imaginings, Impressionistic landscapes or cityscapes" (p. 300). Jorn "modified" these paintings in a few basic ways, such as painting a grotesque or ghostly figure onto the painting somewhere, adding Jackson Pollock-like paint splatters or drips, and adding print text as a caption to a painting he had modified in other ways. Kurczynski explains that "Jorn's 'Modifications' rejected not painting itself, but specifically the idea of modernist painting, which was increasingly declaring itself 'avant-garde.'" She adds that Jorn's modifications "operated in direct opposition to the institutionalization of modernism in the postwar period" (p. 299). She also analyzes Jorn's modifications in terms that I have already discussed earlier in this chapter: "The annexation of avant-garde strategies to official culture exemplified a process the Situationists called 'recuperation.' Asger Jorn's 'Modifications' were part of the Situationist strategy of 'detournement' developed precisely to combat its institutional counterpart, recuperation. Detournement and recuperation can only be understood in direct relation to each other, since they operate as a sort of hinge between authority and subversion. They reveal power as a dialectic, never static but incessantly reestablished through struggle" (Kurczynski, 2008, p. 295).[24]

Books. Jorn and Debord collaborated on two books. The first was Jorn's *Fin de Copenhagen*. Debord was identified on the title page as "Counselor for the Technique of Detournement." According to Jorn (1999), the book was produced in twenty-four hours.[25] In the first stage, Jorn and Debord bought several national and international newspapers and magazines and cut up them for collage material. They juxtaposed headlines and fragments of print text appearing in French, English, Swedish, and German with a variety of images. Most of the images are fragments from advertisements, including bottles of beer and whiskey, packs of cigarettes, a bar of soap, a container of coffee, and so on. Other images relate to travel, such as a car, a luxury ocean cruise ship, and an airplane. There are several comic strip frames throughout the book, parts of a cut-up map, and cut-outs of various types of people, from a soldier to a naked woman to cowboys and more. The second stage of the creative process entailed Jorn dripping onto the thirty-two collaged pages of the book various brightly colored paints in a process of action-painting reminiscent of Jackson Pollock. As Claire Gilman (1997) observed, "*Fin de Copenhague*, with its inter-spliced cartoons and advertising slogans, must be seen as a commentary on [and a detournement of] consumer society associated, in this way, with Pop gestures" (p. 43).

After *Fin de Copenhague*, Debord and Jorn collaborated on another book titled *Memoires*, which they created in December of 1957 (after the formation of the Situationist International), but which was not published until 1959. Debord is identified as the author, with Jorn described as providing the structural support ("Structures Portantes D'Asger Jorn"). On the title page appears the important statement, "This book is composed entirely of prefabricated elements." Greil Marcus (1989, in Sussman) explains that "*Memoires* is all fragments: hundreds of snippets of text from travel literature, poems, histories, novels, tracts on political economy, film scripts, maps, building plans, advertisements, old etchings and woodcuts, all overlaid by colored lines, patterns, and splotches painted by Asger Jorn" (p. 126). *Memoires* tells a carefully constructed autobiographical and historical story in which Debord recollects his experiences of leaving the Lettrist group in 1952 and of co-founding the splinter group, the Lettrist International. Marcus' description of *Memoires* concerns the book's detournement of the expected form of a typical book: "Refusing the valorization of original speech, the book nevertheless seems to speak with a unique and unknown tongue; insisting on the dissolution of verbal and visible languages—on the breakdown of all social codes, on the impossibility of completing a sentence or a thought—the book contains nothing random." And echoing a core principle of detournement, he states: "In the combinations of its found, scavenged, or stolen materials, *Memoires* affirms that everything needed to say whatever one might say is already present, accessible to anyone; the book defines a project, and tells a story" (p. 126).[26]

Cinema. Writing in the mid-1950s when television ownership and viewing in France was far from widespread, Debord and Wolman (1956) observed that it was

"obviously in the realm of the cinema that detournement can achieve its greatest efficacy, and undoubtedly, for those concerned with this aspect, its greatest beauty." They stated, "The powers of film are so extensive, and the absence of coordination of those powers is so glaring, that almost any film that is above the miserable average can provide matter for innumerable polemics among spectators or professional critics" (p. 19). The exemplar of detournement at work in a film is Debord's fourth film *The Society of the Spectacle* (1973),[27] which is a cinematic translation of his 1967 book of the same title. In "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord," Thomas Levin (1989) explains that the soundtrack of the film consists mainly of Debord reading about half of the 221 theses that comprise his book. This soundtrack accompanies an "image track that presents an unending stream of detourned visual material," all of which are "*exclusively* found materials"—i.e., Debord did not shoot any film of his own to include. Citing only a selection of materials from the first part of the film, Levin lists the following images:

> Street scenes, publicity stills (the majority focusing on the objectification of women), scenes from American Westerns and from Soviet and Polish films, fashion commercials, news footage of Nixon meeting Mao, the Sorbonne General Assembly in May '68, the earth filmed from space, astronauts, a police panoptical headquarters with TV monitors showing Metro stations and streets, the footage of the "live" murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, speeches by Giscard d'Estang … [and] Castro, bombing runs in Vietnam, and a depiction of a couple watching television. One also encounters sequences appropriated from numerous classics from film history, including *Battleship Potemkin, October, New Babylon, Shanghai Gesture, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Rio Grande, The Charge of the Light Brigade, Johnny Guitar,* and *Confidential Report*. (p. 382)

Levin explains that as a film thoroughly imbued with the spirit and transgressive logic of detournement, "Debord's film is simultaneously a historical film, a Western, a love story, a war film—and none of the above; it is a 'critique without concessions,' a spectacle of a spectacle that as such, like a double negative, reverses the (hegemonic) ideological marking of the medium" (p. 396).[28]

A MOMENT OF CRITICAL REFLECTION

Having described several kinds of detournements that SI members made, I want now to take a moment to critically reflect on whether or not these detournements served as inspiration for the contributing authors when they were conceptualizing and making their own detournements. Frankly, I am not sure. I say this because I think to really understand these detournements requires an understanding of the historical, cultural, and political contexts that the situationists were operating within and very much a part of—i.e., contexts that the students and I were not able to explore in any depth in the course (it was not, after all, a course about the situationists).[29] Another way to

convey what I mean here is by quoting Stephen Canfield and Robert Peterson about why they provided extensive footnotes for their translation of Andre Bertrand's "The Return of the Durutti Column" (see footnote 20). Canfield and Petersen briefly explain that the comic strip was distributed to students at Strasbourg University in 1966 at the beginning of the academic year, and shortly after, the SI's pamphlet *On the Poverty of Student Life* was also distributed freely to thousands of students. The appearance and messages of these two texts ignited massive student protests. Canfield and Petersen then observe: "Reading the comic today is difficult because much of the meaning is framed by the specific events surrounding the Strasbourg protests. One suspects that many of the images used in the comic had special meaning to the Strasbourg students and have ceased to resonate with readers today" (p. 2 of the PDF). This statement not only explains the difficulty in understanding the comic strip today, but also the difficulty of understanding the subversive, transgressive intentions and contents of most of the SI's detournements.

As I mentioned, I'm not sure if the SI's detournements influenced the contributing authors. Nor am I sure to what degree, if any, the authors followed up on the various mosh pit links about the SI. The obvious question then is: "What influenced the authors as they were conceptualizing and making their own detournements?" To set up my answer to this important question, I will present brief summaries of the authors' chapters. (In my answer, I will also discuss Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, which is the book we took up for the last third of the course).

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE AUTHORS' CHAPTERS

In "A Detournement of Joe Clark's Problematic 'Motto' of Personal Agency in *Lean on Me*,"[30] I discuss a pedagogical project that took place with a group of secondary English students in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. I assigned students to view the popular school film *Lean on Me* and to express their opinions about the film's main character, Joe Clark. Most of the students interpreted the film and its lead character in the "preferred" way by articulating positive reactions to Joe Clark as a tough but caring educator. In my own oppositional reading to the film, I felt that Clark clearly used a "blame the victim" rhetoric and espoused a philosophy of personal responsibility at the expense of historical knowledge and context. To challenge Clark's problematic rhetoric and philosophy, I created a detournement that drew upon segments from the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, juxtaposing them with Clark's "motto" speech. For the MAT students, the detournement caused them to reconsider their previous uncritical, preferred reading of Joe Clark.

In "Juan Skippy: A Critical Detournement of *Skippyjon Jones*," Amy Senta discusses her detournement of the award-winning children's book *Skippyjon Jones* (2003). The book's main character is a white cat named Skippyjon who imagines he is a Chihuahua and speaks in pseudo-Spanglish. Skippyjon travels to Mexico and befriends a group of migrant workers described as a "mysterioso band of

Chihuahuas," who sing his praises: "Our hero is El Skippito! He's the dog of our dreams who delivered the beans, and now we can make our burritos!" Senta detourned the racist storyline in part by juxtaposing scenes from the book—scenes selected from a YouTube video featuring the author, Judy Schachner, reading the book—with powerful images of oppressed migrant workers living in unjust conditions in labor camps. Senta discusses using her detournement in her own teaching, and she also explains how the detournement became a critical text beyond her own pedagogical context when a librarian discovered it on YouTube and also used it critically.

In "The Hollywood Indian Goes to School: Detournement as Praxis," Trey Adcock describes a pedagogical project he designed for an elementary education social studies methods course. One purpose of the project was to explore and challenge Hollywood's long history of stereotyping Native Americans. A central text was a detournement composed of scenes from nearly fifty Hollywood movies (mostly Westerns) from over nine decades. The scenes depict Natives as bloodthirsty warriors, stoical medicine men, and primitive mystics. Within these scenes, Adcock repeatedly intersperses elements of a humorous scene from the film *Smoke Signals* that features a tough young Indian male attempting to teach his over-polite, soft-hearted Indian friend how to be a "real" Indian in order to survive in the "white" world. These juxtapositions create a clever dialectical interplay between the negative Hollywood representations and the comical dialogue of *Smoke Signals*. The overall effect is a powerful subversion of Hollywood's racist depictions of Hollywood's Indians.

In "Detournement as Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy and Invitation to Crisis: Queering Gender in a Preservice Teacher Education Classroom," Ashley Boyd describes a detournement she showed to 150 students in a course titled "Social Justice in Education." All the students were in teacher preparation programs. To introduce a discussion about gender and LGBTQ communities, Boyd constructed a detournement that opens by posing the question, "How much is gender identity influenced by socialization?" The rest of the detournement is composed of media clips selected from television dramas, comedies, talk shows, commercials, and news stories; Hollywood movies; sports interviews; music videos; and interviews with children. Boyd juxtaposed clips that reinforce typical gender stereotypes with clips that disrupt the stereotypes, including stories about a young boy who wears dresses and another about parents who have refused to reveal their toddler's gender. Through the detournement, Boyd expertly explores and challenges the powerful role that media play in gender stereotyping.

In the chapter "In God's Country: Deploying Detournement to Expose the Enmeshment of Christianity within the Spectacle of Capitalism," Tim Conder discusses how his detournement highlights the close relation between Christianity and Capitalism. A key scene from the film *I Heart Huckabees* features a fundamentalist Christian family having dinner with two young environmentalists. An argument erupts about Capitalism, with the father angrily defending it ("God gave us oil!"). Conder juxtaposes elements from this scene with images depicting Jesus as a pitchman for Coke and McDonald's, along with other images articulating

Christianity with Capitalism, all accompanied by selected parts of U2's song "In God's Country" (e.g., "sad eyes, crooked crosses, in God's country"). This chapter differs from the others because of the pedagogical context. Conder is a pastor of an activist faith community, and he showed the detournement to a group of church members to foster a discussion about the link between Capitalism and Christianity.

In "Challenging *Waiting for Superman* through Detournement,"[31] I describe being a guest speaker for a graduate course titled "Teacher Leadership for a Diverse Society" taken by preservice teachers in a Master of Arts in Teaching program. The students had viewed Davis Guggenheim's (2010) documentary *Waiting for Superman* and had posted their reactions to it on Blackboard. Most agreed with key arguments of the film, such as how "bad" teachers are impossible to fire because of "tenure," and how charter schools like Geoffrey Canada's Promise Academy and the KIPP Schools are superior to traditional public schools. In making my detournement, I strategically juxtaposed clips from Guggenheim's film with news stories and segments from *The Inconvenient Truth about Waiting for Superman* to expose the half-truths, outright deceptions, suspect claims, and the general anti-teacher union slant of Guggenheim's well-known film. Students who viewed my detournement were asked to revisit their initial impressions of the film and post another reaction.

In "Detourning the Charterization of New Orleans Public Schools with Preservice Teachers," Joseph Hooper discusses being a guest lecturer in a graduate course of MAT students. When asked to articulate their views and understandings about charter schools, the students expressed a mixture of limited knowledge about, or slightly positive views of, charter schools. Hooper then showed the students a detournement he made that featured footage of the wreckage and mayhem of the hurricane on hundreds of people with footage of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan boldly stating on a talk show, "I think the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans is Hurricane Katrina." Another key segment features President Obama expressing the same basic message at a Town Hall meeting in New Orleans, albeit in a less direct way than Duncan. The detournement caused several students to reconsider their originally positive views about charters and to want to learn more about them.

In "Revisiting 'Sordid Fantasies': Using Detournement as an Approach to Qualitative Inquiry," Jason Mendez discusses how he introduced detournement in a graduate course on qualitative research methods being taken by social work students who were mainly focused on clinical practice and were apprehensive about the course's final research project. After showing students some video detournements, Mendez explained that detournement can be understood as a research method because it involves posing critical questions, collecting data, and constructing critical analyses of that data. Importantly, Mendez encouraged students to define "texts" broadly to include media sources (films, television, music, and more). This expanded definition opened up new areas to research, as is suggested by the research project titles, such as "The Representation of Islam and Muslims in Film." Several students analyzed media representations, and they represented their analyses both

through a video detournement and a paper. Mendez's chapter is unique for how he articulates detournement as a qualitative research method.

A CONVERGENCE OF INFLUENCES

Having summarized the authors' chapters, I can now return to the question: "What influenced the students as they were conceptualizing and making their own detournements?" I don't think it was just one thing but a convergence of several elements that I built into the structure and content of the course itself. Certainly Debord and Wolman's (1956) article "A User's Guide to Detournement" played a very influential role in the students' understandings of detournement. This is revealed by the fact that in each of their chapters, they quote key passages from that article in order to frame the discussions about their detournements.[32] They also produced detournements that are infused with the subversive intent and spirit of the SI.

Another likely influence was the article of mine (which appears as chapter 2 in this book) that I assigned students to read when we took up Debord and Wolman's (1956) article. The detournement that I discuss—and that I showed during a seminar and made available on YouTube for repeated viewings—is in "video" format,[33] by which I mean that it was not a painting, a comic strip, a book, an advertisement, and so on. Rather, it was a visual/audio text, akin to the "cinematic" detournements of Debord. "Video" is also the format that the authors' detournements take. Another feature of my article is that it describes a pedagogical project I designed around the detournement, which is a feature of all the chapters in this book. The article also likely provided a model for how to describe a detournement in print, which is not at all an easy thing to do because it is a matter of conveying in print something made to be seen.

I also think that Stuart Hall's discussions about stereotypes and the critical act of "transcoding" were deeply influential in contributing to students' understandings of aspects of detournement. We see this in Amy Senta's chapter, which is an exemplar of how to subvert a stereotype "from within." Trey Adcock also challenges and subverts the stereotype of the "Hollywood Indian," though not "from within" as much as through radical juxtaposition of several scenes from many movies. Interrogating stereotypes is also at the center of Jason Mendez's chapter, which features detournements made by his own students, including one that challenges stereotypes of Muslims. And Tim Conder appropriates a scene from *I Heart Huckabees* that stereotypes Fundamentalist Christians, using it to pose questions about hypocrisy and self-imposed ignorance. The main difference between transcoding and detournement is revealed in the scene from *Hollywood Shuffle* that Hall shows in his lecture. The scene was not constructed out of preexisting elements, which is a central aspect of detournement (and all the authors' detournements were created out of preexisting elements).

Another influence was bell hooks, who expressed her view that "popular culture is where the pedagogy is, it's where the learning is" (p. 2), echoing a realization

and an argument that Debord and Wolman had arrived at five decades ago. hooks' eviscerations of several Hollywood blockbuster movies because of their problematic racial and gender representations served as powerful examples of what Hall called "oppositional" readings. And her polemical and didactic position resonates with the intransigent positions often taken by the SI in its written interventions into culture and politics. Unlike hooks' oppositional readings, however, SI detournements typically were not as heavy-handed and direct. Their detournements were often funny, subtle, indirect—and I see these qualities in the authors' chapters (for example, in Adock's use of the comical scene from *Smoke Signals*).

I also think that Slavoj Zizek was influential. As I mentioned earlier (footnote 6), Zizek's use of the term "pervert" means to "turn around," "to turn upside down," phrases that echo a key subversive principle of detournement—"deflection, turning in a different direction" (Levin, 1989, p. 110). Zizek's short circuiting means "to cross wires that do not usually touch"—detournement involves the "mutual interference of two worlds of feelings." The purpose of short circuiting is to bring about "insights which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions"—detournement's method of radical juxtaposition "supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy." My interpretation of Zizek's influence is not only that his short circuiting method was another echoing and mirroring of detournement, but that his analyses of films through "high" theory served as seductive legitimations for taking up popular cultural texts in a graduate education course (to say the least, it's not the norm to do so). I will add that my decision to design the course seminars according to this short circuiting method was (in my mind) a way of embedding detournement within the very structure of the course.

Though I haven't described it in as much detail as it warrants, the "mosh pit" was very important, along with YouTube (which is where most of the videos that the authors used in making their detournements were found). Debord and Wolman stated, "Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations," but they never addressed the "where" aspect of that statement (as in "Where can you find materials for making detournements?") What the weekly mosh pit accomplished was to set into motion a semester long collective project of searching for potential detournement materials and making them available to everyone in the mosh pit discussion forums (though the videos posted had to do with the weekly readings and films, many of them ended up becoming parts of the authors' detournements).

All of what I have described so far played a part in developing the students' multi-layered understandings about detournement as a critical theory and practice, and most of these influences converged and coalesced as we read Naomi Klein's (2001) *No Logo* in the last third of the course. For example, we read the book through a Debordian perspective, interpreting it as one long (and brilliant) analysis of the powerful advertising sphere of "the Spectacle." We articulated passages from the theoretical readings from the previous seminars (Lukacs, Gramsci, Althusser, Debord, etc.) and scenes from the films (*The Matrix*, *Network*, *Manufacturing*

Consent, etc.) with parallel passages in *No Logo*. We uploaded dozens of videos that articulated with or embodied Klein's analyses of specific corporations' advertising practices and campaigns. But what I want to highlight here is that we also were able to critique Klein's treatment of the situationists and detournement. For example, she characterizes the SI as just another artistic avant-garde group of the sixties who mainly critiqued the art world but not Capitalism, as when she states that mainly what the SI critiqued "tended to be the art world and its passive culture of spectatorship" (p. 283). We wondered if Klein had ever read *The Society of the Spectacle* or any of Ken Knabb's (2006) *Situationist International Anthology*, which includes articles about the Watts uprising in Los Angeles in 1965, workers' strikes in several countries, the Vietnam War, the French-Algerian war, the Arab-Israel war, and much more. Klein also gives the situationists' practice of detournement short-shrift. Though she mentions that "culture jamming"—which she valorizes in her book—has its roots in detournement, she claims that "culture jammers' messages are more pointedly political" than situationists who practiced detournement. Despite Klein's lack of depth about the situationists and detournement, the book served well as a text for the several influences discussed above to converge.

FINAL WORDS

I will end this chapter by returning to what I mentioned at the beginning about the "cultural studies" qualities of my course. I want to do this because I am well aware that "Cultural Studies and Education" is about as vague as it gets for a course title, and the vagueness is compounded by the fact that Cultural Studies as a field has from its beginning (but which beginning?) been preoccupied with the seemingly endless project of defining (or refusing to define) what it is and what it is not (see Bennett, 1998; Bowman, 2003; Ferguson and Golding, 1997), which has led to a great deal of confusion and disagreement about what "cultural studies" means. Lawrence Grossberg (1997) has put it this way:

> Defining cultural studies is a risky business. Lots of people are suddenly claiming to do cultural studies while others, nervous about its rather sudden success, are attacking it. Yet the fact is that few people working in cultural studies would agree on a definition, and that many who claim to "do" cultural studies might not recognize themselves in such a definition. (p. 245)

As someone who is "claiming to do cultural studies," I have found Henry Giroux's explanation about articulating cultural studies and education valuable. Giroux (1995) observed that "cultural studies places a strong emphasis on linking curriculum to the experiences that students bring to their encounter with institutionally legitimated knowledge" (p. 135). Giroux also argued that "schools and colleges of education should take the lead in refiguring curriculum boundaries" by "reformulating the value and implications of established disciplines and those areas of study that constitute mass culture, popular culture, youth culture, and other aspects of student

knowledge." He goes on to say that this process does not entail "abandoning high culture or simply substituting popular culture for it. It is rather an attempt to refigure the boundaries of what constitutes culture and really useful knowledge in order to study it in new and critical ways" (p. 136).

How does this relate to my own course? I think both the "short circuit" approach and the mosh pit pedagogy link the "institutionally legitimated knowledge" of my course—the "high culture" critical theoretical readings—to one of the most common experiences that students (and, likely, most of us) have on an everyday basis, which is engaging with a variety of popular culture texts (movies, television shows, music, and so on). By making popular culture texts central to my course, I see myself as enacting what Giroux describes as a cultural studies pedagogical maneuver of refiguring curriculum boundaries, not by "abandoning high culture or simply substituting popular culture for it," but by articulating so-called "high" and "low" (popular) texts, thereby legitimating both as having "value and implications" in my course. Stated in another way, I think my short circuit and mosh pit approaches enacted a cultural studies pedagogy that I hoped students would consider adopting in their own current or future teaching practices because it legitimizes popular culture as a valuable source for constructing knowledge and discovering new pedagogical possibilities. And the fact is that the students did adopt such practices in their own teaching, as I have shown in the preceding section and that the authors explain in each of their chapters.

Finally, I also want to explain the meaning of "praxis" that the students and I operated with throughout the course. According to *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Bottomore, 1983), "praxis" is "the central concept in Marxism," referring in general to humanity's "free, universal, creative and self-creative activity" (p. 384) through which it produces and transforms itself and its historical circumstances.[34] Marx conceptualized praxis as being a creative activity in which theory and practice are fused and reflexive of one another, an activity whose goal is to bring about "the revolutionary transformation of the world" (p. 386). Henri Lefebvre (1968), in a chapter titled "The Marxian Concept of Praxis," explains that for Marx

> Praxis in its supreme realization (creative, revolutionary praxis) does not exclude the theory it animates and verifies. It comprises theoretical decision as well as the decision to act. It involves tactics and strategy. There is no activity without an aim in view, no act without a program, no political praxis save as the possible, the future, are envisaged. (pp. 54–55)

This concept of revolutionary praxis is, of course, at the center of Paulo Freire's (1970) book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, throughout which Freire elaborates a pedagogy of praxis that begins with the thesis that "human activity consists of action and reflection [theory]: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world" (p. 125), a transformation ultimately directed at those societal structures that produce and maintain the oppression of millions of people in every society throughout the world.[35]

These understandings of praxis informed the work of all the authors in this book. Each consciously sought to animate the theory of detournement in their pedagogical practices *of* detournement. Each author attempted to creatively fuse theory and practice in the service of a political, transformative pedagogy. Anther way to articulate this is with the words of Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1969) in their book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. In their call for societal revolution, Postman and Weingartner were very specific and detailed about the potentially transformative effects of the praxis that teachers can engage in with students. They believed that radical, widespread changes in society begin with very simple actions of a local, situational nature. As they put it, "revolutions can be made" from even "small … shifts" in one's pedagogical activity (p. 38), and "a simple idea" can "change the entire direction of life in a society" (p. 98). The authors of the chapters in this book understand their use of detournement as a pedagogical praxis that can contribute to a transformation of the more "spectacularized" aspects of our educational system, and beyond. The authors also believe that in this current period, when those who are in control of the Spectacle of Education relentlessly seek to "*proletarianize*" (in Debord's sense) the work of educators at all levels, detournement is one way to subvert the impoverishing agenda of so-called "educational reformers."

NOTES

1. "Detournement" is both a theory and a critical practice, but hereafter I will usually just write "detournement" and assume that the reader will interpret it as meaning "the theory and practice of detournement." At the end of this chapter, I explain the "praxis" aspect of detournement.
2. I still teach this course, and the goals, pedagogical methods, and textual content remain essentially the same from one iteration to the next (and will continue to do so in future offerings). This fact would warrant my using the present tense to describe my course. However, it also makes sense to use the past tense because I include specific examples from completed iterations of the course. I have experimented with both tenses and decided the past is the more readerly of the two.
3. For readers who would like an immediate sense of what the chapters in this book are about, I recommend reading the section titled "Brief Descriptions of the Authors' Chapters" and then returning here to continue.
4. Instead of uploading a URL link to the video to Sakai, I showed students how to embed the videos within their posts to a discussion forum on Sakai. This enabled everyone to simply click on the video to play it in the discussion forum rather than having to have another browser open to view the video. Embedding videos streamlined the interactive process.
5. Though the students and I contributed dozens of videos, images, and webpage links to the weekly "mosh pit" discussion pages during the semester, I won't be able to discuss that aspect of my course as it played out for each seminar, though I do mention the mosh pit again when I discuss the Situationist International and the detournements made by members of the SI.
6. Along with *Looking Awry*, other books in which Zizek engages in this procedure of reading "major" texts with and through "minor" texts include *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (Zizek, 2002) and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan but Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock* (edited by Zizek, 1992b).
7. The term "pervert" in the title does not mean something like a sexual fetish; rather, it means something closer to its Latin meaning: to "turn around," "to turn upside down." As Paul Taylor (2010) explains, Zizek's "primary *raison d'etre* is to turn conventional understandings upside down by the unremitting application of theory. The multitude of examples he draws upon from popular culture, no matter how entertaining, are all subordinated to radical, counter-intuitive theoretical purposes" (p. 8).

[8] In 2014, another film titled *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* became available on DVD and also streams on *Netflix*, and in future offerings of my course, I will also include it as a required text for the course.

[9] To attempt to do so would not only balloon this section out of proportion with the rest of the chapter, but it would also overemphasize the short circuit aspect at the expense of what this chapter is mainly about, which is to define detournement. That said, for examples of articles that I have written that develop in-depth explanations of engaging in short circuit articulations of critical social theories with popular films, see Trier, 2002, 2003, 2006a, and 2010. Though these articles are about short circuits that took place in teacher education courses rather than in the course I am discussing in this chapter, they provide more examples than I can include in this chapter.

[10] The reason why I return to *The Matrix* as an example here and later on when discussing "the Spectacle" is because the theoretical reading articulated with *The Matrix* in my course is Lukacs' chapter on reification, which appears in his 1923 book *History and Class Consciousness*. As Anselm Jappe (1999) has observed, after World War One, Lukacs had become a leading figure "of a minority tendency within Marxism that assigns central importance to the problem of alienation, considered not as epiphenomenal but as crucial to capitalist development" (p. 4). Jappe situates Debord within "this strain of Marxism" (p. 4), and he adds that Lukacs' book "attained an almost cult-like status in the nineteen-sixties and it exerted a profound influence on Debord" (p. 20). So, of the theoretical readings from the short circuit seminars, Lukacs' is the main one when it comes to Debord's work. Therefore, it makes sense mainly to develop the example of *The Matrix* throughout this chapter.

[11] I also provide each student with a copy of a DVD titled *Stuart Hall: Representation and the Media* (Hall & Jhally, 1997). The film was produced by the Media Education Foundation (see Trier, 2006b) and it features Hall giving a lecture based on the ideas he wrote about in much more depth in his book. A transcript of the film is also available on the MEF website.

[12] Hall specifically discusses *Sweet Sweetback's Baddasss Song* and *Shaft* in some detail, and he explains the great appeal that these films and those that followed in their mold held for black audiences: "In the ways their heroes deal with whites, there is a remarkable absence, indeed a conscious reversal of, the old deference or childlike dependency." Hall adds, "In many ways, these were 'revenge' films—audiences relishing the black heroes' triumphs over 'Whitey,' loving the fact they they're getting away with it!" Hall acknowledges that films like these succeeded in carrying out the transcoding strategy of reversing a stereotype, but he also makes the point that this particular strategy, though successful to a degree, does not necessarily overturn or subvert a stereotype: "Escaping the grip of one stereotypical extreme (blacks are poor, childish, subservient, always shown as servants, everlastingly 'good,' in menial positions, deferential to whites, never the heroes, cut out of the glamour, the pleasure, and the rewards, sexual and financial) may simply mean being trapped in its stereotypical 'other' (blacks are motivated by money, love bossing white people around, perpetuate violence and crime as effectively as the next person, are 'bad,' walk off with the goodies, indulge in drugs, crime and promiscuous sex, come on like 'Superspades' and *always get away with it!*)." (p. 272)

[13] Hall's example of a seemingly positive image that doesn't undermine a binary is that of Sidney Poitier, who embodied what Hall calls an "integrationist" strategy. Hall states that Poitier "was made to play on screen everything that the stereotyped black figure was *not*" (p. 253). This seems positive on the surface, but Hall quotes Donald Bogle's (1973, pp. 175–176) critique of Poitier's cinematic function in the 1950s and 1960s. Bogle wrote of Poitier that, "educated and intelligent, he spoke proper English, dressed conservatively, and had the best table manners. For the mass white audience, Sidney Poitier was a black man who met their standards. His characters were tame; never did they act impulsively; nor were they threats to the system. They were amenable and pliant." As such, "they were the perfect dream for white liberals to have a coloured man in for lunch or dinner." So even though Poitier was not reproducing the stereotyped black male figure, he nevertheless remained within "the binary" that Hall speaks of because he was now playing the role of the "civilized" black man who was non-threatening to whites.

[14] See at: http://www.ubu.com/film/si.html. The documentary's title is also the title of Guy Debord's second film, made in 1959. Five of Debord's six films can also be accessed on the UbuWeb site.

[15] On the mosh pit discussion forum, I posted various links about the SI. One was to Ken Knabb's website Bureau of Public Secrets (http://www.bopsecrets.org/), which includes Knabb's (2006) book *Situationist International Anthology* and a lot of other situationist works. I also posted a link to other SI-focused webpages, including Situationist International Online (http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/index.html), NOT BORED! (http://www.notbored.org/index1.html), and a mega-site of SI writing and writing about the SI called 1000littlehammers (http://1000littlehammers.wordpress.com/).

[16] For accounts about Debord's LI years, see Greil Marcus' (1989) *Lipstick Traces* and Jean-Michel Mension's (2001) *The Tribe*.

[17] This article appears in the 2006 edition of Ken Knabb's edited book Situationist International Anthology, but in the several previous editions, the article was titled "Method of Detournement." I point this out because the contributing authors of this book cite previous editions of Knabb's book and use "Method of Detournement" as the title. For the sake of consistency, I am citing Knabb's 2006 edition (i.e., the most recent edition) throughout this chapter.

[18] For example, Bradley Macdonald (1995) wrote that "the spectacle has been able to use *detournement*-like techniques to reinforce itself" (p. 107); Jappe (1999) described how a "gigantic detournement" has been "perpetrated upon all the revolutionary tendencies of the century" (p. 157) by the Spectacle, "by power" (p. 164); and McDonough (2002) asserted, "We can only conclude that the bourgeoisie"—i.e., the class most invested in the Spectacle—" was as adept at detournement as the situationists themselves" (p. xiv).

[19] On the mosh pit, I posted links to several of the resources I mention in this section, including links to the comic strip "The Return of the Durutti Column" (see next footnote); to a facsimile to SI's original publication of its journal *Internationale Situationniste* (http://www.museumjorn.dk/en/journals.asp); to Jorn's *Fin de Copehague* (http://www.scribd.com/doc/34832441/Asger-Jorn-Guy-Debord-FIN-DE-COPENHAGUE); and to Debord's *Memoires* (http://1000littlehammers.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/debord-memoires.pdf).

[20] The entire comic strip—translated into English—was part of an exhibition titled "Subversive Visual Communication," sponsored by the Table Arts Center at Eastern Illinois University from November 12, 2011 through February 26, 2012, and as of this writing, the comic strip can still be electronically accessed and downloaded as a PDF. See at: See: http://detournementexhibition.org/durutti.php. Stephen Canfield and Robert Peterson—the two people responsible for making this English text version available—have also provided thirteen invaluable footnotes to accompany the comic strip. It is worth noting that the maker of this comic strip, Andre Bertrand (a fan of the SI), misspelled the last name of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist, Buenaventura Durruti.

[21] Readers of the comic when it appeared in 1966—readers who were familiar with the SI through its journal—realized that the term "drift" referred to a favorite activity among SI members (and LI members before them) called (in French) the *dérive*, which I discuss in the *"Maps and Space"* example. (I need to add that Canfield and Petersen's translation of the dialogue between the cowboys differs from the standard translation because instead of "drift" they use the phrase "wander around.")

[22] The best book about the dérive is Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa's (1996) edited work *Theory of the Derive and Other Situationist Writings on the City*.

[23] It is worth mentioning that another SI action for detourning public space was through graffiti. Within SI scholarship, the most discussed act of writing graffiti is Debord's scrawling of the phrase "Never Work!" on the side of a city building (a photo of it can be found in Pinder's book on p. 145). Graffiti also appeared during May'68, such as "Beneath the paving stones, the beach." See Knabb, 2006, pp. 445–457 for a few dozen examples.

[24] The other painter who created detourned paintings was Pinot Gallizio, an Italian painter who was Jorn's friend before the SI was formed (Gallizio was also a co-founder of the SI). To discover new uses of emerging technologies for artistic purposes, Gallizio developed what he called "industrial painting," which entailed having a machine that Gallizio had invented "paint" on huge rolls of canvas as they were fed through the machine. The long rolls of canvas were intended to be sold by the yard and to be used to beautify buildings and landscapes. Gallizio's painting were intended to detourn "the rationalist and neo-constructivist currents of the time, re-evaluating the formerly surrealist domains of free expression, experimentation, and individualism" (Bandini, 1989, p. 68 in Sussman).

[25] See Jorn (1999), "Guy Debord and the Problem of the Accursed."

[26] It is worth mentioning here that though Debord's book *The Society of the Spectacle* is not a book that detourns the expected form of a typical book, it is a book that contains a plethora of detourned passages (see Jappe, 1999, p. 60, footnote 27 for an extensive list).

[27] Debord made six films between 1952 and 1973: *Howls in Favor of Sade* (1952), *On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time* (1959), *Critique of Separation* (1961), *The Society of the Spectacle* (1973), *Refutation of All the Judgments, Pro or Con, Thus Far Rendered on the Film The Society of the Spectacle* (1975), and *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (1978). The scripts of these films can be found in Knabb (2003), and the films themselves are on YouTube and UbuWeb.

[28] It is important to mention here the Romanian poet, filmmaker and provocateur, Isidore Isou, who founded an avant garde group called the Lettrists, which Debord was a member of (he joined in 1950). Isou's film *Treatise on Slime and Eternity* (1950) deployed various techniques of detournement, and the film arguably deeply influenced Debord's own filmmaking. (For excellent articles about Isou's film and the connection between Isou and Debord as filmmakers, see Astrid Vicas, 1998; Allyson Field, 1999; Andrew Uroskie, 2011.) It is also important to note here another example of a cinematic detournement by SI member Rene Vienet (1973): *Can Dialectics Break Bricks?*

[29] When I explained at the beginning of this chapter that I have researched the SI extensively and have produced a lot of writing that was beyond the scope of this chapter's purpose, much of that material is about the historical, cultural, and political contexts just mentioned.

[30] That chapter originally appeared as an article in the *Journal of Thought* (vol. 39, no. 4, 2004), a Caddo Gap Press publication. Use is permitted because Caddo Gap Press does not copyright. Also, the original title of that article was "Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis," which I have changed here because I have used that title for this edited book.

[31] This chapter originally appeared as an article in the *Journal of Popular Film & Television* (2013, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 68–77). Reprinted here with permission from Taylor & Francis.

[32] It is important to explain here that though each author quotes the same or very similar passages from Debord and Wolman (1956), this should not be seen as needless repetition. All the chapters are quite connected with one another because they discuss critical projects that they enacted in various pedagogical situations. But each chapter is self-contained and can be copied and taken up (as, say, part of a course), apart from the rest of this edited book. So, it is necessary that the same quoted passages about detournement should appear in each chapter.

[33] Of course, the term "video" to describe the digital format that "texts" take on the Internet is anachronistic, but it is commonplace to use it.

[34] Of course, the term praxis did not emerge with Marx. As is explained in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, the term has a long history, extending back to Aristotle and passing through the discourses of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Lukacs, Marcuse, the Frankfurt School, Habermas, and many others, up to the present (Bottomore, 2001, pp. 435–440).

[35] Freire (2000) also discusses what he calls "the praxis of the dominant elites" (p. 126), opposing such praxis to "revolutionary praxis"—this distinction between different kinds of praxis resonates with the distinctions made by Lefebvre.

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JAMES TRIER

2. A DETOURNEMENT OF JOE CLARK'S PROBLEMATIC "MOTTO" OF PERSONAL AGENCY IN *LEAN ON ME*[1]

> The signature of the situationist movement, the sign of its presence and contestation in contemporary cultural reality …, is first of all the use of detournement.
>
> — Guy Debord, 1959

INTRODUCTION: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, MEDIA CULTURE, AND SCHOOL FILMS

A substantial body of research exists concerning the assumptions, knowledge, and beliefs that preservice teachers hold upon entering a teacher education program (Wideen, Smith, and Moon, 1998). Much of this research argues that, upon entering programs, most preservice teachers do not have a highly developed critical disposition that questions the status quo and critiques educational policies and the social conditions of schooling. In response to this research, a number of academics have called for those who work with preservice teachers to engage in the kind of pedagogical praxis associated with the tradition of critical reflection—a tradition also signified by phrases such as critical theory, social reconstructionism, and critical pedagogy. Zeichner (1990) explains that critically reflective teachers recognize "the fundamentally political character of all schooling," and their "reflections center upon such issues as the gendered nature of schooling and of the teacher's work, and the relationships between race and social class, on the one hand, and access to school knowledge and school achievement, on the other" (p. 59).

Anyone who has this goal of engaging preservice teachers in the processes of being critically reflective first has to answer some fundamental questions, one of which is: What texts will be taken up, and what methods will be used, to create the situations within which critical questions and analyses can take place?"[2] Perhaps the most typical method is to involve preservice teachers in reading, researching, and discussing various print texts (e.g., academic journal articles, book chapters, books, magazine and newspaper articles, online text) that address a range of crucial issues that play out within the national, state, and local spheres of educational policy and practice (e.g., issues having to do with, for example, class, race, gender, language, and power). While examining print texts with preservice teachers is an important

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 39–54.

aspect of my own teaching practice, I also typically take up a variety of other texts—more specifically, I include various "media culture" texts. In conceptualizing the importance of incorporating media culture texts in education, I have found Douglas Kellner's work valuable.

In his book *Media Culture*, Kellner (1995) uses the phrase "media culture" to refer both to the culture industries (film, television, print media, advertising, radio, fashion, and so on) and the commodities that these corporate systems generate and circulate (films, television programs, commercials, CDs, DVDs, radio programs, newspapers, magazines, video games, clothing, and others). The main argument that Kellner develops about the significance of media culture texts is that

> our current local, national, and global situations are articulated through the texts of media culture, which is itself a contested terrain, one which competing social groups attempt to use to promote their agendas and ideologies, and which itself reproduces conflicting political discourses, often in a contradictory manner. Not just news and information, but entertainment and fiction articulate the conflicts, fears, hopes, and dreams of individuals and groups confronting a turbulent and uncertain world. The concrete struggles of each society are played out in the texts of media culture, especially in the commercial media of the culture industries which produce texts that must resonate with people's concerns if they are to be popular and profitable. Culture has never been more important and never before have we had such a need for serious scrutiny of contemporary culture. (p. 20)

Kellner's analysis of the great importance of media culture in our society and the "need for a serious scrutiny of contemporary culture" resonates with an aspect of my work that has involved taking up selected media culture texts for a variety of critical purposes. The media texts I have used most extensively have been "school films." Generally, I define a school film as a film that in some way—even incidentally—is about an educator or a student. This broad definition has allowed me to conceptualize the school film genre as being comprised of well over 100 films. Examples of well-known school films are *Dead Poets Society*, *Stand and Deliver*, and *To Sir, with Love*. Examples of lesser-known school films are *Waterland*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, and *Small Change*. Examples of rather obscure school films are *Torment*, *Zero for Conduct*, and *Maedchen in Uniform*. Examples of recent school films are *Elephant* and *The Emperor's Club*.

I consider these films to be "public pedagogies," a term that Henry Giroux (2003) uses in *Public Spaces, Private Lives* in a discussion about the power of media culture texts in society. In a discussion of films, Giroux articulates one of his central arguments about all cultural texts, which is that they

> work pedagogically to legitimate some meanings, invite particular desires, and exclude others. Acknowledging the educational role of such films requires that educators and others find ways to make the political more pedagogical. One

> approach would be to develop a pedagogy of disruption that would attempt to make students and others more attentive to visual and popular culture as an important site of political and pedagogical struggle. Such a pedagogy would raise questions regarding how certain meanings under particular historical conditions become more legitimate as representations of the real than others or how certain meanings take on the force of commonsense assumptions and go relatively unchallenged in shaping a broader set of discourses and social configurations. (pp. 78–79)

In previous publications, I have described different critical projects that I designed around school films. For example, one project involved problematizing preservice teachers' "autonomous," traditional notions of literacy (Street, 1984) by having them read Gee's (1996) articulation of Discourses and multiple literacies, and then having them view the film *Teachers* for its construction of literacy. Through close readings of both the academic and cinematic texts, students challenged the film's assumption that literacy is merely the ability to pass standardized tests, and they opened up to a more sophisticated conceptualization based on Gee's definition of literacy as being the mastery of a secondary Discourse (Trier, 2001a). In another project, I introduced preservice teachers to the concept of "techniques of power" through analyses of the film *The Paper Chase* (1973), analyses informed both by Gore's (1998) articulation of eight "techniques of power" and by certain elements from Foucault's (1977) *Discipline and Punish* (Trier, 2003c).[3]

In this chapter, I will discuss one particular aspect of a larger project that I designed to engage preservice teachers in an exploration of the issue of personal and social agency in education. This group of preservice teachers was made up of secondary English students in an MAT program. The aspect of the larger project that I will focus on is an activity that involved students in viewing, analyzing, discussing, and writing an essay about the film *Lean on Me*. As I explain in the next section, I responded to the preservice teachers' readings of the film by making what I call a videocollage. This videocollage became an important text within the overall project, mainly because it engaged preservice teachers in reconsidering the issue of "agency" that the film works to legitimate. Because the videocollage would be impossible to fully describe in detail here, I have decided to describe only a few sequences of it. After I discuss both the film and the videocollage, I will explain how my making of the videocollage was an enactment of the "critical art" method of "detournement," which I will define later. For now, I will add that this "critical art" method enacted my own sense of agency as a teacher educator, which I will also explain in the last section of this chapter.

LEAN ON ME AS A "PUBLIC PEDAGOGY" ABOUT AGENCY

Lean on Me (1989) is a fictionalized (yet quite close to the facts) account of the experiences of Joe Clark, an African American principal of Eastside High, an

urban school in Patterson, New Jersey from 1983-1991. The film depicts Clark's "tough love" authoritarian methods for dealing with the many serious problems that Eastside High School faced. This film was one of a number of texts that were taken up within the course to facilitate examinations of the issues of race, class, power, and so on. In the film, we see Clark firing teachers for simply disagreeing with him or not following his every policy to the letter; expelling hundreds of "losers" and "drug dealers" from the school, sometimes dozens at a time; chaining the school doors shut; marching through the halls with a bullhorn and a baseball bat, creating a disciplined, boot-camp atmosphere; taking "suicidal" students to the school rooftop and challenging them to jump if they really want to kill themselves; shouting down and insulting parents at public meetings; confronting his superiors and the school board; and much more. By the end, the film's preferred message is clear: because of Clark's draconian policies and methods, he turned Eastside High around, and Clark is a heroic educational figure.

The activity that precipitated my making of the videocollage called for students to view, analyze, and write an essay about the film. The open-ended essay prompt was for students to react to the cinematic figure of Joe Clark in any way they wished. One requirement was that they were to discuss two selected scenes of the film. What the essays and seminar discussions about the film revealed was that most of the preservice teachers strongly identified with the representation of Joe Clark, seeing him as being (to quote from student essays) "inspirational," "committed," "tough but fair," "over the top but down to earth," and "a caring educator who, though strict and unyielding, serves as a good model for teachers to emulate."

Remarkably, none of the students discussed what is, on my own admittedly oppositional reading of the film text, arguably the most ideologically problematic message of the film, which crystallizes in one specific scene in the film. In the scene, Clark, dressed as always in a white suit, is on the stage of the school's assembly hall. Behind him are dozens of students, most of whom are African Americans. In the audience are hundreds more students, nearly all African Americans. Clark holds a microphone and faces the students seated in the hall, explaining that the students on stage are drug dealers and users, and that because they "are incorrigible," they are being "expurgated … forever" from the school. At this point, what seems to be two dozen plainclothes security officers (all African American) swiftly remove all the students by physical force from the stage. Moments later, Joe Clark is alone on stage. When the verbal commotion among the seated students dies down, Clark addresses them with a warning and a declaration:

> Next time, it may be you. If you do no better than they did, next time it *will* be you. They said this school was dead, like the cemetery it's built on. But we call our Eastside teams "ghosts," don't we? And what are ghosts? Ghosts are spirits that *rise* from the dead. *I* want you to be *my* ghosts. You are going to *lead* our resurrection by denying expectations that all of us are *doomed* to failure. *My* motto is simple. If you do not *succeed* in life, I don't want you to

> *blame* your parents! I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man! I *want* you to *blame yourselves*! The responsibility is *yours*!

Though I find Clark's "blame the victim" rhetoric and tone quite problematic, what I find more problematic is the philosophy of personal agency that Clark implies in this "My motto is simple" speech. On my reading, the key terms are "blame," "succeed," "responsibility" "parents," and "white man." For Clark, success likely refers to remaining in school, studying hard and getting good grades, passing standardized skills tests, graduating from high school, obtaining a job or going to college, paying taxes, not breaking laws, getting married, being a good neighbor and citizen, having children, buying a home, taking vacations, opening doors of opportunity yourself, and so on. For Clark, if these events do not eventually take place for the students, it will be their own fault, which he makes clear in the line, "The responsibility is *yours*!" For Clark, exercising agency is essentially an interpretive experience that, if exercised properly and routinely, will inevitably lead to success. He implies that taking responsibility is an internal act of interpreting our experiences in a way that does not attribute causes to any other sources. Clark expresses his belief that there is a clear danger in attributing causes to other sources in his references to "parents" and "the white man." The term "parents" indexes not only one's father and mother but many other "personal" and "local" elements of one's life (other family members, relatives, one's home, neighborhood, school, church, job, larger community, and so on). The term "white man" refers both to our country's history of white racism as well as to the fact that the control of all the powerful institutions in our society (the economy, the government, the law, the media, higher education, and so on) rests almost totally in the hands of a white power structure. Clark commands his students not to look for any outside sources to understand the circumstances of their lives. To do so is to play with fire because such searches for causes may tempt one to attribute "blame," and for Clark, to "blame" is to fail in one's interpretation of one's life experiences. In a fighting fire with fire internal action, Clark implies that the way to ward off such a temptation to blame others is to internalize the impulse and blame ourselves. This is the supreme—and simple—form of agency for Clark.

To challenge Clark's philosophy of agency, I made a videocollage that became a central text for analysis.

A VIDEOCOLLAGE COUNTERTEXT

To encourage students to reexamine their identifications with Clark, I designed a videocollage based on this "I want you to blame yourselves" scene. One feature of this videocollage is that Clark's "My motto is simple" proclamations are juxtaposed with scenes from various sources, such as documentaries, news stories, other films, and television programs. Another feature is that Clark's "blame" speech is taken apart and reassembled in varying ways to highlight the problematic nature of what

he says. Here is one example of such a reassemblage (the dashes signal when a "cut" has been made, and the italicization signifies emphasis placed on particular words):

Clark: "*My* motto is simple—
I want you to blame *yourselves*!
If you do not *succeed* in life—
I want you to blame *yourselves*!—
blame *yourselves*!
My motto is—
blame *yourselves*!"

Throughout the videocollage, about two dozen such reassemblages are tactically juxtaposed with clips from a variety of sources for the purpose of challenging Clark's "blame" message. The videocollage is far too long and multi-layered to describe entirely.[4] Instead, I will describe two representative (if rather short) sequences that capture the spirit, form, and content of the whole. Admittedly, I am attempting here to render in print something whose impact can only be fully understood and appreciated audiovisually. That said, I think I will be able to convey the general idea through this example.

Sequence A: Linear Juxtaposition

The first jump cut of this segment occurs at the end of the scene from *Lean on Me* described above.

[1]

Clark: "*My* motto is simple. If you do not *succeed* in life, I don't want you to *blame* your parents! I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man! I *want* you to *blame yourselves*! The responsibility is *yours*!"

[2]

Clip from *Eyes on the Prize*: The sequence of images includes a sign on school grounds that reads **"NO TRESPASSING / *BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD*,"** rows of immobile school buses, locks on the doors of a chain-link fence surrounding a school. We hear the narrator's accompanying voice (uninflected in its tones) speaking about the governor of Virginia at the time (1960): "Governor Almond closed schools in Charlottesville, in Norfolk, and other towns, and he called for unyielding rejection of integration."

[The accompanying images of African American children and adults sitting in a courtroom, with white lawyers and spectators on one side and African Americans on the other.]

"The federal courts were also unyielding, ruling again and again that this resistance was unconstitutional. But while the court cases were fought, the schools stayed closed, and the children—especially the black children—paid the price."

[Image of a car pulling up to the entrance of a school. When it stops, two adult white males and a small black child get out of the car.]

"So the crisis in school desegregation continued. In the fall of 1960 in New Orleans, four little girls were sent to first grade in white schools."

[The men are on each side of the girl as they ascend the school steps. One man opens the door, and the girl enters the school first, followed by the men.]

"It caused a city-wide riot."

[3]

Clark: "If you do not *succeed* in life—
I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man!—
If you do not *succeed* in life—
I *want* you to *blame yourselves*!"

[4]

Clip from *Eyes on the Prize*: The scene is a city street, and the images are of the tyrannical Police Chief Bull Connor barking directives at his white police officers and firemen amid a gathering of hundreds of peaceful black demonstrators on the sidewalk. The narrator's accompanying voice-over is: "The confrontation moved outside the park. Once again, Bull Connor summoned his firemen. With no place to run, no trees for protection, the demonstrators were hit with the full force of the water."

[Imagery of firemen blasting massive streams of water full force from fire hoses as defenseless black men, women, and children are slammed into the sides of buildings or blown off their feet to the pavement.]

[5]

Clark: "*My* motto is simple.

I *want* you to *blame yourselves*!"

Sequence B: Separation and Rearticulation

Along with the juxtaposition of images in a linear fashion, the other main feature of the videocollage is the separation of a segment's audio and visual elements and a rearticulation of them for the purpose of creating provocative combinations or

"couplings." For example, one such sequence includes footage of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivering his famous "I have a dream" speech to the massive gathering of people that came together on the March on Washington in 1963. At first, we see King and hear his voice, but in subsequent segments his voice is replaced by that of Clark's, so we see King "speaking" Clark's "blame" speech, which is repeated in various combinations accompanying King's image. We also see the image of Clark on the assembly stage of Eastside High and hear him delivering his "blame" speech to the African American audience of students, but at one point Clark's voice disappears and is replaced by King's voice speaking words from the "I have a dream" speech to the image of Clark on stage. This provocative interplay occurs in variations for some time. Another permutation in this sequence is that there are many segments in which we see other recognizable black and white historical/cultural/political figures speaking to crowds or on television, but what we hear are Joe Clark's words or MLK's words accompanying the images. For example, here are just a few of dozens of brief segments from this sequence:

[1]

Clark: "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, 'When will you be satisfied?'

[Image of African American students in the assembly hall audience looking at and listening to Clark on stage]

We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality."

[2]

King: "*My* motto is simple. If you do not *succeed* in life, I don't want you to *blame* your parents!

[Aerial image of tens of thousands of people on the Washington mall, listening to MLK deliver his speech]

I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man! I *want* you to *blame yourselves*! The responsibility is *yours*!"

[3]

Clark: "We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

[3]

Kennedy: Clip from *Eyes on the Prize*: We see President Kennedy seated at a table as he delivers a speech on television to the American people. The image is accompanied by Clark's words:

"If you do not *succeed* in life—
I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man!—
If you do not *succeed* in life—
I *want* you to *blame yourselves*!"

[4]

Bush: Clip from contemporary news footage of President George W. Bush delivering a State of the Union speech, but the voice and words are Clark's:

"My motto is simple. If you do not *succeed* in life, I don't want you to *blame* your parents! I don't want you to *blame* the *white* man! I *want* you to *blame yourselves*! The responsibility is *yours*!"

[5]

King: Speaking his own words: "In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.' But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

After viewing the entire videocollage during a seminar, nearly all of the students expressed through a discussion and in a subsequent essay how the videocollage had caused them to begin to rethink their views of Joe Clark and his "tough love," "I *want* you to *blame yourselves*!" philosophy. They described feeling "shocked" or "jolted" by some of the juxtapositions, especially hearing Joe Clark's words accompanied

by visual scenes of Dr. Martin Luther King. The "shock" was in recognizing that Dr. King would never have constructed the complexity of the situation in terms of "blaming the victim." Students also saw the lack of any historical and institutional critique in Clark's words, and they came to realize how economically depressed communities and underfunded schools are contributing factors leading to student disaffection and failure. Many students took up the documentary series *Eyes on the Prize* and other documentaries about the civil rights movement for further study.[5]

DETOURNEMENT AS A "CRITICAL ART" THEORY AND PRACTICE

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that a fundamental question to be answered by those who attempt to engage preservice teachers in critically reflective activities is: "What texts will be taken up, and what methods will be used, to create the situations within which critical questions and analyses can take place?" Having described in some detail the media texts I took up (*Lean on Me* and the series *Eyes on the Prize*), I will now turn my attention to the method that I used in making the videocollage. Though I will use the term "detournement" to describe this method, I need to state first that the term "detournement" should be understood as being both a theory and a method intertwined—a "praxis," in the (arguable) sense of a critical practice informed by theory (see Bottomore, 1983). To avoid the unnecessary repetition of saying "theory and practice of detournement," however, I will gradually just use the term by itself.

"Detournement" is a theory/method associated with the Situationist International. Ken Knabb (1989) describes the Situationists in *The Situationist International Anthology* thusly: "In 1957 a few European avant-garde groups came together to form the Situationist International [SI]. Over the next decade the SI developed an increasingly incisive and coherent critique of modern society and of its bureaucratic pseudo-opposition, and its new methods of agitation were influential in leading up to the May 1968 revolt in France. Since then—although the SI itself was dissolved in 1972—situationist theses and tactics have been taken up by radical currents in dozens of countries all over the world" (p. ix). The central figure of the Situationists was Guy Debord, most famous for his book *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Though it is well beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt a full (or even a partial) explanation of Debord's theory of "the Spectacle" (see Jappe, 1999; Plant, 1992), Griel Marcus (1989) might be suggestive here:

> "The spectacle," Debord said, was "*capital* accumulated until it becomes an image." A never-ending accumulation of spectacles—advertisements, entertainments, traffic, skyscrapers, political campaigns, department stores, sports events, newscasts, art tours, foreign wars, space launchings—made a modern world, a world in which all communication flowed in one direction, from the powerful to the powerless. One could not respond or talk back, or intervene, but one did not want to. In the spectacle, passivity was

> simultaneously the means and the end of a great hidden project, a project of social control. On the terms of its particular form of hegemony the spectacle naturally produced not actors but spectators: modern men and women, citizens of the most advanced societies on earth, who were thrilled to watch whatever it was they were given to watch. (p. 99)

The main method that the situationists developed to critique and challenge the alienating, separating, pacifying, spectator-inducing, socially controlling forces of the Spectacle was the "critical art" (Debord, 1963) of detournement. Elisabeth Sussman's (1989) discussion of detournement provides an initial, broad definition:

> *Detournement* ('diversion') was [a] key means of restructuring culture and experience …. *Detournement* proposes a violent excision of elements—painting, architecture, literature, film, urban sites, sounds, gestures, words, signs—from their original contexts, and a consequent restabilization and recontextualization through rupture and realignment. (p. 8).

Debord and Wolman (1956) explained that detournement entailed "the reuse of preexisting artistic [and mass-produced] elements in a new ensemble" for the purpose of critique, which was the ultimate purpose of art in situationist theory:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations …. [W]hen two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed …. The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (p. 9)

Many detournements—the products of the act of detournement, or detourning—made by the situationists derived from relatively insignificant sources. For example, in the issues of the SI's journal *Internationale Situationniste*, comic strips with rewritten speech bubbles appeared often.[6] Other detournements were more sophisticated, such as Debord's six films. Because my videocollage detournement is based on film texts, I narrow my focus to film.

Situationist filmmaker Rene Vienet (1967) explains that a situationist film practice "lends itself particularly well to studying the present as a historical problem, to dismantling the processes of reification" (p. 215). In a discussion of Vienet's views of cinema, Thomas Levin (1989) explains that

> Vienet's conception of an SI film practice enlists the specific capacities of the medium (above all, photographic documentation, voice-over, and analytic montage) to expose the always mediated status of the seemingly immediate and "natural" world constructed in classical, or pre-situationist, cinema. The present is studied as a historical problem, and, above all, the practice of representation itself is continuously subjected to critical interrogation. This staging of mediation takes the form of a work on other mediations, primarily

> by means of cinema's elective affinity to the important strategy of citation and reinscription referred to as detournement. (pp. 76–77)

This purpose of studying the present "as a historical problem" (Vienet) by critically interrogating "the seemingly immediate and 'natural' [reified] world constructed in classical, or presituationist, cinema" is the very purpose that informed my videocollage based on *Lean on Me*. In explaining this, I will draw from what I have presented thus far.

The videocollage as a whole is intended "to expose the always mediated status of the seemingly immediate and 'natural' world constructed" in a typical Hollywood film (and the spectacle as a totality). This immediateness and naturalness is achieved through what appears and does not appear. About the Spectacle, Debord (1967) wrote: "The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than 'that which appears is good, that which is good appears.' The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearance without reply, by its monopoly of appearance" (thesis 13). Both *Lean on Me* and the figure of Joe Clark that it constructs can be viewed as spectacles. Clark's "My motto is simple" speech is "good" and seems "natural" because it appears without reply in the film. There is no critique of it or argument against its monopoly of appearance. So the videocollage serves as such a critique and challenge, in both its content and form.

The content of the segments from *Eyes on the Prize* in Sequences A and B challenge Clark's implied argument that historical knowledge is unimportant because such knowledge cannot explain or change circumstances in the present. Clark, through his pejorative use of the term "blame," commands his students to avoid searching for historical explanations for present conditions. The *Eyes on the Prize* segments in Sequence A (and the entire videocollage, most of which was not described) are about school segregation, collective civil action undertaken for the purpose of changing a racist culture, the violent repression of the freedom to exercise one's personal and social agency, the economic poverty that is both a weapon and effect of repression, and more. Considered separately, Joe Clark's "world" and the "world" documented in *Eyes on the Prize* can be characterized in terms that Debord and Wolman (1956) use when describing detournement—as "two worlds of feeling," as "two independent expressions." What the videocollage works to do is bring about a "mutual interference" of these two worlds. So as we hear Joe Clark tell his students to blame themselves for their failures, we suddenly see an image of Bull Connor and his firemen violently confronting a peaceful gathering of African American demonstrators on city streets. This "mutual interference" is, however, caused not only through the content of the elements brought together, but also through the method used to connect these elements—through the formal characteristic of the videocollage.

One main formal characteristic of the videocollage is its radical juxtaposition of elements from the two different textual sources, its "strategy of citation and

reinscription." In the videocollage, the spectacular text (*Lean on Me*) is challenged by segments from another text (*Eyes on the Prize*), and this challenge occurs through a process of excision of elements from their original contexts and a recontextualization within the context of the videocollage. In the new combinations of images and sounds that are formed, a rupturing takes place, and because the videocollage itself is a highly mediated text (as are all texts), this rupturing is not mere coincidence—it is highly calculated. Clark's "My motto is simple" speech—which expresses what can arguably be interpreted as an ultimately "violent," disempowering philosophy of personal agency—is itself subjected to a process of "violence" of a kind. It is not only excised from its original context, but a series of "violent" insertions of each individual statement within the short textual passage takes place. And the realignments, the new combinations are designed to expose the mediated (carefully constructed) nature of Clark's message. It is a message that presents one view of agency, but other views exist, and they are brought into existence though radical juxtapositions of the videocollage segments. Also, the other formal feature of the videocollage is the separation of an image from its accompanying "natural" sounds (the voices of the people, in this case) and a rearticulation of the sounds with other images. The intended effect is for the words to take on radically different meanings as they are "voiced," so to speak, by carefully selected historical figures, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The intent is to challenge the viewer to reconsider what Clark's words mean and imply about social agency, and also to present a counterview of agency, one that encourages active participation, the expression of individual and personal desires, and collective action—the kind of agency represented by the various segments of the *Eyes on the Prize* material (the March on Washington, for example).

At this point, it is important to note that Debord (1963) believed that the best detournement, along with creating a critique of its object, "must also be critical of itself in its very form." It must "contain *its own critique*" (p. 151, italicized in the original) to show that the maker of the detournement has anticipated the arguments that can be made against it. I think this is the case with the videocollage I made, as well as in my discussion of it. For example, at one point in my discussion, I am explicit about the fact that just as the film *Lean on Me* is a carefully constructed set of representations and mediations, so, too, is my detournement: "In the new combinations of images and sounds that are formed, a rupturing takes place, and because the videocollage itself is a highly mediated text (as are all texts), this rupturing is not mere coincidence—it is highly calculated." In stating this, I am also stating that I do not consider the videocollage to embody some universal truth that dismantles on its own the falsity of the message about social agency expressed by Joe Clark in *Lean on Me*. Rather, I am implying that my videocollage—my detournement of *Lean on Me*—is an *argument*, and it is admittedly an argument from a particular position. This is a position that values both individual and collective exercises of agency.

CONCLUSION: DETOURNEMENT AND AGENCY

At the end of the introduction, I stated that conceptualizing and designing the *Lean on Me* detournement and using it as a text with preservice teachers was a process that enacted my own sense of agency as a teacher educator. To expand on this, I find Fox and Geichman's (2001) discussion to be especially useful. Fox and Geichman explore how educators and researchers can take up certain "strategies and perspectives from contemporary art" (p. 35) for a variety of educational purposes. They have identified nine such strategies from contemporary art, some of which I see enacted in my own practice. For example, two strategies are what they call "Aiming to Break Through, to Shock" and "Mixing Up and Mixing Media." The first strategy seeks "to stop us in our tracks, to break through the borders of convention" (p. 38). The second involves both finding "alternative ways of combining media that are not normally worked together," as well as "*join[ing] things together that don't normally go together*" (p. 49, original emphasis). I see the videocollages as using media to juxtapose images that usually are not thought of together (footage of Joe Clark giving his "My motto is simple" speech juxtaposed with images of Bull Connor and his firemen blasting people with firehouses and attacking them with attack dogs), and the juxtaposed images can bring about the "shock" element described in the "Aiming to Break Through, to Shock" strategy.

I would also add that in making the *Lean on Me* detournement, I feel I accomplished a certain set of goals related to social agency and the arts: (1) I made "agency" a topic of study through (2) an act of detournement that revealed not only my own agency in the making of what is arguably a political statement (the detournement itself), but the contents of the media texts that I took up are shot through with discourses of agency, and (3) I took the detournement up with preservice teachers for the purpose of engaging them in a discourse about what agency is. Through the detournement, preservice teachers underwent the initial stages of reconsidering what social agency means and how it is represented through both the figures of Joe Clark and through the detournement that I made.

NOTES

[1] This chapter originally appeared as an article in the *Journal of Thought* (vol. 39, no. 4, 2004), a Caddo Gap Press publication. Use is permitted because Caddo Gap Press does not copyright. Also, the original title of the article was "Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis," which I have changed here because I have used that title for the edited book.

[2] The argument could be made that this is actually two questions; for me, the two issues—which texts to include and the method of taking them up—are intertwined, so they (arguably) form one question comprised of inseparable parts.

[3] For other examples, see Trier, 2001b, 2002, 2003a, 2003b.

[4] My transcription of the audio runs over 2000 words, and my descriptions of the visual elements of the three dozen or so clips runs even longer.

[5] I wish to acknowledge the brevity of my comments here about the preservice teachers' reactions to the videocollage. I typically present a fuller analysis of student readings of various print and media texts, quoting and interpreting selected passages from their critical essays. Such accounts can be found in

some of my articles. My rationale for summarizing students' reactions is that my primary focus in this chapter is on an aspect of my teaching practice.

[6] Imagine a "Dagwood" comic with Blondie fixing dinner, saying, "The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images," to which Dagwood, sitting at the dinner table, replies "You're absolutely right, Honey: Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle"—these are Debord's words, which take on a rather different meaning through the subversion of the comic strip's typical discourse. [See the Dagwood comic at: http://www.bopsecrets.org/comics/dagwood.htm.]

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AMY SENTA

3. JUAN SKIPPY: A CRITICAL DETOURNEMENT OF *SKIPPYJON JONES*

Mid-read aloud, I looked out to confused faces of the Latin@ students who constituted more than half of my third grade classroom. As I moved through the story, animating the nonsense Spanglish used by the Chihuahua characters, Hector, an eight-year-old who described himself as Mexican, put on the brakes by saying, "I feel like that book is making fun of me." A class discussion fired up as we abandoned the read aloud. Even a passing teacher joined us to listen in on the critical discussion about the brand new book that had arrived for us that very day in the much-anticipated monthly red and white Scholastic Publishing and Distribution cardboard box. This event drove me to take up the popular *Skippyjon Jones* series for analysis later in my graduate studies.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine messages embedded in the award-winning contemporary children's book series *Skippyjon Jones* (Schachner, 2003), which has grown to empire status within the children's literature market. Using Hall's (1997) theory of representation as a lens and Debord's (1967) technique of detournement as a method for critique, I exposed and challenged author and illustrator Judy Schachner's messages about Mexicans that are embedded in the texts. The audiovisual detournement juxtaposes images of Mexican migrant work with elements of the children's text and reveals that *Skippyjon Jones* marginalizes and portrays Mexicans as inferior through representations, language, and the overarching theme of a welcomed white savior. These findings suggest that when used in teacher education, detournement can lead to critical analysis of media intended for use in classrooms and therefore to efforts for social change within and through schools. These efforts could range from text selection to critical media literacy with young children. As part of this chapter I describe three issues with which I continue to puzzle as I deploy detournement in teacher education and discuss how those puzzlements surface possibilities for detournement as pedagogical praxis for equity. Finally, I describe one case in which promulgation of the detournement forged a relationship between teacher education and other education contexts, which in turn contributed to ripples of social action. The nine-minute detournement itself can be found on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg0OwLCq484

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 55–78.

Like all media, children's literature is a social institution in relationship with the larger society. Books are one way in which children learn about their world. Dominant meanings become encoded in books, and through interactions with those books, children construct meaning about their social worlds. It is a common misconception that picture books for children cannot convey societal messages, especially when writers and illustrators use techniques such as bright coloring and rhyming, simple, and/or repetitive language (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). In this chapter, I describe how I took up a text for young children and examined it for messages about race and language.

This examination led to a tangible critique of the children's book. The critique, which is intended for an audience of practicing and aspiring teachers as well as teacher educators, was an audiovisual detournement. Through the detournement, I exposed messages of racism, linguicism, and ethnocentrism in the highly acclaimed picture book series. Botelho and Rudman (2009) argued, "Placing a text within its sociopolitical context opens up the dominant cultural assumptions imbued in its language and images" (p. 71). Through the detournement, I aimed to place *Skippyjon Jones* within the sociopolitical context of border crossing, with the purpose of exposing and challenging the dominant assumptions imbued in author and illustrator Judy Schachner's language and images.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Critical analysis of children's literature allows for reconstruction of the existing social order (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Such an analysis requires a reading of children's literature beyond the text. In other words, because texts are created within sociopolitical contexts, analysis of those texts must include consideration of the historical and political contexts in which texts are situated. A critical analysis of a text "calls attention to the power imbalance in society as well as its organization" (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 5). Only with this attention to inequity of access to social power can critical analysis of children's literature take place. In my critical analysis of children's literature I ascribe to critical scholars of children's literature Botelho and Rudman's (2009) fundamental argument that, "Placing a text within its sociopolitical context opens up the dominant cultural assumptions imbued in its language and images" (p. 71). In the detournement and in this chapter then, I place the *Skippyjon Jones* works in their sociopolitical context and thereby expose the racism of the series.

Although the authors of some of the related existing literature that I present here used the term "Hispanic" in their writing, in this chapter and in the detournement I instead use the term "Latin@." "Hispanic" was a term first used by the United States government in what many argue was an attempt to erase ethnic identities. This term includes people of both Latin American and European Spanish heritage. The term "Latin@" was appropriated in recognition of the common experience of oppression of people in the United States that have Latin American ethnicity (Chomsky, 2007).

In this chapter, the term "Hispanic" appears only within comments of original authors or speakers.

The critical analysis of representations of Latin@s in children's literature is an underexplored but growing practice for cultural studies and for education researchers. Existing work that has involved examination of representations of racial groups in children's literature has focused mainly on African American literature, defined as literature by African American authors and/or about African Americans. For example, Brooks and McNair (2008) edited *Embracing, Evaluating, and Examining African American Children's and Young Adult Literature,* a compilation of critical work done on literature ranging from neoslave narratives to biographies of African American women. In addition, Botelho and Rudman (2009) recently critically analyzed children's literature by and/or about Mexican Americans. This chapter contributes to this growing field by offering a critical analysis of representations of Latin@s in a series that has dominated the children's literature market for over a decade.

Historically, people of color, when represented in children's literature, have been portrayed as nothing more than "an oddity or an exceptional character out of place in a relatively homogenous society" (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 22). Even when including characters and/or plots related to people of color, a trend that began only recently in the 1960s, the intended audiences for children's literature in the United States have historically been primarily children of the white middle class. After a period of invisibility in the 1980s, Mexican American representation in children's literature increased with the work of Latin@ authors and small publishers. These books reflected themes such as the heterogeneity of Mexican American communities, contemporary issues for Mexican Americans, and code switching between Spanish and English. Still, most children's literature that included Mexican representations presented border crossing to the United States, followed by agricultural work and abandonment of the Spanish language and Mexican culture, as the only possible way for Mexicans to live a good life. This trend continued through the 1970s. Today, less than 10% of the 5,000 children's books published each year include any representations of people of color, and in 2007, there were only 59 books published that included Latin@ characters (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Children's literature, then, is an institution with a history of dominance and oppression in tandem with wider society. The series *Skippyjon Jones*, as this chapter will demonstrate, is a major contributor to that history.

Skippyjon Jones: The Series

Judy Schachner, whose former occupation was greeting card illustrator, is both author and illustrator of the *Skippyjon Jones* series. The first installment in the series, which has run since 2003, received a long list of awards, including the first-ever annual E. B. White Read Aloud Award from the Association of Booksellers for Children. In the series, a white cat named Skippyjon Jones travels to Mexico in his imagination

in order to save a community of Mexican Chihuahuas who call themselves Los Chimichangos. In each book, the Chimichangos rejoice at the arrival of Skippyjon, to whom they look for such acts as safety from an enemy and restoration of their supply of beans. In addition, when Skippyjon visits Mexico, he self-identifies as a Chihuahua himself, adopting what he imagines to be a Spanish accent and language techniques such as adjusting words to include an –ito suffix. The *Skippyjon Jones* series, which is still growing, is distributed by the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books: Scholastic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to analyze *Skippyjon Jones*, I used Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation. First, I used this theory to consider representation within *Skippyjon Jones*. I argue that the problematic meaning that Schachner communicates through the text (including both written and visual discourse) involves messages of inferiority of Mexicans and the Spanish language through stereotyping. Hall (1997) defined stereotyping: "Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature" (p. 257) and argued that this practice is central to representation because it reduces, naturalizes, and fixes difference. *Skippyjon Jones* positions the Mexican characters as the "other." By "other," I mean "people who are different linguistically, culturally, racially from the dominant White Anglo-Protestant culture" (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 103). According to Hall (1997), the practices of normalizing and othering depend on stereotyping, and that stereotyping occurs within wider contexts of power differentials.

An important assumption behind my critique of *Skippyjon Jones* is that meaning is created rather than existing as an inherent property of a text. Hall (1997) argued that "meaning can never be finally fixed" (p. 270). According to Hall (1980), meaning is encoded in a text and decoded from a text, and both processes are framed by structures of understanding as well as social contexts. Furthermore, "The codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical" (Hall, 1980, p. 131). In other words, the meaning encoded in a text by its producer and the meaning taken by a reader may not be the same. This assumption has been important to my deployment of the method of detournement for critique of *Skippyjon Jones* because it has framed the representations of *Skippyjon Jones* as ripe for re-appropriation in a contestation of meaning.

I engage in this contestation of meaning in a critical direction. I acknowledge that such a direction silences alternate interpretations. However, I stand in this direction for this particular work due to the dominance of *Skippyjon Jones*, especially in school contexts, and the resulting urgency for a contestation of its messages. In sustaining a sense of urgency I look towards Hall's (1980) reminder that the dominant order is encoded within texts. More specifically, "The domains of 'preferred meanings' have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices, and beliefs...the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimations, limits,

sanctions" (Hall, 1980, p. 134). In this chapter, I demonstrate that the problematic meanings encoded within *Skippyjon Jones* serve to marginalize and position Mexicans as inferior. While the sites for potential critique in *Skippyjon Jones* are multitudinous, the three elements of the text on which I focused my investigation for their problematic meanings are representations, language, and the theme of a white savior.

In order to investigate the representations, language, and theme of a white savior in *Skippyjon Jones* I employed Hall's (1980) theory of encoding and decoding. According to Hall (1980), a reader can interpret a text in three ways. If the reader decodes the meaning encoded by the producer of the text, a preferred reading has taken place. Secondly, if a reader acknowledges the legitimacy of the dominant meaning encoded within a text but reserves the right to adjust the legitimacy of that meaning within local conditions, a negotiated reading has taken place. If on the other hand, the reader "detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference" (Hall, 1980, p. 138), an oppositional reading has taken place. Most importantly for my critique of *Skippyjon Jones,* an oppositional reading allows for intervention in representation.

The detournement that I created is an oppositional reading, intended as an intervention in the representations within *Skippyjon Jones*. I re-appropriated Schachner's writing, illustrations, and own voice in order to bring new meaning to her representations. According to Hall (1997), there are two ways to re-appropriate representations in order to challenge stereotypes. The first is to counter negative stereotypes with either a reversal of a stereotype's characteristics or the substitution of positive images. However, Hall (1997) argued that although this type of intervention may involve progress in terms of adding to available messages, "To reverse the stereotype is not necessarily to overturn or subvert it" (p. 272) and "does not necessarily displace the negative" (p. 274). In order to critique the stereotypes and messages within *Skippyjon Jones* then, I employed Hall's (1997) interventionist strategy of going within the representations themselves with the intent of contesting them from within. This "transcoding" strategy involves examining the form of existing representations rather than adding additional content to those representations. Detournement is the strategic approach I took for this intervention.

I chose my strategic approach of critique for the detournement according to the recommendations for intervention posited by Hall (1997). More specifically, I chose to challenge the stereotypes within *Skippyjon Jones* by going inside those stereotypes rather than by attempting to counter those stereotypes with positive representations. "Detournement…is the fluid language of anti-ideology. It occurs within a type of communication aware of its inability to enshrine any inherent and definitive certainty" (Debord, 1967, thesis 208). My detournement is a reflection of my oppositional reading of the text, and I understand that it is neither objective nor universally true. I describe myself as a white, middle class, heterosexual, cisgender[1] woman and my life story includes layers of privilege and experiences with teaching.

The detournement communicates my oppositional reading of the *Skippyjon Jones* text in one specifically constructed audiovisual argument.

Juan Skippy: The Detournement

Using Debord's (1967) method of detournement, I critiqued the award-winning series in an audiovisual detournement that I entitled *Juan Skippy*. Botelho and Rudman (2009) argued that an approach to children's literature with only "interest and respect is important but not sufficient" (p. 159), and that analysis should include consideration of topics such as inequity, marginalization, policy, and the hegemony of the English language. In short, sociopolitical systems that further inequity must be questioned, along with the message of inevitability of those systems that permeates children's books. This detournement juxtaposed images and print/verbal text from *Skippyjon Jones* with photo documentaries of Mexican migrant working communities. I combined these two distinct sources and contexts in order to expose and challenge (1) the marginalizing portrayal of Mexicans and the Spanish language, and (2) the overarching theme of a welcomed white savior.

Of detournement, Debord and Wolman (1956) wrote, "Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations…When two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed" (p. 15). Although the detournement I created incorporates elements from two distinct contexts—the pages of a picture book for young children and the pages of community documentaries—their combination results in a new relationship that allows the viewer to see the *Skippyjon Jones* text from a new and critical perspective.

The purpose of this technique, according to Debord (1967), is not just to create a distinct perspective, but to challenge the central messages of a text as well as the social order that the original text reflects: "The fact that the violence of detournement itself mobilizes an action capable of disturbing or overthrowing any existing order is a reminder that the existence of the theoretical domain is nothing in itself" (thesis 209). My purpose in creating the *Juan Skippy* detournement was to uncover and disturb the existing order portrayed in the *Skippyjon Jones* series.

In order to expose the messages of the children's book, I excised elements from the original text's context and appropriated them in order to develop specific arguments through a new medium. I used the strategy of calculated recontextualization that Trier (2004) deployed in his audiovisual detournement of a popular film. In his detournement, Trier (2004) challenged the messages within *Lean on Me* with "a process of excision of elements from their original contexts and a recontextualization within the context of the videocollage…this rupturing is not mere coincidence – it is highly calculated" (p. 48). In *Juan Skippy*, I used this same strategy in order to challenge the *Skippyjon Jones* text's preferred ("encoded") messages of language, representation, and theme of a white savior.

In the detournement, I employed various media elements to critique *Skippyjon Jones*, including visual images, written text, audio text, lyrics, and music. In order to disturb the existing order reflected in Schachner's series, I detourned images within *Skippyjon Jones* (the original book in the growing series of picture books) with images from photo documentaries of Mexican migrant working communities. Debord and Wolman (1956) argued that "detournement gains by being accompanied by illustrations whose relationships to the text are not immediately obvious" (p. 18). For *Juan Skippy*, I chose Sebastião Salgado and Lélia Wanick Salgado's (2000) *Migrations: Humanities in Transition* and David Bacon's (2006) *Communities without Borders* as the sources of these accompanying illustrations. I chose these particular texts because at an annual conference of the American Educational Studies Association (AESA), Michael Hale recommended them for anti-xenophobic pedagogy with preservice teachers. By juxtaposing images from these two documentaries with images and text from *Skippyjon Jones*, I aimed to invite viewers to challenge central messages of the children's book. While acknowledging that viewers would interpret the detournement in their own ways, I constructed the detournement through calculated decisions that had the potential to expose particular racist messages.

I detourned more than just the imagery of *Skippyjon Jones*. In addition to images and visual text from all three sources, I sliced up and appropriated Schachner's reading of her own text for the detournement. An audio recording of Schachner's reading of her own text is marketed along with each of the books in the series, and I chose to use her voice to demonstrate in the detournement that when read aloud, the written text of *Skippyjon Jones* becomes even more problematic. Rather than using another's audio reading of the book, I elected to use Schachner's own reading in order to argue that the reading included in the detournement is the type of reading actually practiced for work with the young audience of these books. Furthermore, the book was awarded a distinguished award for read-alouds, or books that are intended to be read out loud with young children, and my use of the audio reading was part of a critique of this awarding.

In addition to Schachner's own audio reading of her text, I also incorporated lyrical and musical portions of an audio track (Bennett, 2002). Sections of the track that I appropriated include female vocalist Alexandra Hamnede singing, for example, "Did you mean the things that you were saying?" "Is your conscience clear at all?" "Life goes on and on without any deeper thoughts," and "Are we going to live like this forever?" I selected this track for the decontextualized lyrics' inquiry of intended messages and implied discussion of a problematic future (See Appendix A for complete lyrics). In addition, I intended for the serious and heavy down-tempo beat to counter the fantastical, humorous tone with which Schachner reads her own text.

In addition to detourning audio elements, I also detourned the title of the book. More specifically, I entitled the detournement *Juan Skippy* in order to reflect Debord's

(1967) commitment to the tactic of reversing meaning through detournement (see thesis 206). I chose to adjust Jon to Juan in order to re-emphasize the centrality of language in the detournement, and ended with Skippy in order to emphasize my argument that Schachner's text is anything but skippy.

INTERPRETATIONS AND ARGUMENT

Judy Schachner's series for young children reproduces stereotypical messaging about Mexicans. The messages that I exposed and challenged in the audiovisual detournement involve three elements within the text: representations, language, and the theme of a white savior. Because racism and linguicism are so intertwined in the *Skippyjon Jones* series, I describe my interpretations related to language and representation together. After interpreting language and representation in general I then examine the theme of a welcomed white savior in the texts. Next, I argue for the importance of these interpretations for teacher education. I follow these implications for teacher education with a discussion in two parts. First, I discuss how using my detournement of *Skippyjon Jones* in teacher education courses has continued to surface engagement with issues related to teaching and equity. I describe myself as "puzzling from pedagogical praxis." Finally, I detail a "rippling" of action that occurred outside of schooling contexts as a result of my detournement. This description of a relationship between teacher education and contexts beyond schooling offers a case in which detournement as method allowed for mobile influence in work towards equity.

LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION

An understanding of the widespread practice of stereotyping Latin@s as a racial group in children's literature can provide some context for Schachner's racial and linguistic stereotyping. Nilsson (2005) found widespread evidence of stereotyping Latin@ characters with, for example, little diversity in physical characteristics and low-level jobs. Christianson (2002) coded eight different ways that language was used in children's literature that included representations of Latin@s. The most common of these ways was code switching, or alternating between phrases, words, or sentences in Spanish and English. Code switching between Spanish and English is under the wider definition of "Spanglish," the narrower definition of which is a fusion of Spanish and English (Chappell & Faltis, 2007).

Christianson (2002) argued that such code switching is beneficial and important for all students, based on the idea that readers may infer the importance of bilingualism for Latin@ cultures and that Latin@ readers would develop an increased interest in their own culture. Nilsson (2008) examined the use of African American Vernacular English and advocated for its incorporation into literary texts for children. She studied student responses (for example, call and response patterns) during both read alouds and independent reading and concluded that literature that incorporates

African American Vernacular English "holds great potential for providing children with opportunities to draw on their prior linguistic knowledge as they work to construct meaning of the literature they read" (p. 145).

While Christianson (2002) and Nilsson (2008) argued for the incorporation of entire or elements of actual languages and dialects, Judy Schachner chose to use nonsense Spanglish in her *Skippyjon Jones* series. For example, her Mexican characters collectively sing, "Muchos poochos, licky-sticky mango, Gozo bozo, chimi-chimi-chango!" (Schachner, 2005, p. 26). I argue, through the detournement, that Schachner's choice effectively marginalizes actual Spanish language and therefore the groups that are portrayed as using it in the text. The use of Spanglish in the *Skippyjon* texts masquerades as code switching while at the same time inviting reader response. This combination in *Skippyjon Jones*, its power established by Christianson (2002) and Nilsson (2008), dangerously encourages the development in readers of a negative sense of Latin@s, whether self or "other." Chappell and Faltis (2007) examined children's literature that included representations of Latin@s and found that the messages within "often reinscribe ideological notions of linguistic prescriptivism, cultural assimilation, [and] the hegemony of English" (p. 253). I argue that the messages embedded in the representations and language of *Skippyjon Jones* do exactly that.

In order to make this argument in the detournement, I created sequences that exposed and critiqued the messages of marginalization of Mexicans and the Spanish language. For example, the opening sequence of the detournement critiques both representation and language use. Following the introduction of the white author and her opening greeting of "Hola dudes!" I juxtaposed an image of Skippyjon Jones, the main character, with a portrait photograph of Fernando, a Trujilo boy from Mexico. Skippyjon, a white Siamese cat, passes across a mirror and envisions himself a Chihuahua. The scene does not necessarily function as marginalizing Latin@s until paired with the narration: "Using his very best Spanish accent, he said, 'My ears are too beeg for my head. My head ees too beeg for my body. I am not a Siamese cat….I AM A CHIHUAHUA!" (Schachner, 2003, p. 8). I chose to overlap this scene's narration with a photo of Fernando in order to emphasize the author's choice of highlighting Skippy's use of "his very best Spanish accent" as well as her association of that accent with a set of disproportionately "beeg" head and ears. The detournement uses several such sequences in order to question the messages involved in Schachner's portrayal of Skippyjon's obsession with "those cockeyed Chihuahuas" (Schachner, 2005, p. 3).

In media for children, giving characters an accent "builds upon the stereotypical belief that people who speak with an accent sound unintelligent and therefore sound funny" (Pimentel & Velázquez, 2009, p. 9). Schachner's attribution of what she perceives to be a Spanish accent to the Mexican characters in the story as well as to Skippyjon when he chooses to cross into Mexico and see himself as a Chihuahua like the other Mexican characters, builds upon this stereotype. Even more tragically, Schachner appears to make these accent choices in an attempt at

humor. Furthermore, linguistic stereotypes are not isolated elements in the texts, but are emphasized whenever the Mexican characters appear in the text and whenever Skippyjon imagines himself to be Mexican, and these instances together constitute the majority of the plot of each of the books in the series. Furthermore, the use of anthropomorphic animals serves to distance readers from the social issues such as these that are often involved in a text (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Therefore, Schachner's dangerous craft of using anthropomorphic cats and dogs serves to distance readers from the racism of the *Skippyjon Jones* series.

The Mexican Chihuahua stereotype comes further into play in the next sequence of the detournement, when Skippyjon travels "far, far away in old Mexico" and meets "a mysterioso band of Chihuahuas" who call themselves "Los Chimichangos" (Schachner, 2003, p. 12). In order to detourn this scene, I chose an image of a group of migrant farmworkers from Mexico, playing over the image the nonsense narration, such as "Why the maskito dude?", "Poquito Tito," and "'Do you like rice and beans?' asked Pintolito" (Schachner, 2003, p. 13). Repetition of this phrasing, paired with the interchanging of images of rainbow-colored cartoon Chihuahuas and Mexican migrant work contexts, effectively foregrounds Schachner's literal equation of Skippyjon's encounter with Mexican peoples with the trivialization of the Spanish language and the characterization of a Mexicanness through stereotyping. In another juxtaposition sequence I decontextualized Schachner's (2003) image of a "fiesta" in honor of Skippyjon's arrival. Included in this image are about two dozen dancing Chihuahas, many of whom are wearing sombreros and holding items such as maracas and tacos. The counter image that I chose to expose the stereotypes and characterization in this image is a photograph of a boy's first dance as lead deer in Rancho Camargo (Bacon, 2006). The sincerity of this counter image of what I would describe as community accompaniment to the honored youth exposes the racism of Schachner's tongue-wagging, googly-eyed dogs.

The racism of Schachner's characterization and representation is not surprising, given the influence of the wider social problem of white supremacy on representations in literature for children. Although some may argue that the consequences of stereotyping in children's literature are spread evenly amongst racial groups, researchers working on the problem of white supremacy and children's literature have fortunately been steadfast in their attention to power relations. Willis-Rivera and Meeker (2002), for example, engaged in a qualitative analysis of representations of people of color in children's literature texts through the framework of whiteness studies. They argued, "White privilege in these texts positions people of color as non-American commodities and objects of a white gaze" (p. 269). Bringing this lens of whiteness to Schachner's racist representations reveals that Schachner positions her Mexican characters as both objects of a white gaze and as commodities owned by the gazer. She goes so far as to position Skippyjon as clearly separate from, superior to, and controlling the Chimichangos. For instance, when Skippyjon is not imagining himself in Mexico, the Chimichangos are Chimichangos are a set of stuffed toys and bobble head dolls actually belonging to Skippyjon. Normally resting in Skippyjon's

room, these toys only take on lifelike characteristics when Skippyjon commands them in his own imagination. These aspects of the storyline "other" readers of color, which "gives the white reader the pleasure of the appearance of diversity, while still protecting the white position as separate from the position of people of color" (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002, p. 277). This is a common trend in children's literature. For example, in works from 1992-1995, stereotypes of Mexican Americans included an exoticized, foreign other (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Tragically, white supremacy allows "othering" to persist and dominate children's literature.

Furthermore, in *Skippyjon Jones* "the white viewer inhabits the gaze," leading to the problem that "this gaze controls the position of the person/people of color in the text" (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002, p. 272). According to Botelho and Rudman (2009), "The point of view of the story is considered because the perspective determines the position(s) of power from which the reader 'sees' the story" (p. 4). In *Skippyjon Jones*, the story is told through the perspective of Skippyjon, which positions power with Skippyjon rather than with the Mexican characters in the story. Schachner positions a controlling Skippyjon as clearly separate from and superior to her Mexican characters. Skippyjon views himself as "the greatest poco perrito of all" (Schachner, 2005, p. 12), and calls himself "the decider" (Schachner, 2007, p. 30). This superior controlling gaze is exemplified when Skippyjon arrives in Mexico in a sequel to the original and calls out to the Chimichangos, "Stinkitos! I smell you but I don't see you" (Schachner, 2007, p. 12).

THEME OF A WHITE SAVIOR

In addition to marginalizing Latin@s through representation and language, the *Skippyjon Jones* series also positions Mexicans as inferior through its main plot theme. The overarching theme of each of the books in the series is the theme of a white savior for a Mexican community. More specifically, in each text, Schachner's Chimichangos rejoice upon the arrival of Skippyjon Jones and beg him to help them with some collective problem. Schachner both defines the needs of the Mexican community in her texts as well as positions Skippyjon as the welcomed savior to address those needs. In doing so, the texts communicate messages of marginalization, trivialization, and inferiority of Mexicans.

In sequences of my detournement, I chose images of the oppression of migrant workers such as unjust conditions of migrant labor camps, patrols deporting migrant workers to Mexico, and violence inflicted upon migrant workers. Over these images of historical oppression of migrant workers, I ran the white savior narrative, again involving pseudo-Spanglish: "Yip, Yippee, Yippito! Skippito is here, we have nothing to fear!" (Schachner, 2003, p. 15). Through the juxtaposition of images of lived oppression of migrant workers and Schachner's portrayals of a welcomed white savior, the detournement critiques Schachner's portrayal of a welcomed white cat that border crosses to save the Mexican characters. For one juxtaposition, for example, I excised an image of the white *Skippyjon* wearing a windblown green cape

and black bandit mask, grasping the reins of his trusty stick pony (Schachner, 2003). This "hero" outfit, which in the series marks Skippyjon's border crossing between the United States and Mexico, has become the signature image of the Skippyjon character, manufactured and marketed as infant onesies, youth pajamas, and costuming for children and adults. I paired the image of Skippyjon as white border crossing hero with an image of an armed deportation of Mexican migrant workers from the United States to Mexico through a gate in a chain link fence (Bacon, 2006). Juxtapositions such as this one suggest to the detournement viewers that *Skippyjon Jones* contributes to rather than acknowledges the oppression of Mexican Americans in the United States.

The history of oppression of Mexican Americans in the United States involves both economic and racial oppression, involving in part systematic economic exploitation through a migrant agricultural labor system. For example, although migrant workers are paid seven to ten times as much as they would make working in Mexico (Habenstein, 1998), about 76% of Mexican Americans earn less than $35,000 annually, and Latin@s have disproportionately less formal educational attainment than any other group in the United States (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Mexican migrant workers have experienced abuse, exploitation, involuntary dislocation, and inequity of access to benefits (Bacon, 2006). This racism, as well as Latin@s' anti-racist social activism, are absent in *Skippyjon Jones*.

In children's literature that includes representations of Latin@s, the theme of border crossing between the United States and Mexico is a popular and dominant theme. In 1975, the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) reviewed all children's literature written between 1940-1970 that included representations of Latin@s and concluded that the common themes in the literature were plots of poverty and inevitable acculturation. More specifically, Mexicans were portrayed as ignorant, inferior, and in need of a white savior (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Unfortunately, the books in the growing *Skippyjon Jones* series continue this trend today.

Late in the detournement, I attempted to drive home the point about the problematic theme of the white savior, weaving Schachner's (2003) childlike voice reading lines that reflect her perspective on the needs of Mexican communities. This section of the detournement critiques Schachner's portrayal of the collective problems of the Mexican characters. I attempted to emphasize this point by weaving audio of her infantile voice reading lines that reflect her rendition of the Chimichangos' central desires in the story: "We are full of the beans too!" and "Yo quiero frijoles [I want beans]!" (Schachner, 2003, p. 19) over images of Mexican workers engaged in activities such as organizing for labor rights, holding democratic votes, and caring for their young children. In their discussion of the migrant agricultural labor system, Botelho and Rudman (2009) considered how migrant families have collective agency for decreasing systematic inequity. In *Skippyjon Jones*, on the other hand, a Mexican community is portrayed as helpless, in need of and enthusiastically grateful for their white savior, Skippyjon. In the detournement, I juxtaposed Schachner's

images of the community's collective worship of Skippyjon with images of migrant workers' collective organizing. In this juxtaposition, I aimed to expose and challenge the theme of the welcomed white savior, which persists through each of the titles in the series.

Following the sequence critiquing Schachner's perspective on the needs of Mexican communities, I constructed a sequence in the detournement that critiqued the Chihuahuas' calls for their savior, Skippyjon. In the first book in the series, the story's ending of the white savior fulfilling the Chimichangos' need for beans culminates in the Mexican characters bursting into song: "Yip, Yippee, Yippito! (clap, clap) Our hero is El Skippito! (clap, clap) He's the dog of our dreams who delivered the beans, And now we can make our burritos! (clap, clap)" (Schachner, 2003, p. 24). At this point in the sequence, I played Schachner's song of rejoicing over additional images of economic and sociopolitical oppression such as deportation and border violence. Scattered between these images are Schachner's (2003) pastels of her Chimichangos going "crazy loco" (p. 15), blissfully worshipping the snow-white Skippyjon by performing rituals such as throwing him up in the air in an Inuit blanket toss and pulling him sultan-style in a lushly padded wagon. Skippyjon is certainly "white, privileged, and separate from others of color" (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002, p. 546). Furthermore, salvation is the culminating event of each story, the story closure that Botelho and Rudman (2009) emphasized is especially important to analyze, because a story closure either serves to confirm or disrupt the messages within a text. Clearly, the white savior closure forwards the message that Mexican communities are in need of a white savior. Furthermore, because the salvation narrative is continued in this growing series, fans of *Skippyjon* are conditioned to expect it, which I argue serves to further normalize and mask it.

Although the majority of the detournement uses images and text from the original *Skippyjon Jones*, Schachner's sequels involve this overarching theme as well. The theme of the welcomed white savior and the theme of Mexican inferiority wrap with one another in a powerful message of white supremacy. For example, in *Skippyjon Jones in Mummy Trouble*, Poquito Tito, the "smallest of the small ones," pulls Skippyjon along in a makeshift chariot by a rope and says: "You have a muy big brain" (Schachner, 2006, p. 15). In *Skippyjon Jones: Cirque de Olé* (Schachner, 2012), the "tiny, trembling Chihuahuas" (p. 22) rejoice, "Your cabeza is just what we need-o…Or else we will all crumble-ito" (p. 15). In *Skippyjon Jones: Class Action* (Schachner, 2011), Los Chimichangos welcome Skippyjon with, "Thank dog you made it…We need your help" (p. 10). Skippyjon's mother teaches her children about Los Chimichangos by describing them as "unruly and drooly," "ferocious," and warns her children, whom she names as "smart," that their "dog breath" is "atrocious" (Schachner, 2011, p. 2-3). Skippyjon's sister, as a result of their mother's warning, learns to attribute Skippyjon's destructive behavior to his time spent with the Mexican characters. In a sequel in which Skippyjon visits the Mexican characters' school, the teachers praise Skippyjon as performing to

an academic level at which they have never before witnessed in the subjects of art, music, language arts, and math, and inferior to the Mexican characters only in the school subject of "obedience" (Schachner, 2011, p. 22). Interestingly, the gratefulness of the Mexican characters for their superior white savior is always a central theme to the story's plot. When Skippyjon again arrives in Mexico to save Los Chimichangos in yet another sequel to the original, the dogs declare, "We have been waiting for you, dude" (Schachner, 2005, p. 15). In *Skippyjon Jones: The Great Bean Caper* (Schachner, 2009), when Skippyjon returns the beans to Los Chimichangos they cry out over and over in a collective chant, "Skippito is a hero!" (p. 22). The fact that Schachner stretches the central theme of the welcomed white savior through the entire series, encouraging the reader to recall and expect it once again, makes its prevalence even more dangerous. After expressing their collective agreement with Skippyjon's assessment of their problem: "All of the doggies nodded: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh" and "this made the poochitos feel so good that they all began to sing and dance… the Chimichanga Rumba and the Cha-cha-cha" (Schachner, 2005, p. 16-17). More celebration ensues: "Yes, sirree sirrito, (clap-clap) It's the return of our boy, El Skippito (clap-clap), A bird in his ear said we needed him here" (Schachner, 2005, p. 20), and "Muchas gracias, Skippy-dippy-dango!" (Schachner, 2005, p. 26).

In addition to being positioned as a savior, Skippyjon is also portrayed in a position of privilege when it comes to border crossing. Botelho and Rudman (2009), building on the work of Fondrie (2001), argued that an analysis of children's literature should include an investigation of how white characters embody white privilege. Skippyjon enjoys the privilege of border crossing at will. Borders of all types are sometimes depicted in picture books in order to indicate social division and dominance (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). In this case, the U. S. – Mexico border, even while only crossed in Skippyjon's imagination, represents social division and dominance over the Mexican community in the stories. My analysis of *Skippyjon Jones* supports the idea that "white privilege, especially in texts that purport to openly address issues of race and diversity, denies the questioning of that privilege" (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002, p. 271). My detournement questions the messages related to race and language that are embedded in *Skippyjon Jones* and suggests a potential strategy for educators in the questioning of other texts for young children.

Through the encoded messages of marginalization and subordination of Mexicans and the Spanish language within the series, the readership of *Skippyjon Jones* is conditioned to engage in a preferred reading that will suggest to them a normality of that marginalization and subordination. Therefore, a preferred reading of *Skippyjon Jones* involves accepting the encoded messages as a legitimate portrayal of Mexicans and of the Spanish language. This preferred reading ignores the historical oppression of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. An attention to these messages is of utmost importance for teachers who use children's literature in their classrooms.

IMPORTANCE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Although the critical analysis of children's literature that includes representations of Latin@s is an underexplored practice for education research, it is crucial, especially for educators, to investigate texts for aspects such as representation, language, and deeply covert messages of white supremacy. Clearly, "There have been important societal and educational changes in the United States, which create a pressing need to bring together and reassess the body of children's literature at this time" (Nilsson, 2005, p. 534). Fortunately, critical analysis of the representations of Latin@s in children's literature appears to be a growing practice in education research: In Nilsson's (2005) evaluation of the study of this topic over the past 40 years, she stated, "More and more, character portrayal in children's books has become a topic for organized study" (p. 534).

Stereotypical character portrayal of Latin@s in texts for children is "damaging to the minds of young Latin@ children who are attempting to navigate an already repressive cultural climate inside and outside of U. S. schools" (Pimentel & Velázquez, 2009, p. 13). When read with a preferred reading, *Skippyjon Jones* is therefore damaging for Latin@ students. When media texts that are created for youth audiences promote racism through stereotypes, this promotion is often disguised within narratives of fantasy and humor (Pimentel & Velázquez, 2009). Fantasy, which is characterized by characters that have greater than human abilities or worlds that go beyond earthly bounds, is an especially dangerous genre when it comes to promoting messages of racism; "Fantasy can convey and inculcate values and ideologies, very often in a more captivating way than stark reality" (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 217). Botelho and Rudman (2009) warned that aesthetics often distract readers from the sociopolitical messages embedded within texts. It is likely that many readers of *Skippyjon Jones* experience such distraction through the aesthetics of the rhyming text and the fantastical events of the stories. Consequently, the texts' embedded messages are especially likely to go unnoticed or disregarded. The strategy of detournement could be a way for educators to engage in critique of craftily disguised messages within children's literature.

Botelho and Rudman (2009) argued, "Because texts are socially constructed, they can be deconstructed." They further argued that the deconstruction of children's literature, or "resistant reading" (p. 9), can be a form of social action in which even children can engage. Teachers' aim of helping children to expose and problematize the messages in literature written for them could even evolve from using strategies such as detournement in teacher education. Walker-Dalhouse (2008) asserted that teachers must select texts that "provide a window as well as a mirror that reflects the lives of readers" (p. 205). The *Skippyjon Jones* series is neither a window nor a mirror for young children. I am convinced by Debord's (1967) assertion that "the obscure and difficult path of critical theory must also be the path of the practical movement that occurs at the level of society as a whole" (thesis 203). It is possible that educators who view and create detournements like this one will engage in

such a practical movement through their own text selection as well as through their commitment to helping students develop a critical lens when it comes to children's media.

While detournement is but one potential strategy for the critique of children's literature, literature such as *Skippyjon Jones* is certainly in need of critique. In the detournement, I argue this point of necessity for action. The detournement wraps up with a sequence showing the text "Skippyjon sleeps…so he can wake up and do it all over again" around images of death at the United States – Mexico border, a pairing that I chose in order to highlight the violent and persistent power of the messages embedded within this text for children. The next image that appears in the detournement is one of the Jones family passively taking in some television. I selected this image and paired it with Schachner's audio farewell to readers in order to make a point about the danger of a passive, preferred reading of a media text such as *Skippyjon Jones*.

The final sequence in the detournement involves the emblem of the E. B. White Read Aloud Award, the very first of which was awarded to the original *Skippyjon Jones* book. This annual award, only one in a long series that Schachner has collected for her *Skippyjon* works, is given by the Association of Booksellers for Children for a book's exceptional quality as a read aloud for children. Over the emblem, I play Schachner's read aloud voice: "Holy frijoles!" (Schachner, 2003, p. 21), then finish with the repetition of that same phrase over the image of a Latino student in a California elementary school scratching his head and wearing a look of utter and disgusted confusion. This final sequence, made especially powerful by using Schachner's actual voice reading her own actual text, summarizes my oppositional reading of *Skippyjon Jones*, while at the same time arguing for the importance of a critical reading of literature for use with and by young children.

In addition to the concerns that arise when such a problematic text is awarded with a celebratory seal of approval, there are concerns with *Skippyjon's* popularity as well. Reimer (2002) showed that books that include representations of people of color usually go out of print very quickly because they are published by smaller companies, but because *Skippyjon* is distributed by the corporate powerhouse that is Scholastic (which approaches monopoly of school book fairs and mail order programs through classrooms with incentives for teachers' marketing to their students) the chances of the series fading away are grim. Already, hundreds of various *Skippyjon Jones* works are for sale, as well as merchandise such as Skippyjon plush toys, Skippyjon costumes, apparel, toys, baby products, puzzles, and products to support classroom dramatic performances. There are Skippyjon web sites and official social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Parents and teachers can acquire free kits for hosting Skippyjon parties and lessons. The Skippyjon Jones app was featured in USA Today's list of ten "coolest" book apps. Nilsson (2005) emphasized, "Poor-quality books that are part of a library collection left untended can stay around for a long time" (p. 546). Unchallenged, *Skippyjon Jones* has become an empire that reaches far beyond library collections. Critical analyses such as this detournement

of *Skippyjon Jones* have the potential to question the establishment of popular poor-quality texts and their parasitic spread.

One action over which teachers in particular have relatively strong potential to curb such spread is classroom text selection. Text selection is an important issue for teacher education. Bandre's (2008) study of read aloud choices in a rural school found a mere 6% of teachers' self-selected read alouds to be "multicultural" (defined as involving relations between cultural groups, and/or about cultural groups other than the author's own or by the author's own). Although the authors of the study used a "culture" lens rather than a race lens, the study is important for the topic of this chapter because the authors noted that virtually all of the main characters in the read alouds that the teachers chose were either white or anthropomorphized animals (as are all of the characters in *Skippyjon Jones*). In other words, groups of color were hardly represented in the literature that teachers selected, and when represented at all, people of color were, as they are in *Skippyjon Jones,* portrayed as animals. Still, I argue that education research has indicated possibility when it comes to classroom text selection. As Willis-Rivera and Meeker (2002) explained, "Worries about promoting the wrong message have led some teachers to not include multicultural literature in their classrooms" (p. 270). While the implications of this worry are unfortunate, the same worry is encouraging for the potential development of teachers' critical perspectives regarding children's literature such as *Skippyjon Jones*. The selection and use of children's literature is often central to teaching and involves high levels of teacher agency. Therefore, teachers' text analysis is a potentially powerful area for social change that could have direct and enduring implications.

There is little doubt that children's literature is a powerful medium for teacher education. In their study of preservice elementary school teachers at the University of Colorado, Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003) concluded, "Teacher candidates' inability to make specific cultural connections stems from their lack of experience interacting with ethnic and linguistic minority cultures" (p. 109). They used children's literature that included representations of Latin@s in order to attempt to increase cultural connections between the preservice teachers and their students. They found that those connections began to develop in the second or third years of the of the preservice teachers using the literature in lessons with students. Although they did not examine the literature that they used from a critical standpoint, their project establishes the power of classroom use of children's literature that includes representations of Latin@s--for both students *and* teachers. The consequences of selecting a preferred reading of *Skippyjon Jones* as a vehicle for an attempt at cultural connection would be tragic.

It is crucial, especially for educators, to investigate texts for aspects such as representation, language, and a theme of a white savior. The current movement of increasing literary texts written by and about people of color is a movement that Botelho and Rudman (2009) argued could actually distort social issues such as race and language while at the same time distracting people from addressing the

social oppression of people of color. Because Schachner creates texts that are widely defined as texts that include representations of Latin@s, due to her use of language and incorporation of Mexican characters, her work can easily pass as progress in children's literature. Unfortunately, this passing allows the messages of racism and linguicism in the texts to go unchallenged. By exposing those messages through the strategy of detournement, I argue that they can be problematized and taken up for discussion.

It is possible that educators who view and create detournements like this one will initiate with their students such a critical movement when it comes to literature for young children. Botelho and Rudman (2009) argued that critical discussions of children's literature with children challenge the establishment of teachers as holders of textual meaning. At the same time, children need support while engaging in critique (Cai, 2008), and detournement is a strategy that could contribute to teachers' developing that support.

My detournement is certainly an oppositional reading of *Skippyjon Jones*, and in this chapter I argue that using this strategy of incorporating oppositional readings of children's literature in teacher education can lead to social change. However, Hall (1980) made the point that even negotiated readings can lead to oppositional readings and social change. In terms of children's literature, then, even recognition of the dominant messages within the representation, language, and white savior themes of books for young children can potentially contribute to eventually challenging those messages.

School contexts are important sites for this ongoing critical process. Hytten (1997) emphasized that schools are among the primary institutions in which dominant power structures are maintained, and that curricular texts are a key influence in this process. Therefore, schools are an excellent potential site for questioning inequities, including those forwarded by the messages within children's literature. According to Hytten (1997), "Schools can be instrumental vehicles through which to engage in efforts at social reform" (p. 54), and, "Educators are political agents who can both contribute to the perpetuation of deleterious social practices or provide a challenge to them" (p. 55). I argue that the exposure and challenge of messages within children's books through the technique of detournement with these political agents can be a small part of these efforts at social reform.

PUZZLING FROM PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS

Through my own informal self-studies of teacher candidates' work on the detournement of *Skippyjon Jones* over several years of distinct courses, I have built what I would call a set of patterns that puzzle my deployment of detournement as pedagogical praxis. Although the subjects, forms, and purposes of my detournements vary, I continue to try to make sense of the emergence of these patterns. My purpose for this section of the chapter is to name three persistent puzzles that have arisen over time as I have brought to the table the inequities resulting from the interrelated

problems of capitalism and white supremacy as well as the argument that challenging those inequities is the driving project for learning to teach. While a reader might expect the patterns to illustrate transformation into particular teaching perspectives, my description of these three patterns presents possibilities for detournement as pedagogical praxis in the equity-related issues raised through teacher candidates' engagement with detournements.

First, use of detournement in my own pedagogical praxis has involved a promising puzzlement over the issue of authorship. Many teacher candidates have stubbornly dismissed my detournements based on ideas of author intention. Whether about the intentions of the author of the original text or the detournement text, their arguments that intention matters more than representation persist. This logic allows candidates to claim any imagined or even author-articulated intention and in their view, excuse or condemn the creation of the representation. Interestingly, candidates often view my detournement as argumentative and therefore problematic while at the same time protectively enveloping the original text due to its purported neutrality. As bases for this claim of neutrality, candidates cite text characteristics such as rhyming structure and character whimsy before even considering those characteristics as authored. Despite emphasizing that teaching practices such as the selection of children's literature for their classrooms present an urgency that renders intentions meaningless, this pattern of sliding discussion from representation to intention continues to puzzle me. Another side of this puzzle is the rejection of the notion of intentions paired with consideration of essentialisms. Sometimes, for example, candidates engage in collective searches for algorithms that might allow them to classify texts as either inherently bad or inherently good. These searches take the form of, for example, quests for take-away lists of criteria that will allow candidates to feel as if they have determined a given text to be either "racist" or "not racist." Detournement as pedagogical praxis, then, certainly creates events that are raw for critical study of authorship.

Another pattern that has continued to puzzle me is confusion regarding the wider social problems on which the detournements are centered. This confusion often at least initially overtakes their work on the connections between wider social problems and the texts under detournement. For example, confusions about the nature of racism manifest as fixations on personal offense as the ultimate consequence of racism or professed hopes that teachers achieve post-racial classrooms. I view my ongoing puzzlement with the confusion regarding wider social problems on which the detournements center as presenting possibility for detournement as pedagogical praxis. Detournement pushes those confusions to the course surface, leading us to deeper study of concepts such as power and privilege.

A final pattern in candidates' work with my detournements is the struggle to envision pedagogical praxis for their own future classrooms. Potential ideas for praxis that candidates bring to the table have opened discussion around important issues. For example, candidates sometimes see a direct line of praxis for their own teaching, and they express plans to use the ed texts as catalysts for discussion in

their future classrooms. Such a plan raises important questions about developing justifications for curriculum decisions. Another teaching decision that arises from this pattern of struggle to envision praxis is the plan to invite future students to speak as token representatives for their social groups. In my experience it is necessary that this strategy be named in teacher education in order for the strategy's deconstruction and preemptive rejection.

RIPPLING ACTION FROM PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS

The deployment of detournement as pedagogical praxis in teacher education has opened praxis in additional contexts that can be understood as educational. Through promulgation via YouTube, the detournement of *Skippyjon Jones* has engaged a variety of audiences that are specifically interested in *Skippyjon Jones* for one reason or another. One important way in which the promulgation of the detournement of *Skippyjon Jones* via YouTube was pedagogically distinct from its use in teacher education contexts was that it allowed the detournement to connect individuals already critical of *Skippyjon Jones.* For this reason, in this section I will briefly discuss my relationship with one of those like-minded critics, as well as what I know about what she described as a "rippling" of resulting action.

Many months into my use of the detournement in teacher education, an individual outside of teacher education contacted me about the detournement. "Ana" (a pseudonym) had been searching for critiques of *Skippyjon Jones* when she came upon the detournement on my YouTube page. After viewing the detournement, she contacted me in order to both connect with another critic and acquire detournement materials that she could employ in her struggle against *Skippyjon Jones* in her own social contexts. These social contexts, as they were very particular to her local spaces of practice, were contexts in which only Ana's own pedagogy could operate.

Ana, who described herself as "of Mexican descent," worked as a public librarian in a southwestern state. She reached out to me, the author of the detournement of *Skippyjon Jones,* in order to bolster her own existing arguments against *Skippyjon Jones* in her discussions with other librarians. Despite Ana's extensive experiences and distinguished credentials, she reported having experienced extreme resistance to her stance. This resistance was in response to her analysis of the "stereotypical images" in *Skippyjon Jones*, including, for example, the submissiveness of the Mexican characters, the representation of Mexicans as "Chimichangos," the Spanish "accent" employed by Skippyjon himself, and the series theme of beans. Ana encountered my detournement on YouTube during her search for "any other Xicanos" who were as "incensed" as she was. She wrote, "In my increasing state of piss-offedness, I came across your moving piece and breathed a little easier." She shared links, blogs, and articles with me that she had discovered during her search. She called our struggle "the great *Skippy* debate" and brought two other librarians into the discussion. With a paper that I had presented at an annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and CDs of the detournement, she and the other

librarians initiated a protest of the ongoing use of a *Skippyjon Jones* costume at a major annual community event hosted by their libraries and area bookstores. As part of the event, children and families interact with book characters, receive copies of the books in which the characters appear, and are encouraged to record their own likenesses with the characters. Photos of past events include children posing with the "costume character," or person wearing an oversized costume of the character. The children appear posed with the oversized *Skippyjon* and local celebrities, and the costume *Skippyjon* even performed scheduled and honored roles at major sporting events in front of thousands of people. The librarians were ultimately successful in this specific effort to ban the costume from the annual community event; the *Skippyjon Jones* costume was stricken from the event. Following their success, the librarians continued to distribute my detournement to even more colleagues and reported its being used in higher education courses for prospective librarians. Reports of specific actions continued to flow to me. In one case, someone reported that my detournement caused the cancellation of a "performance" of *Skippyjon Jones* at a public literacy event for children.

Ana wrote to me, "Thanks for standing up where few others have." She described us as crying out to each other in the wilderness, and we have continued communications about our common struggle. I understood our detournement relationship to have become educative within her social contexts in the actions that she and her colleagues accomplished. She called the message of the *Skippyjon Jones* series "insidious" and saw a group of us as working to bring that message "to light." Ana described this work by writing, "The ripples are expanding." There can be no doubt that driving those ripples of work is the purpose of challenging the interrelated problems of white supremacy and capitalism; Ana names both "racism" and "promotion for profit" when it comes to the ripples of action that challenge the *Skippyjon Jones* empire.

This new relationship, forged through detournement, was notable in my own life story as creating my first thoughts about education research contributing to something more than discussion amongst academics or schooling action through teacher education. In a sense, the relationship offered a glance at the possibility for unanticipated and moral movement of pedagogical praxis. By placing detournements in relatively public spaces, those involved in teacher education might contribute to connections between teacher education and other social contexts. Such connections are then educative in the myriad ways, both known and unknown by those involved, in which they become meaningful. This faith in meaning making seems to be a familiar faith, at times even necessary for sustenance, for many of us who work at critical praxis in teacher education.

The engagement of audiences interested in *Skippyjon Jones* via YouTube contributes to the illustration of possibility for detournement as pedagogical praxis. As the story around the detournement of *Skippyjon Jones* offers a case in which the initial embeddedness of a detournement within teacher education allowed for the creation of new relationships between teacher education and broader education

contexts, it points not only to the communicative nature of praxis but also to the promise of the role of the art of detournement in the ongoing struggle for praxis within and around teacher education. Furthermore, as many teacher educators aim for praxis from a particular moral stance, the critical nature of detournement offers some protection from appropriation for relativistic argument, the danger of which always looms for pedagogy. Finally, it is not often that teacher educators and their students witness a confirmed case of action that occurred as a result of the reach of their pedagogy into social contexts, especially when those social contexts are beyond schooling.

Historically, the method of detournement has presented a sustained challenge of the capitalist social order. Deploying detournement as a method in this case exposed the racism of messages of representation, language, and the theme of a welcomed white savior. These messages of racism and the way in which they are circulated through the empire status of Judy Schachner's *Skippyjon Jones* series in the children's literature market are testaments to the interrelated problems of capitalism and white supremacy. In this chapter I have described how bringing my detournement of *Skippjon Jones* to teacher education has engaged my students and me with pedagogical puzzlements on these social problems. Furthermore, I have described ripples of action that occurred as a result of a new relationship, forged by detournement, between teacher education and social contexts beyond schooling. When considered together within ongoing struggles for equity, this story of action and this story of puzzlement contribute to an understanding of detournement as presenting exciting possibilities for multifaceted and unpredictable praxis around schooling contexts.

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE LYRICS OF "SYMPATHY"

Sympathy

Did you try to satisfy the hunger?
Was the action in vain?
Did you try to be some kind of hero?
Was it just to ease the pain?

Did you try to satisfy the hunger?
Was the action in vain?
Did you try to be some kind of hero?
Or was it just to ease the pain?

All the negativity, try to lose it.
But is your conscience clear at all?
Did you mean the things that you were saying?
The word is way beyond recall.

Sympathy… makes no sense at all.
Sympathy… makes no sense at all.
Sympathy… makes no sense at all.
Sympathy… makes no sense at all.
Oh no no, oh oh.

All my life I keep on searching for that special thing.
Always need the optimum.
Life goes on and on without any deeper thoughts.
Are we going to live like this forever?

Did you try to satisfy the hunger?
Was the action in vain?
Did you try to be some kind of hero?
Or was it just to ease the pain?

All the negativity, try to lose it.
But is your conscience clear at all?
Did you mean the things that you were saying?
The word is way beyond recall.

NOTE

[1] I use the term "cisgender" as Schilt and Westbrook (2009) did: to describe individuals who are experiencing a match between gender assigned at birth and gender identity.

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TREY ADCOCK

4. THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN GOES TO SCHOOL

Detournement as Praxis

> The enormity, variety and near universality of the literary crime against the Indian cannot be fully recognized until one has let hundreds of books and films and dramas pass before his eye.
>
> Cynthia-Lou Coleman (2005)

> Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined…How they are told, who tells them, why they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.
>
> Chimamanda Adichie (2009)

> *I speak for one American Indian, myself as a Cherokee Nation Citizen, and no others.*

In the forethoughts to *Up from These Hills: Memories of a Cherokee Boyhood* Lambert and Lambert (2011) call for the silent Indian majority to "become visible and reclaim for themselves what it means to be Indian… to forever distance Indian identity from the stock markets that are so often identified by non-Indians as Indian. And non-Indians need to completely relearn how to see Indians" (p. xxviii). I heed this call and join my voice with others who call for the re-contextualization and contemporizing of American Indian students and communities.[1]

As a Native American educator teaching within a multicultural framework, it is an essential goal of mine to address contemporary issues facing Native American communities and peoples.[2] One such issue is the way in which Native people continue to be represented in media and school "texts." Essentially, notions of Native American peoples are derived from fictional representations of Indians from a past century and have become a litmus for "authenticity" of contemporary Indian identity (Cobb, 2003). The term *representation* is of particular importance, as it denotes the ability of the dominant group to produce and re-produce a narrative of Native communities that is far removed from both the historical and contemporary reality. Stuart Hall (1997) further contends that the reality of race in society is "media-mediated"; therefore, the dominant colonizing power experiences the pleasure of its own power of domination in and through the construction of stereotypes of another,

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 79–105.

of the Other (p. 6). As such, many preservice teachers subscribe to the "Vanishing Indian" myth, which is the belief that Native Americans do not exist, or if they do, they must look and behave like stereotypically-represented nineteenth century warriors (Cobb, 2003).

This issue is particularly acute in teacher education programs as the histories, cultures and contemporary issues faced by Native American peoples have been left out (Haynes Writer, 2002). As a result, many preservice teachers' understandings about American Indians have been acquired from Hollywood films and other "texts" including curricular materials found in schools (Bird, 1999; Cobb, 2003). Therefore, many non-Indian preservice teachers have the impression that Native peoples live only on reservations or in teepees on the Great Plains (Haynes Writer, 2001). This reinforces their assumptions that they have never had any experience involving a Native American and they are unlikely to teach an American Indian student (Pewewardy, 1999).[3] This assumption is built around problematic notions of race and identity associated with Native Americans and can be especially complex because the vast majority of American Indian students attend public schools.[4] The reality is that many Indian students who are present in classrooms may not possess the expected physical features of dark skin and eyes, and long, dark hair (Haynes Writer, 2001).

It is necessary, then, that future classroom teachers are provided opportunities in preservice programs for serious scrutiny of contemporary culture to consider how the media influences their own lives and thus, the lives of American Indian students (Joanou & Griffin, 2010). As Apple (1999) posits,

> unstated beliefs can become explicit if teachers are provided the opportunities to reflect on these beliefs, discuss them and be challenged by feedback from both colleagues and peers. (p. 315)

One critical pedagogical strategy to interrupt the racialized and dehumanizing nature of the "Hollywood Indian" with preservice teachers is detournement, "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble," to render a new meaning (Debord,1959, p. 67). I take up a pedagogy of detournement with preservice teachers to challenge popular representations of Native Americans as being child-like savages, far removed from the modern world and, instead, to suggest that "Indians are people, just plain folks" struggling to teach, learn and prosper (P. C. Smith, 2009, p. 18). Therefore, by using and critiquing texts of everyday life through a pedagogy of detournement, preservice educators can begin expanding their pedagogical practice as a form of cultural politics to "make visible the operations of power that connects knowledge to specific views of authority, cultural practice and the larger world" (Giroux, 2002, p. 16).

COMING TO THE STORY

While it is true that the bombardment of stereotypical images of American Indians from the dominant society has continued the mission of colonialism, it is also true that we Natives have internalized those images and reproduced not only the images,

but also the racialized structures, in our own communities; fragmenting and dividing us along someone else's notion of what it means to be Indian. This is particularly true for me as I think about my own experience as a Cherokee Nation citizen who grew up outside tribal lands. In many ways, I have come to recognize that everything I grew up knowing and understanding about being a so-called "Native American" was wrong…or as Paul Chaat Smith (2009) suggests "not everything, just most things" (p. 17).

My mother is a Cherokee woman from Oklahoma. My father is a Scotch-Irish, born and raised in Georgia. I do not subscribe to the binaries that have been constructed around this mixed identity: full-blood or not really Indian, traditional or sellout. I am neither one nor the other. I am fully both. I was and am still aware that in many ways I do not and will not live up to the "Mythical Super-Indian" litmus that spawned from the imagination of D. W. Griffith, reproduced most popularly via John Ford and that remains embedded in the popular imagination through films such as, and I know I might break a few hearts here, Dances with Wolves*,* The Missing *and most recently,* The Lone Ranger. *Although, if I am being truthful, I like some of these movies—they are pretty good entertainment.*

Nevertheless, to live up to the celluloid version was and remains an impossible task. Growing up, I never had a war pony that galloped at blazing speeds across the desert. Instead I had a yellow knock-off Schwinn bike and then, later in life, a powder blue Nissan Sentra with rusted out rims and no A/C, that always, no matter what I tried, smelled like rotting gym shorts. My headdress was an Atlanta Braves cap turned backwards and instead of War chants I was in love with the Commodores, Stevie Wonder and the Reverend himself, Mr. Al Green. For some, maybe this disqualifies me as a "Real Indian." I would argue, however, that my experience is not a unique one. Maybe it's more common than some of you would like to believe.

Recently, I have spent the better part of the past decade teaching social studies and pursuing various degrees that have led me to the present moment. As a former secondary social studies teacher in the public school system, I am intimately familiar with the ways in which curricular materials promote a dominant view of United States history at the expense of American Indians and other marginalized groups. I am not sure I had the vocabulary, while teaching, to articulate all of the ways in which my Cherokee identity was enacted through my pedagogy. Looking back, however, I can clearly identify the ways in which I resisted the construction of Indian peoples found in social studies textbooks and curriculum by simply claiming my position as a fully figured human being participating in modern life. However, I am not sure that simply by presenting my own story that I was fully undermining the totality of the "Hollywood Indian." Through my experiences as a public school teacher and most recently as a teacher-educator, it was apparent that the problematic understandings of American Indians continue to persist in the minds of preservice teachers.

What, perhaps, is most insidious about the reproduction of the "Hollywood Indian" and its racial tropes, both in mainstream media texts and, I argue, in school curriculum, is that it distracts from real issues that impact real people in very real

ways, issues like diabetes, educational attainment for Native youth, water rights, violence against Native women and issues that pertain to the protection and security of Native children.

CONSTRUCTING THE "HOLLYWOOD INDIAN"

Regarding the media, Sut Jhally (1997) wrote that "when we are immersed in something, surrounded by it the way we are by images from the media, we may come to accept them as just part of the real and natural world. We just swim through them, unthinkingly absorbing them as fish in water" (p. 1). In this way, media culture, in addition to textbooks and state curricula, acts as a principal educator of Indian and non-Indian students. The term "media culture" refers to both the culture industry (film, television, print media, advertising, radio, fashion, and so on) and the commodities that these corporate systems generate and circulate (Trier, 2004). The proliferation of images associated with media culture is deeply imbued with material and symbolic notions of power. According to Stuart Hall (1997), "Power can be understood, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a 'regime of representation'" (p. 232). The regime of representation that Hall alludes to helps construct the landscape of American culture by articulating specific ideologies and agendas through which audiences will relate and consume. This works to pedagogically legitimate some groups and exclude others.

Philip Deloria (2004) further argues "that as consumers of global-mass mediated culture, expectations sneak into our minds and down to our hearts when we aren't looking" (p. 6). Deloria uses the term *expectation* as "shorthand for dense economies of meaning, representation and acts that have inflected both American culture writ large and individuals, both Indian and non-Indian" to create "an Indian in modern American society [that] is in a very real sense…unreal and ahistorical" (P. Deloria, 2004, p. 6; V. Deloria, 1995, p. 2). In these ways, media culture does more than entertain—it also educates along lines of difference.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSTRUCTION OF INDIANS

Racist depictions of Native Americans in film have existed since the beginning of the film industry and similar depictions existed before film in the form of wild-west shows. Hollywood has produced thousands of feature films on cowboys and Indians and as a result, the western can be understood as the most popular genre of cinema over the past century (Kilpatrick, 1999). Taken as a whole, these films have attempted to erase the varied cultural and ethnic identities of tribal nations in an effort to replace them with a singular fictional identity, the "Hollywood Indian" (Churchill, 1991). In essence, the long history of Hollywood's depiction of the Indian can be seen as white America's version of what an Indian should look like,

act like, and talk like (Cobb, 2003). As Patty Loew (2012) writes in the introduction to *American Indians and the Mass Media:*

> If art imitates life the world has long gazed upon a surrealistic portrait of indigenous people. It is a canvas painted by outsiders, textured initially through trader journals, missionary reports and government documents and later through dime novels. The pallete is predictable… Native Americans are people whom the federal government attempted to subdue and subjugate, exterminate, or assimilate, and who, at the very least exist mainly in opposition to mainstream culture. However, these are not true portraits. These are the representations of white colonists, military leaders, government workers and missionaries whose lives interesected with native Americans. (p. 3)

The western genre, over any other Hollywood film type, has provided justification for the expropriating of Indian lands and culture for the sake of Manifest Destiny. Cinematic representation in western films, such as John Ford's *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956), are grounded in the construction of fervent nationalism, the western land movement, and the unique challenge the "frontier" presented white Americans (Rollins & O'Connor, 1998). As Berkhoher (1978) argues, "the 'frontier' provided the space for white Americans to test their belief that they, the colonizer, were the tools of God and that the physical and emotional investment of the settler gave them the moral right to Indian lands" (p. 265). Therefore, much of what has been crafted as the "Hollywood Indian" is through settler's eyes. Cobb (2003) posits:

> …these images have contributed to the conceptualization of American Indians not as distinct nations of people or as distinct individuals or even, in fact, as people at all but rather as a singular idea, "The Indian," an idea that helps whites understand themselves. (p. 210)

Two fundamental positions that have been used to construct a singular idea of the Indian can be found in Hollywood's depiction of a "good" Indian and that of a "bad" Indian (Berkhofer, 1978). Hall (1997) refers to this as a binary form of representation (p. 22). The 'Other' is most often represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes which requires the subject to be both things at the same time. For Native Americans, the good Indian is usually defined as friendly and noble while also being depicted as a steward of the environment. Hall (1997) claims that "this can be seen as the dominant group's attempt to construct the essentialness of the 'Other' by identifying them with nature so that they begin to symbolize the 'primitive' in contrast with the 'civilized world'" (p. 237). On the other hand, the bad Indian is usually represented through his lechery, alcoholism, promiscuity and love of war. Either way, the ethnographic construction of the Indian through the use of cinematic texts can easily be defined as a one-dimensional character that remains static in time. As Ward Churchill (1991) contends, "There is no 'before' to the story, and there is no 'after.' Cinematic Indians have no history before Euro-Americans come along, and then mysteriously, they seem to pass out of existence altogether" (p. 168). This is

primarily due to Hollywood's continued fascination with the Plains Wars of the mid 19th century. Therefore, the celluloid existence of Indians has been most relegated to that of the "plains warriors astride their galloping ponies, many of them trailing a flowing headdress in the wind, thundering into battle against the blue-coated troops of the US" (Churchill, 1991, p. 168).

Part of the issue is that Native peoples have had a hard time entering into Hollywood in positions that would directly challenge these distorted images (Cobb, 2003). While that has begun to change in recent years with movies like *Smoke Signals* (2000)*, The Fast Runner* (2002), *Barking Water* (2010) and others, the cinematic "Hollywood Indian" continues to be reproduced so often it has taken on a seemingly natural state within the broader dominant consciousness. Consequently in the minds of many preservice teachers Native Americans continue to be viewed and understood through the lens of the nineteenth century. It is essential then, as a teacher educator, to present opportunities for students to critically think about the ways in which their own identities have been constructed in order to understand the frameworks on which their perceptions of Native identity, communities, and culture are based (Haynes Writer, 2001).

THE "HOLLYWOOD INDIAN" GOES TO SCHOOL

It is noted that Hall and other cultural theorists are most concerned with the ways in which media culture shapes, and often grossly misrepresents, broader cultural understandings of race, class, gender and ethnicity. However, there is another cultural sphere in which problematic notions of the "Hollywood Indian" are reinforced rather than subverted: public education. Native American history, with all of its triumphs and its tragedies, has been whitewashed out of the historical narrative and, therefore, the historical consciousness in schools (Bryant, 2008). State standards portray American Indians in a demeaning fashion, focusing almost exclusively on 18th and 19th century images, with relatively little emphasis on cultural contributions, modern issues, or personifications of American Indian groups (Journell, 2009). This version of American history taught in public schools caters to a Eurocentric male point of view, starting with the voyage of Columbus and continuing with English colonization over a century later (Banks & Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Reinforcing this point, the culture of Native American communities is often taught through the Plains Wars era with most textbook accounts of Indians ending around 1838 amidst the removal of the Five Civilized Tribes from the southeast United States (Bryant, 2008; Journell, 2009).

Textbooks are particularly problematic as they often reinforce the "vanishing" Indian myth. As Loewen (1995) points out, non-Indian and Indian students alike will not find among the Native Americans portrayed in their textbooks many regular folks with whom they might identify. In this way, American Indian people have been relegated to being historical artifacts not deemed fit to participate fully in modern society. Many of these same accounts portray Native people as helpless victims facing the inevitable conquest of "progress." The problem with this

"declension" narrative is that not only is it unequivocally false but it completely ignores the fact that American Indians had agency in their own histories and continue to enact self-determination in the present.[5] In other words, American Indians have been the most lied about subset of the United States population, which has the very real effect of divorcing Native Americans from material reality (Churchill, 1991). The result is that the only way many white students grow up knowing about Indians is through the European American invention of the "Indian" to replace the indigenous person (Powell, 2005). Reyhner (2005) contends that "the danger to students is not the sterotypes themselves, but the possibility that students will come to believe that the stereotypes accurately represent the whole group" (p. 158). The images most often projected in popular culture and school curriculum are typically internalized by the very people they objectify (Pewewardy, 1997; Cobb, 2003). Furthermore, if students engage curriculum that characterizes people of their own heritage as consistently oppressed and marred by inequity – that may act as a form of oppression in itself, while reinforcing the colonial power structure (Bryant, 2008). This can most readily be seen in state curricula and social studies textbooks and in the way Native American history is taught in the classroom (Loewen, 1995).

Compounding the issue is that there can be no expectation that textbook publishers will produce texts with the kind of language instruction and cultural knowledge that Native American communities wish to see (Journell, 2009). Textbooks, in particular, have silenced many tribes in their cultural distinctiveness and uniqueness through the use of the "vanishing Indian" image (Berkhofer, 1978). In addition, textbooks are subject to economies of scale and end up expressing the "official knowledge" that is determined by the political power of the dominant society (Apple, 1999). Loewen (1995) argues that:

> Native Americans would have textbook publishers note that, despite all the wars, the plagues, the pressures against their cultures, Indians still survive physically and culturally, and still have government-to-government relations with the United States. (p. 13)

Textbooks instead provide little emphasis on the cultural contributions, modern issues, or unique characteristics of tribal groups (Journell, 2009). As a result, most high school students are subjegated to a historical narrative that unapologetically presents Native Americans through white eyes (Loewen, 1995). Paul Chaat Smith (2009) argues that the "overwhelming message from schools, mass media and conventional wisdom says that Indians might be interesting, even profound, but never important" (p. 71). Thus, students continue to be subjected to images and curriculum that reduce all Indians into "plains warriors astride their galloping ponies, many of them trailing a flowing headdress in the wind, thundering into battle against the blue-coated troops of the US" (Churchill, 1991, p. 168). One specific example of the way in which public education produces and reinforces problematic notions of Native people is in the origin story of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving

The dark greens, blues and yellows of late summer have been re-cast into browns and mustards of fall. Cold, crisp temperatures are the norm. This time of the year urges me to turn inward and reflect. It is a time for family and long hikes in the barren woods. It is a time of preparation for what is to come. It is also a time to give thanks.

Breaking my train of thought, the screech of brakes signals the arrival of the school bus. I am cutting time short once again. Racing to meet the boy, I struggle to *catch my breath. The top of his head is barely visible as he rushes down the aisle. My labored breath hovers in the cold air as he emerges and bounds off the bus. On this day he resembles a character out of a Huck Finn story. Disheveled blond hair, an expanding hole in his jeans above the left knee, and a hint of sweat mixed with dirt above the brow remind me of playground battles from not long ago.*

Everyday I give thanks for the best part of my day, the *walk from the bus stop to the house. It is only about half a mile, but each time I feel a bond renewed. As we walk, discussion about what he learned, who made him mad, and other topics consume our time. Sometimes we walk in silence, as quiet reflection signals a break from the noise and commotion of the school day. When I inquire about this day, the boy stops and opens up his well-worn backpack. He rolls up the right sleeve of his plaid shirt and reaches into the front pocket of the bag. Pulling out a brown construction paper vest he proudly displays his latest piece. I am silent. Stuck in a state between shock and horror.*

> *"Do you know what it is?" he asks. "No," I mumble.*
>
> *"It's an Indian vest!" he exclaims. "Ya know,* Indians *kill animals and make vests with them. Look here." He states pointing at the vest.*
>
> *"Your doda [father] does not dress like that," I respond.*
>
> *"Well, you are not a real Indian…Indians are* naked*! Indians ride horses and live in teepees. Indians have sharp teeth and eat buffalo and lizards," he states matter-of-factly.*
>
> *"Interesting...because I get our food from* Harris *Teeter," I argue.*
>
> *He cuts me off before I can continue: "Besides, you don't have one of these…."*
>
> *Rummaging through the recesses of his oversized* bag *he pulls out a brown paper headband and attached colored feather. All that was missing was a John Wayne action figure and a Winchester rifle.*

The above narrative does not speak to all experiences of Native children in schools. It does, however, reflect the recent experiences of my son and his kindergarten classmates as they engaged in the history and culture of Thanksgiving as it is most often taught in public schools. Thanksgiving, which Loewen (1995) describes as America's origin

myth, has been constructed in the popular imagination as a time when Indians and Pilgrims celebrated the harvesting of their first crop as friends. Despite the popular connotation of this day, it is not a traditional Indian holiday. In fact, most of what the general population understands about Thanksgiving is unequivocally false. However, in schools and textbooks around the country this time period has been told and re-told as the beginning of the Christian mission to civilize the "New World." Loewen (1995) contends that this version has been constructed as a time to renew the premise of ethnocentrism. In this edition of history, Pilgrims embody God's ordainment of the United States as a beacon of goodwill. Very rarely is the story of Thanksgiving subverted or challenged, nor is the notion that Indians provided the means for survival discussed. Rather, state curriculum and subsequent materials continue to expose students to stereotypical representations that work to dehumanize Native peoples.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The central issue then is that preservice teachers who are not pedagogically engaged in critical analyses about Native Americans will, in all likelihood, continue to reproduce knowledge that perpetuates cultural myths and stereotypes (Haynes Writer, 2001). For preservice educators working in North Carolina, which is where I am an assistant professor, this issue should be of central concern because the state has the largest American Indian population of any state on the East Coast and recognizes eight Tribal Nations within its borders (Education, 2009).

However, much literature exists which shows that upon entering a teacher education program, most preservice teachers have not developed a "highly critical disposition that questions the status quo … and the social conditions of schooling" (Trier, 2004, p. 3).

This is particularly true for many of the preservice students I find in my courses. Many of them will eventually move into teaching positions throughout Western North Carolina and will be mandated to teach about American Indians but without authentic knowledge to do so. This is an important point as 90% of Native students attend public schools, as I did, where problematic notions of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation are reproduced daily. So where Hollywood creates the myth, public education often reinforces it. This is particularly troubling for American Indian students and communities who are nearly always taught by non-Indians in public schools.

A very real effect of this can be seen in the discrepancy in the level of achievement between Indian and non-Indian students across the nation (Henson, 2008). In a recent study conducted in North Carolina, American Indian students scored on average 100 points lower than non-Indian students on the SAT (Education, 2009). Non-native students in the state also take AP exams at three times the rate of their American Indian counterparts. Furthermore, American Indian males continue to have the highest dropout rate of any race/gender combination in the state (Education, 2009). There are no doubt other factors at play behind these disturbing trends. However,

the bombardment of negative and dehumanizing imagery of Native Americans in a "media saturated" (Hall, 1997) world cannot be underestimated. Therefore, it is essential that preservice teachers are engaged in critical analyses and deconstructions of racial stereotypes found in popular media to demonstrate how these images are used to justify problematic attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward Native American students. As Haynes Writer (2001) explains,

> Sadly, we cannot, under the best conditions, hope to recruit and retain a sufficient number of Native American teachers to meet the present needs of Native students and communities. We can, however, better prepare all teachers to appropriately teach Native children and teach all students accurate information regarding Indigenous Peoples. (p. 9)

The development of a pedagogy of detournement is a specific way in which teacher educators, Native and non-native, can begin to interrupt the smooth circulation of racialized knowledge in a way that fosters a contemporary understanding of American Indian students and communities.

Detournement as Pedagogy in Preservice Education

By deploying Guy Debord's (1959) technique of detournement, which he generally defined as "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble" (p. 67), teacher educators can engage preservice teachers in analyzing the myriad ways in which Hollywood and school curricula have constructed a version of Indian identity that systematically undermines and racializes contemporary understandings of indigeneity. While there is no simple definition of detournement, Elizabeth Sussman (1989) provided this definition:

> Detournement ("diversion") [is a] key means of restructuring culture and experience… *Detournement* proposes a violent excision of elements – painting, architecture, literature, film, urban sites, sounds, gestures, words, signs – from their original contexts, and a consequent re-destabilization and re-contextualization through rupture and realignment. (p. 8)

Detournement as praxis allows teachers to interrogate the influences of colonization on future students through the deconstruction of racist representations of American Indians in media. Representations of Indian people and communities presented as a real version of Indian identity work to remove Native students from their lived realities (Haynes Writer, 2001). The end goal then is to expose the highly-crafted nature of the 'Hollywood Indian" by creating a rupture in understanding. As Hall (1997) contends the act of interrogating a stereotype calls into question its naturalness and normality.

Detournement is a critical art form conceptualized and practiced by members of the Paris-based Situationist International (SI) during the later 1950s and throughout the 1960s. The SI was under the direction and leadership of Guy Debord, who

posited that society is made up of a never-ending accumulation of "spectacles" or, in Marxist terms, "capital" (Debord, 1995, thesis 1). In reinterpreting Marx's work, Debord appropriated notions of commodity fetishism and applied it to contemporary understandings of mass media. Therefore, for Debord, "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation" or a spectacle (thesis 1). Debord found that the accumulation of spectacles resulted in images becoming real and, therefore, reality being transformed into images. Jappe (1998) argues that central to Debord's position is the view that the

> Invasion by mass communication is only seemingly neutral …; in reality the operation of the media perfectly expresses the entire society of which they are a part. The result is that direct experience and the determination of events by individuals themselves are replaced by a passive contemplation of images (which have been chosen by other people). (p. 6)

Debord found value in using detournement to critique and challenge the alienating, separating, pacifying, spectator-inducing, socially-controlling forces of the spectacle (Trier, 2004). Hoping to move past the original negation techniques of avant-garde Dada artists, Debord (1959) proposed "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble." Debord and Wolman (1956) stated about detournement: "The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy" (p. 15). Stripping texts from their original sources and juxtaposing them with and against images and representations related to and produced by the spectacle, the Situationists used a variety of detournement sources including comic strips, paintings, street graffiti, and film. As Debord and Wolman (1956) stated, "Anything can be used" (p. 15).

The notion of detournement parallels Hall's (1997) concept of "trans-coding" (p. 269). Since meaning can never truly be fixed, different meanings can be constructed by taking existing meanings and re-appropriating them. However, Hall (1997) contends that reversing a stereotype is not to simply overturn it by adding positive images to the negative repertoire of the dominant representation. This critical act may challenge the binary but it does not subvert it. Instead, a counter-strategy that "locates itself within the complexities and ambivalences of representation itself, and tries to contest it from within" (Hall, 1997, p. 269) can be used to graft new meanings onto old ones. In this way, Debord's use of detournement can be a counter-strategy that as Hall (1997) states "use[s] the desires and fetishism" (p. 270) of the image, in this case the Hollywood Indian, against themselves.

The utility of detournement in preservice education is that it enables teacher educators to develop a "pedagogy of disruption" which attempts to challenge future teachers' perceptions about the process of schooling and its relationship with popular culture (Giroux, 2006). The end goal then is to expose the highly-crafted nature of the "Hollywood Indian" by creating a rupture in understanding.[6] As Hall (1997) contends, the act of interrogating a stereotype destroys its naturalness and normality.

In pedagogical terms, I have struggled as a 9-12th grade social studies teacher and now as a teacher educator, to explore issues of race, representation, and power with students from the dominant class. For many white students, they are unaware of their privileged position and even less aware about how their privileged position is constantly produced and reinforced through media. Therefore, I took up a pedagogy of detournement to carve out liminal space in the classroom to challenge students' assumptions and ultimately unhinge those assumptions from the nexus of power Hall (1997) alludes to.[7] This is essential, for as Apple (1999) argues, the first step for educators is to acknowledge that inequities exist and that schools often reinforce those inequities for the students (p. 314). Therefore, as the repressive structures become clear, students and teachers can engage in an open and honest dialogue in an attempt to examine the historical, social, economic, and political forces that go into the construction of race and identity in schools.

This type of intentional practice can develop a classroom culture where "classroom procedures and relationships as well as subject-matter content are continually subjected to questions designed to reveal bias, favoritism, or single perspectives" (Oakes & Lipton, 1999, p. 124). As Chimamanda Adichie (2009) reminds us, "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problems with stereotypes, is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story). Thus, interrogating one's own bias, or singular story of others, is an important step in becoming a teacher within a culturally diverse society (Pewewardy, 1999). Haynes Writer (2002) argues that for natives and non-natives, "it is the responsibility of all educators to realize and assess their own miseducation in various areas of diversity" (p. 15). It is my belief that a pedagogy of detournement can foster this type of critical reflexivity within preservice classrooms.

I do recognize that one of the great limitations of a pedagogy aimed at critiquing the "Hollywood Indian" is the ability to fully subvert the seemingly historical and natural space the image occupies. This is an impossible task. However, detournement as theory and practice can provide space in the classroom for students to begin to examine the complex ways in which their identities are informed by popular culture and develop students' ability to evaluate messages they receive from media for their "social, political, economic, and aesthetic contents" (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999, p. 4). Haynes Writer (2001) argues that through a critical pedagogy I can also "interrogate the influences of colonization on myself" so that I do not reproduce a colonizer's mindset with my students. In addition, McGlinn-Manfra and Stoddard (2008) suggest that resistance to critically examining issues of race, class, and gender with preservice teachers can be subverted by challenging students to deconstruct and dissect popular imagery. Finally, as digital tools and resources continue to proliferate into schools, the capabilities of teachers to engage in this type of pedagogy is greatly enhanced (Ashley et. al., 2009).[8]

My Course

Bridging the gap between theory and practice, I took up a pedagogy of detournement with eighteen preservice K-6 teachers in a social studies methods and multicultural education course entitled "Culture, Society and Teaching." All were classified as juniors and the majority of students planned on entering teaching full-time upon graduation. Many of the students will take full time teaching jobs in urban schools, or in the surrounding Appalachian rural counties.

This core academic course serves to integrate three bodies of knowledge: the social foundations of education, multicultural education, and social studies. By combining social foundations, multicultural education, and social studies, the class is an attempt to strengthen the links between theory and practice in ways that make each component relevant and thought-provoking.[9] The overarching objective of the course, as quoted from the syllabus, is that candidates "will become leaders supporting and promoting the development, teaching and learning of all students in multiple contexts." Furthermore, the course takes the critical perspective that teaching often reinforces certain dominant cultural norms. A critical framework in relation to minority schooling posits a view of education as the production and reproduction of culture in terms of power relationships that maintain and perpetuate the status quo (Giroux & Robbins, 2006). The course then is conceptualized as providing experiences and activities that foster critical reflection through which pre-service teachers can begin to view themselves as vital agents of social change.

In terms of social studies, the class looks critically at representations of history and historical texts to begin to understand why the teaching of American history continues to be taught from a Eurocentric perspective while alienating and repressing the unique history and culture of the "Other." This course specifically attempts to facilitate preservice students' understandings of their own cultural heritages before expecting them to understand those of their students (Banks & Banks, 2004). Critically examining the formal and informal educational experiences of one's past is crucial to ensuring that the dominant power discourses and practices of imperialism, colonization, racism, and oppression are no longer imposed on students (Haynes Writer, 2001). Therefore, my aim as an instructor is to facilitate among preservice teachers the interrogation and deconstruction of hegemonic structures of whiteness, patriarchy, class, privilege, and the representation of history and historical texts within K-12 education.

In order to accomplish this crucial task, students read selected "foundational" works of education, including works by figures such as Apple (1971), Banks (2006), Delpit (1988), Freire (1993), Ladson-Billings (2003), Loewen (1995), McIntosh (1990), Valenzuela (1999), and Zinn (2003). Students are also asked to pay particular attention to inequalities associated with race, social class, language, gender, and other social categories. Through activities and class discussions, students are actively engaged to understand the extent of school inequalities and to search for alternatives to such inequalities.

To support learning in the course, students are required to participate in a semester-long practicum located in a local elementary school. A practicum experience is an opportunity for each preservice teacher to be placed in an inservice teacher's classroom for the duration of the semester. For this particular course, preservice students are expected to complete a series of observation activities in addition to designing a three-day social studies unit to teach. University and local school partnerships are based on student body diversity, proximity to campus, and the administration's willingness to host and support a cohort of pre-service educators for an entire semester. The practicum experience is designed to help students become more deliberate and reflective in the way they interact with elementary-aged children. The goal is that their pedagogy and beliefs will become interwoven. Within the context of the students' practicum placements, the expectation is that students will begin considering how their experiences inform and shape previously held beliefs about teaching and learning. The preservice teachers are required to create and maintain a semester-long journal reflecting on their experiences in my course and also in their practicum classroom. Through the academic course, the practicum experience, and the critical reflection journal, my hope is that preservice teachers' unstated beliefs will become explicit and therefore will initiate the process of integrating a critical framework into their future teaching.

A Detournement of The Hollywood Indian

In the remaining portion of this chapter, I will focus on the pedagogical project of detournement that I designed and taught. I will briefly describe a set of smaller activities to get at students' assumptions, both conscious and unconscious, about Native Americans. This section will also detail the eighteen preservice students viewing, analyzing, discussing, and writing about a detournement media text that I created using a series of clips from cinematic texts. The detournement as a whole was intended to expose the seemingly natural state of the Hollywood Indian and thus, create new understandings of Native identity.

Through a pedagogy of detournement, I wanted to accomplish a specific set of overarching goals with this particular group of preservice teachers:

1. Foster liminal space in the classroom to discuss contemporary issues related to American Indian people and communities in the classroom.
2. Reveal and articulate my position as a Native American educator, which in and of itself challenges many assumptions the students have about American Indians.[10]
3. Develop a critical lens for preservice teachers to examine their own position within the "society of the spectacle" (Debord) so as to more fully to understand the frameworks on which their perceptions of Native identity, communities, and culture are based.

To set the stage for using detournement in the classroom, I first had the students view a segment of the documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (Herbes-Sommers, 2003). This three-hour documentary tackles the theory of race by subverting the idea of race as biological, while tracing the idea back to its origin in the 19th century. For one class period we watched a segment of the series entitled "The Story We Tell," which traces the transformation of tentative suspicions about difference into a "common-sense" wisdom that people used to explain everything, from individual behavior to the fate of whole societies, an idea of race that persists to this day (Herbes-Sommers, 2003). Students were asked to come to class having listened to excerpts of an interview with Dr. Theda Perdue in which she argues that "as modern notions about race began to emerge in the 19th century, Cherokees were more or less forced to abandon their old notions of Cherokee identity based on clan and kinship, and adopt a racialized identity that was drawn right out of late 19th century Anglo American racism" (Herbes-Sommers, 2003).[11] We thus engaged in a discussion about race as a social construction followed by individual and peer reflection.

At the beginning of the next class, students formed groups of three or four, and I asked them to examine the ways in which Hollywood films and school curriculum have racialized or constructed Native Americans in popular culture. Students were given about fifteen minutes to discuss this with their peers and then another twenty minutes to create a poster representing their discussion. Below is a list of characterizations associated with Native Americans the students came up with:

> Pocahontas, dark skinned, mohawks, reservations, Thanksgiving, Pilgrims, teepees, funny names, feathers, Indian calls, Atlanta Braves, cowboys v. Indians, *The Indian and the Cupboard*, braids, naïve, taken advantage of, corn, one with the earth, dream catchers, drum circles, nomads, hunters, gatherers, *The Last of the Mohicans*, buffalo hunters, head dresses, alcohol, arrowheads, baskets, spiritual healers

In addition, the students' posters revealed a common understanding of American Indians in very stereotypical terms. One poster in particular stood out as the depiction was of a "Native American" wearing animal skins, a feather in the hair, two long braids hanging down, with a hand raised and the words "How" off to the side. Accompanying the so-called portrait of the Native American is a tee-pee adorned with animal prints, the sun, a moon, and a buffalo. Other posters contained arrowheads, stick figures shooting arrows while riding horses, tomahawks, and feathers.

What is unequivocally missing is an understanding of Native people in historical and contemporary terms that is realistic and accurate. The students also have virtually no conception of Native people in the present, nor of the issues that impact the respective communities. In addition, it is clear that for most, if not all, of the students there is only one version of being Indian—the Hollywood version. The dynamic differences between tribes, the variances in cultural and social practices, and the unique histories of tribes were non-existent in the students' responses. Instead, students responded to the prompt with fictitious characteristics that derive

from the imaginations of white film-makers and producers and non-native actors for almost a century. This version of Indian identity not only underscores much of the current literature on preservice teachers' lack of a critical disposition, but it also reinforces the dangers of future teachers going into classrooms and teaching about Native people. They produce and reproduce inaccuracies that have far-reaching effects for all students.

After establishing the problematic notion of race as being socially constructed and then having the preservice teachers think about the ways in which Native Americans have been racialized in popular culture, I had them watch the detournement that I created. In its totality, the detournement is too long and multidimensional to be given a full breadth of explanation here. I will, however, describe the central segments of the detournement, along with a brief discussion in relation to students' responses after they viewed it.

The Detournement: "Challenging Hollywood's Indian"

In order to expose the "Hollywood Indian," I created a multi-media video entitled, "Detournement as Pedagogy: Challenging Hollywood's Indian." To develop the video, I appropriated elements from three sources: cinematic texts portraying Native Americans, clips of interviews I conducted with current American Indian students and professors, and short segments of the movie *Smoke Signals.* Essentially the multi-media video blends several cinematic representations of Native Americans with brief interview shots of actual American Indian students and professors discussing their tribal affiliations. These are layered with and against segments from the central text, *Smoke Signals,* to develop a rupture in understanding of Native identity.

Description of Detournement. I will attempt below to describe in print what the detournement demonstrates on screen (though see the YouTube link for the detournement in footnote 6). To depict the repetitive nature of the representations I used 49 clips taken from cinematic texts spanning from D. W. Griffith's (1913) *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* to *The Proposal* (2009).[12] All of the clips were readily available via Youtube, which were then imported into Final Cut Pro software housed on my iMAC. In addition, I used a flip camera to do very brief interviews with friends, students and professors representing eight different tribes, including White Earth Nation, Choctaw, Chippawa, Kiowa, Lumbee, Poarch Creek, Wyandotte, and Cherokee Nation. The result is a carefully constructed deturnement lasting approximately ten minutes.

For each clip I placed the original release date in the bottom left corner and organized them chronologically within specific segments. The chronological organizations of the clips provide a "visual structure" that powerfully speaks to the historical reproduction and reinforcement of the Hollywood Indian over almost a hundred-year period. Students seemed to understand this element after viewing the piece. One student noted, "What's interesting is that the movie clips spanned movies

that depicted Native Americans from the 1930's until present day. While the time periods changed, the portrayal of them never did. I thought over time the stereotype would have lessened but it didn't." In addition, there are four specific segments designed to speak back to four preeminent stereotypes found in Hollywood movies: Stoic, Savage, "Mystical," and ageographical. The fifth and final segment attempts to powerfully "interrupt" the Hollywood Indian, while privileging the voices of contemporary American Indians.

Smoke Signals. The central text in the detournement that I used with my class was the movie *Smoke Signals* (2005). Directed by Chris Eyre (Cheyenne) and written by Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), *Smoke Signals* challenges the conventional credos of the film industry from within, and is a "singular achievement when placed in the context of the long and colonized history of American Indians and film, thus its achievement is its existence" (Cobb, 2003, p. 204). *Smoke Signals* is particularly adept at using humor to expose and undermine traditional representations of American Indians, while also moving beyond, into a new space of Native self-representation. The making of *Smoke Signals* was seen as a transformative event in the late 90's, and the movie continues to be immensely popular on college campuses to introduce students to contemporary Native issues. Hearne (2012) argues that the film is the most widely recognized and frequently taught film in Native American cinema (p. 16). For non-native viewers, the rhetorical style of the characters subtly allows the writer and director to focus on highly political topics such as race, identity, and representation without alienating the audience.

Smoke Signals is many things to many people but at its core it's a story of relationships, none more important than the two central characters: the tough, athletic Victor Joseph played by Adam Beach (Saulteaux) and the nerdy, storyteller Thomas-Builds-a-Fire played by Evan Adams (Coast Salish). Much of the plot revolves around the two as they embark on a journey, mostly by bus, from the Coeur D'Alene Indian Reservation in Idaho to recover the remains of Victor's father, Arnold, who recently died in Arizona. The complexity of their relationship is revealed through a complex chronology that moves in a non-linear fashion using flashbacks throughout to highlight key events. Central to the story, and the opening scene of the movie, is a house fire in 1976 that killed Thomas' parents. It is only later on in the movie that it is revealed that Arnold, Victor's father, caused the fire while also rescuing Thomas, as a baby, from certain death. The film title itself refers to the house fire at the core of the story, but it is also symbolic — like the radio airwaves of the film's opening sequence — of a broader communication system that travels across boundaries (Hearne, 2012, p. xix). At its release the *New York Times* (1998) described the movie as a slow-moving, often wistful drama that turns into a road movie as Thomas, a confident nerd who maintains his people's storytelling tradition in an offbeat manner, accompanies the angry, self-conscious Victor Joseph on a journey to Arizona. But the story is enlivened by a self-deprecating sense of humor and allows audiences into the story. In this way *Smoke Signals* is an attempt to indigenize the

popular cultural space it inherits. By this I mean that there are several aspects of the movie, including the dialogue and the characters, that are uniquely American Indian. The writers and directors, thus, undermine the traditional ownership of the narrative by asking non-native audiences to "keep up." Thus, *Smoke Signals* provides me a unique opportunity to create liminal space within my classroom to address issues of power, race, representation, and identity, particularly as it applies to Native Americans.

The Bus Scene. The bus scene from *Smoke Signals* provides much of the unifying structure in the detournement I created. In this particular scene, Victor and Thomas are riding the bus to Arizona. Victor has grown exasperated by the numerous stories Thomas has been telling, many of which contain anecdotes about Arnold. Hearne (2012) argues that the bus acts as a contemporary stagecoach harking the influence of John Ford, while setting the stage for a deep discussion between Thomas and Victor over Indian identity. Central to the conversation is Victor posing the question of whether or not Thomas really "knows how to be a real Indian?" As the discussion goes on, Victor directs Thomas in how to better represent himself as a modern Indian by both drawing on and negating and cinematic representations. It is pure genius, as the characters both subvert the Hollywood understanding of Native Identity while also revealing the almost inescapable nature of the image itself. Here is an excerpt from this most important scene:

	[*Victor and Thomas on the bus to Phoenix*]
VICTOR:	You know Thomas? I don't know what you're talking about half the time. Why is that?
THOMAS:	I don't know.
VICTOR:	I mean, you just go on talking about nothing. Why can't you have a normal conversation? You're always trying to sound like some damn medicine man or something. I mean, how many times have you seen *Dances with Wolves?* A hundred, two hundred times?
	[*Embarrassed, Thomas tucks his head*]
VICTOR:	Well, shit, no wonder you don't know how to be an Indian if you learned from watching *Dances with Wolves.* Jeez, I guess I'll have to teach you then, enit?[13]
	[*Thomas nods eagerly*]
VICTOR:	First of all, quit grinning like an idiot. Indians aren't supposed to smile like that. Get stoic.
	[*Thomas tries to look serious but fails*]
VICTOR:	No, like this.
	[*Victor strikes a very cool, determined,"warriorlike"* image]

VICTOR: You got to look mean or people won't respect you. White people will run all over you if you don't look mean. You got to look like a warrior. You got to look like you just got back from killing a buffalo.

THOMAS: But our tribe never hunted buffalo. We were fisherman.

VICTOR: What? You want to look like you just came back from catching a fish? It ain't *Dances with Salmon*, you know? Man, you think a fisherman is tough.[14]

Description of Segments

In this section I will describe the opening scene and two segments of the detournement that combine cinematic clips with the central scene (just described) of *Smoke Signals*. Finally, I will describe the closing scene of the detournement through selected students' responses to viewing and engaging in the critical video text that I created.

Opening Scene. The beginning of the detournement foregrounds the soundtrack to the movie *Dances with Wolves* (1990). This is a subtle nod to the unique place that the movie holds in the American public's imagination. The winner of numerous awards, including the 1990 Academy Award for best picture, *Dances with Wolves* (1990) was recently selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." However, the movie also propagates several enduring stereotypes related to the *Hollywood Indian:* the savage, the noble environmentalist, and the white hero. I play with this cultural significance by placing the soundtrack in a juxtaposed position with Stuart Hall's (2003) quote, "Power can be understood, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a 'regime of representation'" (p. 258). The nostalgic theme music of *Dances with Wolves* (1990) stands in sharp contrast to the "regime of representation" that Hall alludes to. This scene sets the tone for the rest of the detournement.

Segment: Mystical Beings. This segment is designed to challenge the representation of American Indians as mystical beings. Once again I draw on the conversation between Victor and Thomas as they ride the bus to Arizona to recover Arnold's remains. In this particular scene Victor is frustrated with Thomas's incessant need to tell stories in a mystical Indian manner.

Victor: Ya know Thomas, I don't know what you are talking about half the time. Why is that?

Thomas: I don't know.

Victor: I mean you just go on and on talking about nothing. Why can't you have a normal conversation. You're always trying to sound like some damn medicine man or something.

This scene is juxtaposed against a collection of Hollywood clips of actors playing the "mystical" Indian part. The initial clip comes from D.W. Griffith's (1913) film *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* where a figure wearing a massive headdress hurriedly dances around waving his arms and hands to the sky. This is immediately followed by Jeff Chandler, playing Cochise in *Broken Arrow,* speaking in a non-sensical manner. Clips from *The Indian Fighter*, *Little Big Man*, *Dances with Wolves, Thunderheart* and *The Missing,* in which Tommy Lee Jones prays in an "indigenous" dialect, are also used. To break up the clips and to subvert the naturalness of the "Mystical" Indian stereotype, I return periodically to Victor and Thomas' discussion on the bus:

Victor: Ya know Thomas, I don't know what you are talking about half the time. Why is that?
Thomas: I don't know.
Victor: I mean you just go on and on talking about nothing. Why can't you have a normal conversation. You're always trying to sound like some damn medicine man or something.

Segment: Savage Indians. In the detournement, I particularly focus on the way in which the Native American people have been constructed as bloodthirsty savages. This particular segment returns to the bus scene of *Smoke Signals* and begins with Victor instructing Thomas to be more stoic in his appearance. He reminds Thomas that, "You gotta look mean or people will not respect you. White people will run all over you if you don't look mean." As Victor's statement lingers, the deep melodramatic rhythm of the *Dances with Wolves* (1990) soundtrack begins to play. After a few seconds the title page from Griffith's *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (1913) displays across the screen. It reads, "The Death of the Chieftain's Son Fans the Ever Ready Spark of Hatred to Revenge" and then gives way to two young girls praying in their beds. This scene is immediately reinforced with a close-up of Lucy Edwards as she lets out a harrowing scream in John Ford's (1956) *The Searchers*. Other scenes from this segment that reinforce the savage stereotype include a scene from *Dances with Wolves* (1990), where a Pawnee raiding party, led by Wes Studi (Cherokee) shoot and scalp a trader. As the scene ends I return to *Smoke Signals* with Victor instructing Thomas to "look mean or people will not respect you. White people will run all over you if you don't look mean." A clip of Russell Crowe's character in *3:10 to Yuma* (2007) describing the Apache Indian's "enjoyment" of killing is then shown. To further attempt to rupture my students' understanding, I strip another segment of Thomas and Victor's conversation where Victor reminds Thomas that

to be a respected Indian you must "look like a warrior. You gotta look like you just came back from killing a buffalo." I then link Victor's statement to the buffalo chase scene in *Dances with Wolves* (1990). In one of the most romanticized scenes in the movie, Kevin Costner is seen riding a horse with a Sioux Indian hunting party. I use the scene for approximately five seconds before cutting back to Victor and Thomas on the bus with Thomas proclaiming, "But our tribe never hunted buffalo. We were fishermen." Victor frustratingly responds, "What! You wanna look like you just came back from catching a fish. This ain't dances with salmon ya know."

Final Segment: Exploding the Stereotypes. In the final scene of the detournement I took all of these cinematic clips and brought them together in a "media wall" using Motion software. The "media wall" consists of several rows and columns of TV screens playing all of the cinematic texts I used in the detournement simultaneously. The "noise" is meant to represent the immersive nature of Native identity that has been constructed though Hollywood films and the privileged place it holds in the dominant society's psyche. I then manipulate the "media wall" to blow apart in a violent explosion; this action is overlayed with the sound of glass breaking into a million tiny shards. The screen fades to black. This action is a symbolic attempt to dramatically dis-member the spectacle of the "Hollywood Indian" in physical form.

After thirty seconds, the grainy flip camera video footage of interviews I conducted with contemporary American Indians is revealed. Each interview clip lasts no more than five seconds as the person simply states his or her tribal affiliation. Some chose to speak in native tongue, while others did not. There are eleven interviews in all spanning nine tribal communities. My purpose in including these brief segments was to subvert the "Hollywood Indian" by demonstrating that contemporary Native people do not and have not looked like the Pan-Indian warriors that were just displayed in the detournement.

Students' Responses to the Detournement

After the students watched the detournement, I asked them to write a reflective essay of their impressions. Several reflected critically on their understanding of Native Americans and the role media play in shaping those understandings:

> Watching the video in class today really made me question my own perceptions and ideas of race and Native Americans in particular. During the activity in class where we brainstormed the stereotypes about certain groups, my group had Native Americans. All of the stereotypes that we came up with (those dealing with appearance, typical dress, occupations, mannerisms, etc.) appeared in the movie clips that we watched. It is crazy how much the media influences what we think or perceive about others!

Another student added:

> I guess that is what's so troubling about the multiple pictures that we saw: they only represented one smidgen of Native American life. Over and over and over again. So that is all that the general public knows: riding horses and warfare. And I'm positive that Native American life, history, and culture is so much deeper than that. So in that sense, the repetitive movie clips were very useful in helping me recognize and examine my ideas and notions that I have in my mind about Native American culture.

On the whole, students seemed to respond most positively to the final segment of the detournement. The following response is typical of what many students wrote in their reflective essays about the final segment:

> I really liked the conclusion of the film with the statements of the American Indian students and professors. I thought this aspect of the film provided a refreshing contrast to the stereotypes that had previously been on the screen. It dispelled the images of all American Indians wearing their traditional clothing, having dark skin and hair, and none of those people were hunting buffalo! In fact, one of my friends was featured in the [detournement] and I had no idea that she was American Indian. Ending with this segment really brought the purpose of the [detournement] into fruition and challenged the Hollywood stereotype.

Another student also discussed developing a deeper, more dynamic understanding of tribal communities based on the final segment.

> Something else I just thought of about the people in the end was that none of them said "I am Native American," but said exactly what tribe they were. I think it is interesting how the media groups them as all "Indians" when there are very different groups.

Other students reflected in pedagogical ways often generating more questions than answers. This response is indicative of several student responses:

> I feel that that it is our job to stay educated and keep our students informed in order to refute stereotypes which perpetuate violence and prejudice. I hope that becoming more aware of these stereotypes and the negative effects they can have on different races will help me teach a more comprehensive and realistic perspective of race in the classroom. My question is, however, how do we dissolve these stereotypes? We are so covered in stereotypes, I wonder how you get out? It seems that a good way to start is to teach our students to be critical of how the media portrays things, and not to believe everything they see on the TV. Forming opinions based on facts will make people better able to understand others.

However, the true utility of this pedagogical project about stereotypes of Native Americans was on display when students critically reflected after engaging in all of the various activities of the project, including watching the detournement. Several students reflected on their original notions about Native Americans and admitted that they really had no idea or had never thought about racist depictions of American Indian people and communities. One student wrote, "Native Americans and the perceptions that people have of them is something that I had never really thought about until I heard the discussions in class and watched this video." Another student added, "To be completely honest, prior to our classroom activity and discussions about defining the stereotypes in different races and cultures, I probably wouldn't have noticed anything wrong with the portrayal of Native Americans in the video." This rupture in understanding was an important part of the project and a central goal in moving Native Americans from "reel" to "real" in the minds of these preservice teachers.

CONCLUSION

> So I urge everyone, Indians included, to start with the assumption that everything you know about Indians is wrong. Begin not by reading about South Dakota but by looking for the Indian history beneath your own feet.
>
> Paul Chaat Smith (2009)

I return to the underlying premise of this chapter by calling attention to the challenge of Michael and Leonard Carson Lambert (2011) to make ourselves, as Native people, visible "without parading Plains Indian flute music, dream catchers, or other such stereotypical tropes" (p. xxviii). As such, I consider the implementation of a pedagogy of detournement as a critical act that has the purpose of disrupting the power of the spectacle that subsumes us all, Indian and non-Indian alike, and of educating and fragmenting along lines of difference.

However, I am fully aware that the tentacles of the spectacle know no bounds. The truly insidious aspect of stereotypes is that they get down into your bones and eventually wrap themselves into your consciousness and very being. They shade how you view yourself and how you view "the Other." How do we, then, as Native people, move from simply exposing the faulty premise of the Hollywood Indian to producing a more complete picture of what it means to be Indian in the 21st century? As an Indian scholar, I struggle with confronting and challenging the spectacle of the Hollywood Indian while also recognizing that, by doing so, I am in some way giving it power.

One of the great limitations of a pedagogy aimed at critiquing the Hollywood Indian is to show fully what is real. In no way am I arguing that a pedagogy of detournement can fully account for or subvert the entire history of the "Hollywood

Indian." I am positing that, through the use of a pedagogy of detournement, I was able to engage preservice teachers in recognizing the myriad ways that Hollywood has constructed a version of Indian identity that systematically threatens the continuance of Native cultures and Native sovereignty (Coleman, 2005). Preservice educators' participation in the critical pedagogical project of detournement can foster more humane and realistic understandings of American Indians from reel to real. Through the project I designed and taught, I sought to involve preservice teachers in being more critical of the images presented to them via various books and media. More importantly, I wanted preservice teachers to gain insights into how important identity is in the context of education and to think of various ways to implement this pedagogical strategy with their own future students.

While I do concede that a pedagogy of detournement cannot provide an absolute truth or, in this case, fully replace the plethora of problematic representations related to the "Hollywood Indian," I do argue that through the practice of detournement, I involved these preservice teachers in experiencing an initial and meaningful stage of reconsidering their own position as teachers and the critical role teachers play in the reproduction of stereotypes in the classroom, particularly as it relates to American Indian people and communities.

By combining the rhetorical structure of *Smoke Signals* (2000) with interviews from contemporary Indian students and professors, as well as juxtaposing clips from cinematic texts, I attempt to interrupt preservice teachers' preconceived notions about Native identity. In doing so I am providing space for the construction of new understandings of Native identity rooted in the lived realities of American Indian students. The specific desire to interrogate the "Hollywood Indian" through situating elements of spectacle through inter-textuality is a particular kind of subversive strategy to speak back to those elements of the *spectacle* that continue to work against me and other Native people.

NOTES

[1] For this manuscript the terms American Indian, Native American, Indigenous peoples, tribal peoples and Native peoples are used interchangeably due to the lack of an agreed upon term. However, it is generally noted that Native peoples tend to use a specific clan or tribal name rather than these terms, which can be seen as colonially imposed.

[2] The author is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation.

[3] Or if they have engaged a Native American, they often do not recognize the experience as authentic due to the lack of phenotypical characteristics most often represented in cinematic constructions of Indian identity.

[4] There are approximately 21,000 American Indian students currently enrolled in North Carolina public schools alone, according to the 2012 Report to the North Carolina State Board of Education conducted by the State Advisory Council on Indian Education (http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/americanindianed/reports/2012indianedreport.pdf).

[5] The linguistic term "declension" is used widely in the fields of history and anthropology to refer to the dominant hegemonic theory that the victory of western civilization over American Indians was inevitable.

[6] The detournement that I made, which exemplifies how I conceptualize using detournement with preservice teachers to challenge the "Hollywood Indian," can be found on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYZCWhfXPyE

[7] Bowers (1984) argues, "As traditional forms of authority are delegitimized individuals enter a brief period of liminal cultural space that allows for the negotiation of new meanings" (p. viii). By using the term "liminal," I am recognizing that institutional structures, such as school systems and media culture, do not lend themselves to open and equitable discussions on race, gender and identity. Therefore, a pedagogy of detournment in which the authoritative voice of the decoder is interrupted provides liminal space to discuss these issues. This type of discourse, Bowers (1984) argues, "does not simply maintain the old cultural patterns, but becomes a political force in establishing new foundations" (p. viii). For preservice educators the carving out of liminal space in the classroom has the effect of fostering "student's ability to participate in the negotiation [of meaning] process" (p. ix).

[8] I am attempting to make a subtle point that the availability and ubiquitous nature of many digital technologies in schools allows teachers to more readily engage in a pedagogy of detournement.

[9] Topics for the eighteen week class include: Functions of Power in Education; Understanding Ourselves and Others; Developing Meaningful Strategies for All Students; Gender; Culture; Social Class; Race; Issues of Schooling; Critical Pedagogy; Learning through "Doing History"; Historical Perspectives of Education; What Is Social Studies?; Intersections of Social Studies and Multicultural Education; What Is Multicultural Education?; Strategies for Teaching the Social Studies; and Understanding the Role of Primary and Secondary Sources in the Social Studies.

[10] Mihesuah (1996) argues that "understanding the historical and everyday lives of Native peoples would serve to disrupt the inaccurate information and stereotypes perpetuated in schools" (p. 15).

[11] Students were also assigned to read Gloria Ladson-Billings's (2003) chapter "Lies My Teacher Still Tells" in *Critical Race Theory Perspectives in Social Studies* and Lisa Delpit's (1988) chapter "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children."

[12] Here is a complete list of the movies used in the making of the detournement accompanied by the original release date: *Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (1913), *Stagecoach* (1939), *Broken Arrow* (1950), *The Indian Fighter* (1955), *The Searchers* (1956), *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here* (1969), *Little Big Man* (1970), *Billy Jack* (1971), *Pow Wow Highway* (1989), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *Thunderheart* (1992), *Smoke Signals* (1998), *The Missing* (2003), *3:10 to Yuma* (2007) and *The Proposal* (2009).

[13] This term is often used by Native people as a shortened version of "Isn't it?" It is also used as a form of agreement. This term is employed so often amongst Indian people that "The 1491s," an American Indian comedy troupe, parody its use in Sterlin Harjo's movie *Barking Water*.

[14] See Zonn, & Winchell (2002) for this dialogue.

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ASHLEY BOYD

5. DETOURNEMENT AS ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PEDAGOGY AND INVITATION TO CRISIS

Queering Gender in a Preservice Teacher Education Classroom

> Anti-oppressive education involves helping students trouble their own knowledges and identities, trouble the ways they traditionally engage with oppression, and trouble what it means to change oppression. Such work cannot happen unless educators invite students into crisis, and then help them work through it.
>
> —Kevin Kumashiro

Recently, I had the opportunity to work with several former teacher education students, who are all then currently first year teachers, in a professional development program. I had taught them in an *Introduction to Teaching* course at the beginning of their program at the university and continued to assist them in formal and informal capacities of support throughout the completion of their degrees. I was excited to see them again as they were closing the first semester of their secondary teaching careers. One student, a white male raised in an upper middle class family, currently taught in a large, urban school district. He purposefully chose this population and school and was dedicated to his work, but he admitted to me in this conversation, "Nothing about my experience or what I went through growing up relates to the kids that I work with. I have one white student in my classes all day." I was struck by his honesty. This was a well-rounded young man who participated in field experiences and student teaching and who was insightfully critical in his coursework and discussions. I wondered quietly if *we* had in some way failed *him* in his teacher education—or, rather, did we prepare him to come to such realizations? I asked myself how we could continue to cultivate similar types of consciousness in our students and, simultaneously, how we could incite them to action based on this awareness.

As public schools in the United States become increasingly more diverse, the demand for teachers who are equipped to cater to the various needs, cultures, and subjectivities in these classrooms concurrently escalates (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Yet, many who enter preservice teacher education programs have restricted knowledge of or experience with the students they will be teaching. The question of how to adequately prepare our educators for the teaching tasks before them has been of paramount concern in teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith, 2008).

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 107–128.

While universities throughout the last several decades have incorporated a host of strategies to accomplish this feat, such as offering multicultural education courses, investigating teachers' own autobiographies, promoting field experiences, and espousing missions of equity that supposedly permeate throughout all coursework (Ladson-Billings, 1999), further research is needed to explore specific strategies that illustrate how to realize the mission of generating individuals who are oriented toward social justice and will enter the teaching force. My research offers one such method, using detournement as anti-oppressive pedagogy, amongst a palette of others. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explain my use of detournement, which I situate in the literature on social justice in teacher education and within a framework of Queer Theory, and present students' reactions to this pedagogy through the illustration of responses in six instances along a spectrum. I then consider how detournement is one technique of anti-oppressive pedagogy that contains transformative capacity, and I offer it as a tool for teacher educators who work in social justice classrooms.

CONTEXT: THE GUEST LIST

The students involved in this research were all members of a *Social Justice in Education* course at a large southeastern university. There were approximately 150 preservice teacher education students in the course who ranged from across programs in early childhood to secondary education. They spanned undergraduate and Master of Arts in Teaching programs, but all were seeking initial licensure. In the first five seminars of the fifteen-week course, we spent time with students making a case for the need for social justice in education by focusing on schooling inequities including funding and constructed achievement scores, investigating comparisons to other countries' educational systems, and examining how education fits into a larger discourse on social justice as a movement. We then transitioned in the remaining ten weeks to a more specific focus in each that was related to particular groups, taking care not to essentialize members of groups. We examined, for example, the diversity between Latin@s, educational barriers related to Native American youth, and culturally relevant pedagogy as related to African American students. Mirroring the larger population of teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995), the students in this class were predominately white, middle class, in their early twenties, and female. Before each week's seminar, we asked the students to reflect on and connect their personal experiences to the readings in online submissions.

In addition to the online forum assignments, the course was heavily media-based. Each week, small groups of students presented a music video to their peers related to a social justice issue and led a fifteen-minute discussion and critique related to course topics and readings. In the culminating assignment for the course, we required students to create educational games using the software *Scratch,* and we spent time throughout class meetings allowing students to collaborate and help one another troubleshoot. We often utilized clips from real-life teaching scenes to facilitate application of course concepts and news footage to explore current educational

topics. Finally, we used Skype© to communicate with scholarly experts throughout the semester and small groups of students were responsible for communicating with the scholar to prepare to lead the class discussion during the session. Thus, the course employed a host of media and technology.

The detournement utilized as an anti-oppressive pedagogic strategy in this project was shown at the midpoint of the semester, week seven, at the end of the three-hour class. This came after we had discussed ability based grouping, the social construction of smartness (Hatt, 2007), and issues related to race, ethnicity, and inequity. The detournement showing was in anticipation of discussions about gender and LGBTQ communities scheduled to occur the following week. In making the detournement, I purposely drew on cultural artifacts that would be recognized by the particular population of students, since the practice of detournement relies on shared symbols (Debord & Wolman, 1956). In addition, as described above, the class was heavily media-based and the students were accustomed to being asked to provide critical analysis of film clips, music videos, and newscasts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRAFTING THE INVITATION THROUGH DETOURNEMENT

This project employs the method of detournement, a technique borrowed from the Situationist International, a group of French-led revolutionaries of the late-1950s and throughout the 1960s. Best and Kellner (1997) write of the group:

> Led by Guy Debord, they combined a theoretical critique of consumer society with a radical artistic and social politics. They identified consumer capitalism as a new mode of social control, as a "society of the spectacle," that pacifies citizens by creating a world of mesmerizing images and stupefying forms of entertainment. (p. 80)

Best and Kellner (1997) explain that Debord conceptualized a world in which people no longer experienced life directly but instead are subjected to an image-governed existence. The result is a population alienated from one another by capitalist creations, unbeknownst to those most affected (i.e., all of us). According to Best and Kellner (1997), the spectacle, then, "is a tool of pacification and depoliticization; it is a 'permanent opium war' that stupefies social subjects and distracts them from the most urgent task of real life" (p. 84). Reminiscent of Gramsci's (1971) theory of ruling by consensus as well as Horkheimer and Adorno's (1944) notions of the culture industry as a highly influential social force, Debord asserts that the spectacle was a powerful instrument in shaping mass perception.

One of the solutions Debord proposes in order to overtly expose the spectacle is his conceptualization of detournement, a strategy that juxtaposes multiple disparate texts in order to communicate a message that is often politically charged in the service of a leftist social agenda. According to Ken Knabb (2006), the French word "detournement means deflection, diversion, rerouting, distortion, misuse,

misappropriation, hijacking, or otherwise turning something aside from its normal course or purpose" (p. 480). Debord & Wolman (1956) stated that "the mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy" (p. 15). Through the combination of one text with another, meaning is created that was not held within either original piece. They further delineate specific types of detournement, one of which is "deceptive detournement," and is "the detournement of an intrinsically significant element" (p. 16). Thus, this strategy takes symbols which have solidified meaning and diffuses that in order to attach new meaning. According to Debord and Wolman (1956), a detournement is most powerful when the audience for which it has been created has a "conscious or vague recollection of the original contexts of the elements" (p. 17) so that their shared meaning can be called upon and challenged by the artistic creator. Therefore, just as the Situationist practice involves "the disarticulation of conventional forms of culture and their rearticulation into forms of oppositional culture" (Best & Kellner, 1997, p. 92), so I used clips from popular films and media, such as *The Hangover,* Dr. Pepper commercials, American Girl Doll advertisements, and music videos of Justin Beiber and Beyonce to rearticulate these artifacts as social messages infused with gender norms, which collectively serve to indoctrinate members of American culture. (I will describe the detournement in more detail later in this chapter.)

Identifying its political influence, Debord and Wolman (1956) avow detournement has "instrinsic propaganda powers" (p. 17), and "clashing head-on with all social and legal conventions, it cannot fail to be a powerful cultural weapon in the service of a real class struggle" (p. 18). The entities that can be "detourned" are multitudinous; one can utilize novels, titles, gestures, or clothing (Debord & Wolman, 1956), but here I specifically focus on film and mass media as the fodder for detournment, but I do so by using multiple layers including audio, images, and language. Astrid Vicas (1998) writes that "detournement was more than a label for a technique. It was a catchword for a stance taken toward culture, a position on the historical stakes of contemporary culture" (p. 392), and through its use my stance was to open up a space for preservice teachers to question gender labels, which are often treated as axiomatic.

Detournement in Preservice Teacher Education

The use of detournement with preservice teachers is somewhat limited in existence and is mainly restricted to the work of James Trier (2003, 2004, 2007, 2008), although studies on examining media and representation with preservice teachers is abundant but is beyond the scope of this chapter. Trier's extensive writing and use of detournement with his students provides several examples of how this strategy can be employed. For example, in one article, Trier (2004) documented the use of detournement as a means through which students can develop critical dispositions and engage in a particular political discourse. He posits as problematic a message

presented in the popular film *Lean on Me,* particularly the "'blame the victim' rhetoric and tone" and "the philosophy of personal agency" (p. 39). He uses this message as a platform for detournement, wherein he created a film text that juxtaposed alternative media with clips from the original to complicate the film's implication of blame. After presenting this to his preservice students, Trier reports their reactions from class discussion and assigned writing, where many indicated beginning "to rethink their views" (p. 44). His students thus interacted with his constructed argument (and Trier clearly affirms that detournement is in fact an argument) in the staged detournement in relation to their own thoughts and emotions. His study highlights the power of engaging students with detournement as a means to explore hegemonic discourses and personal and social agency.

Although not employing the method of detournement, one study tangentially related and worthy of mention for its use of film in preservice teacher education to examine gender is Beyerbach's (2010) article, in which she engaged her students in an examination of teachers in school films. She used these texts to "reveal how these representations perpetuate a worldview that supports racist, classist, and sexist structures" (p. 270), and she initially analyzes how women are portrayed in visual texts and invites her students to critically analyze these as well. She describes several films in depth and asserts that "by looking at films over time, preservice teachers can discern patterns across the films" (p. 279). What is perhaps most pertinent, however, are the steps she highlights in conjunction with this examination, about which she writes, "I juxtapose using popular culture with the video *Killing Us Softly 3* (Kilbourne 2000), which offers a powerful analysis of how women are represented in the advertisements that have gotten worse over time" (p. 279). Although she does not necessarily question the construct of gender, her work does illuminate one way that gender is specifically addressed in teacher education through the cultural material of media.

Social Justice in Teacher Education

In examining the literature on how gender is treated in teacher education courses with social justice goals, what became evident was the silence in mainstream articles on diversity around issues of sexuality and gender. Phrases about the preponderance of "white, middle class, female" teachers were rampant (e.g. Causey et al., 2000; Santoro & Allard, 2005), but "heterosexual" as an additional modifier was rarely included. Instead, diversity was often defined in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic class (Santoro & Allard, 2005), and research explored how preservice teachers negotiated their own identities in light of experiences with diverse students. Scholars pay a significant amount of attention to preservice teachers' personal beliefs and knowledge (Tatto, 1996; Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000;) and field experiences (McDonald, Tyson, Brayko, Bowman, Delport, & Shimomura, 2011), but these are framed mostly in terms of how teacher candidates respond to or act with regard to race. For instance, Causey et al. (2000) describe a case study in which

a student, Susan, "seemed to have radically restructured her schemata as a result of her urban school experience" (p. 39), and they call for teacher education programs to "address the career needs of teachers as they face the joys and challenges of diverse classrooms" (p. 43). Others focused specifically on the lack of awareness of white teachers and several surveyed various methods which teacher education programs use to educate white teachers, such as "community-based cross cultural immersion experiences" and "multicultural education coursework" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 97). Again, however, gender and sexuality were often excluded. "Diversity," a term that should perhaps refer to the myriad ways students can differ, instead only referred generally to race and, subsequently, class.

Additionally, in a study that ascertained the areas of diversity with which preservice teachers were most concerned, the results illustrated "race as the key defining variable" (Goodwin, 1997, p. 121). The studies that did discuss gender in educational settings focused on paying attention to gender differences in implementing pedagogical methods. For instance, teacher educators emphasized devoting critical thought to the differences between male and female participation in class discussions, and they also stressed the self-recognition of preservice teachers' own biases (Lundeberg, 1997). These studies therefore uphold the traditional dichotomy between male and female and did not seek to engage preservice teachers in the normalization of these separate spheres or in the analysis of gender as a social construction.

QUEER THEORY

Unlike the studies on gender in teacher education that focused on differences between males and females, the literature on Queer Theory seeks to question the boundaries marked by those two concepts. The most prominent aspect of queer theory is its commitment to questioning the normalized assumptions pervasive in dominant discourses. As Meyer (2007) explains, "Queer theory … questions taken-for-granted assumptions about relationships, identity, gender, and sexual orientation. It seeks to explode rigid normalizing categories into possibilities that exist beyond binaries of man/woman, masculine/feminine, student/teacher, and gay/straight" (p. 15). Rather than seeking to examine the **effects** of the constructs, queer theory scrutinizes the constructs **themselves**. In regard specifically to gender, Meyer writes, "Many people have never questioned or examined how gender shapes our daily behaviors. The invisible nature of how masculinity and femininity are taught to children contributes to its strength. The purchasing of gender-'appropriate' toys and clothes for babies and young children is one way adults perpetuate these lessons" (p. 17). This assertion raises questions about the complicity of adults in the gendering process, a central aspect of my detournement.

In her work on imagining a queer pedagogy, Britzman (1995) advocates for "pedagogies that call into question the conceptual geography of normalization" (p. 152). She expounds, "Queer theory occupies a difficult space between the

signifier and the signified, where something queer happens to the signified … and something queer happens to the signifier" (p. 153). Detournement is thus one way that queer theory can be enacted because of its emphasis on the de-articulation of one text and re-articulation of that text with new meaning. Furthermore, "the queer and the theory in Queer Theory signify actions, not actors. It can be thought of as a verb" (p. 153). Thus, through the use of detournement, the normalized concept of gender was "queered" in my pedagogical project. Viewers of my detournement video were asked to incorporate "reading for alterity," a central aspect of queer theory, where "the exploration becomes one of analysis of the signifier, not the signified, and hence an analysis of where meaning breaks down for the reader" (p. 163). The purpose was thus to open a space for students to question gender and gender norms, to disrupt the meaning traditionally associated with gender.

Studies that report the use of queer theory as a lens for working with preservice teachers provide a solid framework for similar work (Asher, 2007; Kumashiro, 2001, 2009; Macintosh, 2007). As Vavrus (2009) explains:

> Their common approach is "queering" the curriculum. This critical pedagogy is not about reifying rigid notions of a normative dichotomous sexuality between hetero and gay/lesbian, but instead focuses on deconstructing and decentering normative heterosexuality. The purpose of this approach is to help education students, especially the majority heterosexual population, to examine how their own sense of sexuality and gender identification is imbued with various degrees of compulsory heterosexuality and the resultant problematic effects this can have for *all* young people at various stages of identity development. (p. 384)[1]

Researchers thus use queer theory as a basis for engaging students in a number of activities. Vavrus (2009) employs autoethnography with preservice teachers as a way to "provide a critically reflective space for teacher candidates to consider their teacher identity formations as shaped by their lived experiences with gender and sexuality" (p. 385). In these narratives, students revealed their memories of gender-molding events from their own educational backgrounds and explored "assumed heterosexuality" as "the norm" (p. 387), and they made plans for future curriculum with their potential students. Vavrus (2009) cites the autoethnographies for their transformative capacity as revealed through his students' writing.

Like Vavrus (2009), Loutzenheiser (1998) notes the advantage of having students compose a "cultural autobiography" (p. 207) to recognize how race, class, and gender have intersected in their own lives. Asher (2007), however, stresses the difficulty in confronting these issues of diversity with her students, stating: "I realize that although my efforts to create a safe space in my classroom have allowed some students to speak up, silencing forces continue to prevail" (p. 70). Her portrayal of vignettes that document specific student experiences in her multicultural education classroom emphasizes the tension that results when intersections of race, class, and gender are brought to the forefront of class discussion. In her final arguments, she promotes

the idea that teacher educators should attempt to foster a "queer consciousness in heterosexual-identified teachers" (p. 71) amongst their goals of multicultural work.

MacIntosh (2007) highlights the tendency for teacher education programs to treat gender and sexuality in isolated instances in coursework. This accomplishes little in the way of achieving the greater goal of disrupting norms; she laments that "assumptions of student and teacher identities as heterosexual, examples expressed through heterosexual narrative, and curricula seeped in gender normativity are all characteristic of the ways in which non-normative sexualities are 'inadvertently' excluded from curricular agendas" (p. 36). Her work emphasizes the challenges of implementing social justice goals of debunking heteronormativity in teacher education, and she asserts that a curriculum which embraces queer theory would mean "letting go of our desire to conceal the wounds of the marginalized with Band-Aid pedagogies and anesthetizing curricula" (p. 40) that address homophobia but not heteronormativity. She cites that while there are no "quick fixes" (p. 41), we must attempt to unsettle the silence. In a similar vein, Loutzenheiser (1998) calls for a "queered, antiracist education that is 'for' everyone. A pedagogy that works to disrupt the essentializing call for the primacy of race that is often inherent in U.S. incarnations of multicultural education, and that excludes the possibility of multiple identities or intersectionality" (p. 198). Thus, researchers who cite the use of queer theory in preservice teacher education report both on the methods they utilize and how their use can expand upon traditional multicultural education.

METHODS: THE INVITATION

Since this research occurred in two parts, it is necessary to discuss the methodological approach used in both creating the detournement and the process of employing it as an important aspect of my anti-oppressive pedagogy. In creating the detournement, I performed a series of choices in order to engage the audience and communicate a particular message. I conceptualize detournement as an arts-based method, in a manner aligned with Leavy's (2009) theorizing on qualitative methods that commission the arts. Leavy (2009) writes that "arts-based practices can be employed as a means of creating *critical awareness* or *raising consciousness*. This is important in social justice-oriented research that seeks to reveal power relations (often invisible to those in privileged groups), raise critical race or gender consciousness, build coalitions across groups, and challenge dominant ideologies" (p. 13). Thus, the detournement itself is an artistic representation of a cultural study, which I then used with others to "*promote dialogue,* which is critical to cultivating understanding" (Leavy, 2009, p. 14).

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF SCENES

In keeping with the elements of detournement (Debord & Wolman, 1956), I intentionally juxtaposed scenes from popular media that inscribed gender stereotypes with examples of children from society who disrupted those norms. In

the background of the video, I overlaid Beyonce's song "If I Were a Boy" in which the singer speculates how she would act if she were of the opposite gender and describes those actions in terms of stereotypical male behaviors, being emotionally insensitive and uncaring toward a significant other. Popular at the time the course was taught, the song was intended to be an added layer of considerations of gender fluidity even in its problematic presentation of male actions. The consistency of the music also tied the entire video together against the quick shifts in visual scenes. I also infused black slides with questions in white text to prompt students' thinking; these questions stemmed from the words of the speakers in the clips but with an addition of a question mark after the quotation. These were meant to direct students to the messages I was attempting to puncture. I turn now to a description of examples of these messages with exemplar sequences in the following sections.

Sequence 1

The detournement begins with a clip of a news reporter on screen at a typical news desk.

[1]

Reporter: "The question then becomes how much of gender identity is influenced by socialization?"

[2]

Text Slide: How much is gender identity influenced by socialization?

[3]

Clip from a Dr. Pepper commercial follows. In the scene, a man speaks to the camera from the passenger side of a Hummer vehicle, holding a can of Dr. Pepper 10. He states,

He says, "It's only 10 manly calories."

[4]

Clip from a documentary interview with a young (approximately age 6) white female student. The setting appears to be an elementary school classroom and the interviewer sits at a table with the student. He asks, "Can boys put on dresses?" The girl shakes her head slowly.

[5]

Clip back to Dr. Pepper commercial. A high speed chase in a jungle between three motorcycles and the man in the Hummer through a jungle appears, and the camera returns to the man in the passenger seat. He looks directly to the camera to say, "So you can keep the romantic comedies and lady drinks, we're good." The car

speeds off camera. The final shot of a Dr. Pepper can beside a full glass of ice and presumably Dr. Pepper appears on a table in the jungle. A voiceoever announcer states, “Dr. Pepper 10, it’s not for women,” as “It’s not for women” is written in text on the screen.

[6]

Clip from an *American Girl* doll commercial. A shot appears of several young girls of various ethnicities, each holding an *American Girl* doll and frolicking outside. The voice overlay states, “The New American Girl doll is” and a different voice of a young girl each states “sporty,” “funny, “creative” as images of different dolls appear onscreen.

[7]

Clip back to the documentary with the interviewer in the elementary classroom. This time, a young boy appears onscreen in scuba goggles and a plaid blazer. The interviewer asks, “Boys don’t put on girls clothes?” and the young boy emphatically responds “Noooo.” He follows up with “Can girls put on boys clothes” to which the boy repeats, “Nooo.”

[8]

Clip from the film *The Hangover,* in which several male characters stand in a hotel waiting for an elevator. One character, Alan, dons a t-shirt, jeans, and a bag draped sideways across his body. An exchange then occurs between Alan and a character, Phil, who is dressed in a sleek black suit.

Phil: “You’re not really wearing that are you?”

Alan: “Wearing what?”

Phil: “The man purse. Are you actually going to wear that or are you guys just fucking with me?”

Alan: “It’s where I keep all my things. I get a lot of compliments on this.”

[9]

Clip to a CBS show featuring the “Princess Boy.” A young African American male appears on screen, sitting in what appears to be the living area of his home at a children’s table coloring. He is wearing a hot pink dress. The caption on screen reads, “Today’s Family. My Princess Boy, When Boys Dress Like Girls.” His voice lays over the shot, stating “I’m a princess boy, and I love wearing dresses, and I love the colors of pink and red.”

Explanation of Sequence

In the segment described above, I introduce one main message of the detournement, which is the idea that children undergo gender socialization via consumer culture. I included the Dr. Pepper advertisement and the American Girl Dolls to illustrate how certain products are catered directly toward particular audiences. The clips of the interviewer with the children in the classroom demonstrate how these messages are successfully achieved, as the children's responses to the questions are immediate and definite. The young boy in the scuba goggles is generally humorous, but his replies to the questions about boys wearing girls clothes emphasize how nonsensical of a question this seems to him, thus further elucidating the point of the clip: children are in fact strongly socialized to believe in gender separations. I drew on *The Hangover* specifically for its popularity at the time as well as the fame of the "man purse," which had become a sensation in popular culture. Most of the audience for whom this detournement was created would be familiar with that scene and its dialogue. Finally, I troubled this notion of gendered clothing by including "The Princess Boy," who defied these traditional distinctions but who was made worthy of an entire segment on a popular news network to exhibit the exceptionality of those who do not conform to these predetermined societal values. The fact that he was not only male but was also African American called forth issues of maleness in general as well as particularly Black masculinity, which I hoped my students would latch onto in their viewings.

Sequence 2

In another sequence, I introduced the story of the baby "Storm," born to a Canadian couple in 2011 who decided to keep the gender of their child undisclosed so that it could be decided by the child when ready. The clip of the newscast I incorporated begins with an image of the mother holding the baby, and the voiceover of the newscaster says, "Baby Storm remains at the center of a firestorm, well not exactly the baby itself but the parents' decision to keep the baby's private parts private." The caption on screen reads, "Boy or Girl? Firestorm over gender-free baby. Parents fight back at critics." The sequence continues with clips of the interview in the elementary classroom where the interviewer asks the children questions such as "Who goes to work?" and the children point between male and female dolls. I here provide a more detailed description of part of this sequence.

[1]

Clip: The scene cuts to the infamous press conference in 2007 in which Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy screams "I'm a Man!"

[2]

Clip: The father of "The Princess Boy" appears on screen talking to the camera during the segment. He states: "It's not contagious, he's just a kid like any other kid. He plays checkers, he plays in the trees, he just likes to do it in a dress. Big deal."

[3]

Clip: Loud rock music is heard. A shot of a thin white female model in black lingerie walking through what appears to be a desert arises. Next is a black screen and the text "Victoria's Secret presents" with the music still sounding.

[4]

Clip: A pundit is now onscreen of "The Princess Boy" segment, stating, "There's a reason why boys do more rough and tumble play."

[5]

Clip: A Wrangler jeans commercial. Brett Farve, holding a football, avows, "I'm comfortable in jeans that are tough."

[6]

Clip: The pundit of "The Princess Boy" segment shares, "There's a reason why girls have better language development."

[7]

Clip: A McDonald's commercial. Two young girls sit at a small table in what appears to be a young girl's bedroom, playing with dolls. An announcer exclaims, "You can dream to be anything! With a Barbie I Can Be Doll or Playset." A shot then appears of the doll sets.

[8]

Text Slide: There's a reason why?

Explanation of Sequence

The implication of this sequence is again meant to trace the inscription of gender roles in our society and to problematize the natural appearance of them that some claim to exist. Just as with "The Princess Boy," the media sensation of the baby Storm and his or her family illustrates how outstanding those who do not conform to traditional norms become a spectacle. Mike Gundy's rant, although not questioned for his claim to masculinity but famous because of the nature of his disposition in the press conference, continues to show how gender can be a performance whose codes are accepted and have meaning in social arenas. He felt that being "a man" warranted him greater strength and criticism than his players should receive, but the point of inclusion in the detournement and the intended effect of repeating the "I'm a Man!" scene was to jar viewers into realizing that this declaration entitled him to a public reaction.

The intellectual who was interviewed in "The Princess Boy" segment also proffered an axiomatic view of gender, telling the audience that there was a root cause for

gender differences that was somehow innate. The juxtaposition of the McDonald's advertisement and the Wrangler commercial with his proposed essentialist argument was meant to counter his assertion by presenting the social forces that influence mainstream values. The Victoria's Secret advertisement, with its forceful music and sexualized female model, further proffered my notion that there is indeed a reason why gender norms exist, but this has to do more with how they are social constructs fashioned by external elements.

Analysis of Student Responses

In the second part of the research, I engaged the group of preservice teachers in a viewing of the detournement at the end of a class meeting. As Leavy (2009) writes, "An arts-based practice may also serve as one method in a multi-method research project. In this case, the arts-based practice and traditional method(s) ideally inform each other, constituting an *integrated approach* to the methodology" (p. 258). Thus, I combined the detournement as a qualitative piece of research itself with further, more traditional, qualitative research on student responses. I briefly introduced students to the idea of detournement and the Situationist group prior to viewing. I explained that detournement is a juxtaposition of texts intended to make an argument of the creator's discretion. Immediately upon viewing in class, students were asked to answer three questions in our online class forum before any verbal discussion occurred. In the questions, I asked them to reflect broadly on gender, to respond to the detournement and provide an opinion on areas of agreement or disagreement, and to hypothesize on the purpose of the detournement. For the following week, students were assigned three articles to read and were asked to watch the detournement again and report on how (or if) their thinking had changed. The articles assigned for reading included work by Bettina Love, who works with queer youth and hip-hop pedagogy and with whom the class was scheduled to Skype© in the following week. Love's article (2013) focused on the struggles of queer students in an all girls Catholic school. The second reading, Nadal, Issa, Leon, Meterko, Wideman, and Wong's (2011) piece catalogues the various microaggressions experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals that result from our heternormative society and they relate these implications to working with youth. Finally, the third article by Luecke (2011) provided specific context for issues that arise in working with young transgender children in schools. Taken collectively, these provided students even more of a background against which to read the detournement, and for the second online post (due before they returned to class the following week, presumably written after the readings) we asked them to note how their thinking might have changed over the week, what questions were perhaps opened up for them by the detournement, and how they had personally experienced gender socialization.

In analyzing the data, I reviewed students' initial responses as well their post-reading responses; I thus read approximately 300 responses to my detournement. In both the initial and post-reflections, I applied a first level of line-by-line open coding

(Glaser, 1978) according to the topic discussed. These included on what areas of the detournement students chose to concentrate, such as gender roles, the "princess boy" in the film, the "gender-less baby Storm," their own personal experiences with gender, and the idea of the social world changing. I then narrowed my scope to the second reflections for reports from students that noted changes in their thinking between the first and second viewing and writing. In the analysis of the post-writings, I engaged in focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) for the responses to note changes and then established themes across all accounts to create concepts and then categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These themes included normalized gender roles, agency and the media, plans for one's own children, seeing gender in current situations, critique of detournement, and emotional responses. Finally, within the framework of queer theory, I analyzed and coded the second round of responses to the degree to which they upheld the gender dichotomy, either explicitly or implicitly. From these layers of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) emerged a spectrum along which to discern cases of student responses.

Findings: (Un)Accepting the "Invitation to Crisis"

Based on the various types of coding, a number of instances arose that were emblematic of the assorted positions which students assumed in reflecting on the detournement. I chose one representative of each point, yet this is not to imply that all were equally present. Rather, here I present six portraits that illustrate distinctive points of reactions in the post-viewing writings. Most notable commonly among them are the emotion solicited, a poignant reminder of how art as method can be particularly effective (Leavy, 2009). A detailed explanation and exploration of each instance follows. All names used are pseudonyms.

"What's So Wrong with Gender Roles?"

This first example illustrates a consistent adherence to the recognition and affirmation of gender and gender roles in society. John writes:

> What I mean by practical and visible ways is I am prone to say women should wear dresses, men shouldn't. Girls play with dolls, boys don't. And guys like Legos where girls do not. I would agree that most of the reason boys think they shouldn't wear girls clothes, and visa versa, is because social norms like the video. However, the question this video opened up for me is, why is this a bad thing. I experienced this a lot in high school sports. As a young man I was expected to be able to totally invest myself in a sport I love, but show no emotion when we failed, especially when I personally performed badly.

Here John expresses a willing acknowledgement and acceptance of the separation of spheres in society. He takes an oppositional reading to my detournement, what Hall, (1980) explains as a reader who "detotalizes the message in the preferred code,"

(p. 138,) refusing its main argument and instead articulating his own perspective "within some alternative framework of reference" (p. 138), which in this case is one that upholds gender roles. Although he recognizes that his perspective may be influenced by the media, he directly calls into question the implication that this is somehow unacceptable. In fact, he treats dominant expectations for showing emotion as indisputable and is uncritical of the dichotomy between girls and boys. He presents disparities in the preferences of males and females as generalizable and self-evident. Perhaps the most extreme point on the spectrum of responses, John represents one type of response to the detournement in which there was no change between initial and post-reading reflection. He feels that gender and gender roles as they are currently institutionalized should continue and does not see the need to critique them. In this sense, the detournement did not affect his viewpoint and he maintained dominant hegemonic viewpoints on gender.

"Why Would a Parent Not Assign a Gender?"

Perhaps somewhat similar to John, another instance along the range of responses was that of explicitly calling into question the 'gender-less' baby Storm which was presented in clips from the media frenzy that ensued when the story became public. Discussed previously in the sequence descriptions, Storm's parents chose not to reveal the child's sex to anyone except Storm's siblings with the goal that Storm would choose hir (gender neutral pronoun, pronounced "here") own gender and form hir own identity. Images of Storm, along with the parents' written response, were conveyed in newscasts and were the target of comments from anchors as well as psychologists.

In the reaction below from Sarah's post-viewing response, the ability of detournement to provoke emotion is palpable.

> I am especially angry with the parents of the gender-less child. They made a comment at one point that they wanted the child to eventually decide what gender he/she wanted to be. In my opinion this is the wrong way to approach this issue. The child has a biological gender and therefore biological differences from the opposite sex. This is something that if ignored will likely lead to confusion and resentment. I think that the parents should have focused their energies on making sure that the child understands that even if he/she is a boy or a girl that does not mean that he/she has to act in a way or like the things that society tells him/her a boy or girl should.

Sarah's adamant response is that disregarding gender, which she perceives as a biologically determined characteristic, is a disservice to the child. This is somewhat different from John's writing, which upholds gender roles, but his does not consider the consequences of dismantling them. Instead of focusing on the media or broader forces of socialization, Sarah hones directly in on the role of parents in this process. She speaks from a society that upholds gender norms and wonders what would

happen if a baby was not labeled, rather than questioning how society might change or be altered.

Like John, then, Sarah takes an oppositional reading (Hall, 1980) of the detournement. However, hers is more nuanced. While she disagrees, she delves more deeply into possibilities that exist otherwise and she notes that societal values are not fixed entities. In this way her response is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, she feels that gender is immutable, but on the other, she says that children do not have to subscribe to prescribed norms. The contradictions in her discourse reveal that Sarah has opened up a space for additional thinking, rather than remaining steadfast to her opinion like John. I also argue that her explicit reference to her anger rather proves the strength of the detournement; one intention of the technique is to implore a response from viewers. Although an oppositional reading then, Sarah's is still one with possibility.

"The Media is Solely Responsible for Gender Construction"

While Sarah considers the role of parents in gender socialization and naming, Henry positions the apparatus of power as the media. Somewhat like one facet of Sarah's argument, however, in this portrayal there is little space for the individual to determine or negotiate gender; instead, the imposition of gender roles is accepted without mention of individual action. Henry states:

> The idea that we have no control over the placement of gender stereotypes upon us really stands out to me. After thinking about gender roles in my interactions with people this week, I couldn't help thinking about how these roles were not our choice. Do we act in these ways because we are innately made to act as such, or is it a direct correlation of the media telling us how we should act?

Like Sarah and John, Henry identifies gender and gender roles as distinctly separate for male and female. Yet, he takes his analysis a step further in wondering how these were established. His narrative attributes human action to a force greater than the individual self, either to popular culture or to a physical/psychological characteristic, but nonetheless he ponders the influences of factors other than choice. His remarks allude to a determinism that leaves little room for agency or revolution of social norms.

Despite this determinism, Henry flirts here with what Hall (1980) labeled as a preferred reading of a film text. The final question in his excerpt identifies one of the main messages of the detournement: the overwhelming power of mass media culture to influence the way individuals think and act. Hall (1980) described a preferred reading as one in which the reader "decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded" (P. 136). As the author of the detournement, I specifically encoded the theme of gendering via popular films, commercial advertisements, and prominent figures. Henry's questioning suggests that he is

considering my message, but his consideration of innateness negates a full grasp of the detournement's cultural critique.

"Now I See Gender Everywhere"

Some students reported the impact of the detournement in their everyday lives. Rather than focusing on Storm, the "gender-less" baby, they reported on ways that the detournement had opened up spaces for critique. Leavy (2009) notes, "Many scholars using arts-based practices are doing so with the intent of increasing a critical consciousness, promoting reflection, building empathetic connections, forming coalitions, challenging stereotypes, and fostering social action" (p. 255). Mackenzie's following testimony on seeing the ways that gender plays out in her own life is a move toward raising consciousness. Her reflection includes:

> In the last week I have picked up on little things that function in our society that determine girls' and women's roles versus boys' and men's roles. For example, in my boyfriend's co-ed fraternity, only males are assigned the chore of lawn care. The kids that I babysit have their rooms painted either blue or pink, according to gender. I began thinking about that crucial moment when an expecting couple finds out the sex of their unborn baby. Why does it matter so much? … In the last week I have realized just how much socialization shapes us and our gender assignments, even if it is unconsciously, before we are ever born. I have realized that I myself am a product of gender socialization … All in all, the detournement that we viewed in class on Monday has opened my eyes to just how much gender socialization affects our roles in society.

Her candid remarks demonstrate a case in which the detournement disrupted a student's thinking and catapulted her into seeing anew what she had previously taken for granted. This case is thus an example of how the strategy for anti-oppressive pedagogy can open students up to exploration, to seeing the world differently. Not only does she apply the detournement to her own life, she then relates it to events occurring around her.

Mackenzie's embrace of the detournement's intended message exemplifies a preferred reading of the text (Hall, 1980), which is "the ideal-typical case of 'perfectly transparent communication'" (p. 137). She not only references specific elements of the detournement that influenced her, but she reveals how she has applied them to her individual context. It is important to note here that Hall's theory traditionally applies to the ways that media texts are conventionally communicated; yet, I am applying it in a different manner. A traditional preferred reading of gender roles would uphold the dichotomy of males and females, but because my detournement attempted to flip that message, I am using the theory to illustrate how the students read *my* film, which already contained oppositional messages. Thus, as Mackensie presents here, a preferred reading in this context adheres to what are generally thought of as critical

ideas. I make this distinction in order to adhere to the integrity of Hall's theory but to also explain the ways that students read the messages I encoded.

"Race and Gender Are Inextricably Linked"

A report on the instances along the spectrum of responses would be remiss without including students' musings on the narratives excluded in the detournement. While many of these offered were engendered by specific course readings assigned between the first and second viewing and described previously, they nonetheless revealed a realization of the intersectionality of race and gender. One exemplary case is Katelyn, who wrote in her post-reading submission:

> My original response discussed the complexity of gender and how the detournement may be arguing that it is socially constructed; however, after re-viewing the detournement, the issue of race stood out to me. While I still agree with my original response, I realized that I had not taken race into consideration when reflecting about gender roles. After doing the reading for this week, I began to pick up on the racial implications of the detournement. For instance, in the segment of the "Princess Boy" I was primarily concerned with the idea that we are socialized to believe that boys shouldn't wear skirts. Now I'm considering what the implications of dressing like a girl are for a growing African American boy.

Thus, Katelyn calls into question the way race is treated, or is not, in my detournement. Her response harkens to her reading of Love's (2013) article on queer African American girls in a Catholic school and the issues with which they struggled, which she then applies to "The Princess Boy" from the detournement. In concentrating solely on gender, large implications for the politics of race are denied. Her example illustrates this assessment of the detournement. She also realizes her own ignorance of the implications of race and gender in the initial viewing and emphasizes the complexity in seeing race and gender together.

Although multiple students viewed the detournement, there are different implications for different students. Katelyn's insight is noteworthy because it elucidates how upon multiple viewings, new messages or ideas can be read in the media text. She here takes what Hall (1980) refers to as a negotiated reading, one in which the viewer operates through "situated logics" (p. 137) and accepts some of the messages but problematizes or rejects others. She retains her original reading of the detournement that gender considerations are important but further complicates the message of the short film by ruminating on issues of race. While she situates one reading in the logics of gender arguments, she then continues to say that in a larger scope the message falls short. She leads me to argue for the power of detournement in its potential for multiple meanings from readings and its imploring authentic dialogue.

"I Get it Now"

Furthering the multifariousness of responses is the extreme of students who expressed full disruption to their prior thinking. Leavy (2009) reminds us, "Visual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can as effectively be used to challenge, dislodge, and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes. In terms of the latter, visual images can be used as a powerful form of social and political resistance because the arts, and perhaps the visual arts in particular, always retain oppositional capabilities" (p. 216). In conceptualizing detournement as a visual art, it also contains this oppositional capacity, which Jason highlights:

> Watching the detournement for a second time was almost difficult for me. This is because of the fact that I had originally found the video to be more humorous than serious. The video is presented in a way that makes the viewer laugh but in fact, the issues it displays are very serious and most of the clips are taken from offensive and discriminatory situations. One major factor that upset me regarding the video was the Oklahoma State coach's interview. I was familiar with this speech and found it to be a great speech and message. However, after the reading and analyzing the video, I realize how the speech could be offensive. The coach speaks about men as though they are the ones capable of being strong and powerful. Not only is this offensive to women, but also to men who may not identify with the stereotypical masculine roles of men like football players.

Another student, Tyler, notes a similar disturbance:

> What this specifically made me think about was how I have listened to those songs on the radio before, and never really paid attention. They were just pieces of music that filled the silence around me. I paid attention to the words, but not in a way in which I was thinking about them. Watching the video clips however meant that I could not ignore these female images, and that realization is upsetting. That we live in such a socialized world that when we listen to music, and sometimes even see images that should bother us, but have become such an integral part of society that we do not even notice it, that is unsettling.

I quote here at length to provide an accurate portrait of the students' disclosures; these writings exemplify the radical introspection that was prompted by the detournement. Jason and Tyler accepted the "invitation to crisis" (Kumashiro, 2009) expressed by the film and shared the progress of their thinking in powerful ways. Both admit that they now recognize practices which have been normalized as neutral, despite their gendered messages. Jason's use of the term "difficult" and Tyler's classification as "unsettling" are discursive indicators that they have both undergone genuine reflection. The daily lives of both students, in which they watch television and listen to music, have been shifted, even if only presented here briefly. While their

initial responses may have been oppositional, their shift to preferred readings of the messages I encoded (Hall, 1980) are noteworthy because they continue to illustrate the power of detournement and as well as how the chain of communication can be dependent on the reader's situatedness rather than a closed circuit.

DISCUSSION

I view detournement as not only an artistic representation and a means through which to conduct qualitative research, but also as a method of anti-oppressive pedagogy. Reflecting all three of these renderings, Leavy (2009) expresses the "oppositional capabilities" (p. 216) of visual art and the capacity for art to facilitate critical dialogue. It was my hope that in implementing the detournement, I would create a space for students to consider gender socialization and the fluidity in distinctions between male and female.

The students' instances reported here illustrate the various points in their thinking on gender and how they were affected (or not) by the viewing of the film. While some such as John and Sarah believe that gender is necessary to function in society and they treat norms as axiomatic, others began to see the ways that the genders are constructed in everyday society. Still, as in Katelyn's case, gender was complicated by race and the two were realized as inextricably interconnected.

Thus, while my purpose in raising the issue of gender for conversation through detournement was accomplished, the strategy for anti-oppressive pedagogy was only partially achieved. Some students maintained a desire for a system of oppression, for the repetition of practices they found comfortable (Kumashiro, 2002). These discourses of comfort blame structures that students felt were beyond their control, such as the media, and thus upheld strict binaries in which being male or female was the only choice. Others, however, experienced upheavals in their thinking and confessed having previously accepted gendered practices as neutral and unproblematic. They were able to distinctly locate these spaces and began to critically uncover them. For these students, the anti-oppressive nature of detournement was robust.

I thus offer detournement as one method for anti-oppressive teaching. In the plethora of writing on social justice in teacher education, rarely has one best practice been touted which successfully and miraculously eradicates prejudice from students; rather, approaches are offered that have unlocked doors for student exploration and contemplation. Many of these tactics employed reflective journals and autobiographical writing as attempts to solicit deep and personal reactions from students. As illustrated in the student responses presented, detournement can also achieve these goals. Incorporating visual imagery is one technique for capturing attention, especially in our current society that is saturated with visual stimuli. Furthermore, employing and re-articulating shared cultural symbols that are taken for granted are ways to accomplish the arduous task of simultaneously facilitating personal reflection and raising critical consciousness. Although my detournement did not affect all of the students' thinking, it did raise the issue in a way that allowed

for discussion and consideration. Perhaps this is a first step. By "inviting" my own students to "crisis" though the use of detournement, I hope they begin to challenge the boundaries imposed by our social structure.

NOTE

[1] All italics in quotations are in the original source.

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TIM CONDER

6. IN GOD'S COUNTRY

Deploying Detournement to Expose the Enmeshment of Christianity within the Spectacle of Capitalism

INTRODUCTION

When economists, media personalities, and the proverbial person on the street talk about the economy, they often use language appropriate of proud parents discussing a beloved and fragile child. "The economy is growing" (How exciting, please send us the new school pictures!). "The economy is ailing" (How horrible, what do the pediatricians say?). "The economy is diversifying and expanding" (How remarkable, this kid now plays *two* varsity sports and has added several new AP classes to her class schedule!). This precious progeny is often seen as the ultimate source of hope (How exciting, when this kid matures and really takes off, we will all be blessed!). In turn, it is unthinkable for a parent to say, "We've got to find a better kid."[1] Consistent with this child analogy, it also appears to be unfathomable to consider a new economic system.

Critiquing the neighbor's kid is difficult and almost always is in bad taste. This is equally true for capitalism in our society. It has become socially and morally sacred. And it has become so expansive that many treat it like the true oxygen of our society: indispensable, ubiquitous, and life-giving. How does one see or critique that which has become so pervasive that it has become synonymous with reality or, at a minimum, with the best possibility for a generalized prosperity or the good life? In our present society, capitalism and the market economy have become *consuming* realities that suffocate imagination and militate against alternative visions. Grand personal and even eschatological hopes are placed on the market, promising to provide access to wealth, ameliorate poverty, and protect the cherished values of freedom, individuality, and personal expression. It is not a large stretch to say that we see the market as our salvation, the source not only of a materially good life, but also more deeply as the source of our motivation and meaning in life. These hopes endure and prevail, despite ample and expanding evidence that poverty is on the rise, that the gap between the wealthy and the poor is rapidly expanding, and that the quality of everyday life is eroding among those in almost every socio-economic strata, despite our historically expansive economy (McKibbon, 2007). Nevertheless, these hopes, though they are not shared by all and at times are passionately protested by some, are broadly stoked across all arenas of life—politics, economics, religion,

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 129–154.

media, and common idiom. How does one expose that which cannot be seen because of its pervasive proximity, like a wall too close to one's face or a challenge that takes on the precious sanctity (and hence immunity to critique) appropriate for a beloved child?

Guy Debord and his small community of colleagues who formed the Situationist International (SI) in the later 1950s referred to this economic condition as *the Spectacle.* Simply defined, the Spectacle is a world commodified to the extent that one cannot imagine another means of production or mode of economic life. In his famous 1967 text, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord (1995) explained:

> The spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life. It is not just that the relationship to commodities is now plain to see—commodities are now *all* that there is to see; the world we see is the world of the commodity. (thesis 42)

Additionally, for Debord (1995), "the Spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image" (thesis 34). Following this logic, the images and artistic expressions produced under a dominant capitalist regime are subsumed within the Spectacle. In this sense, the texts of our culture are *spectacular* and hence captive to a ubiquitous and seductively pacifying regime, a regime that some barely notice and others defend as the only liberative possibility, despite the accumulating evidence to the contrary.

Debord and his associates not only critiqued the magnitude of the Spectacle, they also crafted critical tactical methods for challenging the Spectacle's strategic totalizing effects. One of those methods, and one for which the SI is most known, is the practice of *detournement.* It is important to note that detournement is the conjunction of both theory and method (Trier, 2004; Trier, 2013). As a theory, detournement acknowledges the saturation of the society by the Spectacle and hence the *recuperation* or wholesale capture of both art and text within images created by and designed to serve the Spectacle. Such is the magnitude of this recuperation of art and text that fashioning a counter-narrative requires a radical and even violent interaction with these images. Consistent with this theorization, the methods of detournement are inherently intrusive dissections and reconstructions of the original image. So, put more simply, detournement is an act of plagiarism, a hijacking of meaning, from an original text into a new text with the political intent of demonstrating the pervasiveness of the Spectacle.

Debord (1959) confirmed this definition of the methods of detournement by describing it as "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble" (p. 67). He continued with the following elaboration:

> The fundamental laws of detournement are the loss of importance of each detourned autonomous element—which may go so far as to lose its original sense completely—and at the same time the organization of another meaningful ensemble that confers on each element its new scope and effect. (p. 67)

The artistic or image materials for detournement are nearly unlimited, given the theorization of the totalizing nature of the Spectacle. Debord and Wolman (1956) reiterated this point:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations …. [W]hen two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed …. The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (p. 15)

Current Comedy Channel TV viewers can attest to that final statement. Jon Stewart's immensely popular *The Daily Show* nightly uses all sorts of popular culture materials to construct the sharp juxtapositions of detournement in order to convey the all too common hypocrisies and deceits of contemporary political discourse (see Trier, 2008).

The Situationists also naturally took great interest in artistic representations in popular culture. Since the Spectacle had transformed art into a commodity, one of the most natural methods to expose the Spectacle's suffocation of society was to disrupt, redirect, deface, and hijack spectacularized art into new contexts and new humanistic meanings. Debord and the Situationists immediately saw the potential of cinema in detournement, stating that "it is obviously in the realm of the cinema that detournement can attain its greatest effectiveness and, for those concerned with this aspect, its greatest beauty" (Debord & Wolman, 1956, p. 19).

In this chapter, I use detournement like Debord and the Situationists did, as an exposition of and challenge to the Spectacle. In their theorization, this is the true and only use of detournement. But, I hope to take another logical step in the use of detournement. My hope is to also shed light on the partners that not only buttress the Spectacle's influence but also, either through distraction or acts of recuperation, enhance the Spectacle's invisibility. I believe my chapter will be of interest to ethnographers who write about the practices of persons and communities, educators and critical scholars of education who study the powerful reproductive effects of contemporary education (Is there any more effective ally to the Spectacle?), and, perhaps surprisingly, to religious leaders and scholars. One of the natural projects of cultural studies and post-structuralism, and rightly so, has been the deconstruction of religious presuppositions or superstitions, and the unmasking of the dangerous wake of Christian privilege in the unique history of our particular society. My project certainly continues on that path. But according to this logic, it is quite easy to discount religion to such a degree that one forgets the powerful alliances that religious assumptions and institutions can forge with economic and political systems (West, 1999).

My detournement appropriates and reworks an important segment from the film *I [Heart] Huckabees* (2004). My main goal in this chapter is to demonstrate the intimate

relationship that popular expressions of Christianity have in justifying and blessing the Spectacle of hegemonic capitalism in our society. *I [Heart] Huckabees* makes this point in a brief scene that stands as a corollary to its primary storyline. That which is truly detourned in my critical media piece is the often-unchallenged economic assumptions of American Christianity. Before describing this detournement, I want to highlight some theoretical undergirdings that accentuate the role that religion can play in bulwarking economic hegemonies. Central to this description will be the classic works of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and Louis Althusser (1918-1990). To their work, I will add the voice of contemporary theologian, Willie Jennings.

Religion and Power: Hegemony, Consent & Trasformismo: Antonio Gramsci

Gramsci is noted for his development of the idea of *hegemony*, the power that dominant groups exert over the rest of society. Gramsci (2000) defined hegemony and its primary means of dominance, consent, as

> the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (pp. 306–307)

When consent fails, dominant groups can also exercise hegemony through coercion. But dominant groups strive to influence, bind, and control most optimally through consent, the *gift* of the dominated to hegemonic groups. Hence, the most effective level of consciousness from the perspective of hegemonic groups in the establishment of consent and the avoidance of coercion occurs when hegemony appears to be invisible, or when what is visible appears to be in the interest of subordinate groups. Robert Cox (1993) explained this powerful combination of dominance by a hegemonic class and the complicity of dominated classes as follows:

> The movement toward hegemony, Gramsci says, is a "passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures," by which he means passing from the specific interests of a group or class to the building of institutions and elaboration of ideologies. If they reflect a hegemony, these institutions and ideologies will be universal in form, i.e., they will not appear as those of a particular class, and will give some satisfaction to the subordinate groups while not undermining the leadership or vital interests of the hegemonic class. (pp. 57–58)

These explications about consciousness and consent are essential to Gramsci's idea of *common sense,* which he contrasts with *good sense.* Gramsci uniquely used *common sense* to denote incoherent assumptions and beliefs that are contrary to good sense. The practice of common sense is unknowingly holding to a belief that actually intensifies one's own subordination. This common sense consent, whether

offered actively (in trade for some benefit) or passively (because one knows no other option) are elements of what Gramsci calls *contradictory consciousness,* which means accepting the hegemony of a social group against one's own class interests (Gross, 2011).

Highly aligned to this practice by hegemonic classes of gaining the consent from those they dominate is the practice of *trasformismo*, which is very similar to the Situationists' concept of recuperation. Gramsci (2000) defined trasformismo as the intentional co-optation of subaltern voices and ideas. As Cox (1993) elaborated, trasformismo is a "strategy of assimilating and domesticating potentially dangerous ideas by adjusting them to the policies of the dominant coalition" (p. 55). Religion can be a powerful tool of trasformismo by silencing oppositional voices, winning the consent of dominated groups without coercion, and protecting hegemonic interests.

Cornell West (1999) affirmed that "the centrality of morality and religion loom large in the works of Antonio Gramsci. For the first time, a major European Marxist took with utter seriousness the cultural life-worlds of the oppressed" (p. 374). Gramsci was highly aware of the power of cultural forces in shaping the state and defining the cultural worlds of specific classes of persons. He called attention to the attractiveness of religions, because of their own inherent materialism, as targets for manipulation by materialist class forces hoping to inculcate and bolster the contradictory consciousness necessary for hegemony. Gramsci (2000) stated:

> "Politically" the materialist conception is close to the people, to "common sense." It is closely linked to many beliefs and prejudices, to almost all popular superstitions (witchcraft, spirits, etc.). This can be seen in popular Catholicism, and, even more so, in Byzantine orthodoxy. Popular religion is crassly materialistic …. (p. 352)

In other words, religion is in many ways the perfect fodder for the co-optations of *trasformismo* to stoke the common sense and secure the consent of subordinated groups and classes.

A strong example of how Christianity was recently used as an ideological[2] vehicle of distraction from discourses on economic injustice is the Republican primary season during the 2012 Presidential campaign. Notably, Rick Santorum, a former Republican hopeful, offered a classic example of trasformismo by relabeling the egalitarian components of the incumbent Democratic platform as "class warfare"—a term many in his coalition would associate with "atheistic communism"—and then redirecting the dialogue by declaring these policies to be elements of a secular assault on the freedom of religious expression in the public square (see Wolff, 2005).[3]

West (1999) continued his affirmation of Gramsci's interests in religion and its potential to be co-opted to defend hegemonic classes or bolster a commodified, spectacular society by warning against the oversight of religion for those reasons and also hinted at the emancipatory possibilities of religious faith and ideology:

> Yet since the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Europe, most of the progressive energies among the intelligentsia have shunned religious channels. And in these days of global religious revivals, progressive forces are reaping the whirlwind. Those of us who remain in these religious channels see clearly just how myopic such an antireligious strategy is. The severing of ties to churches, synagogues, temples and mosques by the left intelligentsia is tantamount to political suicide; it turns the pessimism of many self-deprecating and self-pitying secular progressive intellectuals into a self-fulfilling prophecy. This point was never grasped by C. Wright Mills, though W.E.B DuBois understood it well. (p. 172)

West explained that though Gramsci may have been the first European Marxist to explore the importance of cultural worlds in the roots of oppression, it was Louis Althusser, writing almost a half-century later, who made culture and ideology one of the foundations of his critical theory.

Ideological State Apparatuses: Louis Althusser

In writing about the power of the state, Althusser (1971) distinguished *state power* from *state apparatuses*. State apparatuses support state power, but these *ideological state apparatuses* are quite different in substance. He specifically named "Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, [and] cultural ventures" (p. 144) as examples of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). Distinguishing the State from ISAs, Althusser noted, "whereas the - unified - (Repressive) State Apparatus belongs entirely to the *public* domain, much the larger part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (in their apparent dispersion) are part, on the contrary, of the *private* domain" (p. 144, emphasis original).[4] Althusser added, "The Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence,' whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses *function* '*by ideology*'" (p. 145).[5] He stated unequivocally the importance of ISAs: "To my knowledge, *no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*" (p. 146). He continued, "Ideological State Apparatuses may be not only the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle, and often of bitter forms of class struggle" (p. 147).

Richard Wolff (2005) explains that for Althusser, ISAs function by "interpellation," which means by "calling" or "hailing" individuals to think in a prescribed manner about their identities, their social relationships, and their relationships to social institutions, and then to act accordingly with these prescribed thoughts. Wolff adds that through interpellation, ISAs not only construct subjectivities/identities for interpellated individuals, but they also reinforce the idea that these "subjectivities/identities are internally self-generated" (p. 226). In my opinion, Althusser's theory is a strong complement to key aspects of Debord's and Gramsci's theories. The artistic elements that Debord argues must be plagiarized and detourned reveal the intense

cultural power of ISAs in the Spectacle. The ISAs comprehensively "recuperate" art (to again use the SI term for such co-optation) and so effectively interpellate artists such that their art becomes commodified *image*s that are purposefully used to promote, protect, and obscure an oppressive economic system (Debord, 1995, thesis 34). As Gramsci (2000) anticipated, ISAs such as popular religion become "crassly materialistic" (p. 352) and complicit in sustaining hegemonies.

As I noted earlier, West (1999) had critiqued the political left for ignoring the potential influence of religion for oppression or liberation. Wolff (2005) broadened this critique to the left's insensitivity to ISAs in general:

> A tragedy of anticapitalist politics in the United States for a long time is that they were rarely informed by Althusser's ISA argument. The Left in the United States did not mount any sustained attack on the interpellation of individuals as consuming subjects. Indeed, the Left mostly endorsed and repeated such interpellations. It presented itself and socialism generally as the better vehicle for all individuals to achieve higher levels of consumption. (p. 231)

Returning specifically to religious ISAs, Wolff continued by explaining that these ISAs "play their role less by promoting consumerism than by seeking to direct the frustration of the many workers whose wages do not allow [for] sufficiently rising consumption" (p. 232) to a spirituality that is disassociated from class struggles and exploitation. While I agree with Wolff's assertion of a religious distraction from class struggles—and I would even intensify it to a *demonization* of class struggles—I would challenge Wolff's argument about the diminished significance of religious ISA's advocacy of consumerism. On the contrary, I share Gramsci's view about the deeply or "crassly" consumerist nature of popular Christianity. There are more than enough examples of mega-churches sponsoring outrageous Oprah Winfrey-esque giveaways to attract visitors to worship events.[6] There is also a deeply entrenched religious/theological tradition in America of connecting divine blessing or even salvation with material prosperity (Bowler, 2013). But the roots of enmeshment between American Christianity and capitalism are historically deeper than mega-church growth strategies and prosperity theologies. Many have argued that a capitalist imagination has captivated the social imagination of Christianity.

Market Baptism: The Disease of Christian Social Imagination

Willie Jennings (2010; 2011) wrote about the deep historical connections between identity in Christian America and a racial world that formed in an unholy trinity of colonialism, market economies, and racial subjectivities constructed in modern slaveholding societies:

> As the [slaveholding] planters formed this New World into America they formed it into a Christian nation. From its beginning, the dual identity of

> American and Christian seemed not only appropriate, but also compelling. To be a part of America was to be part Christian and a part of the New Israel, and also to be *white*. To be Christian in America was to be white. (2013, seminar notes)

Jennings (2010) pressed this point further, describing a deeply rooted disease in the social imagination of Christianity that emanates from the core of its historical, theological self-understanding and ongoing pedagogies:

> Indeed, I argue here that Christianity in the Western world lives and moves within a diseased social imagination. I think most Christians sense that something about Christians' social imaginations is ill, but the analyses of this condition often don't get to the heart of the constellation of generative forces that have rendered people's social performances of the Christian life collectively anemic. Those shortsighted analyses suffer on the one side from unfamiliarity with the deep theological architecture that patterned early modern visions of peoples, places, and societies and therefore lack the sense of what was turned horribly wrong theologically. And on the other side, Christian theology now operates inside the diseased social imagination without the ability to discern how its intellectual and pedagogical performances reflect and fuel the problem, further crippling the communities its serves. (pp. 6–7)

The outcomes of a diseased social imagination that is being pedagogically reproduced within Christianity can hardly be underestimated. Jennings (2011) explained that baptism—the historical sacrament of initiation into the Christian faith—has been fundamentally damaged and co-opted by this impaired social imagination. The result is, in actuality, there are rival baptisms within Christianity: a baptism into faith that is inextricably connected to a parallel baptism, one that was constructed by the racial optics of color and phenotype in concert with the market logics of bodies as commodities, derived from a colonial and former slaveholding society. Using sharp theological language, Jennings (2010) lamented:

> Indeed we are caught between two competing baptisms, with two mirror baptismal rites, and two forms of baptismal consciousness. The way forward for the Church cannot be simply to invoke baptismal confession, commitment, and identity without realizing its demonic deployment in the formation of the New World. (pp. 285–286)

Jennings' racial theology has been built on the inseparable connections between the market expansion of a burgeoning modern capitalistic society, the salvific and conversionist aspirations of a culturally and politically dominant church at the onset of modernity, and advances in military and transportation technologies that supported the advance of both market and religious goals. In other words, merchant, missionary, and soldier have worked in unison not only to construct a racial world, but also to ensnare Christianity in its logics and optics.

In summary, Gramsci theorized a link between cultural and ideological worlds of religion with economic oppression, a link that West (1999) critiqued theorists for too easily discounting. Althusser's theoretical contribution regarding ISAs reinforced Gramsci's theorization and offered strong explanations of the functioning of this link. Jennings completed the argument with a critical description of the imagination and pedagogy of Christianity in market (and racial) captivity. This linear progression in many ways answers the inevitable question about the importance of attempting to detourn Christianity as an important component of a social justice pedagogy. Remembering Gramsci's interest in religion and Althusser's critical inclusion of churches in his ISA argument implores those outside the realms of faith to not overlook faith, and particularly Christianity, because of the unique role that Christianity has played in the formation of Western capitalism and in the deflection of practices to expose the injustices of market exploitation. Jennings' work reminds those with Christian convictions of the grave danger in and poisonous spiritual results of the church's market baptism. With all of these considerations in mind, I turn now to a detournement that I made based on an insightful segment from the film of *I [Heart] Huckabees*. Because readers may not be familiar with the film, I will provide a summary of its plot and then describe in detail the scene that became central to my detournement.. This is necessary for the discussion about my detournement to make sense.

I [Heart] Huckabees

I [Heart] Huckabees is a philosophical comedy that humorously portrays the dialectic between two popularized forms of existential philosophy, an optimistic form of universal interconnectedness and a nihilistic form of chaos and isolation. The plot revolves around the search for meaning by Albert Markovski, the founder and leader of an Open Spaces Coalition that combats the seemingly incessant land development occurring in his local community. Albert has seen his coalition infiltrated and his leadership undermined by the charismatic Brad Stand, a shallow and materialistic executive at Huckabees, which is an iconic "big box" retail chain. Huckabees, in a classic gesture of corporate "activism," is supporting a lavish event to promote its professed protection of an open space; in fact, the event is a distraction from a corporate land grab. The success of Huckabees' strategy of holding an expensive event with a celebrity headliner (Shania Twain) is that no one in the coalition seems to notice that the event violates their core principles. On the contrary, everyone in the coalition (except, of course, Albert) has bought into the event and into the belief that Huckabees is sincerely and solely interested in the public good of conserving open spaces (which is not the case). This is a splendid example of Gramsci's trasformismo. Albert's feeling of angst over these events, coupled with what he perceives to be the meaningful coincidences of three (likely) random encounters between himself and a Sudanese refugee named Stephen, drives Albert to seek the professional help of a husband/wife team of "existential" detectives—Bernard and Vivian Jaffe—to help

him find some personal meaning behind these coincidences, and also to resolve his accumulating anger about the degenerating state of the coalition he founded.

Bernard and Vivian Jaffe espouse a philosophy of universal connectivity of all life, including vital connections even with one's adversaries. Albert's attempts to live by this ultra-optimistic outlook suffers many setbacks, including the dismay of seeing Brad Stand also contract with these same detectives, which Albert sees as a cynical act that Brad engaged in to intrude on Albert's physical and psychological space. To help Albert along in his existential struggle, the Jaffe's partner him with Tommy Corn, a firefighter traumatized by the 9/11 disaster and disillusioned with America's obsessive dependence on oil as a source of energy. Both conscientious bike riders, Albert and Tommy seem like a perfect friendship. But Tommy continually questions and challenges the Jaffe's optimism, and he eventually ends up introducing Albert to Caterine Vauban, a former pupil of the Jaffe's, who mysteriously appeared on the scene and has been teaching Tommy her philosophy that the human experience is rooted in meaninglessness and shared misery. This dialectic of opposing existential philosophies of the Jaffes and Vauban energizes the film's comedic narrative of bizarre human encounters and its critique of a market economy, which is often presented as a given without any in-depth scrutiny of its impact on human lives and the environment.

The Scene: Dinner with Stephen and the Hooten Family

Embedded within the film is a powerful, critical, and truly brilliant scene about the linkage between Christianity and capitalism, represented in a carte blanche religious affirmation of commercial development. To this point, the critical message of the film is deeply aligned with the contradictory consciousness described by Gramsci. This scene connects the developing narrative of common sense consent with the argument Althusser made about the importance of cultural institutions, particularly religion in this case, in supporting this consent of unregulated capitalism. The scene is a dinner table encounter of Albert and Tommy with Stephen and his adoptive family, the Hooten's. Albert and Tommy, becoming more frustrated with the existential detectives, have taken matters into their own hands and have searched out Stephen at his home. Albert believes that a direct conversation with Stephen will resolve the nature of their seemingly coincidental but perhaps greatly meaningful encounters. Greeting them in the driveway, Stephen politely asks them to stay for dinner.

Present at the family dinner are Stephen, Mr. and Mrs. Hooten, and their teenage son and daughter, named Bret and Cricket. The segment begins with the daughter saying the Lord's Prayer in a devout liturgical cadence, which marks the family as practicing Christians. (The family members also bow their heads and hold hands during the prayer, and they incorporate Tommy and Albert into the act, too.) The conversation that follows accentuates the family members' beliefs and aligns them with an uncritical posture of Christianity wherein evangelical piety, American

nationalism, Western colonial paternalism, and confidence in the salvific qualities of market capitalism are deeply enmeshed, as if they are all part of a single devotional entity. Though the following exchanges between the Hooten family members and Albert and Tommy is lengthy, I think it is necessary to present because of its importance to my entire chapter and specifically to my detournement. This segment of the dinner party scene begins with Mrs. Hooten addressing Albert:

Mrs. Hooten	Albert, what do you do?
Albert	I'm the director of the Open Spaces Coalition. We fight suburban sprawl.
Cricket	[asks her father] What's suburban sprawl?
Mr. Hooten	Why don't you ask Steven. He could have used a little suburban sprawl in Sudan.
Stephen	Excuse me, dad?
Mr. Hooten	Industry, houses, jobs, restaurants, medicine.
Albert	You can preserve a lot of open spaces and have jobs for people with—
Mr. Hooten	I beg your pardon, Albert. I wasn't finished.
Albert	Sorry, sir.
Mr. Hooten	Clothes, videos, toys, cheeseburgers, cars, a functioning economy.
Albert	[In an assertive, argumentative tone] You can still have a functioning economy and preserve open spaces with a little planning.
Tommy	Yeah.
Mrs. Hooten	Socialism! A complete disaster.
Albert	Theodore Roosevelt was a socialist? And William Butler Yeats and Elizabeth Bishop, Henry David Thoreau, Robinson Jeffers, the National Geographic Society. They're all socialists?
Mr. Hooten	You're talking about socialism.
Albert	No, I'm not. I'm talking about not covering every square inch of populated America with houses and strip malls until you can't remember what happens when you stand in a meadow at dusk.
Bret	What happens in the meadow at dusk?
Albert	Everything.
Mrs. Hooten	Nothing!
Albert/Mrs. Hooten	[Simultaneously] Everything!/Nothing!
Albert/Mrs. Hooten	[Simultaneously] Everything!/Nothing!
Albert	It's beautiful.

Tommy	It's beautiful.
Mr. Hooten	I work for an electrical engineering firm, son, and we do a lot of commercial and residential contracts. And if development stops, so does my paycheck. Then Steven couldn't be here as our guest, could he? So your ideas hurt Steven.
Albert	[Defensively] I'm not hurting Steven. That's an outrageous accusation.
Mr. Hooten	[Angry and pointing a finger at Albert] Don't use that tone of voice in my house!
Albert	[Equally angry] Well I think you started that tone. And I think it's entirely possible for your engineering firm to have jobs for people, preserve open spaces, have contracts, do the— [suddenly halts, sighs heavily out of frustration, and looks down silently, causing the Hooten family to be puzzled]
Bret	[Laughingly] Whoa!
Cricket	What's he doing? Why's he closing his eyes?
Mrs. Hooten	[Whispering voice] Shhh, Cricket. I don't know. [The family members stare at Albert, smiling and amused at his "strangeness"]
Mr. Hooten	[In an even-tempered tone now] Do you have a job, Tom?
Tommy	I'm a firefighter.
Mrs. Hooten	[Mr. Hooten gives a "thumbs-up" sign] Oh, God bless you. A hero.
Tommy	[Very defensively] I'm not a hero! We'd all be heroes if we quit using petroleum though. [looks directly at Mr. Hooten]
Mr. Hooten	Excuse me?
Tommy	You say you're Christians living by Jesus's principles. But are you?
Bret	Yeah, of course we are.
Mrs. Hooten	What?
Cricket	Jesus is never mad at us if we live with him in our hearts.
Tommy	[To Cricket] I hate to break it to you, but he is. [Looks at Mr. Hooten] He most definitely is.
Mrs. Hooten	All right. That's, that's, that's enough. Steven, I don't know what this is about. Who or why they're here.
Stephen	Sorry, Mom. Sorry, Dad. I did not know.
Mr. Hooten	Stevo, I'm so disappointed.
Mrs. Hooten	It's all right. [pauses] Look. Look, he's sad. Look. He's sad.
Mr. Hooten	I'm sorry, Stevo. My bad. You didn't know.
Tommy	[To Mr. Hooten] You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Hooten I should be what?

Tommy You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Hooten And why is that? Why should I be ashamed of myself?

Tommy You're a hypocrite.

Mr. Hooten I'm—I'm a what?

Tommy You're misleading these children. 'Cause you're the destroyer, man.'

Mr. Hooten How am I the destroyer?

Tommy I saw that S.U.V. out there.

Mr. Hooten Oh, oh--my car's the destroyer? You wanna know how many miles per gallon I get?

Albert Steven, I really need to ask you a question. It's why I came here. Why are autographs so important to you?

Stephen It is a pastime with this family, which they have taught me. Which I can now carry on. [Bret picks up a video game and begins playing it]

Mrs. Hooten It's just for fun. It's for entertainment. [Bret's video game makes sounds] No games at the table, please.

Bret Yes. 260. [To Cricket] And I've reached the omega level.

Tommy [To Mr. Hooten in a low voice] You're a destroyer. Destroyer. Destroyer.

Mr. Hooten [Explosively angry and yelling] God gave us oil! He gave it to us! How can God's gift be bad?

Tommy Well I don't know. He gave you a brain, too, and you messed that up pretty damn good.

Mr. Hooten I want you sons of bitches out of my house now!

Tommy If Hitler were alive, he'd tell you not to think about oil.

Mrs. Hooten [Screaming] You're the Hitler! We took a Sudanese refugee into our home!

Tommy You did. But how did Sudan happen, ma'am? Could it possibly be related to dictatorships that we support for some stupid reason?

Mr. Hooten [Pointing a finger at Tommy and Yelling] You shut up! You get out.

Tommy You shut up. [He tosses a biscuit that hits Mr. Hooten in the chest, then he addresses Albert] Come on. Let's get out of here.

Albert [Tommy and Albert get up from their chairs] Later, Steve.

Tommy [To the Hooten Family] God bless you.

[Tommy and Albert leave the Hooten home, and stand for a moment on the front steps.]

Albert	Wow.
Tommy	What's going on in there?
Albert	Crazy.
Tommy	Unbelievable.
	[Thus ends the dinner scene segment.]

My critical reading of this scene is what Stuart Hall (1980) called a "preferred" reading; in other words, I share the critical perspective that the filmmaker worked carefully to "encode" and convey about the ideas and beliefs espoused by the Christian family. What begins with some overt hospitality and a nice conventional blessing quickly turns ugly when Mr. and Mrs. Hooten and their children repeatedly make observations, express opinions, and espouse views that are recognizable stereotypes of a certain type of American Christianity (evangelicals), which Albert and Tommy call into question and argue against. For example, one stereotype is that evangelical Christians are unthinking, uncritical, and anti-intellectual. This stereotype is developed through a series of questions that the Hooten children—son Bret and daughter Cricket—ask whenever they don't understand something. Here are some examples:

> To Albert's mentioning of the existential detectives, Cricket asks, "Why can't he use the church?" When Mrs. Wooten retorts that Albert might have different questions, Cricket incredulously wonders, "Like what?" (she can't fathom that any questions besides those answered by "the church" even exist).
>
> When Albert mentions his concerns regarding the "infinite forms of humanity" or the "habitual mind," Cricket recoils and pleads to her mother, "We don't have to ask *those* kinds of questions, do we, Mom?" to which the mother replies reassuringly, "No honey."
>
> After Albert names the mission of the Open Spaces Coalition as containing urban sprawl, Cricket asks, "What's suburban sprawl?" (the irony is that she and her family are living in the middle of it).
>
> When Albert describes the beauty of an undisturbed meadow at dusk, Bret asks, "What happens in a meadow at dusk?" which causes Mrs. Hooten to exclaim, "Nothing!"
>
> When Tommy wonders, given the Hooten family members' insensitivity to environmental concerns, whether they really are "Christians living by Jesus's principles," Cricket offers a powerfully succinct description of the Hooten family's faith by asserting to Albert, "Jesus is never mad at us if we live with him in our hearts." In reply, Tommy says to Cricket, "I hate to break it to you, but he is. He most definitely is."

This final question that Cricket asks serves as a crowning description of individualistic pietism. The implication of her question (and the many that preceded it) is that the essence of Christianity is a personal connection with or commitment to God, often experienced as a sense of peace or surety rooted *outside* of social, economic, or physical realities.[7] Threats to this "All I need is Jesus" theology typically come from the intellect, such as interpreting the Bible through historical or social lenses, and through asking the kinds of philosophical questions humorously framed by Albert, Tommy, and the rival existential detectives in this film. Against these threats, those consumed by individual pietism respond, "We don't really need to ask these kinds of questions" and "Jesus is never mad at us if we live with him in our hearts!"

Along with individualistic pietism, the conviction that Jesus is a "personal Savior" also frames and encourages a consumerist view of Christian faith. Like a personal banker, Jesus serves to meet one's emotional, material, and even social and spiritual transactions, by catering to the wants and demands of the individual believer. Whether as employees or as consumers, many have been long trained in the transactional practice that "The customer is always right!' Applied to theology, this is easily enacted as a consumerist and uncritical posture toward the divine: "I am always right regarding my needs presented to God!" This consumerist view plays out in the dinner segment. In my interpretation, Mr. Hooten's defiant defense of economic development and the free market strongly describes the enmeshment of Christian devotion and market capitalism such that devotion to one inherently means a conviction for the other. Tommy complements his witty rejoinder to Cricket that "Jesus would definitely be angry" with strong accusations to the Father as a "destroyer" and a hypocrite. In the sharp conversation at the table, the Father has paternalistically defended suburban sprawl and the economic system that in actuality preys on underdeveloped economies like Stephen's home: "He could have used a little . . .a functioning economy.". In his diatribe and in an exercise of bizarre logic, Mr. Hooten strongly makes my case of enmeshment by linking his commitment to the market to his faith-driven generosity: "If development stops, so does my paycheck. Then Steven couldn't be here as our guest, could he? So your ideas hurt Steven." The scene is a representation of the market baptism and diseased social imagination that Willie Jennings decried (see my earlier discussion).

This critical point on the link between Christianity and consumerism is humorously and cleverly salted throughout the scene with various links to the products of a technological, entertainment driven economy. Bret speaks very little because he is absorbed by an internet game. At one point, he gleefully proclaims the he has reached "the omega level," clearly the ultimate level of expertise (and absorption), which serves as a subtle jab questioning what is the real "alpha and omega," the beginning and end, of this family. Though Jesus declared himself to be the "the alpha and omega" (Revelation 22:13, *NRSV*), the ultimate source of piety for the Hooten family could be more accurately construed as a technology or an entertainment culture that is deeply aligned with markets and consumption. One of

Albert's coincidental encounters with Stephen was at a store that sold autographed glossies of Hollywood stars. In the scene, we learn that collecting autographs is (in Stephen's words) a "pastime with this family, which they have taught me." We are left wondering what the Hooten family members are really teaching Stephen, despite their protestations of generosity and faith.

The Detournement

Having described this scene, I will turn now to how I used it in my detournement. Because the Huckabees dinner segment was encoded or crafted by the filmmaker to be a critique of evangelical Christianity's anti-intellectualism, individualistic pietism, and uncritical association with market economies, my detournement takes the form of a production that hopefully adds "new scope and effect" (Debord, 1959, p. 67) to an already powerful message. The goal of my detournement is to highlight and magnify the content of this scene in a memorable and transgressive manner.

The key elements of my detournement include cuts from this dinner scene and a U2 rock anthem, "In God's Country," from *The Joshua Tree* album (1987). "In God's Country" is a lament about imperial America, which is described as a "siren" and a "desert rose," now in a "dress torn in ribbons and bows" due to the social injustices and insensitivities of its policies and practices as a global empire. The lyrics continue that "she is liberty and she comes to rescue me" but the world's citizens (and presumably her own citizens) are "burned by the fire of love." The echoing taunt of the refrain is that America, ironically identified by its Christian heritage as "God's Country," has seen its faith become a sham to capitalistic expansionism and the defense of market economies ("hope, faith, her vanity—the greatest gift is gold"). In the chorus, America is chastised repeatedly as a place of "sad eyes" and "crooked crosses" (a metaphor consistent with Jennings's accusation of a diseased social imagination within Christianity). In two pointed lines, the song begs "we need new dreams tonight" and laments that "everyday the dreamers die," which harkens the points of Debord, Gramsci, and many other theorists that the Spectacle has become so normative that our collective imaginations of alternative economic/social realities are near bankrupt. The following is an outline of my four and half minute detournement:

1. Short *Huckabees* Cut:
"Forgive us our Trespasses" (15 seconds)

I began with a short video cut from almost the very beginning of the *Huckabees* segment showing the family holding hands and praying a blessing together before beginning their meal. I wanted to immediately establish this as a Christian family. The very first audible line in the Lord's Prayer (led by the daughter) is the line "Forgive us our trespasses," which connects the faith of

this family with many trespasses in thought (or absence thereof) and action revealed in the larger scene. The text of the generally familiar Lord's Prayer (identifying the world as belonging to God as a space of reconciliation rather than a location to meet our personal needs) is in itself a detournement—ripping these biblical words from common and rote use to a critical context that restores the meaning of its radical words.

2. Long *Huckabees* Cut:
Dangerous Ideas (80 seconds)

The prayer leads immediately into a longer portion which serves as a summary of the whole scene in the original film. In this portion, I wanted to highlight the economic and environmental implications of the Hooten's understanding of Christianity. This segment includes the following conversations that I have previously described:

(Cricket On Philosophy)
"We don't have to ask those kinds of questions?"

(Mr. Hooten defends suburban sprawl)
"Stephen could have used a little suburban sprawl over in the Sudan."

(The Open Spaces Coalition)
The Hooten's:
"You're talking about socialism"
Bret:
"What happens in a meadow at dusk?"
Albert and Tommy:
"EVERYTHING!" (repeatedly)
Mr. and Mrs. Hooten:
"NOTHING!" (repeatedly)

(Mr. Hooten again defends economic development)
"If development stops, so does my paycheck...
So your ideas hurt Stephen!"

3. Music and Photo Collage (90 seconds)

The third portion of the detournement uses the U2 anthem "In God's Country" as the audio commentary to a series of still images that critically link Christianity to capitalism. This section of the detournement serves to offer a strong critique to the Christianity of the Hooten's in the previous section.

The Musical Text

(Opening Verse)

The musical text begins with the opening sequence in the song depicting dreamers in a "desert sky" (a desolate landscape) and ends with the lament: "We need new dreams tonight"

(Chorus: Repeated)

I then repeat the song's chorus which serves as the song's primary commentary of a nation (America) asleep in its imperialism and unaware of the contamination of its own Christian message:

"Sleep comes like a drum, in God's country"
"Sad eyes, crooked crosses, in God's country"

The repetition of these lines serves as an echoing, haunting lament and is the heart of my critique.

(Verse)

I include a short verse on America's imperialism, in the name of God
"She is liberty, she comes to rescue me"
"Hope, faith, her vanity"
"The greatest gift is gold"

(Chorus: Repeated as Closing)

[The Visual Text]

As the music plays, I show a series of still photographs connecting Jesus or Christianity to capitalism and nationalism. Interspersed in these images are text slides of the lyrics summarized above. I allow all of the images to remain on the screen for a steady 9 seconds. The following are a non-exhaustive sample of these images:

(An image of a man in a suit, casting two different shadows on each side: a cross and a dollar sign)

(An image of Jesus wearing a business suit with U.S. flag lapel pin)

(A seminar poster: "God, China, and Capitalism: Is Christianity in China the Key Ingredient for Economic Success?")

(Two juxtaposed images:

The Coke logo and Jesus with the text: "This is my blood"
The McDonald's logo and Jesus with the text: "This is my body")

(A scripted slogan: "Capitalism without Bankruptcy is like Christianity without Hell")

(An image of Jesus wearing a "heart" America T-shirt)

4. *Huckabees* Repetitions (50 seconds)

In this fourth portion of the detournement, I lift out the poignant questions and statements from the *I [Heart] Huckabees* dinner scene by showing these cuts from the larger scene in rapid succession. As a parallel to the repeated chorus from "In God's Country," I repeat them for emphasis. The statements are as follows:

Cricket:
"Jesus is never mad at us if we live with him in our hearts?
Tommy:
I hate to break it to you, but he is. He most definitely is."

Bret:
"What happens at a meadow at dusk?"
Albert /Mrs Hooten:
EVERYTHING/NOTHING!"

Cricket:
"Jesus is never mad at us—"
Tommy:
"—He most definitely is."

Cricket:
"We don't have to ask those kinds of questions?"
Cricket:
"Jesus is never mad at us—"
Tommy:
"—He most definitely is."

Tommy to Mr. Hooten
"He gave you a brain and you messed that up pretty damn good."

Mrs. Hooten:
"You're the Hitler! We took a Sudanese refugee into our home!"

5. The Closing Image

The closing image is a picture of a dark-skinned Jesus held on screen for 10 seconds without sound but accompanied by this print text:

"Obama is not a brown-skinned anti-war socialist
who gives away free healthcare...
You're thinking of Jesus"

Using the Detournement: A Very Public Pedagogy

The use of detournement inevitably involves risk. There are risks that audiences or viewing communities will not understand the visual assemblage, especially because people are inundated with spectacular media pieces rife with highly anticipated narrative developments that reinforce mythologies of markets, meritocracies, and individual freedoms. There is also the risk that viewers *will understand* the detournement and strongly reject its message or presenter. But I have found that this pedagogy is well worth the risks. In the closing sections of this chapter, I will present some of my experiences in using this particular detournement and how these experiences might inspire the use of detournement as part of critical pedagogical projects in radically different settings.

In the interest of reflexivity, it is important for me to explain that alongside my vocation as a Ph.D. student in education and cultural studies, I am a working pastor with three decades of experience in a variety of ecclesial and organizational settings. My profession and my history give me access to a series of congregational, religious, political, and theological settings, in addition to academic meetings and classes associated with the disciplines I study. Theological, congregational, and political settings are extremely delicate. People engage these cultural worlds often with prior convictions that they hope to find reinforced rather than challenged. In reality, I have found a strong similarity in this manner to educational contexts such as the education of preservice teachers, the ongoing training of experienced classroom teachers, or the academy that often facilitates this educational training. People enter these educational realms with strong passions, visions, and social perspectives. My observations here are simply an antecedent to suggesting that what I have learned in ecclesial/theological settings may translate well to educational settings.

The faith community that I lead is relatively small (75 to 100 persons), organic (we do not develop many programs and function primarily around proximal and intentional living), youthful (most of our community are in their 20s and 30s) and activist (we are committed to be engaged politically and socially in our community to work for greater social justice). We are located near two major universities in a mid-sized Southern community that has many longstanding social/racial issues as well as some intense cultural development (food, art, music, etc.) and more than a

fair dose of hipsterism. Many consider our community "one of the places to live" in North Carolina. We are regularly described as non-traditional for a church. For example, rather than preaching a sermon, I lead a weekly dialogue. Our meeting space is arranged circularly with chairs and sofas surrounding our musicians, and a single stool for the dialogue initiator to support this type of community conversation. So —no stages, raised platforms, or state of the art technology for us. We also have some social diversity. Most are politically liberal, but we have some who are avowed social conservatives and even some who are being trained in the elite local business schools in marketing and finance. For those who are familiar with the bifurcations of Christianity, our community members hail from both theologically conservative and theologically liberal backgrounds. In other words, our weekly dialogues are not framed in a consensual environment. For example, I recently offered an open-ended question about our community's perspective on "the gospel" (a recognized term denoting the message of Christianity). The first responder affirmed some traditional teachings of Christian orthodoxy. The next responder described the gospel as "a poison that has been used to support violence against others." The juxtaposition of those two comments is not that strange for us.

The Situationists Go to Church(!): An Example

Generally once a month, we replace music, which is the dominant art form used in most churches, with a different art platform—like focusing on a film or a form of visual art—that fosters different forms of experiential participation. We used my detournement as a focal point during one of these monthly gatherings. My experience has been that most people do not come to religious gatherings thinking about the planned content. So that the detournement wouldn't come out of left field, I took approximately ten minutes to describe the historical roots of detournement, including a synopsis of some of the material located in the opening section of this chapter. I was careful to avoid making this summary too academic. But I did summarize the historical roots of the SI (from Dadaism and the Lettrists) and the historical moment of the social revolutions of 1968. From this short history, I offered a definition of detournement as a theory and method by explaining Debord's idea of the Spectacle. I also used the easy analogy, given the media habits of our community, of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* as an example of detournement. In our context where many congregants are currently or recently students, learning about new disciplines or ideas and their connection to popular culture is generally very well received.

I struggled with the decision of whether to spend some of my time summarizing the plotline of *I [Heart] Huckabees.* A quick poll revealed that only five or six persons had seen the film. I decided that a plot summary might be too much preamble given that the scene I am using is a sidebar to the main narrative of the film. I felt like the point of the scene had some level of self-evidence. I had also prepared our community the previous week with a spoken announcement and a follow-up email encouraging preparatory viewing of the film and offering a short summary.

My decision to minimize the plot summary before showing the detournement was a mistake in retrospect. In future showings, I plan to increase this preparation by showing a short compilation video of scenes as a summary, as well as the entire dinner scene.

Each week, our gathering has a focal text, biblical or otherwise. Our norm before a community reading or viewing of a text is to offer some questions to frame and focus the hearing or seeing of the text. Before showing the detournement, I offered the following questions:

- What Christian norms (of thought or practice) are present in the detournement?
- How are those norms affirmed or critiqued?
- What do you perceive the messaging of the detournement to be, and what is your reaction to that perceived messaging?
- Does this detournement challenge your thoughts and actions?

We spent approximately 20 minutes discussing the presentation. I was pleased that many comments engaged the authorial (i.e., my) intent of the piece. An example of those comments included one young woman saying, "I am strongly reminded how a personal view of Christianity [implying a pietism that sees faith solely as an experience between an individual and God] has resulted in apathy to social systems and structures." Where the discussion struggled in parts was with participants who struggled to understand the plagiaristic and polemical nature of detournement even in our church setting where deconstructive dialogues and sarcastic speech are common fare. Despite my introduction, many were still working to mentally put together the pieces of film segments, still photographs, memes, and musical composition of the detournement as the discussion began. In evaluation, I quickly remembered how in my critical theory course we watched several detournements consecutively during seminars to develop sensitivity to this methodology. One of many lessons that I learned as a new "detournement" practitioner was that it is helpful to expose the community to other detournements in preparation.

Given this needed adjustment time, our next pedagogical decision on that evening turned out to be extremely effectual. Immediately following the discussion about my detournement, we sent the community to several preplanned detournement stations. In each station, our community members were given the opportunity to plagiarize or deface art to detourn an intended meaning to a more liberative message. Because we see deep connections of worship and theology with politics and economics as well as the enmeshment of various Christian theological constructs with the economic Spectacle, we were very comfortable to creatively widen our practices of detournement. So we continued by detourning stacks of photocopied pictures of Westboro Baptist Church protests. Westboro Baptist Church, which is more of an extended family group rather than a traditional church, is commonly know for its use of hate language (their official website URL is <godhatesfags.com>) and outrageous protests of popular events, like the Super Bowl, and somber events, such as military funerals, to offer fear-based theological social critiques and eschatological rants.

In the photographed protests, Westboro group members held picket signs such as "GOD HATES FAGS!" and "YOU'RE GOING TO HELL!" Our stations included an origami station, a collage station, and a "strike though" station. Members at each station detourned the flat hateful images by the Westboro group into simple textured statements of love and hope. For example, through "bold" formatting certain letters and adding certain words, the previous defamations became"GOD **HA**TE**S** FAGS! **YOUR BACK**" and "YOU'RE GOING TO **HAVE A** HELL**UVA GREAT TIME!"**

The evening was a tremendous hit. The room was filled lots of laughter and people circulating to demonstrate their work. In fact, we have decided to make our detournement night an annual event. Some obvious lessons stood out. The opportunity to participate in detournement not only expanded the scope and impact of my video piece, but it also greatly helped those who were unfamiliar with this type of critical art form to get enough experience to dialogue with my piece. In a future detournement event, we will include a film discussion station where the *I [Heart] Huckabees* detournement will be shown on a laptop for small group discussion. In addition, I will create a new project to either introduce or close the evening.

REFLECTIONS

As previously noted, the gap between this ecclesial context and the classroom are far less than expected. The SI relished detournement because of the highly public nature of this pedagogy. Classrooms and congregations share a natural affinity as extremely public spaces. Also, both are places of passion, vision, ideological diversity, and life story diversity. These common components certainly counsel caution as well as providing a rich fabric for discussion and reaction. Our experience of using my film in conjunction with other hands-on detournement opportunities appeared to be an excellent decision. In academic settings, a similar choice has been effective. For conferences, colleagues and I have shown multiple detournements and found this to create a cascading effect. As attendees begin to understand the form, their commentary, critique, and reactions deepen. In critical theory seminars that I have attended, we have often used media "mosh pits" where students bring (or post to an online course content site) all forms of media images related to the week's topic for weekly discussion by the class. This kind of repetition has been extremely helpful in the analysis of and creation of detournements.

CONCLUSION: A BENEDICTION FROM ŽIŽEK

In ecclesial settings, gatherings are typically closed by a benediction, which admittedly can often be stuffy, pompous, or flowery speeches that are tangentially related to the context of the gathering. But the term essentially means an expression that promotes goodness or "well being." The power of the Spectacle is that it robs us of equality, justice, solidarity, and this well being, often with clever disguises or narratives that describe the crime of spectacularization as really being in our best

interest. This spectacle in our society has often been deeply aligned with Christianity. The church's benediction, or word of blessing as an ISA, can often be a form of "just stay distracted," "focus on every world but this one," or "just get right with God." This testimony stands as a caution to the power of every other ISA in defense of the economic status quo and in resistance to true emancipatory change.

Philosopher and critical theorist Slavoj Žižek, in his address to the Occupy movement protesters on Wall Street, offered this lament on the Spectacle's totalizing effect of robbing our imagination of economic alternatives:

> In 2011, the Chinese government prohibited on TV, film, and in novels all stories that portray alternate realities or time travel. This is a good sign for China; it means people still dream about alternatives, so attacked and prohibited is dreaming. Here we don't think of prohibition because history has even oppressed our capacity to dream. Look at the movies that we see all the time. It's easy to imagine the end of the world — an asteroid destroying all of life, and so on — but we cannot imagine the end of capitalism. So what are we doing here?

In the same speech at Occupy, Žižek framed this benediction pointedly toward Christians:

> They are telling you we are not American here, but the conservative fundamentalists who claim they are "really" Americans have to be reminded of something: What is Christianity? It's the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit? It's an egalitarian community of believers who are linked by love for each other and who only have their own freedom and responsibility to do it. In this sense the Holy Spirit is here now, and down there on Wall Street there are millions who are worshiping blasphemous idols. So all we need is patience.[8]

To people of faith, I hope my chapter on my making and use of detournement functions as a call similar to the poignant lyric of "In God's Country": "We need new dreams tonight." Žižek said "all we need is patience." That call to patience could be equally sourced in an old school Marxist deterministic optimism for eventual success in the class struggle or a triumphant Christian eschatology regarding the world to come. The two have much in common. But to those who are overly passive and content to be ideological props to empire and oppression, I would reiterate again the urgent chorus from U2's "In God's Country": "Everyday the dreamers die."

NOTES

[1] I became sensitive to this tone of adoration addressed to the economy after listening to journalist and activist Bill McKibben discuss his book *Deep Economy* (2007). McKibben spoke of the common idioms of an "ailing" or "growing" economy as signs of a visceral, familial, and intimate bond that we often have for the market. As a result, I became truly sensitized to how commonly a child's name could easily be used to replace "economy" in media reports without damaging the integrity of the discourse.

[2] For a more detailed understanding of this complex term, ideology, see Terry Eagleton's excellent first chapter "What is Ideology?" in his book, *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991). He named a fifth definition of ideology in a snowballing account of the deceptions of ideology as that which "signifies ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation" (p. 30). Christianity's role in *trasformismo* (as described by Gramsci) or *recuperation* (a favored term with SI) is a classic example of this definition of ideology.

[3] Retrieved from: http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/02/rick-santorum-jfks-1960-speech-made-me-want-to-throw-up/

[4] In all the quotations in this paragraph, any italicization will have appeared in the original, so I won't be adding "emphasis original" hereafter.

[5] See again Eagleton's definition of ideology.

[6] See: http: //www.caller.com/news/ 2010/apr/04/churchs-giveaway-attracts-thousands/

[7] For a detailed history and powerful case study of Christianity's abdication of the physical and social realms to the state in exchange to be sovereign over individual souls, see William Cavanaugh's *Torture and Eucharist*, a fine history of the Roman Catholic theology of a "distinction of planes" (soul vs. world) applied to an initially passive and inert Church in Chile during the brutal military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (1973-1990). Pinochet's tactics of torture and terror were framed as acts of protection of a democratic market system against the threat of godless communism. Hence, Cavanaugh's book also offers a powerful history of Christianity's alliance with market economies and some of the disastrous possibilities of this confederation.

[8] Retrieved from: http://www.imposemagazine.com/bytes/slavoj-zizek-at-occupy-wall-street-transcript

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JAMES TRIER

7. CHALLENGING *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN* THROUGH DETOURNEMENT[1]

Waiting for Superman (2010) is a film directed by Davis Guggenheim, who won an Academy Award for the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). Billing itself on its DVD cover as a "groundbreaking feature film that provides an engaging and inspiring look at public education in the United States," *Waiting for Superman* received mostly glowing reviews in the mainstream media, won several film festival awards, and Guggenheim and the film's heroes have been celebrated guests on dozens of news channels and talk shows, along with receiving high praise from President Obama, Bill Clinton, and other powerful political luminaries. However, the film has also drawn some criticism from reviewers in the popular press, from teachers, and from academics in the field of Education. In this chapter, I describe a pedagogical project that involved preservice teachers in responding to *Waiting for Superman*, and then reacting to a video *detournement*—i.e., a countertext—that challenged the main arguments of the documentary. The detournement caused several students to reconsider the accuracy and believability of the film's main claims and arguments.

THE TWO MAIN NARRATIVES OF *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*

Waiting for Superman comprises two intertwining narratives. One concerns five kids who have their hearts and minds set on attending charter schools, where they believe they will receive superior educations than from their neighborhood schools. Of the five kids, four are children of color whose low-income families live in urban neighborhoods: kindergartener Bianca lives with her mother in Harlem; first-grader Francisco lives with his mother in the Bronx; fifth-grader Anthony lives with his grandmother in Washington, D.C.; and fifth-grader Daisy lives with her mother and father in East Los Angeles. The only white student is eighth-grader Emily, who lives with her parents in Silicon Valley. Emily's family is upper-middle class, and she is headed for a well-funded high school. Nevertheless, her parents believe (as does Emily) that she will receive a better education at a nearby charter school. All the children and their parents express desires and dreams about the future, and this whole narrative builds towards the finale, which features the local public lotteries that will determine the winners of the cherished charter school spots. The odds of winning, however, are slim. The clear message is that unless the children win the lottery, their lives will likely end up being ones of personal struggle and financial hardship.

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 155–169.

The other main narrative features the film's heroes and villains. The heroes are powerful charter school advocates who dominate the film's screen time, extolling the virtues, successes, and superiority of charter schools over public schools. The star is Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone, which provides an array of social services and educational opportunities (free medical care, preschooling, parenting courses, counseling, and more) to thousands of children and their parents in a ninety-seven block area in New York City. Another hero is Michelle Rhee, who was the chancellor of Washington, D.C.'s public schools when *Waiting for Superman* was being filmed. In her three-year tenure, Rhee became a polarizing yet popular figure, appearing on a *TIME Magazine* cover and being celebrated for her reform efforts in a feature story (Ripley, 2010). Other heroes include Bill Gates of Microsoft fortune and fame; David Levin and Michael Feinberg, the founders of the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools; and former Milwaukee superintendent Howard Fuller, a proponent of school vouchers.

The unmistakable villains are bad tenured teachers and their menacing, corrupt unions, which are singularly responsible for (what the film argues is) a broken public school system on a national scale—a system riddled with thousands of "drop out factories" that mar the educational landscape. Unions are also responsible for blocking genuine educational reform by militating against the charter school movement championed by the film's director and heroes. The chief villain is Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers union. During her relatively small amount of screen time, Guggenheim misrepresents Weingarten as an old-school union boss rousing the lockstep troops at a huge teachers' union rally, bullying and silencing poor Michelle Rhee at a community meeting, and expressing some noxious pro-union sentiments in brief interview snippets. Viewers who stretch the film's specious anti-union message far enough can conclude that teachers' unions are collectively responsible for the deep sadness and hopelessness that all the children "losers" will experience when they don't win the educational lotteries. Cruel unions.

REVIEWS AND CRITIQUES OF *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*

Waiting for Superman drew much adulation in the mainstream media when it came out. Scott Bowles (2010) called it a "masterful picture," and he observed (ridiculously) that Guggenheim "mostly steers clear of politics in favor of the children's stories." Betsy Sharkey (2010) thought it was "a withering examination of the country's public school system." John Anderson (2010) saw it as an "exhilarating, heartbreaking, and righteous" documentary and "an epic assessment of the rise and fall of the U.S. school" system. Another cheerleader of the film was Thomas Friedman (2010), who (absurdly) titled his review "Steal This Movie, Too."[2] Friedman believes the film proves "what works" to cure the "miserable failures" that are the U.S.'s ailing public schools: "It is the whatever-it-takes-tenacity of the Geoffrey Canadas; it is the no-excuses-seriousness of the KIPP school (Knowledge is Power Program) founders; it

is the lead-follow-or-get-out-of-the-way ferocity of the Washington and New York City school chancellors, Michelle Rhee and Joel Klein." Along with these laudatory reviews and others like them, mainstream television news channels and talk shows unequivocally celebrated the film, its director, and its heroes. Canada, Guggenheim, Gates, and Rhee have appeared on *Oprah*, *The Tavis Smiley Show*, *Charlie Rose*, *The Colbert Report*, Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC. YouTube also houses dozens of videos featuring the heroes in a positive light.

The film also drew some critical responses. Dana Goldstein (2010) pointed out some important facts that Guggenheim left out, such as how the teachers at the Green Dot schools in Los Angeles, which the film celebrates, "are unionized and like it that way," and how "in the Finnish education system, much cited in the film as the best in the world, the teachers are—gasp!—unionized and granted tenure, and families benefit from a cradle-to-grave welfare system that includes universal daycare, preschool and healthcare, all of which are proven to help children achieve better results at school." Kirsten Krauth (2011) characterized the film as reducing "a highly complex and emotive series of issues into black-and-white statistics and generalizations that just can't do the topic justice" (p. 117). She also criticized Guggenheim for proposing the "bizarre idea that blames 'failing neighborhoods on failing schools'" (p. 120). Along with these and other critical reviews (see also Denby, 2010 and O'Hehir, 2010), there have also been other in-depth critiques of the film (which I refer to in the next section).

MY OPPOSITIONAL READING OF *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*

My initial reaction to *Waiting for Superman* was that I had an "oppositional reading" of it.[3] Of course, my negative reaction has already surfaced in my summary of the "villains" strand of the "heroes and villains" narrative above, through some adjectives I have used in the movie review paragraph, and even this chapter's title. I will also reveal more of my oppositional reading later when I discuss my detournement. What I want to do now is mention some useful resources that provided important information and compelling counter-arguments that informed my critique about the film's questionable claims, assertions, and arguments.

One excellent critique is the cleverly-titled film *The Inconvenient Truth about Waiting for Superman*, which is available on the website Grassroots Education Movement. The website describes *The Inconvenient Truth about Waiting for Superman* as highlighting "the real-life experiences of public school parents, students and educators to show how" the so-called educational reforms that are valorized in *Waiting for Superman* "are actually hurting public education. The film discusses the kinds of real reform—inside schools and in our society as a whole—that we urgently need to genuinely transform education in this country." One enlightening part exposes how Geoffrey Canada kicked out two classes of students from his Promise Academy 1 in 2004 because the students' test scores were too low, which is a fact conveniently left out of Guggenheim's film.

Another excellent critique is Diane Ravitch's (2010) article "The Myth of Charter Schools." What most struck me is Ravitch's explanation of Guggenheim's ignorance of some of the research he presented to make the case about failing schools. She wrote:

> Perhaps the greatest distortion in this film is its misrepresentation of data about student academic performance. The film claims that 70 percent of eighth-grade students cannot read at grade level. This is flatly wrong. Guggenheim here relies on numbers drawn from the federally sponsored National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). I served as a member of the governing board for the national tests for seven years, and I know how misleading Guggenheim's figures are. NAEP doesn't measure performance in terms of grade-level achievement. The highest level of performance, "advanced," is equivalent to an A+, representing the highest possible academic performance. The next level, "proficient," is equivalent to an A or a very strong B. The next level is "basic," which probably translates into a C grade. The film assumes that any student below proficient is "below grade level." But it would be far more fitting to worry about students who are "below basic," who are 25 percent of the national sample, not 70 percent.

By revealing Guggenheim's error, Ravitch not only counters a main bit of "evidence" but she also casts doubt on the veracity of other "facts" that Guggenheim marshals to make his case.

An academic article that raises important critical questions and articulates several trenchant criticisms is by Swalwell and Apple (2011). Among their insights are that the "dominant visual codes" and the amount of screen time devoted to the heroes of the film "establish the ways in which we are supposed to interpret the film"; that the film's "'absent presences'—what is *not* there—are significant"; that "there is a disturbing lack of attention to the racial subtext throughout the film" (p. 371); that Guggenheim's "own race and class (he is white and from the upper class, a graduate of Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. and Brown University) are deeply embedded in the film but ignored"; and that the film's "crude theory of learning, what Paolo Freire called 'banking education' (Freire, 1971), is outdated at best" (p. 372). Swalwell and Apple build a good case to support their main argument: "As a conversation starter, it starts one of the most limited conversations one might have" (p. 379). They conclude by observing how crucial it is to organize and engage in "*critical* discussions" (p. 380) with anyone who has a stake in public education.

These and other sources (Karp, 2010; Miner, 2010 and Olorunda, 2011), coupled with repeated viewings and analyses of the film, deepened my oppositional reading of *Waiting for Superman*, and as it happened, late in the fall of 2011, a doctoral student named Justine (a pseudonym), who was an instructor of a course in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, invited me to participate in a project designed to challenge the film's problematic claims and obfuscations.

THE CONTEXT, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT

The project took place over a two-week period as part of a three-credit graduate course called "Teacher Leadership for a Diverse Society," which was one of four fall-semester courses offered within the ten-month MAT program. The sixty students enrolled were preparing for careers as high school teachers of English, social studies, music, English Language Learners (ELL), and foreign languages (French, Spanish, German). Along with taking courses, students were also observing one day each week in the classrooms where they would student teach full-time during the spring semester.

The course description on the syllabus stated: "This course examines the needs and opportunities for teacher leadership in schools, especially in and for a diverse society. The significance of diversity in the globalizing world and in our nation and state is examined, as are leadership approaches." The primary course texts were Linda Darling-Hammond's (2010) *The Flat World of Education*, Patricia Collins' (2010) *Another Kind of Education*, and Ann Lieberman and Linda Friedrich's (2010) *How Teachers Become Leaders: Learning from Practice and Research*. A recurring course assignment called for students to write "reactions" to the required weekly texts (print or video), and to post their reactions to Blackboard (the course's virtual learning environment).

The project that I became part of involved having students view *Waiting for Superman* and express their reactions to the film. The basic assumption of the project was that most students would agree with at least some, or maybe most, of the film's basic claims and arguments. The project's purpose was to challenge the students' agreements with the film's most deceptive and specious claims and arguments.

In the first phase of the project students viewed *Waiting for Superman* outside of class and then posted their reactions on Blackboard. Justine's concise prompt was: "Write an articulation of your thinking on one or more of the film's messages." Justine also asked students to avoid searching for articles or film reviews about the documentary so that students would not be influenced by what they had read or heard from others. After they posted, the students were also expected to read all the posts prior to the next seminar.

The next phase began during the subsequent seminar, when I made a brief guest appearance shortly before the seminar break. I described my eight-minute detournement video, explaining that I had made it to challenge some of the problematic arguments and claims of *Waiting for Superman*. I defined the term "detournement" as "the act of subverting the intended meaning of, or a 'counter-text' that accomplishes that act of subversion." I also pointed out that the term would appear at the beginning of the video as part of the simple formula "Let 'Superman' = 'Detournement.'" Then, I showed the detournement. Afterward, Justine instructed the students to re-view my detournement on YouTube, and to post again to Blackboard in response to this prompt: "Before you post your reaction to the detournement, reread your initial posts about *Waiting for Superman*. Then, post your reaction to the detournement,

and refer to what you wrote the first time around. Did the detournement change your mind about anything, or not?"

So, those are the activities of the project.

To set up my discussion of the form, content, and purpose of my detournement, I will first provide an explanation of the group that the theory and practice is most associated with, along with some definitions of the term.

THE "CRITICAL ART" OF DETOURNEMENT

"Detournement" is a theory/method associated with the Situationist International. Ken Knabb (2006) describes the Situationists in the *Situationist International Anthology* in this way: "In 1957 a few European avant-garde groups came together to form the Situationist International [SI]. Over the next decade the SI developed an increasingly incisive and coherent critique of modern society and of its bureaucratic pseudo-opposition, and its new methods of agitation were influential in leading up to the May 1968 revolt in France. Since then—although the SI itself was dissolved in 1972—situationist theses and tactics have been taken up by radical currents in dozens of countries all over the world" (p. ix). The central figure of the Situationists was Guy Debord, most famous for his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle*. Though it is well beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt a full (or even a partial) explanation of Debord's theory of "the Spectacle" (see Jappe, 1999 and Plant, 1992), Griel Marcus (1989) might be suggestive here:

> "The spectacle," Debord said, was "*capital* accumulated until it becomes an image." A never-ending accumulation of spectacles—advertisements, entertainments, traffic, skyscrapers, political campaigns, department stores, sports events, newscasts, art tours, foreign wars, space launchings—made a modern world, a world in which all communication flowed in one direction, from the powerful to the powerless. One could not respond or talk back, or intervene, but one did not want to. In the spectacle, passivity was simultaneously the means and the end of a great hidden project, a project of social control. On the terms of its particular form of hegemony the spectacle naturally produced not actors but spectators: modern men and women, citizens of the most advanced societies on earth, who were thrilled to watch whatever it was they were given to watch. (p. 99)

The main method that the situationists developed to critique and challenge the alienating, separating, pacifying, spectator-inducing, socially controlling forces of the Spectacle was the "critical art" (Debord, 1963, p. 151) of detournement. Elisabeth Sussman's (1989) discussion of detournement provides an initial, broad definition:

> *Detournement* ("diversion") was a key means of restructuring culture and experience. *Detournement* proposes a violent excision of elements—painting, architecture, literature, film, urban sites, sounds, gestures, words, signs—from

> their original contexts, and a consequent restabilization and recontextualization through rupture and realignment. (p. 8)

Debord and Wolman (1956) explained that detournement entailed "the reuse of preexisting artistic [and mass-produced] elements in a new ensemble" for the purpose of critique, which was the ultimate purpose of art in situationist theory:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations. When two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed.… The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (p.15)

Many detournements—the products of the act of detournement, or detourning—made by the situationists derived from relatively insignificant sources. For example, in the issues of the SI's journal *Internationale Situationniste*, comic strips with rewritten speech bubbles appeared often (see also Vienet, 1992). Other detournements were more sophisticated, such as Asger Jorn's "modification" paintings (Gilman, 1997 and Kurczynski, 2008) and Debord's six films (Levin, 1989 and Knabb, 2003).

THE FORM AND STRUCTURE OF THE DETOURNEMENT OF *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*

The detournement lasts just over eight minutes and is composed of about forty video clips and "frames" (screen shots). Most of the clips come from *Waiting for Superman*; *The Inconvenient Truth about Waiting for Superman*; an NBC news interview that Katie Couric did with Davis Guggenheim; and several television news programs. I found all the clips on YouTube (see Trier, 2007a, 2007b) for the pedagogical potential of YouTube), which I downloaded and then imported into iMovie to make the detournement. I juxtaposed these clips and frames to form eight distinct yet related "segments" that vary in duration, with some as brief as fifteen seconds, and others lasting a minute or two. Each segment begins with a frame of print text (red print against a black background) that sets up and simultaneously encapsulates the content of the segment. The end of each segment is a scene from *Waiting for Superman* showing Superman punching a bad guy, which signifies that I think I made my critical point and also that the segment is done.

AN IMPORTANT CAVEAT

In preparing to write the following sections, I did the following with the detournement: I transcribed the audio, described the visual elements, provided contextual information, explained the intended critical purposes of the segments, quoted selected passages from students' responses, and included my analyses of students' responses. This preparatory work produced a 5000-word draft, which is

obviously too long to incorporate here. So I will discuss in detail the four segments of the detournement that drew the most responses from students. I intend these discussions to capture the spirit, form, and content of the whole detournement.

SUBVERTING *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*'S STRUCTURING PRINCIPLE

One important segment of the detournement is the first one, which begins with the set up statement "Let 'Superman' = 'Detournement.'" The key term in the title *Waiting for Superman* is, of course, "Superman," and the film's encoding of the figure of Superman is designed to seduce viewers into seeing the film's heroes (Canada, Rhee, Gates, and Guggenheim) as possessing "enough power to save" the education system from villainous teachers' unions. In this segment, I wanted to subvert the film's central figure and trope, so I negated the film's preferred meaning of "Superman" by redefining it as meaning "critique" through the formula "Let 'Superman' = 'Detournement.'" I then followed this frame with the scene showing Superman punching a bad guy, and I repeated the punching scene three times to drive home the point. What makes this first segment so important is that it attempts to rupture the film's structuring principle.

Some students commented on this opening segment's bid to re-encode "Superman" with a new meaning. They wrote that the "organizing principle—'Superman' as detournement, beating up 'bad ideas'—was simple, but very effective"; "the very first premise of 'Let 'Superman' = 'Detournement' set such a sound foundation that everything fell into place with ease, with 'Superman' quickly and effectively knocking down Guggenheim's arguments"; "the message is that Superman's punch smacks the viewer with the voice that has been marginalized"; "the purpose of a detournement is to punch holes in an argument and create something for the audience to think about"; and "Superman's powerful punch represents detournements themselves."

CREATING THE ILLUSION OF STUDENT IMPROVEMENT THROUGH THE "KIPP STAR" TREATMENT

Another important segment of the detournement concerns the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools, which are valorized in *Waiting for Superman*. Guggenheim uses KIPP to argue that charter schools have shown "what works" educationally with "poor students," and he even compares the accomplishments of KIPP schools to the breaking of the sound barrier by Chuck Yeager (replete with hokey sound-barrier-breaking flying jet images). At one point, Guggenheim narrates that students at KIPP "do better than everyone, closing the achievement gap, and shattering the myth that [poor] kids can't learn." As he says this, a red line on a graph showing standardized test scores for KIPP Los Angeles Prep rapidly ascends, morphing into a flying jet (presumably flown by Yeager).

In this segment of my detournement, I wanted to challenge Guggenheim's glorification of KIPP. The segment begins with the set up frame, "KIPP As

Exemplary Charter Schools." Next comes a brief scene from *Waiting for Superman* featuring KIPP Co-founder David Levin congratulating a group of KIPP students in 1998: "KIPP Academy has been named the highest performing middle school in the entire Bronx. Congratulations, KIPP STARS." Next appears this framing question: "How Do the KIPP Schools Do It?"

This is followed by a scene from *Inconvenient Truth* in which the narrator explains: "Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes [CREDO] conducted the most comprehensive study on charter schools to date. What some of the most prominent charter schools have learned to create is *the illusion* of student improvement." On screen is a chart titled "KIPP STAR" that shows a red line for the number of students and a blue line for the proficiency rates of students on standardized tests.

The narrator continues, explaining what the chart reveals: "As the number of students in red at KIPP STAR goes down" from approximately 80 students in the fifth grade to approximately 60 by the eighth grade, "the proficiency rates in blue go up" from 65% in the fifth grade to 90% in the eighth grade. "When looking only at the blue line for proficiency, it would appear that KIPP STAR has led its students to make dramatic improvements. However, if you look closely at the red enrollment line, you can see that the school lost over twenty students between fifth and eighth grade." The clear implication is that KIPP Schools have achieved higher proficiency ratings by shedding students who presumably weren't testing well. *Superman punches a bad guy.*

Several students commented on this segment, and they all expressed great surprise about the statistical "illusion" that enabled KIPP to claim "achievement" successes. This student's reaction is representative of the others:

> The detournement successfully grabbed my attention and clearly presented the hidden issues of the film, Waiting for Superman. I was shocked by the numerous deceptions about the glittering successes of the charter schools. When I first watched the film, I was inspired, motivated, and impressed by the remarkable achievement of charter schools. I did not have any doubt but sincerely believed the information presented in the film. I thought we finally found the antidote to stop the endless rat race of problematic public education. (Or I should say I thought we found the Superman who can save us.) When I saw the Stanford comprehensive study of charter schools, my hope or my Superman died in me. The detournement undoubtedly broadened my knowledge about WFS and charter schools.

REVEALING HYPOCRISY

The most important segment of the detournement juxtaposes a series of scenes to challenge Geoffrey Canada's image as a benevolent educator who has never compromised his principles—an image he tirelessly works to bolster in all of his public speaking engagements and television appearances.

This segment begins with the frame, "How Does Geoffrey Canada Do It?" ("it" refers to the "success" of his schools, like Promise Academy 1). Next is a scene from *Inconvenient Truth* featuring Canada speaking to a group, telling them: "I am paid to educate a child, whether that mother is deeply engaged or that mother is not. And when we accept this as professionals, then you have to educate everybody." Suddenly, the narrator of *Inconvenient Truth* lowers the boom on Canada: "Geoffrey Canada is the founder and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone, which manages hedge fund and billionaire-backed charter schools with over $200 million in assets. In 2007 Mr. Canada was exposed for kicking out an entire class of children from his charter school, Promise Academy 1, because their test scores were too low. To this day, Mr. Canada's two charter schools consistently show higher rates of attrition despite his claims of success." Accompanying this statement is a chart showing enrollments of Promise Academy 1 for 2004, and two glaring "0" enrollments appear for the eighth and ninth grades, which were kicked out.

Having revealed the heartless dismissal of two groups of students because their grades didn't measure up (they apparently ended up back in the real public schools, one presumes), we next see Canada in *Waiting for Superman* saying: "Kids look at the world, and they make certain predictions, based on the evidence they are receiving from their peers, from their parents, and from their teachers. From their perspective, the world is a heartless, cold-blooded place because they realize they've been given the short end of the stick, and they don't know why." What follows is a replay of the earlier scene from *Inconvenient Truth* in which the narrator states: "In 2007 Mr. Canada was exposed for kicking out an entire class of children from his charter school, Promise Academy 1, because their test scores were too low." Next comes Canada again from *Waiting for Superman*: "Between the fifth grade and the seventh grade, you see a huge number of minority kids go from being 'B' students to 'D' students." At this point, this apt question appears on screen: "What can be done with such students?" And again, Canada's solution to the problem is repeated once more from *Inconvenient Truth*: "In 2007 Mr. Canada was exposed for kicking out an entire class of children from his charter school, Promise Academy 1, because their test scores were too low." *Superman punches a bad guy.*

Of all the segments comprising the detournement, this drew the most student reactions. All who responded stated that they had been unaware of the statistics that the CREDO study provided about the KIPP STAR schools, and of the story about Canada expelling groups of students for low test scores. In light of this new information, students expressed a variety of emotional reactions. Some described what happened at KIPP STAR and Promise Academy 1 as "unbelievable," "quite tragic," "disturbing," "disheartening," "extremely frustrating and saddening," and "a very moving and emotional portrait of injustice." They also stated that the new information "takes away the credibility of these charter schools that *Waiting for Superman* promotes"; it "calls into question Canada's trustworthiness and reliability"; it "reveals the hypocrisy of Canada"; it suggests that "Canada is one of the contributing architects to our failing education system"; and it shows that

"G. Canada's decision to kick out a large number of students because of their low academic performance" was "the act of a hypocrite."

"IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FIRE A TEACHER" (IN THE FAIRY TALE *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN*)

One more segment that most students responded to was about firing teachers. A main motif of *Waiting for Superman* is that if "bad teachers" (recall the scenes about the "Dance of the Lemons" and the "Rubber Rooms" of New York City) could be fired, the problems of public education would all but disappear. In this segment, I used a clip from Katie Couric's interview with Davis Guggenheim where he states with great certainty, "It's almost impossible to fire a teacher." I repeated this clip within a series of television news clips about hundreds of teachers being summarily fired *en masse*. In the clips, reporters state, "It's happening across the country. Now, 175 Kansas City, Missouri school teachers are out of work, too, just a couple of weeks before school gets started there"; "Hundreds of D. C. teachers won't be in the classroom this fall. D. C. public schools are firing them after several new staff evaluations"; "The exact number is 74—teachers, guidance counselors, even the principal—fired. They will continue to work at Central Falls High School in Rhode Island through the school year, but when it ends, they're out." I also included a brief scene from *Inconvenient Truth* in which a principal brags to a group of parents, "If a teacher is doing a bad job, I know how to get rid of that teacher, as a good principal," which elicits roaring approval from the parents.

Several students who had been persuaded by *Waiting for Superman* that it was almost impossible to fire bad teachers responded to this segment. One explained that *Waiting for Superman* caused him to become "incensed by the number of horrible teachers and their meddlesome teachers' unions." The detournement, however, caused the student to realize "that there is more to this issue" of teacher firings, "which the film intentionally left out in order to create a nice, neat message, which is that the educational system is failing and 'we' know why"—bad teachers. Another student wrote that *Waiting for Superman* had persuaded her "that a major problem with schools today is that teachers with tenure are difficult to fire," but the detournement caused her to reconsider: "I took to heart the point made in the detournement of a principal saying he can easily fire teachers if he wishes, which is a large part of his responsibility as a principal." She added, "I have realized that 'tenure' is not as large a problem as the producers of *WFS* wanted us to believe. It seems as though the producers once again were trying to place the blame of failing schools on teachers." Another student stated that the detournement segment was "difficult to argue with" because it "quickly nullifies the film's claim" about the difficulty of firing teachers; and one more student thought the detournement "shows just how skewed the reality of this film is."

A MODEST PROJECT, AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

When I reflect on the pedagogical project I have described in this chapter, one main conclusion I arrive at is that the project clearly caused several students to reconsider their initial agreements with some of the more problematic claims, assertions, and arguments made by *Waiting for Superman*. For that reason alone, I think the project was worth doing. The other main conclusion is that this relatively brief, admittedly modest project provided me with a foundational experience that I can build on in a future project involving *Waiting for Superman*. And this is how I want to bring this chapter to a close—by contemplating what a future project would involve that this one did not.

One important aspect of a future project is that it would involve more activities or phases. For example, in footnote three, I summarized Hall's (1980) theory of preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings, and in a redesigned project, I would have students read Hall's chapter and make sure to familiarize them with this important approach to "reading" before they viewed the film. Doing so would allow me to have students write their initial reactions to *Waiting for Superman* in response to a prompt such as this: "No matter what your overall reading of the film is, you must develop at least one preferred, one negotiated, and one oppositional reading of some aspect of the film." Such an exercise would involve students in considering multiple perspectives as they develop an understanding of the film, which I think is a valuable approach to take toward any text. Also, introducing Hall's theory of reading would make seminar discussions more productive (or characterized by fewer polemical stances) because the theory negates any "I'm right and you're wrong" element from creeping in. At best, disagreements of interpretation would have to be articulated in more nuanced ways, as in: "It seems I have a preferred reading, at this time, to something you have an oppositional reading to, but we'll have to provisionally agree to disagree."

Another activity would take place after students had viewed and responded to the film but before I would show my detournement. In that activity, I would provide an in-depth introduction to the Situationist International (SI), Guy Debord, the Spectacle, and detournement. A plethora of Internet resources exists, from websites such as Bureau of Public Secrets (maintained by SI expert Ken Knabb—see references), One Thousand Little Hammers (which has PDFs of entire books about the SI, as well as books by Debord and other members of the SI), UbuWeb (its "Film and Video" section includes most of Debord's films and a documentary about the SI), and more. I would also assign students some of my articles about Debord and detournement (Trier, 2007c, 2007d), and I would recommend that students view *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* because I think the show presents superb detournements in every episode (see Trier, 2008a, 2008b). Finally, I would characterize detournement as a form of critical media literacy—though one that is firmly rooted in a Marxist, class-based orientation (which distinguishes it from other theories of critical media literacy)—and again, I would recommend some articles on critical media literacy

(Trier, 2005, 2006). One more idea for a future project might be a post-project assignment that invites students to compare the various educational narratives constructed in *Waiting for Superman* with other films about education, including both documentaries and dramatic films.

These are just some of the ideas I have had for a future version of the project I have described in this chapter, and I hope that it can serve as a foundational text for future projects that you, Reader, might consider and design.

NOTES

[1] This chapter originally appeared as an article in the *Journal of Popular Film & Television* (2013, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 68–77). Reprinted here with permission from Taylor & Francis.

[2] The title is absurd because in alluding to Abbie Hoffman's 1970 book *Steal This Book*, Friedman implies that Guggenheim's film is a subversive anti-corporation, anti-government text (which Hoffman's book was) and that Guggenheim is a "radical" on the fringes who is "sticking it to the man," but Guggenheim is quite cozy with "the Man."

[3] The term "oppositional reading" comes from the theory of "reading" (i.e., interpretation) that informs all of my engagements with popular culture texts (and all texts, really). It is a theory articulated by Stuart Hall (1980) in a chapter titled "Encoding/decoding." Hall explains that producers of texts attempt to encode texts with meanings that they want the "readers" or "viewers" to decode/read/interpret (synonyms for the same process) in the way the producers intended, but no matter how hard the producers work to ensure that certain meanings are activated, there is no way to guarantee that this will happen. Hall also conceptualizes three different ways of reading a text. Readers can enact preferred, negotiated, or oppositional readings. An admittedly simple explanation of these terms goes like this: A preferred reading is one that a text (print, film, visual image, etc.) continually works to achieve through its presences and absences (or silences). Viewers who share the main assumptions, arguments, claims, and understandings encoded into a text are likely to see and understand the text as the text sees and understands itself. A negotiated reading is one that recognizes the contradictory elements of a text, that does not accept all the elements that a preferred reading does, that reads some elements in an oppositional way, but that does not read the text in a totally oppositional way. An oppositional reading wholly rejects much or all that a preferred reading accepts, resulting in a reading that can indeed "read the signs" but that refuses to follow their direction, instead "reading" in an oppositional way.

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JOSEPH D. HOOPER

8. DETOURNING THE CHARTERIZATION OF NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH PRESERVICE TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

As the charter school movement continues to be a far-reaching and highly debated reform initiative in the United States, education departments are tasked with helping preservice teachers discern issues surrounding charter schools. But separating fact from fiction and parsing through rhetoric and alarmism is not an easy undertaking. The charter movement on parade in the media is a spectacle filled with a preponderance of proponents across a variety of sectors—from top federal government officials and education experts to entertainers, business magnates, and entrepreneurs with no experience in education—and all of them in one way or another criticize traditional public schools while extolling what they claim to be the virtues of charters: expanding education choices for students and parents, fostering partnerships between schools and communities, giving teachers the autonomy to be more creative and innovative in the classroom, and providing students with a structured environment in which to learn. All of this, they argue, works in tandem to correct what traditional schools could not: the yawning achievement gap.

Unfortunately, those who challenge and dissent from the proponents' claims are rarely invited to participate in public discourse about charter schools. They have to either push their way into the charter parade as it processes through their states and local communities or express disquiet and opposition through other avenues. There is no opponent to charter-based education more experienced at doing that than Diane Ravitch. She continues to make her way into popular media outlets through a variety of ways: appearing on programs like Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with John Stewart* and PBS's *Bill Moyers Journal*, composing a variety of books, and disseminating information through her personal blog, which has received over 11 million views since she composed her first post in April 2014. Apart from the books and public appearances, her blog serves as a valuable repository of thought concerning all things education, from dispelling myths about charters to providing synopses and links to the latest stories and reports that do not always make it into the national press. She points to a plethora of independent researchers and agencies that show charter schools do not yield greater success in student outcomes than traditional public schools, fail to serve students with the highest needs, create racial stratification of students, enforce strict disciplinary codes of conduct, disrupt

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 171–194.

local communities, cream skim the brightest students and reduce resources from traditional schools, and even allow for new ways to defraud and abuse American education. What is revealing about Ravitch's use of digital media is that she is not the only education expert identifying serious issues surrounding charter schools and providing counterstatements to proponents' claims. These issues are also articulated through a variety of formats outside the specter of major media outlets, and educators need to locate and creatively use them to the best pedagogical advantage if helping preservice teachers discern issues surrounding charter schools is a priority.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a pedagogical project that I designed to engage preservice teachers in critical discussion about charter schools. It involved having them answer and discuss general questions about charter schools and then respond to a detournement that functioned as a countertext of juxtaposed digital elements and critical significations that countered proponents' claims about charter schools. To carry out this project with specificity I focused attention on the post-Katrina New Orleans school system because it is the largest charter school market in the United States (currently 9 out of 10 students attend charters), and many national policymakers are watching the New Orleans charter experiment closely and looking for lessons as more urban districts across the nation are witnessing substantial growth in the share of parents and students electing to attend charter schools (Khadaroo, 2014). Before I outline and discuss the larger details of the project, I will first highlight a few key issues surrounding charter schools in New Orleans, explain the usage of the word "detournement," and describe the design and structure of the detournement video (i.e., digital countertext).

UN-FRAMING THE ARGUMENT: KATRINA AND THE NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2010 Education Secretary Arne Duncan appeared on TV One's *Washington Watch With Roland Martin* and spoke his infamous words about Hurricane Katrina, the devastating storm that caused the deaths of nearly two thousand people and the homelessness of hundreds of thousands. He said: "The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina" (Gibbs). In no time Secretary Duncan's immortal words became public knowledge and coursed through national media outlets. The State Department of Education promptly confirmed the quote to the "American Broadcasting Company" (ABC), but requested that major print and broadcast media outlets release a full transcript of the exchange between Martin and Secretary Duncan (Bruce, 2010). Below is a reprint of that exchange with Martin on Katrina:

Martin: I was talking to you on James Carville and Mary Matalin. They're of course very involved in what's happening in New Orleans. What's amazing in New Orleans, is that everything was devastated because of Hurricane Katrina. But because everything was wiped out, in essence, you are building from ground zero to change the dynamic of education in that city.

> *Duncan*: That's a fascinating one. I've spent a lot of time in New Orleans and this is a tough thing to say but I'm going to be really honest. The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina. That education system was a disaster. And it took Hurricane Katrina to wake up the community to say that we have to do better. And the progress that it made in four years since the hurricane is unbelievable. They have a chance to create a phenomenal school district. Long way to go, but that city was not serious about its education. Those children were being desperately underserved prior. And the amount of progress and the amount of reform we're seeing in a short amount of time has been absolutely amazing. I have so much respect for the adults, the teachers, [and] the principals that are working hard. I've spent a lot of time talking to students at John Mac [John McDonough] high school there. Many who had missed school for six months, eight months, 13 months after the Hurricane and still came back to get an education. Children in our country, they want to learn. They're resilient. They're tough. We have to meet them halfway. We have to give them opportunity. And New Orleans is doing a phenomenal job of getting that system to an entirely different level.[1]

In a concerted effort with the Department of Education, Secretary Duncan sent an email to *The Washington Post* in an attempt to elaborate on his comments and allay the potential for public uproar. He said, "[As] I heard repeatedly during my visits to New Orleans, for whatever reason, it took the devastating tragedy of the hurricane to wake up the community to demand more and expect better for their children" (Bruce, 2010).

Some school administrators, education experts and commentators also joined in by publically agreeing with Secretary Duncan and even going so far to re-articulate what he really intended to say. For example in *The Washington Post*, Paul Vallas, the former superintendent of the Recovery School District in Louisiana, which manages many of New Orleans' public schools, said that he had "no problem" with Duncan's comments about how Katrina provided a beneficial effect on education in New Orleans, and he commented that many locals have "said that time and time again" (as cited in Anderson, 2010). Moreover, Vallas did not believe Secretary Duncan was "saying hurricanes are good things…[instead] what he's saying is that people were not serious about school reform [before the hurricane struck], and if they were serious, there wasn't any progress being made. And post-Katrina, there is." He went on to substantiate his claims of positive reform by touting a rise of academic improvement and progress in New Orleans since Katrina, maintaining that average test scores rose two years in a row since the rebuilding began.

Other Duncan supporters included Paul Pastorek, the Louisiana superintendent of education. In the same *Washington Post* article Pastorek acknowledged that

Secretary Duncan indeed made a "strong statement." However he did not take issue with Duncan's comments about the public school system in New Orleans because they were "actually quite accurate. It was a pathetic system before the storm" (as cited in Anderson, 2010).

On the same day the article was published, T.J. Holmes, former anchor at the Cable News Network (CNN), moderated an interview between Roland Martin and education expert Steve Perry. Both panelists seemed to largely agree with Secretary Duncan's assessment. Martin went so far as to re-articulate Secretary Duncan's remarks, saying:

> And this is what he was talking about. That was a decrepit school system. And so what you do is you turn tragedy into triumph. That is, you have an opportunity to totally rebuild a school system that was not educating children, where you had a high illiteracy rate in that city, a high poverty rate. And so it was totally destroyed, so therefore they can build from ground zero. (as cited in Gibbs, 2010)

Martin, like Duncan and Vallas, cited that "many folks in New Orleans" as well as educators (he was openly referencing *The Washington Post* article) were saying the same thing as Secretary Duncan, "that this was the opportunity, that because it was destroyed this is how you can now fix it and repair it and build it up" (as cited in Gibbs, 2010). Unfortunately, like Duncan and Vallas, Martin never identified the persons from whom he heard that Katrina woke up the community and motivated them to demand more and expect more for the children of New Orleans; they simply remained anonymous sources. In what seemed like rhetorical boilerplate, Martin applauded the progress that New Orleans public schools have made in the post-Katrina era and cited academic progress and improved test scores.

The support for Secretary Duncan did not end there. Holmes asked Perry if he agreed that Katrina was "the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans." Perry quickly agreed, and tried to condemn the tenuous leadership and track record of Paul Vallas when he was CEO of Chicago Public Schools. That moment of honest critique quickly fleeted the more he spoke, almost to the point of "sounding frankly unhinged as he actually lamented that there could not be more Katrinas for the sake of U.S. education: 'I'm saying that we can't have a Katrina in all of the 50 states" (as cited in Gibbs, 2010; Rendell, 2010).

Nowhere in *The Washington Post* report or in the CNN panel discussion did anyone challenge Duncan's "gross incomprehension, indifference, and insensitivity" to the amount of human suffering caused by the hurricane (NYC Educator, 2013). Everyone failed to mention that over 1800 people lost their lives and that hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless. Instead they focused on what they perceived as sparse concern for educational reform before the storm, and they unsympathetically referred to the devastating tragedy as an opportunity to rebuild the school system of New Orleans and haughtily asserted the academic progress apparently aggregated since Katrina.

Also missing from the reports was an explanation as to why the school district was in crisis before the storm, a crisis that was not necessarily promulgated by a lack of public concern or effort but by a lack of public funding. In fact the public school system of New Orleans was one of the least funded school districts in the country, and the lack of resources in the community was strikingly indicative of the financial crisis experienced by many of the neighborhood schools. As the data show, but the education experts and commentators failed to recognize, before the storm the United States had a medium income of $41,994, whereas Louisiana's medium income was $32, 566. In the lower ninth ward which was 99% African American (where the devastation was more pronounced), the medium income was an appalling $19,918. The data seem more staggering when comparing the percentages of the population living in poverty. In the United States it was 12%, whereas in Louisiana it was 20%. In New Orleans and the Lower Ninth Ward, however, the percent of the population living in poverty was 28% and 36%, respectively (Wagner and Edwards, 2006).

The economic circumstances plaguing New Orleans before the hurricane seemed insignificant to Duncan and his defenders. They simply failed to question the apparent lack of financial income in New Orleans and the Lower Ninth Ward, a financial dearth that generated economic degradation for the people of New Orleans and for the school system as well. Of course, there were other questions that seemed undeserving and were left outstanding. For example, given the increase in academic progress and test scores since the storm, how did pre-Katrina schools compare to post-Katrina schools—what contributed to the new schools becoming more successful than their predecessors? What was the education blueprint for reforming and rebuilding a better school system for the children of New Orleans, and how much of the community was actually involved in the plan?

The answer to the first question can be addressed in two parts. One, test scores have increased in part because "post-Katrina rebuilding has largely driven out the poor and black populations who had been so poorly served by the city's schools pre-Katrina" (Rendell, 2010). Second, rebuilding efforts were spearheaded by a coterie of politicians and wealthy funders who sought to turn New Orleans public schools into charter schools: a data-driven, business-infused approach to education (Gabor, 2013). For example, groups like the Soros Foundation, Oprah Winfrey's Angel Foundation, and the Walton Foundation came in and swept away the remaining traditional public schools that were once located in New Orleans' lowest-performing districts and then replaced them with charter schools. Essentially the funders pumped millions of dollars into charter schools, thereby creating a playing field on which traditional public schools could not compete. Simply put: the winning schools were those with the most resources, the charters that quantifiably showed the most promise; whereas, the losers were the ones without resources, the traditional public schools that simply could not compete against their more highly funded local counterparts.

Quite naturally the charter school movement became the Superman-like reform that New Orleans had been waiting for. Charters were viewed as the answer to the underperforming and administratively languid traditional schools that were

unexplainably ignored by the community of New Orleans before the storm. They epitomized the kind of education reform for which Secretary Duncan and his army of supporters hoped. Perhaps no other school received more recognition than what is considered the flagship school in the charter movement: Sci Academy. It was recognized as the *Übermensch* of charter schools: the goal that each charter set for itself—the model for the "new data-driven, business-infused approach to education" (Gabor, 2010).[2] In fact, Sci Academy achieved so much notoriety during the first years of operation that it became one of two schools that received a million dollars from Oprah Winfrey Angel Network (the other being the John Mac school that Duncan mentioned in his interview with Martin). What is often overlooked, however, is Sci Academy, like many other charters, employ a high number of young, inexperienced white teachers who are not from Louisiana and most of them serve for Teach for America. Filling charters with that type of workforce not only prevented the schools from having a diverse faculty, it also decimated teacher unions and occluded many local educators from procuring teaching opportunities.

Apropos of the second question, the one about the amount of input the local community has been able to provide, critics like author and social activist Naomi Klein, journalist and grassroots organizer Jordan Flaherty, and civil rights activist lawyer Tracie Washington have argued in one form or another that the local community has not been given the opportunity to participate fully in the rebuilding process. Clearly that is contrary to Secretary Duncan's comments (see the extended transcript above) and to President Obama's 2009 Town Hall meeting at the University of New Orleans a few months before Duncan articulated his infamous remarks. In two different segments of the speech President Obama addressed reform, progress and communal opportunity taking shape in New Orleans, saying,

> *Segment One*: On the education front, I just visited Martin Luther King Charter School, the first school to reopen in the Ninth Ward and an inspiration for this city…And because a lot of your public schools opened themselves up to new ideas and innovative reforms, we're actually seeing an improvement in overall achievement that is making the city a model for reform nationwide. That is good news, thanks to the hard work being done right here in New Orleans.
>
> *Segment Two*: Well, look, there's a reason why I went to visit Martin Luther King Charter School, because as I said before, a good-news story about New Orleans–let's face it, the schools weren't working for the children of New Orleans before the storm, and what has happened is, is that this community has actually used the crisis as an opportunity to start rebuilding, and try to experiment with new ways of learning.

According to Klein (2007) the New Orleans' school system had been auctioned off "with military speed and precision" similar to "orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disasters as exciting market opportunities, 'disaster capitalism'" (p. 6). What is left is a

duplicitous facade of education reform and community-driven efforts. Political leadership has turned over public education to private funders and entrepreneurs who trust their autocratic enforcers and the market more than they trust the public, more than they trust the New Orleans community. Flaherty (2012) echoes Klein's sentiments but focused instead on the racial component of community involvement. He reports many residents, particularly in the African American community, have felt disenfranchised in the rebuilding of New Orleans. Many claim the community has been forced to view the rebuilding from a distance but experience the "experiment" up-close as an incursion of young white college graduates who have come "to start nonprofits and run our schools and redesign our neighborhoods as disaster profiteers, not saviors."

Treating the city of New Orleans as a laboratory for experimenting with school reform has caused many in the African American community to be suspicious. Washington says, "When I hear the word experiment, I think of Tuskegee," referencing the racist nontherapeutic and clinical study that experimented on Black bodies without their consent in Alabama in 1932 (as cited in Flaherty, 2012). She continues, "Tuskegee was an experiment. We have reason to be suspicious of experiments" (as cited in Flaherty, 2010, p. 82).Washington (2012) posits the New Orleans experiment was similar to the Tuskegee experiment, claiming the African American community has reason to be suspicious of experiments because there is a "history of racist experimentation performed on Black bodies without their consent" (as cited in Flaherty). Similar to Washington's comparison between the New Orleans and the Tuskegee experiments, Julian Vasquez Heilig (2014), former dean of a New Orleans Charter School and now Associate Professor of Education at the University of Texas, presents what appears to be more of the same but in new guises. He claims many charters have created new forms of hegemony, which he defined as monitoring, sanctioning, and controlling civilized people. Heilig offers the following narrative about the time he headed up a charter school in New Orleans:

> It took me some time to realize that I had been enforcing rules and policies that stymied creativity, culture and student voice. Though some of my main duties involved ensuring the safety and security of all students and adults at the school, investigating student behavioral incidents and establishing a calm and positive school culture, I felt as if I was doing the opposite.

He goes on to explain the routine demands of enforcing conformity, punishing African American children for wearing their hair natural and sending children to detention for trivial offenses, and he lamented the following:

> Everything at the school was done in a militaristic/prison fashion. Students had to walk in lines everywhere they went, including to class and the cafeteria. The behavioral norms and expectations called for all students to stand in unison with their hands to their sides, facing forward, silent until given further instruction. The seemingly tightly coupled structure proved to be inefficient as students

> and teachers constantly bucked the system in search of breathing room. The systems and procedures seemingly did not care about the Black children and families they served. They were suffocating and meant to socialize students to think and act a certain way. In the beginning, we were teaching "structure," but it evolved to resemble post-colonialism.

Even though these sources reveal some of the issues associated with the New Orleans' charter school movement, many of them were either overlooked or disregarded by proponents and popular media outlets. For example, the percent of the population living in poverty in New Orleans and the Lower Ninth Ward before the storm negatively affected the amount of available resources and learning opportunities for the city's schoolchildren (Wagner and Edwards, 2006). That information seemed insignificant to top political leaders like Education Secretary Duncan and President Obama, who wagged their fingers at the community of New Orleans for not helping the children before the storm yet emphasized the opportunity to atone for previous shortcomings by reforming and experimenting with new ways of "doing school." But the unique double helix opportunity to reform and experiment did not emanate from the bottom up. Instead a top down enterprise guided by a group of neoliberal politicians and corporate disaster capitalists took charge of the recovery efforts and used the community as their test subjects, which ultimately led to the de-professionalization and de-unionization of local teachers, the disciplinization of children, and the colonization of neighborhood schools. Of course I would be remiss if I did not mention the misrepresentative reports about the sustainability of measurable gains in academic success that could serve as national models. According to Ravitch (2014), "[T]he great majority of charter schools in New Orleans today are rated either D or F by the state of Louisiana (which favors them)."

Highlighting these sources reveals the extremely high stakes for preservice teachers because in time preservice teachers will need jobs and charter schools are expanding and hiring based on the manufactured success of charter schools in places like New Orleans. Therefore educators must help preservice teachers critically discern what they read and hear before considering any information about charter schools to be factual. Just as Ravitch (2014) calls for readers to be wise, to think critically, and to read carefully about the stories and reports that praise the virtues of charters while demeaning traditional public schools, educators must call on preservice teachers to do the same. However, I would like to add one more component to Ravitch's simple yet rational to-do list for interpreting and forming inferences about the New Orleans charter experiment in particular and the national charter movement in general: to detourn.

Detournement: A Brief Explanation

To "detourn" is the verb form of detournement, a method developed by the European avant-garde group known as the Situationist International. For the Situationists detournement was a critical practice intended to challenge the alienating, separating,

pacifying, spectator inducing, and socially controlling forces of the spectacle (Trier, 2013). In many respects, detournement functioned as critical instrumentality as well as political activity aimed at undermining the spectacle and all of the texts and images and the social and economic structures that enable it. To understand the methodological and pedagogical value of "detournement," I will briefly unpack the term. Before I proceed, however, I must first provide an explanation of the very thing detournement seeks to subvert: the spectacle.

The spectacle is a richly complex term that, according to proclaimed leader of the Situationists Guy Debord, "unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena" (1967, thesis 10). Since Debord promulgated his theory of the spectacle in his famous and appropriately titled book *The Society of the Spectacle,* contemporary critical theorists across a variety of academic disciplines have continued to build onto the concept. As result, the band of instructors seeking to introduce the spectacle to their students must be aware of the various designations of the term, while at the same time they must select passages that present the term in a clear and pointed way. According to Trier (2007) one such passage that works particularly well is the one used by the critical theorist Griel Marcus. In his book *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History*, Marcus (1989) offers the following:

> The spectacle," Debord said, was "capital accumulated until it becomes an image." A never-ending accumulation of spectacles—advertisements, entertainments, traffic, skyscrapers, political campaigns, department stores, sports events, newscasts, art tours, foreign wars, space launchings—made a modern world, a world in which all communication flowed in one direction, from the powerful to the powerless. One could not respond or talk back, or intervene, but one did not want to. In the spectacle, passivity was simultaneously the means and the end of a great hidden project, a project of social control. (p. 99)

Trier (2007) maintains the second sentence of Marcus's passage points out what most people already know about modern life: that we live in a media-saturated world. However, the remaining portion of the passage captures what Trier says is "essential to the concept of the spectacle: that 'passivity' and 'social control' are the de-politicizing aims of spectacular society and that most people willingly, even desirously, accept passive roles (without realizing it)" (p. 278).

The theory of the spectacle seems to suggest that the experience of authentic human agency has been supplanted by representation and that there is little room for escape. But for the Situationists, society was not without critical armament; it could detourn. The critical practice of detournement entailed "the reuse of preexisting artistic [and mass-produced] elements in a new ensemble" for the purpose of critiquing and subverting the intended meaning (Debord, 1959, p. 67; Trier, 2013, p. 72). In other words, detournement subverts and changes the meaning of existing forms and practices by appropriating the cultural products of the spectacle. Debord and Wolman (1956) explained this aspect of detournement in more detail:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations. The discoveries of modern poetry regarding the analogical structure of images demonstrate that when two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed. Restricting oneself to a personal arrangement of words is mere convention. The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the juxtaposition of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. *Anything can be used.* (p. 15; my emphasis)

Too often those who claim to practice detournement or use it for pedagogical purposes focus only on the key aspects (i.e., remixing intended forms and practices) presented in the passage above. Unfortunately, that is a mistake because the passage does not fully encapsulate the essence of detournement as presented in the remaining pages of Debord and Wolman's treatment. That is, detournement is a tactic that seeks to be "a real means of proletarian artistic education" and "a powerful cultural weapon in the service of a real class struggle" (Debord and Wolman, p. 18). It is intended to guide the revolutionary proletariat and to struggle against advanced capitalism and other far-reaching oppressive entities. Thus, my purpose is to maintain the essence of detournement as closely as Debord and Wolman intended: to provide a digital countertext that uses and juxtaposes any elements and critical significations with the aim of subverting the intended meaning behind the charterization of New Orleans' public schools in the post-Katrina era and aiding in the support of marginalized communities who struggle against the proponents who enforce experimental school reform without their counsel or consent.

The Design and Structure of the Detournement

My detournement is the primary digital text within the overall project mainly because it subverted meanings by emphasizing and juxtaposing different details about charters, which in turn engaged preservice teachers in identifying issues surrounding proponents' claims about New Orleans' charters in particular and national charters in general. To advance the pedagogical intent of the detournement I focused on the previously noted excerpts from Arne Duncan's interview with Roland Martin and from President Obama's Town Hall meeting at the University of New Orleans. I did not detourn the entire excerpts, choosing instead to rely heavily on certain parts because my goal was to provide a pointed countertext within the parameters of the detournement and of the chapter. Below is a general overview of the design of the detournement followed by examples of its sequences.

The detournement is exactly seven minutes and fourteen seconds long and it consists of approximately fifty different video clips, photos, and print-text screens with a black background and white Seravek font. I located all of the video footage on YouTube (such as news coverage, interviews, and independent documentaries about New Orleans before, during and after Hurricane Katrina) and all the photos

(specifically the ones showing devastation to schools and school-related equipment) using Google images. In addition, I included two different styles of music to stream in the background. Using standard, royalty free sound clips from the Apple library, I applied a slightly overtly dramatic style of music for the first five minutes and ten seconds and then a more upbeat and "fun" style for the remainder of the detournement. The moment one musical style fades out and the other fades in marks a transitional moment in the detournement. However, the transition is not highlighted by different music compositions alone, but also by the title of the detournement: *As Fate Would Have It*. Selecting that title in advance and including it somewhere in the middle of detournement was central to my original storyboard. I must admit the title was partly influenced by Ravitich's (2014) rejoinder to Duncan's comments about Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans school district. She maintains the school district of New Orleans needed a natural disaster "to demolish public education and eliminate teachers' unions so they can be replaced by privately managed charter schools" (April 5). With that in mind my use of the word "fate" took on a double meaning: 1) Hurricane Katrina provided the New Orleans' school district with a fortuitous twist of fate, and 2) the re-development and reform of the school district is out of the community's control, now mainly determined by a powerful group of business magnates, entrepreneurs and entertainers with no experience in education, and their actions are unfortunately sanctioned by top federal government officials and education experts. My explanation will hopefully become clearer once I present the sequencing of the detournement below. Finally, I downloaded and imported all the elements into video editing software and then spliced, re-rearranged and juxtaposed them in order to provide as coherent a countertext as possible.[3]

Because the detournement is over seven minutes long and consists of many details and layers, I decided to employ Trier's (2004) approach to only describing the general idea of the detournement. As he explains, attempting "to render in print something whose impact can only be fully understood and appreciated audiovisually" can be a difficult enterprise. Often it is far more effective to describe "representative (if rather short) sequences that capture the spirit, form, and content of the whole" (p. 41). For the purpose of this chapter I include three representative sequences, with each one varying in length, to convey the general idea of what I designed and intended the detournement to be and to do (the italicization signifies my emphasis and the dash (—) signifies a break or fade from one segment to the next).

Sequence 1

The following sequence consists of introductory material, a section from Arne Duncan's interview with Roland Martin (included at the beginning and the end of the sequence), text screens that provide data about the number of lives lost and schools destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, and video footage, photos, and audio snippets from citizens of New Orleans which coincide with the text. The sequence ends by seguing into President Obama's 2010 Town Hall speech at the University of New Orleans.

[1]

Text: The detournement begins with the following definition: "The reuse of preexisting artistic [and mass-produced] elements in a new ensemble" for the purpose of critiquing or subverting the intended meaning (Debord,1959; Trier, 2013)—

[2]

Video: Television playing white noise static—

[3]

Secretary Duncan: "I've spent a lot of time in New Orleans and this is a tough thing to say but I'm going to be really honest. *The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina*. That education system was a disaster. And it took Hurricane Katrina to wake up the community to say that we have to do better"—

[4]

Music/Text: The music begins as the following producer credit is displayed to give the detournement video a level of authenticity: DETOURNEMENT FILMS—

[5]

Text: On August 2005, Hurricane Katrina Hit New Orleans—

[6]

Video: Three video clips are spliced together to illustrate the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina hitting and flooding New Orleans—

[7]

Text: An Estimated 1800 People Lost Their Lives—

[8]

Video: Various videos are spliced together to illustrate how people were affected after the storm. Videos included deceased citizens floating in the floodwaters, groups of people walking toward shelter (e.g., the Superdome), residents trying to escape cars and waiting helplessly on rooftops for someone to rescue them, and children looking for lost parents and parents looking for lost children.

[Streaming in the background along with the music are the following audio clips of various community members describing their difficulties:

"No water, no food"

"We don't have a home"

"We lost everything"

"We ain't got no more food and we got babies out here. We got handicap people."

"On the floor, she's dying right now. Two people died already"

"Where's FEMA? We need some help out here."

"I don't even know if my kids are alive, man!"]—

[9]

Text: Of the 126 Public Schools, 110 Were Completely Destroyed—

[10]

Video/photo: The following images make up a photo collage (with one video attached at the end) to illustrate the devastating effects Hurricane Katrina had on public schools and equipment: a school building decimated with the only things left are the chairs bolted to the foundation, a school bus nose-first in a large hole, a windowless school building with most of the roof destroyed, a destroyed gymnasium and library, and a single book lying open with the first page of chapter two flapping in the wind—

[11]

Music/Text: At this point the overtly dramatic musical composition fades out and a more upbeat one fades in. It continues until the detournement ends. At the same time the following text appears, which also served as the title of detournement: *As Fate Would Have It—*

[12]

Secretary Duncan: "*I think the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina*"—

Replaying Duncan's remark highlights the magnitude of his comments in view of the destruction-filled and tragedy-laden video clips and photos in the detournement. To further emphasize the gravity of his remarks, I reversed the content of the audio-visual event using a "rewind video" effect. By actually showing the clip of Duncan rewind before the viewers' eyes makes his comments seem at once both absurd and callous.

"Katrina Hurricane was Orleans New in system education the to happened that thing best the think I"—

Then I played the line forward again: "*The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina—*

[13]

Text: It Seems Secretary Duncan and President Obama Agree—

Sequence 2

The second representative sequence begins where the first one left off. In fact, the last text panel above is intended to connect Duncan's remarks to an excerpt from Obama's Town Hall meeting at the University of New Orleans. For the purpose of the detournement the excerpt from the Town Hall is cut into two parts and each one is countered with media texts, such as an interview with Jordan Flaherty and a documentary that examines the charter movement in New Orleans from a local perspective, and with text screens. Keep in mind that these examples are only representative of the full-length detournement.

[1]

President Obama: "Well, look, there's a reason why I went to visit Martin Luther King Charter School, because as I said before, a good-news story about New Orleans – *let's face it, the schools weren't working for the children of New Orleans before the storm*." —

[2]

Jordan Flaherty: The clip is from *The Real News Network*, which is a member-supported online broadcasting network that describes itself as "focused on providing independent and uncompromising journalism" on "the critical issues of our times" ("Our Mission," n.d.). In this clip Paul Jay, the network's founder and CEO, is interviewing Flaherty.

The clip actually begins with a text screen and Flaherty asking the question, as if he is asking Obama why New Orleans' schools were not working. More specifically, Flaherty asks:

"What was wrong with the school system?"—

Then Flaherty appears and provides an answer to his own question, and it serves to articulate a rejoinder to Obama's claim:

"It wasn't that it was under local democratic control; it wasn't that we had a powerful teachers union; it was that there was very little funding for the school system overall."—

[3]

President Obama: The clip returns to the previous Obama clip by picking up where it cut to the Flaherty clip. Obama continues:

"And what has happened is, is that *this community has actually used the crisis as an opportunity to start rebuilding, and try to experiment with new ways of learning.*"—

[4]

Text: Rebuild and Experiment = Charterize New Orleans' Schools—

[5]

Jordan Flaherty: "Now these new charters have come in, and much of them have received extra federal funding, extra state funding, extra funding from foundations like Walton Foundation, Soros Foundation, Rockefeller, Ford. Many of them have made money available to these new schools, these new charter schools. They also receive many of the best facilities. So it's been an uneven playing field. You give these new schools the best resources, the best funding, the first choice of teachers, and then you say, oh, charter works."

[6]

President Obama: From this point forward I repeated Obama's following statement and provided articulations from various sources available on YouTube (I continued this repetitive structure up until the near end of the full-length détournement):

"*This community* has actually used the crisis as an opportunity to start rebuilding, and try to experiment with new ways of learning."—

[7]

Karen Harper Royal: The clip is from a 2013 documentary entitled *Rebirth: New Orleans*, which is narrated by PBS education correspondent John Merrow and is a production of Learning Matters. It begins with Ms. Royal, an African American parent and community organizer, speaking to a predominately white Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education committee, saying:

"*So many decisions have* been made, that *have been really shoved down our throats as a community*"—

Then Ms. Royal expresses the following view in normal interview format:

"My main concern is that *the charter movement does not emanate from the community up.*"—

Sequence 3

As mentioned in part six of sequence two, I repeated Obama's statement and juxtaposed it with various media sources up until the near end of the detournement. So for the final representative sequence I decided to showcase the lattermost section

of the detournement. It consists of Obama's statement, clips from the documentary *Rebirth: New Orleans*, and text screens. In the actual detournement I re-inserted Duncan's remarks ("The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina*")* directly after the last media elements "countered" Obama's remarks. My goal was to contextualize the education secretary's comments a bit further and provide a parallel structure to the detournement as a whole. That segment of the detournement is included within this sequence as well.

[1]

President Obama: "This community has actually used the crisis as an opportunity to start rebuilding, and try to experiment with new ways of learning."—

[2]

Ashana Bigard: Ms. Bigard is a parent who expresses concern over the charter experiment in New Orleans, saying,

"Children aren't guinea pigs. So if *this experiment doesn't work then what happens to children?*"—

[The beginning of the clip showed Ms. Bigard express her sentiments during an interview, but after she says "Children aren't guinea pigs" the interview portion of the clip fades to a group of children walking into a school while following a *white line*, which is standard procedure in some charter schools in New Orleans and is actually articulated in further detail within the detournement.]

[3]

Cheryllyn Branche: Ms. Branche is the former principal of Benjamin Banneker Elementary School in New Orleans.[4] During an interview she offered the following expert opinion about the charter movement in New Orleans:

"I don't think to designate that an entire city be '*charterized*' makes any sense. Good schools make sense for every child."—

[4]

Text: Right now, 9 in 10 Students Attend Charter Schools in New Orleans—
The Goal: Make New Orleans The Nation's First All-Charter School District—

[5]

Secretary Duncan: "*The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina*"—

[6]

Text: As Fate Would Have It—

[7]

Secretary Duncan: "*The best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina*"—

Admittedly, detourning Duncan and Obama's remarks through strategically juxtaposed visual thoughts deepened my opposition to the charter movement taking shape in New Orleans and other cities across the United States. I recognize, however, that critiquing the proponents' claims about charter schools requires me to be critical of my own critique**.** Debord (1963) maintained this notion as well, saying the detournement "must also be critical of itself in its very form." It is a critical art that communicates a specific message or argument, so the maker must recognize the detournement has its own limitations within the spectacularized sphere of dominant communication and must "contain *its own critique*" with the expectation that new arguments will be leveed against it just as it did to the original (p. 151). In addition, I recognize the proponents' claims are crafted significations just like my detournement—it is an argument from a certain position. As it turned out, I received the opportunity to share my argument during a course composed of graduate students enrolled in a teacher education program. The course instructor asked me to show the detournement to a group of preservice teachers and then actively engage them in critical discussion about the charter school movement in New Orleans and hopefully springboard that into a conversation about the movement on a local and national level.

The Context and Design of the Pedagogical Project

The project took place over three days in a course entitled "Advanced Exploration of Families, Schools and Communities." The course constitutes one-half of the capstone experience for the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. The summer course serves as an opportunity for the students to come together after completing their spring internship and complete the remaining requirements for the program. Exactly twenty-five students were enrolled in the course and all of them were preparing for teaching careers across a variety of disciplines.

As stated on the syllabus the course description is as follows: "This advanced course examines strategies for effective communication and collaboration with families, professional team members, and school resources. Topics will include a return to contextual issues and reflection on initial preparation experiences." The course was designed around the theme of reform, and as described on the syllabus reform is a collective effort "to make education and schooling better for all students" and "a moral aim." The reform theme connected across issues of families, schools, and communities—the topics of the course. Some of the primary texts of the course included Nel Noddings's *When School Reform Goes Wrong*, Nancy Lesko's *Act Your Age! A Cultural Construction of Adolescence*, and Herb Kliebard's *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*. The course was organized around readings, in-class discussions, and two group projects (a proposed action research plan to study a

youth issue, and a new school design for a local community). My involvement in the course, however, was not centered on any particular course requirement (i.e., reading or assignment). Instead I was given the unique opportunity to design the pedagogical project in a way I saw fit, insofar as the project focused on the course description and the theme of reform. The project fit particularly well with the course's central theme because the charter school movement is a wide-reaching reform initiative and a hot-button topic in the United States.

Because the project took place over three days, I decided to divide it into three phases. The first phase took place in class. After making a brief introduction about the topic and myself, I gave the students a handout with three questions and requested they take fifteen minutes to answer them. The three questions included: What are your assumptions and understandings of charter schools? Do you believe charter schools align with your views on K-12 education? What impact do you think charter schools have on local communities? After they composed their answers, a few students briefly shared their initial thoughts. I kept the in-class discussion time and my comments to a minimum to avoid any undue influence. I then offered a 5-7 minute overview of the Situationist International and explained the terms "spectacle" and "detournement" as well as my usage of them, relying mostly on content already mentioned in this chapter. I told the students a definition of detournement would appear at the beginning of the video so they could refer to it in the second phase of the project. I then described the seven-minute detournement and stated that I made it to challenge the specter of the charter school movement in New Orleans and was using it as a main text for engaging them in critical discussion about charter schools. Then I showed the students the detournement and asked them not to respond right away.

Afterward I explained the second phase of the project would take place in a virtual learning environment. I asked them to view the detournement once again on YouTube and to respond to a writing prompt posted on Sakai (a campus-wide classroom management system) by midnight of the second day. The prompt was as follows: Before posting a reaction to the detournement, reread your initial remarks about charter schools. Then post a reaction to the detournement, and refer to what you initially wrote and to any thoughts that you did not have time to write down. Did the detournement change your mind about anything you wrote or thought? Explain why or why not?

For the last phase of the project, I returned to class on the third day to discuss their initial responses to the three questions in more detail and their postings on Sakai. As realized in the Sakai postings and through the in-class discussion, the detournement challenged, informed and in some cases confirmed their initial assumptions, understandings, and beliefs about charter schools in New Orleans and in their local communities. I will describe their responses in more detail in the next section.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The strategies used to collect data on students' thoughts about charter schools before and after watching the detournement included two writing activities. These were an

in-class questionnaire that consisted of three open-ended questions and an online writing prompt. There was also an in-class discussion after the students completed both writing activities and re-watched the detournement. It was mainly a time for the preservice teachers to share their initial responses and postings in more detail and for me to field any general questions they had.

The primary method for analyzing the data was Erikson's (1986) model of analytic induction. This method involved the formulation of empirical assertions—declarative statements about the meaning of data derived from what is happening or experienced—and the generation of evidentiary warrant by "repeatedly reviewing the data corpus to test the validity of assertions by seeking confirming and disconfirming evidence" (Molebash, 2004, p. 417). Finally I refined and modified the assertions until no more disconfirming evidence was found. The following three assertions resulted from analytic induction:

> **Assertion 1**: The detournement facilitated a change in the preservice teachers' initial assumptions, understandings, and beliefs about charter schools.
>
> **Assertion 2**: The detournement sustained the preservice teachers' initial assumptions, understandings, and beliefs about charter schools.
>
> **Assertion 3**: The detournement motivated the preservice teachers to question further the charter school movement.

This section demonstrates support for the assertions through a series of corresponding vignettes, an approach similar to the way I used representative sequences in the section on the design and structure of the detournement. Included below are the assertions followed by brief syntheses and supporting vignettes.

Assertion 1

The open-ended questionnaire reveals that some of the preservice teachers had limited, neutral and slightly positive views about charter schools prior to watching the detournement. One of the reasons was that few charters existed in their region and what they did know came from outside sources that were difficult to verify. Nonetheless in their initial responses almost all of them maintained that charters received public money but operated independently, created their own curriculum, offered more choice than traditional schools, and could possibly be a positive opportunity for students and parents. As illustrated in the vignettes the detournement facilitated a change in these preservice teachers' initial thoughts about charter schools.

[1]

> **Student A**: If anything, my initial comments suggested a slightly positive perspective of charter schools. For example, in response to the second discussion question, I said: "If charter schools have the option to operate

independently, this can perhaps be a good thing because members of the local community could adapt school policies to meet the needs of that region." I do think that the *detournement* changed my perspective of charter schools (especially those in Louisiana). As I viewed the footage of families trying to survive the aftermath of the hurricane and listened to the news commentary, I could see more how the situation was framed in a way that allowed outsiders to "reshape" the educational system (or "charterize" it) but gave little power to those who actually lived in New Orleans.

[2]

Student B: I initially said that charter schools do align with my views on K-12 education, but I wrote this with the assumption that charter schools are able to better serve the specific needs of the communities in which they operate. After watching the detournement, I see that this is unfortunately not always the case. In the case of New Orleans, as the video states, charters have come in and gotten all these additional resources (like funding and the best facilities) and then people have praised the work done and thought that charter schools must be the answer. This seems very unfair to me. Additionally, as the detournement points out, the schools…hire mostly young, white Americans who are not from Louisiana, are non-union, and serve for TFA. One woman states that many major decisions were made without consulting the community. Another woman complains that the charter movement doesn't emanate from the community up. This perspective goes against my initial perception of charter schools, and also my ideas about who should be in charge of decision-making in schools.

[3]

Student C: The charter system seemed to be failing to provide the opportunity for students and other actual members of the community to make important choices regarding their education. Instead, I saw that the students were required to walk down white lines in the hallway and being interrogated about having the color gray on their tennis shoes instead of the black and white mandated in the school's dress code. It did not seem as though the students were allowed much choice in those schools, nor did they appear to be empowered by their education–actually, it looked as though the opposite was occurring. I must admit that my own perception of all charter schools in general has become more critical.

Assertion 2

Other preservice teachers expressed they had some experience with charter schools as former teachers, witnesses to the movement taking shape in their home town, or as students in courses that discussed the charter movement in great detail. Most of them harbored slightly to highly negative assumptions, understandings, and

beliefs about charters before watching the detournement. These included the rigid disciplined structure of some charters, the tension they potentially create with local communities, the ideological foundation of some charters and their benefactors, and the use of a marketplace model for educating children. As shown in the following vignettes, the detournement seemed to sustain this group of preservice teachers' initial thoughts about charter schools.

[1]

> **Student D:** Prior to watching the video, my preconceptions about charter schools were quite negative. From my previous experience in Connecticut schools, I knew that charter schools are publicly funded, but privately run, and that many are run by large groups or corporations with very specific pedagogical or ideological underpinnings (such as the KIPP and Achievement First networks). I had heard about the strict discipline standards and behavior expectations from students in charter schools in Connecticut, which runs very much counter to my own educational philosophy, and which was subject to heavy criticism from the local community, other teachers and the education department of my college. Therefore, the video largely served to confirm my preconceptions about charter schooling.

[2]

> **Student E:** The detournement did not really change my mind about anything I wrote or thought. I did not have a very high opinion of charter schools pre-video, and I feel the same way–maybe even a little more so–after having seen it. I appreciated the "discussion" in the detournement of the way that most of the teachers in these charter schools are not from Louisiana and have no real connection to the people or the community. I think it's really easy to forget about the impact that schools can have on their local communities, especially as a way of unifying (or the opposite) the people that live, work, and attend school there.

Assertion 3

This group of preservice teachers expressed both limited and ample knowledge about charter schools and held many assumptions, understandings, and beliefs as stated in the previous two sections. However, they did not state if the detournement changed or sustained their views about charter schools. They expressed instead a curiosity in questioning further the charter school movement in New Orleans and elsewhere. The following two vignettes epitomize the groups' contentions:

[1]

> **Student F:** The detournement video was very interesting as I did not know much about the current educational system in New Orleans and I had no idea

that there was a movement to essentially make all schools charter schools in that city. My initial reaction to the topic of charter schools was that charter schools in some ways exist to create competition between charter schools and public schools. I had often heard that when students have the choice to attend an alternative school or attend a charter school, this pushes public schools to improve the quality of their instruction in order to retain their students. I would be curious to know more about how this has played out in New Orleans. Have public schools made any significant changes in order to keep parents interested in sending their children there?

[2]

Student G: We have seen the rise of large networks of charter schools, especially in urban areas like New Orleans, Philadelphia, etc. This proliferation of charters in high-poverty areas historically under/poorly served by schools deserves careful examination. As in all things, I think we have to trace the funding and in some cases profit of these schools. It is too convenient for a devastated city like New Orleans to be told that charters will come in and rebuild lost infrastructure and institutions. The real questions of how/why schools there (as in many much closer-to-home places) weren't working for students are so complex. They deserve real exploring and community-based solutions.

REFLECTIONS

As I reflect on the pedagogical project described herein, it clearly engaged preservice teachers in critical discussion about the charter movement, causing most of them to change, reaffirm, or continue questioning their initial assumptions, understandings, and beliefs about the charter movement. It also challenged them to continue looking for counterstatements to what proponents claim about charters. In addition, the project provided me with the unique experience and foundational knowledge on which to construct future iterations of the detournement and activities. A future iteration would focus on *localizing* the detournement to engage the target more fully. Juxtaposing digital elements and critical significations that countered local proponents' claims about charter schools would add depth to the detournement and encourage more critical thought about the charter movement operating in their academic institution's home state and surrounding community. Another activity involves more in-depth conversation about the theoretical underpinnings of detournement. That would involve an explanation of detournement as a critical art rooted in the tradition of critical social theory and a method for taking preexisting elements and then re-assembling them to communicate a specific message or argument with the intent to subvert the original message or argument, all of which is in the service of class struggle against oppressive (i.e., the culture of neoliberalism) entities. I would then

showcase at least one exemplary detournement to ensure that all the preservice students had a working knowledge of the theory and practice of detournement before they view mine. These are a few ideas that can hopefully guide me and other educators in the design of future projects that involve using detournement to critique educational phenomena with preservice teachers.

NOTES

[1] John McDonogh High School, located in Mid-City neighborhood of New Orleans, closed down at the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The school reportedly had some of the lowest performance scores in Louisiana.

[2] The term "*Übermensch*" is a significant concept in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, specifically in the work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It signifies multiple meanings in German, notably Overman and Superman. I am using the word liberally in the context of this chapter, mainly to signify an archetype and to play on Davis Guggenheim's 2010 film *Waiting for Superman.*

[3] To create and edit the detournement I used Apple' iMovie 1(0.3.3) software.

[4] At the time of the interview Banneker was one the few remaining traditional public schools. However, the New Orleans Recovery School District closed the school permanently on May 28, 2014 in an attempt to shutter the remaining five traditional public schools in the city.

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JASON MENDEZ

9. REVISITING "SORDID FANTASIES"

Using Detournement as an Approach to Qualitative Inquiry

INTERSECTING DETOURNEMENT AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Integrating detournement in my qualitative research course for social work masters students was extremely challenging since students were far more interested in clinical practices of social work than conducting research. Detournement is "both a theory and a method intertwined—a 'praxis,' in the (arguable) sense of a critical practice informed by theory" (Trier, 2004, p.45), and it helped me bridge the field of social work to the practice of qualitative research.

The twenty-five students (20 female, 5 male) enrolled in my course did so only to fulfill the research requirement toward completing their Masters in Social Work program (I know this because on the first day, I typically ask students why they are taking this course). The student demographics are similar to that of education courses (mostly middle to upper class white women). Of the twenty female students, 2 identified as African-American, 1 as Jamaican, 1 as Asian, and the rest white. The male students were composed of 1 African-American and 4 white. One of the white women in the course also identified as being Muslim and the student who identified as Jamaican was blind, but never identified herself as being disabled.

This introductory level course was structured to teach the foundations, politics, and methods of qualitative research. The course generated a semester-long dialogue about the ways in which we make meaning of our lived experiences and sociocultural phenomena. We spent the semester exploring practices that challenged conventional notions of knowledge construction. Throughout the course, students were encouraged to critically reflect on their presuppositions and how their positionality influences their research interests, choices, and questions. The final project for the course gave students an opportunity to observe and analyze real life phenomena related to the field of social work. Detournement was one approach students could employ in their final project.

Detournement provides an opening in qualitative research methods, specifically in document analysis, to broaden the scope of what is traditionally considered sources of data. In my course, I interchange the term *documents* with *texts*. Within document analysis, researchers often sort documents in one of three categories: personal documents, material culture, and public records (Merriam, 1998; Glesne

J. Trier (Ed.), Detournement as Pedagogical Praxis, 195–209.

2011). Merriam (1998) explains that personal documents are "reliable source[s] of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world." Examples of reliable sources include pictures, journals, letters, personal movies, and scrapbooks. Public records, otherwise known as "the ongoing, continuing records of society" (p. 113), include birth certificates, deaths, marriages, U.S. census, mass media, government documents and so on. Finally, material culture or artifacts "refers to objects or artifacts bestowed with meaning and history by the people in that context" (Glesne, 2011, p. 85). Using the term *texts* expands the range of sources researchers can include for analysis. In addition to written documents, *texts* include film, television, music, lyrics, poetry, styles of dress, gestures, Internet, art, photographs, magazines, newspapers, and so on.

Using the term *texts* to identify data sources requires the researcher to incorporate a semiotic approach during analysis. Semiotics pushes the researcher to critically examine the relationship between the signifier (concept) and signified (sound/image). The researcher then "examine[s] the cultural specificity of representations and their meanings by using one set of methods and terms across the full range of signifying practices: gestures, dress, writing, speech, photography, film, television and so on". As a result, the researcher is able to construct meaning between the relationship of "the written word, … the drawing, the photograph, or the sound" (Turner, 1996, p. 14) and their potential social implications.

Using the concept of detournement in my qualitative course reshaped how students conceptualized data collection, analysis, and representation. The limitless possibilities of how data can be represented through detournement eased students' anxiety over the dreaded final project and caused them to be more invested and excited in their research. Later in this chapter, I will discuss three of the final projects students created using detournement.

REARTICULATING THE CONCEPT OF DETOURNEMENT

Already intimidated by a graduate level research course, my students became more overwhelmed once I integrated the concept of detournement. Their anxiety levels increased dramatically when class discussions switched focus from ethnography, narrative inquiry, positionality, interviewing, observations, and so forth to that of semiotics, representation, and the Situationist International's conceptualization and practice of the critical art of detournement. Twenty-five fearful expressions instantaneously turned to blank stares at the first utterance of the French term *detournement*. As I proceeded, I noticed the eyes from twenty-five blank stares slowly glazing over as I defined detournement. The following quotations are examples of various articulations of detournement that I used in class.

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations …. [W]hen two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed …. The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two

> independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (Debord and Wolman, 1956, p. 15)
>
> Detournement ("diversion") [is] [a] key means of restructuring culture and experience …. Detournement proposes a violent excision of elements–painting, architecture, literature, film, urban sites, sounds, gestures, words, signs–from their original contexts, and a consequent restabilization and recontextualization through rupture and realignment. (Sussman, 1989, p. 8)
>
> The present is studied as a historical problem … and, above all, the practice of representation itself is continuously subjected to critical interrogation. This staging of mediation takes the form of a work on other mediations, primarily by means of cinema's elective affinity to the important strategy of citation and reinscription referred to as detournement. (Levin, 1989, pp. 76–77)

Using conventional definitions of detournement in a class composed entirely of social work students made it seem as if I was teaching a foreign language (at least that was my interpretation of students' expressions or lack thereof). The definitions above are excellent articulations of detournement for those vested in the field of Cultural Studies, but for those scholars in other fields (social work, anthropology, sociology, education, and so on), these definitions lack general accessibility. Using these definitions with twenty-five future social work practitioners who could not have cared less about qualitative research, let alone Cultural Studies, did little in providing students with clarity regarding the connection between practical approaches to qualitative research, detournement, and the implications to their professional goals.

A PERSONAL FLASHBACK

Unlike many of my peers in college, I did not have your typical work-study or part-time job to earn extra spending cash. Instead, as an undergrad I would deejay at a local club one night a week for $125 (not bad for only 4 hours of work). In addition to club earnings, I would generate more income by making mixtapes for fellow students and friends in my dorm room on my silver Technics SL-1200MK2 turntables. The majority of the mixtapes I made were compilations of old and new hiphop, R&B, reggae, and dancehall tracks. My favorite mixtapes to create were fusions of musical genres and eras. For example, on my left turntable, I would place a vinyl recording of the *a capella* version of an old R&B track. I would then slide the fader on my mixer all the way to the left so only the vocals from that acapella track could be heard. I proceeded by digging through my crates and pulling out an instrumental version of a classic hiphop track. I would place this record on my right turntable and slide the fader toward the middle so I could simultaneously scratch the beat in while the *a cappella* played. For the next hour, I would repeat these steps and create one continuous track composed of various beats and *a cappellas*. It is important to note that though this remixing may seem like a simple process, in actuality it is a difficult and

time-consuming skill to learn. Making a mixtape involves more than just placing records on turntables and playing them together. You have to adjust the pitch accordingly for each and every track played so that the beats and vocals synchronize to make what could be discordant harmonious.

DEEJAYING, MIXTAPES, AND DETOURNEMENT

My anecdote of being a deejay mixing music has helped me rearticulate to students my experiences as a scholar engaging with detournement. Though the content is different, the concept of a mixtape resonates with the concept of detournement. As a deejay making a mixtape, I reworked existing songs into an original creation, which echoes Guy Debord's (1959) general definition of detournement as "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble" (p. 67).

Two key points derive from my detournement-as-deejaying analogy. Firstly, detournement is more than simply cutting and splicing together various media texts. It is a rigorous process in which you create *critical* narratives through the juxtaposition of conflicting and/or agreeing texts. This critical intention was articulated by Debord and Wolman (1956) when they described detournement as having the potential "to be a powerful cultural weapon in the service of class struggle" (p. 18). Intertwined with careful juxtapositions of material is decontextualization, which is a crucial element in creating stimulating and thought-provoking detournements. In other words, the best detournements, like mixtapes, are the ones that fuse texts that are entirely unrelated and aesthetically oppositional. The more memorable mixtapes I collected as well as made were the mixtapes that took vocals and instrumentals completely out of their musical genre context in order to create something fresh, innovative, and provocative.

Secondly, authors of detournements are similar to deejays in that there are stylistic differences in approaches to detourning (the act of making a detournement). The chapters in this book collectively illustrate a wide spectrum of detournement styles and strategies. For example, the use of repetition of material is one approach—one that I do not employ when creating a detournement. Rather, my stylistic preference is to reuse numerous diverse texts *without* repeating a single one. My intent with this approach is to show viewers the abundant amount of texts that reiterate a broad collection of distorted representations. An example of one my detournement videos is "Latino Stereotypes and Representation in the Media."[1] This detournement is a compilation of movies, news footage, documentaries, and television scenes depicting distorted represention of Latin@s in media and popular culture. I created this detournement as a means to push in-service teachers to critically reflect on the assumptions they have regarding Latin@ students in their classrooms.

In contrast, there are scholars who repeat a particular textual element throughout their detournements in order to emphasize a specific point. James Trier's (2004) "*Lean on Me* / *Eyes on the Prize*"[2] detournement is an example of a detournement that uses repetition, which can be a very useful strategy when focusing on one

specific point, such as highlighting a problematic political message that the original text presents as "natural" and "true." Trier's detournement is based on the film *Lean on Me* (1989), which has been described as the

> rousing, fact-based story of high school principal Joe Clark, who armed himself with a bullhorn and Louisville Slugger and slammed the door on losers at Eastside High in Paterson, New Jersey. Brought in as a last hope to save the school, he chains the doors shut to keep troublemakers out and strivers in. Parents fought him. Teachers fought him. But lots of kids loved him. Clark turned Eastside around, becoming a national symbol of tough-love education and appearing on the cover of *Time* (1989).[3]

The detournement examines the "blame yourself" rhetoric captured in Joe Clark's speech to Eastside High students. Clark, after kicking out students he identifies as troublemakers, addresses the entire student body by telling them:

> Next time it may be you. If you do no better than they did, next time it *will* be you. They said this school was dead, like the cemetery it's built on. But we call our Eastside teams "ghosts," don't we? And what are ghosts? Ghosts are sprits that *rise* from the dead. I want you to be *my* ghosts. You are going to lead our resurrection by denying expectations that all of us are doomed to failure. My motto is simple. If you do not succeed in life, I don't want you to blame your parents! I don't want you to blame the white man! *I want you to blame yourselves*! *The responsibility is yours*.[4]

Trier (2004) takes the above scene from Clark's speech and splices in footage from the television documentary series *Eyes on the Prize* (1987). American civil rights movement footage coupled with the Joe Clark "tough-love education" scene "caused them [preservice students] to rethink their views of Joe Clark and his 'tough love, 'I want you to blame yourselves!' philosophy" (Trier, 2004, p. 44). The aim of this detournement is to generate a dialogue regarding the historic and systemic racism Black people encounter in American education.

REVISITING "SORDID FANTASIES"

Before introducing detournement in my introduction to qualitative methods course, I had my students participate in an activity that established a purpose for engaging with detournement. The activity, which is borrowed from Trier's (2005) work, uses movie box covers of school films to "challenge the students' negative impressions about inner-city schools, students, parents and communities" (p. 176). Trier explained that in his case, the activity was one component of a larger project designed to provide an opening for preservice teachers to critically reflect on their own "assumptions, beliefs and knowledge about inner-city schools" (Trier, 2005, p. 171). In his article, "'Sordid Fantasies': Reading Popular 'Inner-City' School Films as Racialized Texts with Preservice Teachers," Trier (2005) explains:

> Prior to beginning their student teaching in inner-city schools, preservice teachers articulated in essays and seminar discussions their opinions and beliefs about inner-city schools. They then examined in depth selected cinematic representations of inner-city schools to deconstruct those representations for their "racialized" and "deracialized" discourses, as well as for the "sordid fantasies" and "lullabies" that films set in the inner-city typically construct. Finally, after their experiences student teaching in inner-city schools, preservice teachers rearticulated their views about inner-city schools, based on their own experiences teaching in such schools. (p. 171)

I found Trier's work (2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005) on using school films as pedagogical texts, specifically movie box covers, helpful in familiarizing students in my course with the concept of detournement. bell hooks (1997), in a talk she gave titled *Cultural Criticism & Transformation,* discusses the importance of engaging with popular cultural in the classroom:

> Whether we're talking about race or gender or class, popular culture is where the pedagogy is, it's where the learning is … I mean it's been really exciting for someone like me, both in terms of the personal desires I have to remain bonded with the working class culture and experience that I came from as well as the sort of southern black aspect of that and at the same time to be a part of a diasporic world culture of ideas and to see how can there be a kind of interplay between all of those different forces. Popular culture is one of the sites where there can be an interplay. (p. 2)

Based on my classroom experiences in my qualitative research course, students, particularly white students, were hesitant as well as resistant to discussing issues of power as related to race and ethnicity. Therefore, engaging students with popular culture texts such as movie box covers creates a space where student vulnerability is lessened. Additionally, getting students to critically examine the cover art of films like *Freedom Writers* (2007), *School of Rock* (2003), *Lean on Me* (1989), and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) helps rearticulate concepts of data analysis we cover from the course's main required readings: *Making Sense of Qualitative Data* (Coffey and Atkinson, 2007) and *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (Glesne, 2011).

In the next section, I will describe my experience of employing the movie box cover exercise. After I describe the movie box cover exercise, I will discuss how I introduced detournement to my class. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will identify the connections between detourning and conducting qualitative research. Finally, I will share three detournements that students created for their final projects in my introductory qualitative methods course.

CROSSING OVER INTO THE "SORDID FANTASIES" ZONE

> You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension: a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into … the [Sordid Fantasies] zone.
>
> – Rod Serling, *The Twilight*

A substantial body of Trier's work (2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005, 2008) invites pre-service teachers to delve into a personal space where they can critically reflect on their "opinions and beliefs about inner city schools" (p. 171). His movie box cover activity is the primary phase when entering this space, the "Sordid Fantasies" zone. According to Trier (2005), this activity is "designed to challenge students' negative impressions about inner-city schools, students, parents and communities" (p. 176) by deconstructing video box covers of school films. The ensuing phase has students examining the films represented in the initial activity. However, for the purposes of my work, I only engaged students in the movie box cover activity before moving onto detournement.

Similar to Trier (2005), I had students in my qualitative research methods course "analyse the video box covers for their denotative meanings (the literal, descriptive meanings that most everyone would agree with)" (p. 176).[5] The steps in implementing the activity were fairly easy. First, I divided the students into small groups. Once the students were divided, I explained to the entire class that I was giving them each a packet containing various movie box covers. Each group, which had identical packets, was to separate the covers into two piles based solely on colors. Trier's analysis of movie box covers was this:

> the inner-city covers—for example, *Blackboard Jungle*, *Stand and Deliver*, *The Principal*, *Dangerous Minds*, *187*, *The Substitute*—are dominated by dark colors, mainly pitch-black and blood red. (p. 176)

> In contrast, the suburb school film covers—for example, *The Breakfast Club*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Jawbreakers*, *Clueless*, *Can't Hardly Wait* and so on—glow with bright reds, greens, purples, blues and pinks. (p. 176)

After the groups have sorted their piles, I had them consider the characters and objects on each movie box cover. Students then began to identify significant distinctions between the inner-city covers and the suburb covers. Their analyses aligned with Trier's analysis:

> [The inner-city covers] feature male teachers or principals as the central figures, usually in aggressive poses, such as holding a baseball bat, grabbing a male student, or standing behind a desk where an automatic weapon rests. (p. 176)

> [In the suburb school film covers] the central figures are nearly always young, white teens smiling, holding one another, laughing, kissing and so on. (pp. 176–177)

Still keeping the piles designated by colors, I instructed the groups to reexamine their piles and swap any movie box covers they wished as they moved toward finalizing their piles.

After the groups had finalized their piles, I had them examine the print text on each cover. The aim of this step "was to have students examine how the print text attempts to … 'fix' and 'anchor' the meanings of the visual images in order to effect a preferred reading" (Trier, 2005, p. 177). Students began to identify a common theme among each group of school films. For example, each inner-city school film is described negatively while each suburb school film has a comedic, light-hearted, or romantic description. Coupling the print text along with the visual imagery, students began to see how inner-city schools are "cinematically represented as a dangerous place where the students are the violent enemy that must be subdued by aggressive adults (who are typically white males)" (Trier, 2005, p. 177). The following excerpts are examples of some of my students' feedback from the movie box cover activity.

> During class we separated the movies covers according to how light or how dark the colors were. After we separated the covers according to their colors, we paid close attention to the message that was being conveyed. The lighter colored covers portrayed a more positive message while the darker covers told a different and scarier story. The dark covers looked very mischievous. The images told that there would be a lot death and action. There were mostly African-American and Latino students on the covers. They looked very scary, and I don't know who would want to teach them based on the images shown. Whereas, the lighter colors told the story of happy, fairytale like and innocent students. (African American female)

> The language in the urban section is filled with violence. The movies are based in urban inner-city life and culture. The movies are reflecting the raw, gritty side of the urban experience. The movies in this section all touched on gangs, drugs, organized crime, prisons, sex and the inner-city life. The language on the suburban section was more subtle and showed how the movies were based on comedies and teens. A lot of partying and regular teen conflicts but nothing violent. It is based more on living in a fantasy where the characters are able to get away with things that ordinary people would normally not get away with. (White female)

> It is my belief that, whether it is consciously or subconsciously, that the media portrays black students to be delinquents who are naturally unruly. We are depicted as students who are lazy and not able to reach the potential of white students. Unfortunately, instead of these stereotypes being eradicated by the media, they are perpetuated in songs, movies, television sitcoms and the news.

> These covers showed me that even though black people have advanced in the racial struggle, we still have a long way to go before we are able to be identified as equals by our Caucasian colleagues. (African American male)

This was not the first time I had used the movie box cover exercise. I have used this exercise numerous times with preservice teachers in social foundations and sociology of education courses. However, this was the first time I attempted to do the activity with non-education students. In my education courses, the movie box cover exercise fosters a dialogue among students (preservice teachers) on stereotypical representations of urban schools and communities in media and popular culture. My intent is to have students not only begin to deconstruct the meanings embedded within the school film covers, but also to begin to critically reflect on their own "assumptions, knowledge, and beliefs" (Trier, 2005, p. 171) toward urban schools and communities (in other words, crossing into the "sordid fantasies" zone).

Among preservice teachers, my primary objective is not focused on the concept of detournement, but on measuring the gap of representation between historical accounts and cinematic portrayals of urban schools and communities. My second objective focuses on the implications these representations have on teacher education and schooling. A significant amount of class time is spent discussing student readings of the movie box covers. I do mention the concept of detournement, but the depth of my discussion is limited. I only touch upon detournement as one example of a method to challenge the partial, stereotypical and highly problematic representations within film and television.

In my qualitative research course, however, I spend much more time on the concept of detournement than I do on deconstructing the school film covers. Detournement allows me to introduce students to non-traditional modes of data representation ("non-traditional" for a social work discourse). As I discussed earlier in this chapter, I presented some formal definitions of detournement from Situationist literature. I also interchanged (i.e., detourned) the term *documents* with *texts*, which expanded the range of sources that I encouraged my students to include in their analyses. Furthermore, I rearticulated the term detournement through my examples of deejaying and making mixtapes. I also showed the detournement I made (which I mentioned earlier in footnote 1). Most importantly, though, I introduced the process of using photos as a means to visually represent narratives (photovoice), the use of poetry as a way to breathe life into the data (ethnopoetics), and we even explored methods in physically embodying data (ethnoperformance). I consider introducing these more unconventional methods for representing one's data to be a unique form of detournement in the sense that I am detourning the routine, expected, and conventional practices of engaging in qualitative research. Incorporating detournement enabled me to add to the options that students could use in creating unique and provocative data artifacts for their final projects.

In the next section, I will discuss three student final projects from my qualitative course in which students engaged in detournement. Though created by social

work students, these research projects are not exclusive examples of social work detournements, but examples that are suggestive of the vast possibilities of research topics that can be pursued under a detournement framework.

STUDENT DETOURNEMENT PROJECTS

The first project detourns representations of high school students in teen drama television shows. The second detournement examines theatrical trailers and movie box cover images of films depicting Islam and Muslims. The final project detourns representations of therapy in film and television. In addition to the detournements, students wrote papers that described in detail their process in creating their detournements. As stated in the syllabus, final papers were to be no more than twenty pages, including two appendices. In the first appendix, students were to write 1 to 2 pages reflecting on data analyses, interpretations, and positionality. The second was 1 to 2 pages of critique regarding overall research choices, with a focus on coding and analysis. For each of the student detournements that I will discuss, I will briefly summarize the content, present what the students wrote about their detournements, and offer my own reading of what they did.

TEEN DRAMAS

The first project*, Representations of High School Students*, examines the representation of high school students in the popular teen drama television shows *One Tree Hill*, *90210*, and *Gossip Girl*. Collectively, the three television series seem to share a fairly common premise and storyline. *One Tree Hill* (2003) is based on the lives of teenagers attending high school in a small rural town in North Carolina. *90210* (2008) focuses on the social experiences of one family as they transition from life in Kansas to life in Beverly Hills. *Gossip Girl* (2007) captures the social drama of privileged students attending an elite private school in New York City.

In the detournement, the student juxtaposes various scenes from episodes of each television series to critically examine contemporary popular culture representations of the "high school" experience. The *Teen Drama* detournement can be summarized as a dominant media representation of the common American teenager that embodies a highly sexualized, "get ahead at any cost," pressure-filled, minimal consequences lifestyle. In my reading of the detournement, I identified three consistent themes embedded throughout the detournement: sexuality, homogeneity, and adolescent stress.

According to the student's paper, the student used her lived experiences as a point of reference in measuring the gap of representation between reality and media depictions. She wrote:

> As the researcher, my role was to view these shows and compare them to the real life teen. Throughout the viewing and coding process it reminded me of my own personal experiences in high school. I found myself comparing my

> experience to the television experience. As a twenty-three year old white female I look back at my high school days and wonder how I ever made it through. High school is full of emotional teen drama. Throughout high school I had two serious relationships, both of which ended dramatically. Through those four years I watched teen dramas and I can remember feeling comfort from them. The teens in these shows were faced with horrible situations that made mine not seem so bad. Watching these shows now, I believe they are exaggerated representations of reality, yet I can remember thinking these shows were very realistic when I was in high school.

In the discussion section of the paper, the student identified the notion of "pressure" as a constant theme across all the television shows examined. She states that "pressure surrounds high school teens, whether it is through sports, peers, sexual relations, or their parents." She identified that "the biggest reoccurring theme found was pressure with popularity and sex. In each show viewed, the main characters face these controversial topics of sex, who and when they are having it with."

After viewing the detournement, I identified a couple of additional themes. The first major theme throughout the detournement was the emphasis on sexuality (not the act of sex, but the performance of a highly sexualized identity). For example, the student juxtaposed multiple scenes from each series that presented scenarios where teenagers encountered sexual situations. In addition, there were several scenes capturing characters, primarily females, dressed provocatively. Another significant theme depicted in the detournement was the homogeneity among the cast of characters in terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Each show has a primarily White cast. Except for *90210*, the lead characters are white. In *90210,* there is a Black actor in a lead role. However, that actor still embodies a supporting role because his character is an adopted son to a White family. (This "homogeneity" theme recalls the discovery about the representations on the suburban movie box covers from the "Sordid Fantasies" project we did.) The final prominent theme identified was adolescent stress. The student used clips from each series that illustrated the pressure from parents and coaches to succeed academically and athletically, the pressure to be socially popular, and the peer pressure to engage in sexual activity or drug/alcohol use. Interestingly, the risky behaviors that resulted from teenage pressures seem to have minimal repercussions for the characters in school or at home.

ISLAM AND MUSLIM REPRESENTATIONS

The second project, *The Representation of Islam and Muslims in Film,* critically analyzes the film cover art and trailers of 24 films depicting Islam and Muslims. This detournement challenges stereotypical representations of Muslims as terrorists in film. In the paper that accompanied the detournement, the student presented this quotation about depictions of Muslims as terrorists:

> More recent successful movies have increased the depiction of Arab Muslims as faceless militant terrorists. For instance, the word *"terrorist"* is used eight times to describe the Muslims in the movie *The Siege*. Rarely does the media distinguish between religion and politics in Islamic countries. Furthermore, the acts of terrorists are taken to represent the views and beliefs of most Muslims. (Ramji, 2005, paragraph 8)[6]

The Representation of Islam and Muslims in Film juxtaposes film cover art (a nod to the "Sordid Fantasies" project) and scenes from films such as *Mooz-lum* (2011), *My Son the Fanatic* (1997), *Three Kings* (1999), *Malcolm X* (1992), *Traitor* (2008), *A Mighty Heart* (2007), *Taste of Cherry* (1997), and *The Kite Runner* (2007) to detourn cinematic representations of Islam and Muslims.

In my reading of this detournement, I identified two significant themes regarding the stereotypical representations commonly associated with popular culture portrayals of Islam and Muslims. First, the detournement challenges the misconception that *Muslim* is a religion. The detournement uses footage to stress the point that Islam is the name of a religion and a Muslim is someone who practices Islam. Therefore, interchanging the terms *Islam* and *Muslim* is incorrect. The second prominent theme in the detournement is the cinematic association made between Muslims, the Middle East, and terrorism. For example, scenes from the theatrical trailers *The Siege* (1998), *Executive Decision* (1996), and *The Delta Force* (1986) represented Islamic groups and Middle Eastern men as threats to American life and freedom. Images of suicide bombers and airplane hijackers were coupled with the taglines "They're attacking our way of life" (*The Siege*), "Freedom is History" (*Executive Decision*), and "It's a new age of terror that requires a new type of warrior…America's elite anti-terrorist commandoes committed to destroy the enemies of freedom" (*The Delta Force*). As a result, the stereotype that all Islamic groups or Muslims are from the Middle East and terrorists is perpetuated.

In the student's paper, she noted that she "began to study Islam about 16 months ago and became a Muslim about 6 months ago. She explains, "My western perspective is still firmly ingrained, but I am still learning and adapting to the culture of Islam at this time. I am very aware that I am riding the road between two cultures in my interactions within the Muslim community (as well as times within the western culture), and I believe this will help me to see more angles than if I were still totally immersed in the western culture." Though not explicitly stated in her final project, the student's struggle to make meaning of her own cultural identity seemed to be far more significant than the any media text analysis (at least in my opinion).

THERAPY IN FILM AND TELEVISION

One more research project, *The Perception of Therapy in Film and Television,* uses interview data and film and television clips to deconstruct stereotyped representations of therapy. The student used her field experiences as framework for her final project. She explains,

> As an intern last year at a drug and alcohol treatment center doing cognitive behavioral therapy with clients, many of them I worked with had a false perception of what therapy really is. For example, they would say are we going to talk about why I am screwed up because of my parents? Another issue with therapy was the concept of boundaries between patient and therapist. Many of the clients I saw in therapy assumed that I was their friend outside of therapy. They would attempt to ask questions about my personal life and I would have to continue to reinforce the idea that there are clear boundaries between us and that knowing how old I am or if I am married has nothing to do with their treatment.

The student researcher analyzed interview data to identify themes that would eventually serve as a guiding framework in constructing the detournement. In the supplemental paper to the detournement, the student explained that being empathetic, down-to-earth, professional, honest, and having a sense of humor were five consistent themes found in the study participants' responses about desired attributes in a therapist. The detournement spliced together scenes from the films *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Anger Management* (2003), and *The Departed* (2006), as well as the television shows *The Sopranos* (1999), *Grey's Anatomy* (2005), and *Monk* (2002) to detourn the stereotyped representations of therapists and the client/therapist relationship.

What I learned about the field of social work throughout the semester from discussions with my students allowed me to have a more insightful reading of the *Perception of Therapy in Film and Television* detournement. Two prominent themes I noticed after viewing this detournement were unethical behavior and self-disclosure. The unethical behavior illustrated in the detournement emphasized the gender roles generally associated with cinematic representations of female and male therapists. For example, in the crime thriller *The Departed* the female therapist embodies a highly sexualized character that eventually engages in an intimate relationship with her client. On the other hand, male therapists tend to embody more eccentric characteristics. In the comedy *Anger Management*, the therapist (Jack Nicholson) sleeps in the same bed as his client (Adam Sandler) as an intervention. The other significant theme I found across the texts was the lack of self-disclosure among therapists. According to my students, the extent of personal information shared by the film and television therapists with their clients does not normally occur in actual therapy sessions. However, many of the film and television scenes in the detournement show therapists opening their private lives to such an extent that the audience wonders who is in real need of treatment.

The research projects *Representations of High School Students in Teen Dramas*, *Representations of Therapy in Film and Television*, and *Representations of Islam and Muslims in Film* are examples of detournements as pedagogical praxis. Each detournement reflects the intersection of Cultural Studies, qualitative research methods, and their respective fields of study (adolescents, religion, and mental health

services). Though I could have written three separate chapters thoroughly discussing and analyzing each specific detournement, I choose to briefly describe each project to illustrate detournement's influence on non-traditional modes of inquiry and data representation. Though there were similarities across the three detournements, the student researchers exuded unique and distinct stylistic approaches to detourning.

CONCLUSION: DETOURNEMENT

As I discussed in this chapter (and as all the authors in the entire book have sought to show), detournement is a rather unique concept because of its ability to be adapted to and implemented within numerous fields of study and in very different pedagogical contexts. Though the research and process of actually creating a detournement can be time consuming, the most challenging part of detournement is writing about them in a descriptive and analytical way (i.e., as the students did in the papers accompanying their detournements). For example, in my qualitative research methods course, students did a fine job in creating detournements that critically challenged explicit problematic images and language used within media and popular culture texts in their respective topics of interest. However, they lacked a critical discourse to clearly articulate just how their detournements deconstructed the ideologies behind the explicit problematic images and language. However, what may be considered a weakness (i.e., their written accounts of their detournements weren't as persuasive or clear as the detournements themselves) is arguably a strength of detournement. In what sense? The process of creating a detournement guides students in not only critically analyzing racist, sexist, and classist ideologies embedded within public discourses, but also moves students toward a personal critical reflection of their own knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs that reproduce the racist, sexist, and classist ideologies they seek to challenge. The long seldom-traveled highway of detournement is more important than the "final" product.

> This highway leads to the shadowy tip of reality: you're on a through route to the land of the different, the bizarre, the unexplainable … Go as far as you like on this road. Its limits are only those of mind itself. Ladies and Gentlemen, you're entering the wondrous dimension of imagination…Next stop The [Detournement] Zone. (Rod Serling).

This chapter, like the detournements described within it, is an artifact. Similarly, this artifact contains ideas bridged together to construct a product without a culmination. The function of this chapter is to contribute to a discourse that continually reconceptualizes detournement as a pedagogical praxis. For example, coupling Trier's (2005) "'Sordid Fantasies'" article with detournement provided an opening in my courses for students to engage in research that ultimately helped them make meaning of their own lived experiences. As a result, detournement will never produce

a "final" product. Instead, new ideas, new experiences, and new technologies will further develop detournement beyond what Guy Debord originally conceptualized.

NOTES

[1] This detournement can be accessed through the following link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2o8osmVGRQ or by searching Latino stereotypes on Youtube.com

[2] This detournement can be accessed through the following link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBuxZjPzaFc or by searching race and school on Youtube.com

[3] This description appears on the back of the film's movie box cover. Later in this chapter, I discuss movie box covers in more detail.

[4] The italicized words and statements highlight when Clark's voice becomes especially foreful.

[5] I have engaged different groups of students in this activity, with the same results each time. For this chapter, I will use the past tense of the verb because I am discussing what I did with a particular group of students.

[6] Rubina Ramji's (2005) article can be accessed at: http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/Vol9No2/RamjiIslam.htm

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