



from political self-representation."

Developing the practice of interventionist art also requires a consideration of more than the mere ideological content, of course. Questions of form are involved - the place of realist artistic representation continues to be troublesome - as well as the context of artistic production and the relation of artist to audience. With respect to the last, in particular, the approaches taken by contributors vary widely.

Thus, in a populist vein, Peter Bunn and Loraine Leeson describe their evolution from art school radicals to image-makers for the Docklands steering committee which decides on the issues, strategies and priorities of struggle. Visual artist Hans Haeccke, on the other hand, presents himself as a one man flying squad, researching the cities where exhibitions are held in order to identify issues and symbols that make local sense. (In Montreal, he placed posters for Alcan-sponsored operas, a morgue portrait of Steve Biko, and verbal text summarizing Alcan's South African activities in homely aluminum window frames.) A different journey is described by muralist Judy Bacca, whose sponsorship of monumental works, ultimately employing hundreds of workers, meant combining the roles of fundraiser and administrator, bridging between the Los Angeles street scene and City Hall. In the end, saving herself from burn-out required recognizing that her own design talents and responsibility placed her authentically in a position of leadership, a position that broke both feminine gender and Chicano culture norms.

In situations of struggle, other

contributors note, collective participation in the creation of culture breaks down distinctions between artist and audience, creating and unleashing community power. In Uruguay, women sing in prisons to create communities of resistance. In California, Sweet Honey in the Rock, a black women's *a capella* group, sings to cross boundaries between black and lesbian separatist cultural networks. In Kenya, villagers create national identities in theatrical performance. In Jamaica, Sistern, a women's theatre troupe, empowers women to name their own reality.

While a strategy of naming does not in itself constitute an aesthetic, the popular participation it entails tends to discourage formal experiment as a supreme value. Independently of that, the (much maligned) social realist tradition has continued to be influential - for example, as Martha Gever notes, in the making of early feminist videos. On the other hand, feminism in particular has eschewed any single approach, as is documented in Arlene Raven's description of the work of Los Angeles lesbian artists which drew on everything from archaic ritual magic to the latest techniques in photo collage and neon sculpture. In perhaps the best discussion of the Situationalist International available in English, Tom Ward makes a strong case for surrealist disruption of acquiescent (un)consciousness to see, and name, the failures of capitalist abundance.

Finally, there is the problem of distribution: how, in a market society, actually to get radical art out to its intended audience. Community television and free radio provide space on the air waves. Photographer Fred Londier suggests ways of working with unions. Klaus Staack sells posters of his photomontages to German political groups. Lucy Lippard breaks the convention of the detached art critic to help artists and activists communicate. But the strategies that delight are those that turn the media against themselves. Suzanne Lacy and Leila Leibowitz offer guidelines to get feminist political performances covered on that confiner of reality, the news. And Peter King's manual of how the Australian Billboard Utilizing Graffitiists Against

Unhealthy Promotions BUGA UP billboards makes my finger itch for a can of spray paint.

Overall, the anthology has the virtues of bringing together several national experiences, good lay out, many black and white illustrations and an accessible language that such discussions sometimes lack. If some reprinted articles seem to add little to what is already easily available, and if there needs to be a critical introduction that draws connections between the viewpoints expressed, it is nevertheless a useful collection that should fulfill its editors' aims of making practices of political art and debates about them widely known.

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The Politics of Pedagogy: A Review of Peter McLaren's *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

Peter McLaren established his reputation as an important figure in radical education theory with *Cries from the Corridor*, a work in which the brutal and degrading underside of the Canadian inner-city schooling system was revealed in graphic and often disturbing detail. McLaren's ongoing concern with the development of an emancipatory pedagogy is now the focus of a second book, and though this is a more densely written and theory-laden text than his first work, it shows clearly that McLaren remains a perceptive ethnographer of the educational setting. *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* is based on the author's fieldwork at a Toronto Catholic junior high school purported to be the toughest in the city. It is also a school where the majority of the students are the sons and daughters of largely working-class, immigrant Portugese and Italian parents. McLaren's purpose in this book is to offer a

critique of the ideological presuppositions of contemporary education, a purpose which leads him to investigate the processes by which political indoctrination is intertwined throughout the curriculum of mainstream pedagogy. This is an ambition he sustains with considerable success throughout the text.

The most innovative feature of McLaren's approach is the framework of his analysis, the field of ritual studies, or ritology, an emerging perspective which still bears the traces of its interdisciplinary heritage. Because ritology is only now crystallizing around a core of central themes, its systematic application promises as many pitfalls as it does advantages. To the extent that *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* generates a number of important insights through its ritual studies perspective, the book is occasionally hampered by the ill-defined nature of its methodological framework. The very notion of ritual, for example, is notoriously polysemic, and McLaren is forced to pursue his discussion at a fairly high level of abstraction. Consequently, at times the book's theory tends to overwhelm rather than illuminate matters, for the territory McLaren has staked out for analysis becomes rather densely populated with theories, theorists, and definitions. Of course, it should be pointed out that an absence of clear and definite boundaries is hardly surprising in a work that finds its chief lines of influence coming from an array of scholars and disciplinary approaches: anthropology, semiology, education, religious studies, and dramaturgy are but a few of the established fields ritology claims as kin. Thus while *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* is a model of eclecticism, McLaren is impressive in his capacity to move with relative sureness between disparate and often competing schools of thought.

McLaren's investigation of the ritual dimensions of education is structured around an analysis of the intersection of four socially and symbolically constructed "states": the street-corner state; the student state; the sanctity state; and the home state. Each state is comprised of particular rituals, and these ritual complexes are themselves embedded in the social

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matrix of the surrounding economic and political environment. Moreover, each state is constituted from specific interactive modes: the street-corner state, for example, frequently turns on the expression of resistance, while the student state is directed by a monologic, regimented code of behaviour that is found inside the school. The relationship between a given state and the students who participate in its expression is clearly dialectical: To the extent that a particular interactive mode defines the nature of the students' actions, so too do the students themselves construct the particular state. The meaning of a ritual is only realized in the fact of its performance, a relationship McLaren defines as "bi-directionality." By engaging in ritual, the performer is made a part of the social order even as participation establishes that order. For McLaren's study this means that as students participate in the rituals of schooling, they also embody the cultural values that are connected with those ritual forms. Hence engagement in ritual, he says, is a function of political power (p. 131).

What this argument makes apparent is that education can be little more than the accomplice of oppression, a conclusion to which McLaren finds his research has continually drawn him. Teaching, he tells us, is a practice by which students are systematically disempowered. Students with working-class backgrounds in particular lose out on several fronts, for not only does the education they receive prevent them from fully developing their potentials, it also prepares them for the low-paying jobs society sets aside for them. As McLaren sees it, the failure that awaits so many working-class youngsters in traditional schooling is "a crucial factor in the maintenance and evolution of the social order" (p.173). A religious school fares no better, he says, because "the efforts of Catholic schooling in helping the poor and oppressed are invisibly linked to a culture of domination and exploitation" (p.184).

McLaren's analysis concludes with a short offering of general recommendations. He argues that teachers should learn to develop sensitivity to the rituals that define the practice of teaching, and once they understand that teaching is

comprised of an ensemble of cultural symbols and ritual behaviours, they must discover ways of "reritualizing" the education setting. In other words, teachers must learn how to orchestrate the classroom rituals in ways that neutralize the implicit messages by which students learn to accept oppressive societal values. As McLaren sees it, "the teacher, as a prescriber of arbitrary meanings and guardian of the hegemonic boundaries of knowledge, assumes the position of affirming, and to a lesser extent manufacturing, the dominant cultural forms of the social order" (p.222). This is a role desperately in need of transformation. Yet exhorting teachers to step outside the referential frame by which a society defines what an educator's role should be is to suggest that teachers disengage themselves from their culture in order to reframe their social roles. This raises troublesome philosophical and practical concerns, however, for to try and get beyond one's culture is to entertain the notion that culture itself is a disembodied entity capable of existing independently of human agents. Hence the transformation of the educator's role can really only be imagined if it proceeds in tandem with other equally radical changes taking place at numerous interconnecting levels of society.

Teachers, McLaren says, must become "liminal servants" and learn how to draw from their "shamanic roots." Moreover, they must abandon the dichotomous root paradigm which sees learning as a mental practice cut off from practical, embodied experience. Learning should transpire in a "felt context" in which participation and performance are recognized as vital ingredients for true understanding. Thus, for example, the arts should be made a central part of the daily curriculum and not merely set aside as recreational interludes. Drama, for instance, could be used as an instructional device in other disciplines like history and literature. If teachers encourage students to realize the connections between artistic expression and the pleasures of "intellectual" achievements, they may also be able to generate the conditions which make learning a truly creative and spontaneous adventure. Hence greater "interdisciplinary

collaboration" pertaining directly to the study of educational practices is absolutely crucial.

Hans Barth has said: "Since education is everywhere closely related to the prevailing form of government, its principles cannot be reformed without also changing the constitution of the state." This is certainly the larger and more pressing issue proponents of an emancipatory pedagogy need to address. Though the question of who will educate the educators is never raised in *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, it nevertheless forms the unspoken backdrop against which McLaren's ideas are thrown into relief. It also constitutes a serious challenge to the kinds of solutions McLaren is presently prepared to suggest.

Still, McLaren's is a provocative perspective, for *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* can itself be read as a challenge, a challenge to teachers to become political and cultural revolutionaries willing to undertake the deconstruction of a system which functions to maintain existing levels of societal oppression. In his view, "education" and "liberation" must somehow be (re)connected. Students should not be disempowered in the classroom, but given the social and intellectual resources that turn schooling into a process of practical and political enlightenment.

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