

COPIES, HYBRIDS, AND VISUAL MASH-UP:
POPULAR CULTURE IN ADOLESCENT ARTWORK

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores the influence of popular culture on the artwork and aesthetic values of adolescents. Historically, copying and appropriation have been used by artists to improve their technical skills, to develop satire or social commentary, or to create unusual juxtapositions. Adolescents receive different messages about originality from teachers, parents, contemporary culture, and from their peers. While some teachers and parents discourage different methods of copying, these practices are pervasive in contemporary art practice, and also in adolescent's sketchbooks. In an action-research project at Pratt Institute's Saturday Art School, popular culture in both self-directed and teacher-directed assignments was observed and documented. The findings suggest that many students who use images from popular culture are doing more than imitating what they see, and that they use these images to achieve a variety of artistic and social goals. The results may indicate that students are responding to cultural shifts regarding issues of ownership and originality.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

In this thesis, the author uses specialized terms to describe some ideas and practices related to the research question. In the context of this thesis, the meaning of the following words are redefined:

Appropriating: A method of using content from popular culture in which an artist blends aspects of popular culture with original content/images.

Borrowing: A method of using content from popular culture in which an artist recreates an existing story or scene from popular culture while using a personal style.

Copying: An attempt to make an exact replica of an existing image.

Model: From Smith (1985): An existing work of art or media that an artist uses as an example or inspiration for their own artwork, i.e. a comic book, a movie, a cartoon character, a painting.

Student-initiated artwork: An art project that a student devises for himself/herself.

Teacher-initiated artwork: An art project that a student creates in response to a classroom assignment or a teacher's instruction.

Mash-up: The blending of various aspects of unrelated artworks to create a new work of art.

CHAPTER I

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Introduction

I arrived at the topic of popular culture in adolescent art by reflecting on my own classroom experiences, both as a teacher and as a student. Images from popular culture are incredibly pervasive in student artwork; I have seen them emerge in every class that I have taught or observed over the last four years, from kindergarteners to high school students. During this time I have heard many teachers discourage students from copying images from popular culture, and I have discouraged it myself without fully comprehending my motives for doing so. In order to better understand students' use of popular culture, I have undertaken this research project.

Popular culture played a major role in my artistic development as a middle school student. By age twelve, I was already describing myself as an artist: I made artwork in my free time, enjoyed my public school art classes, and attended many extra-curricular workshops. About this time, I developed a friendship with a girl who was very enamored with science fiction. She introduced me to several science-fiction television shows, one of which was *The X-Files*. After several months of watching this show together, we began to write our own stories inspired by the show. Adopting *The X-Files* characters as our own raw material, we created short stories, comics, drawings, and plays.

These projects were mostly done at home, but I also worked on them in school. I did not bring the work into art class, but instead would draw furtively in math class, at the lunch table and in study hall. Our largest project was called "DOOL", which was a series of letters, notes and stories that documented the lives of the two FBI agents from the show. In our story, these agents were working undercover at our middle school as teachers, protecting a group of students who had been identified as alien-human hybrids. As our other friends became increasingly aware of this project, we would write them into

the narrative.

The project became an everyday event; it was as though we had created a second life in a fictional world. We publically and frequently addressed each other by the names of our alter egos, and peers who were not involved looked upon our behavior as bizarre, to say the least. Teachers were increasingly frustrated by the activity because it kept us from paying attention in class. I maintained good grades, but was lectured repeatedly for not participating in discussions or listening to lectures because I was too busy doodling or writing in my notebook.

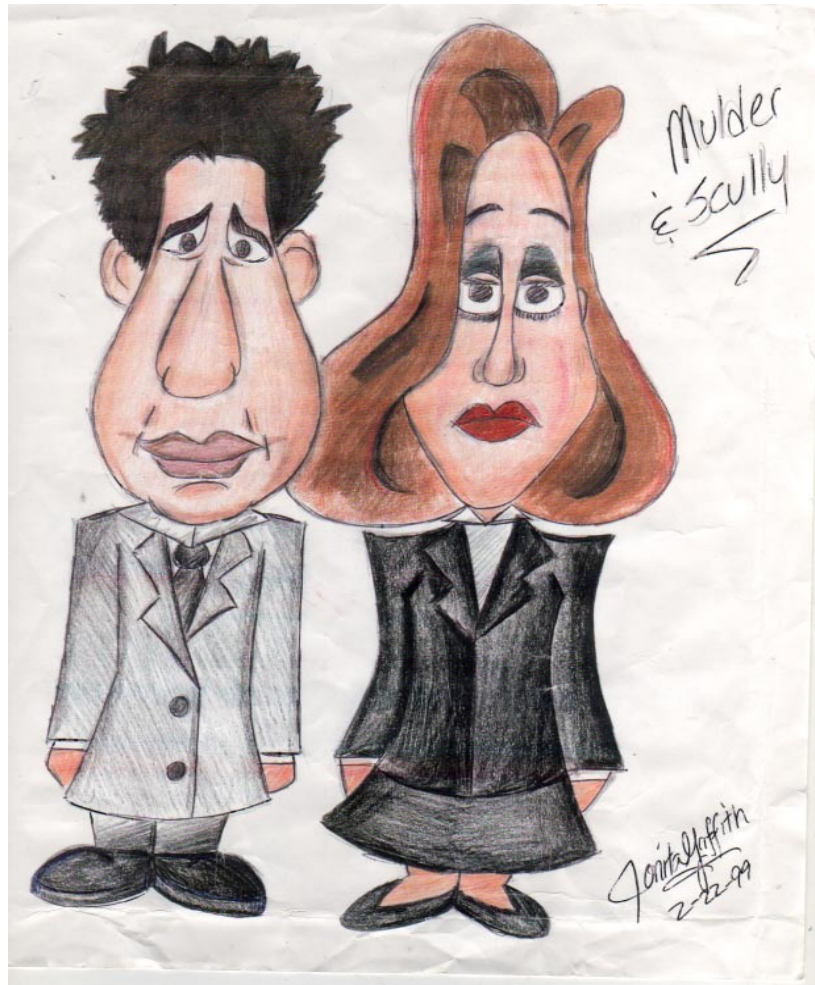


Figure 1. One of the author's drawings from adolescence, inspired by *The X-Files*.

Looking back at this period of my life, I am amused and somewhat embarrassed by our infatuation. However, I also have vivid memories of the excitement of working on

these projects. The collaborative nature of these creations means that *The X-Files* is forever imbedded in the memories of my social life as an adolescent. Our method of bonding may have been unusual, but it involved prolific artistic activity. The material was not original, and yet these silly drawings and writings were a kind of preparation for the work I would be doing later when studying illustration in college.

More recently I have become aware that several of my creative friends engaged in similar adolescent activities. I have heard confessions of role-playing games, illustrations and comic-strip homage paid to such icons as *Sailor Moon*, *Star Trek*, *Kiss*, and many other facets of popular culture. In addition, many of these friends had cohorts with whom they shared the creative process; these projects were almost always collaborative endeavors rather than individual pursuits.

While I look back on this time fondly, I also think about the things that many teachers said to me during this time. I remember hearing, “Don’t trace”, “Don’t work from photographs”, “Don’t use someone else’s ideas”. I witnessed teachers reproaching students for drawing in a style that too closely resembled anime or manga, forms of Japanese popular culture that are highly recognizable. Even in classes where my teachers were more lenient, I felt that using recognizable images was taboo.

With these experiences as a public school student behind me, I began teaching art classes during my second year of undergraduate study. My first few teaching experiences were with elementary students in the summer, where popular characters frequently made appearances in student work. Ninja Turtles, My Little Ponies, Pokémon, Mickey Mouse, Elmo, and many other characters appeared in free drawings, puppets, sculptures, and paintings.

In the spring of 2009 I had the opportunity to teach the Art and Storytelling class with another art education student at Pratt Institute’s Saturday Art School.

Unsurprisingly, the children who came to this class in the spring had interests in comic books and other forms of narrative imagery such as illustration, film and animation. During my experience teaching this course, my partner and I designed lessons in which students were asked to create original characters and storylines and to avoid copying characters from popular culture. These included sculptural monsters,

character drawings, comic strips, illustrations of settings, dream collages, and other projects. Despite our requests, many students in this class borrowed characters, scenes, and dialogue from their favorite forms of popular culture and used them in their own work. I felt a certain connection to these students because of my own adolescent tendencies, but I also felt that it was important to encourage originality. I found myself repeating the mantras of my childhood: don't copy, think of something new. To reduce the amount of copying that I saw, I suggested that students create their own characters instead. Even though I encouraged this, I did not always stop students when I saw them use an existing character.

The final lesson of the class was for students to create a short comic book. As students worked, we saw characters from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Power Puff Girls*, and *South Park* appear in their artwork. When I read the comics after class that day, I found that many students had created narratives that had little to do with their borrowed characters. Despite the fact that some of the content was not their own, they still created original plotlines, compositions, and dialogue in their comics. Seeing this, I felt conflicted about whether or not I should have discouraged my students from using borrowed content.

When I quickly dismissed acts of imitation as “copying” and asked my students to focus on originality, I instinctively felt that their needs were not being addressed. The pervasive nature of this behavior led me to think that perhaps the students were learning or gaining something from the process that I had yet to identify or fully understand. My uncertainty about how to respond to students led me to this research topic.

While other art teachers that I have observed consider this kind of art-making to be strictly imitative or amateur, it appears to me that many works of contemporary art and culture are a result of similar processes. Ideas are traded between artists of varying disciplines all the time: novels are turned into comics, and comics are subsequently translated into movies. This intertextual nature of popular culture is very visible to adolescents; they watch a character like J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter evolve from a storybook character, to an illustrated character, to an actor moving through a digitally

animated world. In the past year a comic adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* was published, in addition to an unlikely adaption of a Jane Austen novel, *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*. These are the products of collaboration between filmmakers, editors, authors, animators, art directors, illustrators, and many other creative professionals.

This exchange also occurs in the fine arts. Many contemporary artists have used the images of popular culture in their own work: Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Richard Hamilton, Jim Dine, among others. These artists do more than translate images from one medium to another; they also use them for social or political commentary. In short, the appropriation and reinvention of images have been well-established within the art world for some time, in galleries as much as in popular culture. Knowing this, should art teachers always shield their students from the practice?

Looking at contemporary creative practice, professionals are often working in teams, sharing and borrowing ideas from each other as well as from cultural products. Artists often join together to work in studios or design firms, on film crews, or in 'think tanks'. Even fine artists who show in galleries employ studio assistants who not only perform administrative tasks, but contribute to the physical creation of their artworks. In such situations, assigning ownership or authorship becomes more complex and more inclusive.

Making these observations as a student, teacher, and professional artist has led me to question the value of pop culture appropriation in the art classroom. The attitude of other teachers towards these imitative behaviors has been varied. For instance, some educators that I have observed insist on total originality in student work. Other teachers adopted a laissez faire attitude toward popular culture in the classroom. Still other teachers believe that students can learn valuable technical skills by closely copying the work of famous artists, but are hesitant to allow students to draw characters from a well-known cartoon or comic book.

The reason that this issue is important to the field of art education is because teachers control what techniques and theories students encounter in an art classroom. If our goal as educators is to prepare students to understand and participate in the

contemporary world, then adolescent acts of appropriation may be valuable if they prepare students to contribute to current cultural activities, and to develop work that is meaningful to themselves and others.

Research Questions

In researching the ways that students interact with the images of popular culture, I wanted to explore the following questions: In what ways does popular visual culture influence the artwork and aesthetic values of adolescents? What roles do copying, borrowing, or appropriating popular images play in the development of content that is meaningful to adolescents?

My research explores what forms of popular culture students choose to copy, and in what ways the students incorporate these images into their work. I wanted to know whether students simply copy what they see, or if any students transform images from popular culture into something completely unique and separate from the originals. To do this, I observed a group of adolescents aged 10-13 years in a weekend art class.

During the study, I documented students' art practices through photography, classroom observations, and student writing samples. I observed a variety of copying behaviors, and tried to learn what types of images students liked and which aspects of popular culture they used the most, whether brands, characters, styles, logos, environments, or other types of images.

I felt that middle school students were the most appropriate group for this study, not only because my own experiences took place during this stage, but because the age group is especially invested in popular culture. Children group themselves with others who share similar interests in music, movies and celebrities, and so these interests become a part of their social identity. As students living in and around in New York City, these children are well-versed in popular culture. Even if some students cannot afford to attend concerts or go to the movies, they are certainly bombarded with advertising and product placement in a way that many suburban students are not. It will be interesting to see how this exposure affects student artwork.

In addition, educational literature suggests that this age group is well-suited to group work. In *Creative and Mental Growth*, Lowenfeld (1947) describes the developmental stage of 9-12 year olds as the “gang age”, suggesting that students in their preteen years thrive on collaboration and benefit greatly from sharing ideas and learning experiences with their peers. For these reasons, younger middle school students appear to be an ideal group for my research.

My own experience taught me that students often create pop-inspired projects outside of their regular art classrooms, especially if their art teachers respond negatively to borrowed imagery. As a result, students create this kind of artwork in notebooks, sketchbooks, and during extra-curricular activities. In order to get a glimpse of these more ‘covert’ art activities, I chose to observe students in a Saturday school setting. I was able to view students’ personal sketchbooks, comic strips and other projects that may not have been available in a public school setting.

It is my hope that this thesis will provide answers about how students use borrowed imagery and why they do so. With this knowledge, we may be better equipped to respond to students who choose to bring popular imagery into the classroom.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review explores a few different topics. First it addresses students' use of popular culture in their artwork, and what observations other educators have made about such projects. The review also explores how students participate in the creation of popular culture, and examines how copying and appropriation have been used in contemporary art practices. Finally, there is a discussion of literature about teachers who actively bring popular culture into their classrooms through related projects or discussions.

Copying in Adolescent Art

One of my research questions is how students use images from popular culture. Some students copy directly through observation or tracing. Other students may use techniques that more closely resemble appropriation. Appropriation is defined by the Tate Glossary as “the more or less direct taking over into a work of art of a real object or even an existing work of art... [it] raises questions of originality, authenticity, and authorship...” (“Appropriation”, n.d., para. 1) In this vein, students may use characters or images created by others as raw material in hybrid images and with original narratives.

Smith (1985) cites a number of studies in “Copying and Artistic Behaviors”, in which she concludes that students who create comic strips are not just robotically copying the commercial products that they read and admire. In support of their behavior, she states that “there are types of copying that cannot be characterized as mindless”. (Smith, 1985, p. 147) One of the projects that she discusses, from a comic book club run by the Teachers and Writers Collaborative at P.S. 75 in Manhattan, showed that student-made comics had two additional themes that were not found in commercial strips: everyday activities, and fears/anxieties.

Smith (1985) also cites a case study by D. Gentin. Gentin (1980) observed and interviewed a boy named Robert, whose infatuation with Charles Shultz's *Peanuts* led to appropriative activities. Robert drew his own version of *Peanuts* characters, such as Charlie Brown and Lucy, but used them in original stories and novel situations. Gentin concluded that Robert's comic-making was a creative endeavor because the results differed from the model (i.e. the original *Peanuts* cartoons) in both form and content.

Based on these studies, Smith states that such imitative activities should not be discouraged by educators. She suggests that "young children who use imagery from a model are primarily motivated by the desire to use recognizable stock characters in a narrative, as a means of communication." (Smith, 1985, p. 154)

Brent Wilson (1974) has a different stance on what motivates students' appropriative acts. He conducted a case study of a student named J.C. Holz., an avid creator of comic strips and superheroes, which he made at home and not as a part of school assignments. Holtz invented original characters and plots, but also imitated known characters, and closely followed the formal elements of the comic strips that he read: using multiple points of view or perspectives, using high contrast, high action, onomatopoeia, and much more.

Wilson (1974) suggests that the art that J.C. makes at home is fundamentally different from the kinds of art that children make in schools. While J.C. often brought his superhero comics to school and received praise from peers and teachers for his work, Wilson believes that these superhero comics are made solely for the purposes of play and fantasy gratification, and he suggests that this kind of art-making arises out of boredom and tension. Wilson theorizes that children's art can be placed on a scale between two poles: routine and ritual art-making on one side, and playful, role-playing art on the other. He thinks that both are useful to children, but the very nature of the playful art forms is such that they cannot be produced by school lessons, which are structured, process-oriented, and mandatory. Wilson concludes that, because school art projects are teacher-structured, children are prevented from bringing their personal motivation and agency to the work. Instead, he believes that they are motivated by a desire to solve the given problem, to learn a new skill, to please their teachers, to get a good grade, or for other

incentives. Wilson compares teacher-created art activities to puzzles which, though they can be challenging and educational, are also somewhat passive in the sense that students are adhering to rules and guidelines that come from an extrinsic source.

According to Wilson (1974), J.C. did not consider himself an artist, despite his obvious preoccupation and skill with creating comics. This would seem to lend credence to Wilson's observation that this artwork is part of a student's fantasy and play scenarios: less about the product being created, and more about the experience of playing out scenarios and avoiding boredom.

More recent research has been done on manga, a genre of graphic novels and comics which originated in Japan after World War II. Manga has since spread across the globe and has gained popularity in the United States. Masami Toku (2001) conducted a study to examine how drawings made by Japanese school children differed from those created by U.S. students. In "Cross-Cultural Analysis of Artistic Development: Drawing by Japanese and U.S. Children" (2001), Toku describes how she and a panel of experts sorted students' drawing samples according to fourteen categories of spatial treatment which were described by Elliot W. Eisner (1967) in "A Comparison of the Developmental Drawing: Characteristics of Culturally Advantaged and Culturally Disadvantaged Children." Toku and the panel found that some of the Japanese students' drawings did not fit easily into these categories. To account for the diversity in the drawings by Japanese students, Toku created six more to account spatial arrangements that were unique to the Japanese students. About a third of all the drawings analyzed fell into one of the six new categories that Toku and other researchers created, which included spatial arrangements like birds-eye views, multiple perspectives, and photographic views.

Toku (2001) acknowledges that certain cultural practices and even geographic factors contribute to these different uses of space. She explains, for example, that school children from one of the schools have art class on the fifth floor of their school and are perhaps more familiar with "birds-eye" views of their playground or other spaces. But she also indicates that these other forms of spatial arrangement are often used in manga books, which are incredibly pervasive in Japanese society. Besides space, Toku indicates

that students' exaggeration of physical proportions and facial expressions are consistent with manga traditions, and that these exaggerations differ between boys and girls. That may be significant because almost all manga books in Japan are created specifically for girls or boys, rarely for both of them.

These studies show that students internalize the artistic forms that they encounter in popular culture and use these techniques and styles in their own work, in the face of traditional theories about adolescent developmental stages. Whether the work is done in school, at home or in other spaces, the students are doing more than "copying", they are taking specific themes, plotlines, or principles and recombining them to create their own original works.

The notion that students learn to draw and create by observing other art forms has already been tested by teachers with traditional drawing and painting. In their book *Teaching Drawing from Art*, Brent Wilson, Marjorie Wilson and Al Hurwitz (1987) describe lesson ideas and techniques in which children are asked to create artworks from direct observation of historical works of art. There is a long history of fine-arts education in which students copy masterworks, or draw from classical sculptures. Wilson, Wilson and Hurwitz (1987) argue that these practices have educational value; by making work inspired by other artists, students can add those styles and techniques to a repertoire from which they can freely pick and choose later.

In reviewing these articles and studies, I notice that there are many works which describe the formal and thematic content of student artwork as a result of their interactions with popular visual culture. The tendency in the research is to examine the product that the child makes and to compare it closely to what Nancy Smith calls the "model" (Smith, 1985, p. 148), or the cultural form which the child chooses to imitate. It would appear that students choose to copy these forms because they are immediately available to them in media and consumer culture. Students are audience to forms like television and comics on a daily basis, but few students are exposed to art in museums and galleries in such a consistent way.

Also, it seems that characters of television, film, and comics are often transplanted into students' own narratives. Based on the articles by Wilson (1974) and

Smith (1985), it appears to me that many of these characters become a kind of avatar through which students act out personal desires and feelings. While some students act out their fantasies through highly-realized video games, other children appear to do so through writing and drawing, using figures from popular culture with whom they identify or whom they aspire to become. These acts of appropriation are very interesting, but according to Wilson (1974) they take place outside of the school, in personal play or play with friends, and therefore such practices may be incompatible with school culture.

Student Participation in Popular Visual Culture

In order to better understand the reasons why students appropriate imagery from popular culture, I need to examine their relationship to these images beyond copying or borrowing. How do students interact with images from culture?

Two very widespread pop culture phenomena are manga and anime. These Japanese genres of graphic novels and animated cartoons are becoming increasingly popular in the United States. At my local public library in Astoria in New York, several shelves are dedicated to manga and other graphic novel genres. I have had many students who vocalized an interest in manga and have brought their related comics and drawings to class.

According to Wilson and Toku (2003) in “Boys’ Love, Yaoi, and Art Education” almost 40% of all Japanese publications are related to manga. They are not only read by adolescents, but a wide variety of Manga comics are marketed to adults and even to preschoolers. Students not only read these products, but are often involved in creating them. According to Wilson and Toku (2003), student-made comics and amateur comics are so popular in Japan that they are celebrated in large public markets held annually in giant halls and exhibition spaces. High school students, college students, and adults gather to trade and sell their wares, called “dojinshi”. Dojinshi not only refers to the comics themselves, but to the way in which they are made. The term is also used to describe clubs or circles of students who meet to collaborate on Manga and to share their ideas. Dojinshi is usually created in such social settings, where students meet to trade characters, plotlines and ideas. This challenges the notion that pop culture media is

merely a group of factory-made products which inevitably turn adolescents into passive consumers. Dojinshi are “created mostly by teenagers and young adults mainly for themselves.” (Wilson & Toku, 2003, para. 4)

Something that is extremely interesting in “Boys’ Love, Yaoi, and Art Education” is a discussion of two kinds of dojinshi / manga, referred to as “boys’ love” and “yaoi”. These narratives, mostly created and read by young women, are stories in which two men are involved in a romantic, homosexual relationship. It is not uncommon for these works to be graphically sexual or violent. According to Wilson and Toku (2003), the consumers and creators of these comics alike insist that they are not pornographic, because the comics are neither intended for homosexual readers nor are they meant to arouse their viewers. Instead the women who read and write these comics insist that a relationship between two men is a more ideal expression of love than heterosexual love.

Wilson & Toku (2003) quote conversations with various consumers and artists, both professional and amateur, in trying to unpack what this philosophy means and why boys’ love and yaoi are so popular. These conversations lead the authors to believe that boys’ love and yaoi may represent a response by young Japanese women to sexism in Japanese society, and their anxiety about traditional roles they will be expected to fill when married, including motherhood. Because men have higher societal status, and a male-male partnership would not result in children, these fantasy stories create a reality in which love is not inhibited by inequalities. As one fan was quoted as saying, the comics express a desire to both “be a man and at the same time to be loved by a man.” (Wilson & Toku, 2003, para. 22)

Aside from the fact that this information is both fascinating and unique to Japanese culture, this information is relevant to art education because students are actively engaged in reading, making, and sharing these comics at the same time as they are involved in formal art education. According to Wilson and Toku (2003) the Ministry of Education in Japan required that manga be included in the art education curriculum of eight and ninth grade students as of 1998, because it manga is so pervasive in Japanese society. However, Toku and Wilson (2003) believe that the inclusion of manga in the curriculum does not make sense:

Dojinshi and its yaoi and boys' love components flourish because they are subversive, beyond control, and because they stand in opposition to conventional societal norms. To put these forms of youth visual culture in schools would probably rob teens of the pleasures that surround their creation and consumption: when we require students to do and make what they themselves have elected to do on their own it becomes no longer their own. (Wilson & Toku, 2003, para. 38)

It seems odd for teachers to talk about the formal qualities and elements of manga without addressing the very content that makes it attractive to students in the first place. And yet the content of this media is deemed taboo or too risqué to appear in the classroom. In fact, much of the content of popular visual culture falls into categories which are carefully navigated and/or censored in schools, especially sexuality and violence.

A spin-off of manga that became especially popular in the United States is Pokémon, short for pocket monsters. The phenomenon is extremely difficult to name, because its product is intertextual; rather than existing in only one form, Pokémon spans a wide range of media from books and movies, to games and trading cards. The premise of Pokémon is that players collect monsters from a variety of species and categories, train them in combat techniques, and then fight them in order to increase their monsters' powers and to acquire additional monsters. The ultimate goal of Pokémon is for players to collect all of the monsters. Monsters can be traded within the video games, but players also trade their characters with other real players using cable connections between their game consoles and by swapping (or buying) trading cards. In order to properly train and fight Pokémon, players must also develop an extensive knowledge of the different Pokémon species, which have unique properties and excel at different maneuvers.

In "Gotta Catch 'em All: Structure, Agency and Pedagogy in Children's Media Culture", David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green (2003), examine the pedagogical implications of Pokémon, and argue that the games require a level of student agency. Students who engage in these games have to memorize the complex categorization of monster species and how to apply their skills effectively. That knowledge is stored in the games, on websites dedicated to the games, and on trading cards which must be shared

with other players in order to be mastered. One cannot easily become a Pokémon “master” without engaging in the social aspects of game play, including sharing highly specialized information, trading cards and monsters, and fighting others’ monsters. The authors argue that Pokémon games are designed to create social activity; children learn social skills as they negotiate, barter, and teach one another during Pokémon play.

Another interesting argument presented by Buckingham and Sefton-Green (2003) is that games which take place in fantasy worlds, as Pokémon does, function as alternative play spaces where children explore, create and interact with peers. The authors suggest that these games help to “compensate for the growing lack of such spaces in the real world, as children have been increasingly confined to the home... a self-contained universe with its own unique geography and cosmology that can only be mastered through active exploration.” (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 2003, p. 387) This may be something especially true for urban students, who have a lack of free spaces in which to play. When every corner is a commercial business that discourages loitering, and public parks erect signs to prohibit ball playing, perhaps these fantasy landscapes are the one place that students can turn to unleash their energies, whether creative or destructive.

Also of interest are the results of a study by Anderson Macklin (1969), which indicate that students’ aesthetic preferences are influenced by the kinds of art present in their local environment. Macklin conducted her study by comparing the artistic preferences of a group of high school students to examples of public art and architecture in their surrounding community. Students took two tests in which they indicated their preference (on a Likert scale of one to five) for different images which had been categorized by a panel of educators as “realistic”, “traditional”, “distorted (abstract)” and other categories. Students’ categories of preference matched the types of public art which were present in their local community. While this study may not have much to do with the art of popular culture, it suggests that students’ preferences are heavily influenced by the kinds of images they interact with on a daily basis. If that is true, the images of popular culture might have a tremendous influence on students’ aesthetic preferences as well, because of the high level of student involvement with this kind of media. Students

who read manga might prefer cartoons. Other forms of media like movies or animation may make students feel more or less inclined toward realistic art.

Copying and Appropriation in Contemporary Art Practice

The practices of borrowing and appropriating are well established in contemporary art practice, not only in terms of artists copying the style of other artists, but also incorporating techniques, images, and content from popular visual culture.

In *Vitamin D: New Perspectives on Drawing*, Emma Dexter (2005) lists several prominent artists who ‘borrow’ in order to produce their own work. She describes the work of a Mexican artist named Dr. Lakra, who combines photographs of cover girls from 1940’s magazines with tattoos, stereotypic imagery of Latino culture, and Catholic imagery. Dexter says that these works:

...act as a site for a battle between competing cultures: the inspired-by-America, celebrity-driven, pseudo-clean-living world of the original aspirant cover girl, pitted against the tattoos that suggest the release of her own private and subjective desires or emotions, in turn pitted against the sentimental and residually Catholic imagery of a Latino community struggling for visibility and to assert itself.

(Dexter, 2005, p. 5)

Here, the act of appropriation is used to juxtapose images and symbols whose meanings are changed and complicated by their new context. Dexter points to other artists from the 1980’s and 90’s whose work incorporates cultural forms such as:

...rock culture and memorabilia, psychedelia, fanzines, film noir, comic books, and fundamentalist Christianity – in fact, the full gamut of the cultural lives of millions of American teenagers growing up in comfortable suburbia.

(Dexter, 2005, p. 5)

In this passage, Dexter fully acknowledges that these materials compose the cultural environment of most suburban American teens. She goes on to describe these materials as the inspiration for a whole genre of work called “bedroom art”, wherein young adults create similar works in the privacy (or confinement) of their own rooms. If appropriative techniques have already been sanctioned by the realm of ‘high art’, then

why do some schools continue to reject the validity of such practices for students?

Acts of imitation are not only present in contemporary art practice; Historically, artists and serious students of art have used copying as a means to increase technical proficiency, in ways that many educators today view as detrimental to students' creative growth and development. Painters have made copies of teachers' or master artists' paintings, in hopes of learning certain kinds of brushwork, lighting effects, color palettes, and more. Draftsmen have worked from sculptures and casts of the human form in addition to working from live models; classical Greek and Roman sculpture is often viewed as the standard of perfection for creating figurative work, and is therefore considered an ideal model for drawings and sculptures alike. Supporters of this kind of imitation-as-learning actively bring these activities into the art classroom. Mentioned earlier in this review, *Teaching Drawing from Art* is a book which outlines a variety of 'drawing from art' activities, and the authors Wilson, Wilson and Hurwitz (1987) argue that acquiring new styles through observation and replication adds richness and diversity to an artists' personal repertoire. Students learn a variety of techniques by responding visually to the work of other artists, and it is assumed that the students will be able to recall them later and use them effectively in different contexts.

Popular Culture in Teaching Practice & Philosophy

Finally, there are teachers who make attempts to bring the realm of the popular into the classroom. The literature concerns how they include these materials, why they choose to do so, and how they navigate issues of problematic content.

In "Teaching Popular Visual Culture: Deconstructing Disney in the Elementary Art Classroom", Anderson and Tavin (2003) describe a project for fifth grade students in which the class watched and analyzed several popular animated Disney films then analyzed them to identify stereotypes and unfavorable presentations of different genders and ethnicities. Then they made visual responses to these works which incorporated elements of popular visual culture including magazine cut-outs, toys, Disney imagery, and others.

In their introduction to the project, the authors severely indict Disney and other media moguls whose products saturate the daily lives of American children, calling them the “teachers of the new millennium.” (Anderson & Tavin, 2003, p. 21) They believe that Disney’s characterizations of different social groups and historical events “play a significant role in the symbolic and material milieu of contemporary society by shaping and often limiting, perceptions of reality and constructing a normative “vision” of the world.” (Anderson & Tavin, 2003, p. 21) They note the tendency for Disney filmmakers to leave out important historical facts (citing *Pocahontas* for its inaccurate depictions of the experience of the Powhatan Indians and their relationship with European settlers). They criticize the company’s tendency to relegate minority voices to the role of animal characters (*Tarzan* and *Lady & the Tramp*). And probably the most consistent characterization, Tavin and Anderson condemn Disney’s depictions of females: fulfilled or saved only by love, becoming witches or villains in their middle age, and only taking on motherly roles as elderly, post-menopausal women.

Because these images are so pervasive, the authors argue that they become part of a child’s worldview, influencing their assumptions about others and themselves. Regarding how teachers should respond to the pedagogy of popular culture, they state that, “we have a pressing responsibility to help develop critical, reflexive, and meaningful approaches to interpreting, critiquing and producing (alternative) images in visual culture.” (Anderson & Tavin, 2003, p. 21)

Here the teachers believe that popular culture should be brought into the classroom in order to be placed under the microscope and probed for meanings. The teachers view the student as an unwitting victim of cultural products who must be taught to read them and then encouraged to rebel. But the authors themselves acknowledge problems with this approach, specifically because popular culture is pleasurable to students as well as to adults. To bring popular culture into the classroom strictly to criticize its messages, are teachers simply telling students that their interest in cultural materials is inappropriate and misplaced?

The approach also assumes that students will agree that the characterizations made by these materials are somehow flawed or undesirable. While the racism and

sexism in Disney movies may be easy to identify and admonish, what about materials that present unfavorable or stereotypical views of homosexuals, or of different religious groups? Students' opinions may be much more varied when it comes to these issues.

In "Toward a Playful Pedagogy: Popular Culture and the Pleasures of Transgression", Duncum (2009) addresses this issue. On the question of incorporating popular culture into school curriculum, he states that "virtually no attention has been paid to the contradiction between the irrational, often-subversive nature of popular culture and the rationality normally required within formal education." (Duncum, 2009, p. 232) That is to say, educators like Tavin and Anderson (2003) may be right to want to help their students critically evaluate and understand the materials of culture. However, by leading students toward political correctness, they also ignore that the "utterly inane and politically incorrect" (Duncum, 2009, p. 232) nature of popular culture may be what attracts some students to these materials. Duncum (2009) calls this the "pursuit of rationality." (p. 235). While students are required to adopt appropriate language, attitudes and behavior while in school, popular culture is full of expressions of the taboo, the immature and the absurd. Therefore students may have little interest making these often violently and rudely expressive materials conform to a school-appropriate discourse. Duncum further addresses teacher responses to such products when created by the students themselves:

When students produce work that is just plain silly, or ostensibly sexist, racist, homophobic, vulgar, offensive to people with physical disabilities, and so on, what are teachers to do? So far, art teachers have dealt with popular culture largely by avoiding such dilemmas... but if teachers are truly to engage with the popular culture of their students, the pleasures of transgression cannot long be ignored." (Duncum, 2009, pp. 232-233)

Rather than positing that children are merely the passive consumers of materials produced by profit-seeking corporations, Duncum also points out that the corporations that produce popular visual culture mine mass culture for their content; there are trend-spotters, youth specialists and other "researchers" who go out into mass culture looking for ideas that can be exploited commercially. In other words, the creators of popular

culture feed on students' expressions; the relationship between these two groups is often symbiotic. This seems to align to the explanation of dojinshi by Wilson and Toku (2003): the students read manga, appropriate its form, create original works with new techniques and content which are then mimicked by adult authors and marketed back to the students. The process is cyclical and students are involved in production as well as consumption.

Duncum (2009) cites examples of student artwork modeled on popular culture that rebels against the rationality of school culture and expresses content that is sexualized, violent, racist or grotesque. Often the students mock the school culture, making fun of teachers or other students. When these issues arise in the art classroom, they can be difficult for teachers to navigate, who rightly become concerned about disciplinary actions toward students or themselves. Therefore the introduction of the popular to the art classroom is a calculated risk taken by the educator, where he or she must straddle a line between defending students' voices and adhering to school policies regarding discrimination, harassment, tolerance, or other issues.

In "Censorship in Contemporary Art Education", Lee Emery (2002) discusses the ways in which educators walk this line of respecting the demands of school policy and law, while also introducing students to what is happening in the current world of art. She interviews many different educators who have confronted these issues and asks them how they have coped with issues of appropriateness in students' work as well as the work of the artists that they introduce to their students, whether through classroom lectures, books, or gallery visits. She describes a kind of censorship employed by teachers via intentional omission of controversial topics. Teachers who do not feel comfortable or confident teaching material that qualifies as offensive, disgusting or disturbing often just leave it out altogether, or only lead students to these artwork indirectly, by suggesting that they see certain a gallery show where they know that the students will encounter the work.

Summary

Looking at these four areas, many important issues have surfaced. In the research, there are several studies on students who imitate comic strips. There is very little direct copying observed in these studies, but there is much appropriation. Some of the studies examine how closely students follow the formal principles that comic books employ, while others are interested in the characters and stereotypes that children choose to replicate in their art. The students sometimes create themes, storylines, and juxtapositions which are original, even if the form that they choose closely resembles a cultural model such as comic books or manga.

There are several theories as to why students use these images, from the desire to master certain technical skills or styles. Wilson (1974) says that students copy popular culture to avoid boredom in an otherwise bland environment. Additionally, Wilson believes that students may use images from popular culture to play out future experiences or grapple with fantasies and desires. Children may use characters and environments from popular culture to act out these fantasies in a way that is safe from adult scrutiny and/or real-world consequences.

There is a long history of imitative practice in the art world. Artists have copied masterworks for centuries, and contemporary artists frequently borrow ideas and images from popular culture, blurring the lines between traditional notions of “high art”, artwork made for museums and galleries, and “low art”, artworks like comic books, Hollywood movies, or other materials that are mass-produced. To shield students from imitative practices, then, creates a gap between what occurs in the classroom and what today’s professional artists and designers are doing in their own practices.

Teachers face a dilemma when attempting to bring popular culture into the classroom. If they encourage students to use popular culture as a source for images or inspiration in their artworks, teachers have to be prepared for the discourse of popular culture, which often stands in opposition to the discourse of the classroom. Classroom discourse is often created to promote rational thinking, to develop students’ respect for diverse genders, races, religions and cultures, to promote a culture of nonviolence, and to avoid disgusting or mature topics. Popular culture, however, is full of the absurd, the

politically incorrect, the violent and sexual, and things which may be illegal or dangerous to students' mental and physical wellbeing. Knowing this, popular culture seems inherently incompatible with school values, and yet the research indicates that students are actively engaged in both the consumption *and* the creation of popular visual culture outside of school. Students work with these images on their own, but how can art teachers effectively encourage or allow them to do so within the context of the art classroom?

The literature review provided a useful foundation for designing my methodology. By reflecting on the methods and results of research by Toku (2001, 2003), Wilson (1974), Duncum (2009) and Smith (1985), I designed a study that would yield various examples of copying from popular culture.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The research questions that were developed for this study are: in what ways does popular visual culture influence the artwork and aesthetic values of adolescents? What roles do copying, borrowing, or appropriating popular images play in the development of content that is meaningful to students? These questions were explored through an Action Research project at Pratt Institute's Saturday Art School. The study was designed to reveal the ways that adolescent students use popular culture in their work, in order to help teachers develop strategies for harnessing the energy and enthusiasm that students have when engaging with popular culture. Action research is defined by Eileen Ferrance as:

Discipline based inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future...carried out within the context of the teachers' environment..." (Ferrance, 2000, p. 1)

This methodology enables a teacher to become a researcher inside their classroom. The method is based on a belief that "teachers work best on problems they have identified for themselves. [They] become more effective when encouraged to examine and assess their own work..." (Watts, 1985, p. 118) By collecting and analyzing data on problems that exist in their own classrooms, teachers can tailor their practices and curriculum to best meet the needs of their specific students. This kind of specific approach can enhance or supplement general information about education that teachers obtain from literature or professional development. Educator Stephen Corey (1953) asserts that by studying "the consequences of our own teaching [we are] more likely to change and improve our practices than [when] reading about what someone else has discovered." (Corey, 1953, p. 70) In other words, the self-initiated study holds more interest and relevance for the teacher.

As a qualitative research practice, action research has a variety of strengths and limitations. According to Falk and Blumenreich (2005) in *The Power of Questions: A Guide to Teacher and Student Research*, “systematic research about our students and teaching – through observation, documentation and reflection – can help us make informed decisions that support our students’ development.” (p. 3) The authors suggest that teachers can use this method of research to gain perspective on their students’ behavior or performance, recurrent problems in the classroom, or other questions. They can then reflect on their data and observations to generate solutions to those problems or to recreate positive experiences.

Ferrance (2000) describes some arguments against action research. Some opponents believe that action research is unscientific because the research is not separated from the act being studied; the teacher is both the subject and the object of the study. This dual role challenges teachers’ ability to remain objective, as well as their ability to observe and document while being effective instructors.

While the problem of objectivity is present in an action research project, the philosophy of *hermeneutics* assumes that no person can be truly objective when interpreting situations or data. Because people come to any experience with a predetermined set of cultural values or life experiences, their responses may be biased toward a particular worldview or outcome. Describing the hermeneutic approach to research, Blumenreich and Falk (2005) say that:

All aspects of research - the nature of the problem selected for study, the choice of paradigm for carrying out the inquiry, the choice of instrumentation and analysis modes, and the conclusions drawn - are affected by human values... Rather than attempting to control one's biases, a research who works within a hermeneutic paradigm instead tries to be upfront about his or her biases...

(Blumenreich & Falk, 2005, p. 12)

By including teacher’s comments, interactions and choices in the observations journal, this research project is designed to incorporate the issue of objectivity/bias into the data analysis. According to Meriam (1998), “The question... is not whether the

process of observing affects what is observed but how the researcher can identify those effects and account for them in interpreting the data.” (p. 103)

The action research project was conducted at Pratt Institute’s Saturday Art School, which is an afterschool/extracurricular setting. This project was undertaken here rather than a public school setting. Wilson (1974) and Duncum (2009) both suggest that the uses of popular culture that this study aims to examine do not occur naturally in school settings. Wilson (1974) refers to these instances of pop culture imitation as liminoid or ‘play’ art that arise from boredom and allow students to live out fantasies, something created more readily at home than at school. He believes that students are stimulated by school art, but that the structure of assignments leaves little room for students to bring their own interests and agency to the work. Duncum (2009) discusses the ways in which the content of popular culture (e.g. absurdity, violence, sexuality, or insensitivity) is incompatible with school values (e.g. logic, safety, respect, or age-appropriate topics). In “Censorship in Contemporary Art Education”, Emery (2002) explains how fear of administrative disapproval leads many teacher to omit controversial work and topics from their curriculum altogether.

Vicki Grube (2009) writes about an afterschool free-drawing club that she sponsors, noting how the students’ self-directed drawings differ from their classroom assignments, how often the boys profess to dislike their school art classes, and noting the content-rich and intertextual nature of their work. Describing her own anxieties about interfering with this work, she says:

What if I ask a question that confuses or distracts? How can I connect with ten-year-old boys? Maybe I should feign ignorance. I have this overpowering urge to demonstrate a technique. I know the boys like to draw: television cartoon characters, comic book heroes, strange scientific-like phenomena, movie text, and war scenes. How can I help without the heavy promotion of my own agenda?

(Grube, 2009, p. 9)

This quote pinpoints exactly how a teacher’s instinct to structure or guide students’ work to produce a certain aesthetic result (whether it’s realistic drawing style, or how to use shadows, or cross-hatching), may impede the development of concepts and

content in the students' work. School lessons are intended by teachers to impart certain techniques or knowledge to students about art-making processes. In an afterschool setting, these expectations are not as concrete.

Pratt Institute's Saturday Art School is a laboratory program where the teachers are art and design education students. Pratt students work with children from the local community and teach classes on a variety of topics, such as sculpture, drawing and painting, and portfolio preparation. Each class lasts for two hours on a Saturday morning, and the classes run for ten weeks. The program culminates in a school-wide exhibition of students' artwork. The Saturday Art School program provides introductory teaching experiences to education students while providing art education to children in the community. The majority of students who attend Saturday Art School come from the Brooklyn neighborhoods in which Pratt is located, including Clinton Hill, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Fort Greene.

Because the program is a Saturday, extra-curricular experience, the majority of students who attend Saturday Art School classes have an existing interest or ability in the arts that attracts the attention of their teachers or parents. As a result, the students who attend Saturday Art School generally have positive views about art and art making and often demonstrate an avid interest in one or more areas of art. While most students volunteer to attend their Saturday Art School classes, it is possible that some students may have been signed up by their parents or guardians for other reasons. This means that occasionally some students demonstrate a limited interest in class activities.

Students pre-register for classes at Pratt based on descriptions available in the Saturday Art School program brochure. As the registration form indicates (see Appendices A and B), there are full and partial scholarships available to students to lower the cost of attendance. According to Saturday Art School director Aileen Wilson, two thirds of students who attend Saturday Art School receive tuition assistance of some kind (personal communication, February 11, 2010).

The study lasted for five weeks beginning in February 2010. The sample size was a group of eighteen students aged 10-13 years, in a class called Art and Storytelling. Artwork and writing samples created by students were collected and their uses of popular

culture were analyzed. A journal was used to document observations about each lesson. The classroom observations were organized into charts along with pertinent information about each session, including materials offered, motivational activities, seating arrangement, and other factors.

This study sought to explore students' voluntary, self-initiated use of images from popular culture, so it was important for the sample size to include all students in the class. At different points during the class, students who produced images with popular visual culture one week chose to make a completely original image the next. Because of this, it was important to have a variety of students creating artwork for this study so that a significant quantity of work was available for comparison and analysis.

The sample students attended a class called Art and Storytelling. Students who registered for this course had expectations based on the description in the program brochure, which said:

Ideas for visual storytelling will be explored and realized in various ways including comics, cartoons, graphic novels, drawings, and paintings. The class will use a variety of media and will look at innovative approaches to visual storytelling.

Students in the Art and Storytelling class are an ideal group for studying popular culture due to the fact that much of the popular culture that students are interested in is narrative in quality. Television shows, movies, many videogames, animations and even pop music are saturated with stories. Because the imagery is so often linked to narrative, these students are very likely to bring popular culture into their assignments, more so than in lessons that are strictly about observational drawing or abstraction.

A challenging aspect of this study was to create lessons that were open-ended enough for students to incorporate popular culture into their work, while not making it an obvious or required response. To do this, it was important to create an environment in which the teacher remained neutral about the presence of popular culture, so that students felt comfortable bringing the content into their work but also did not feel compelled to do so. For this reason, the lessons focused on broad themes, so that students had greater

control over the content of their work. Topics included gesture, monsters, utopia, mood, and metamorphosis.

In addition to creating open-ended assignments, lessons focused on different processes each week in order to reveal which ones inspired the most use of popular culture. For example, some students read comic books and therefore may have an affinity for drawing two-dimensional cartoons, panel layouts, and using onomatopoeia. Perhaps other students play video games, and might bring their pop culture knowledge to a sculpture project about character design, or creating mood in an environment. Varying the processes and materials was a strategy to yield a wider range of pop culture responses. The lessons followed a similar structure from week to week:

- Free drawing time in sketchbooks as students arrive and attendance is taken.
- Motivation (discussion of images and ideas)
- Small introductory project (materials exploration, short activity)
- Short reflection on introductory project
- Main project
- Students reflect through writing and/or group discussion

During the study, data was collected in a variety of ways. Students' artwork and writing samples were collected on a weekly basis. Surveys were given to solicit information about students' interests in art and popular culture. Observations of classroom activities were recorded in a journal and then categorized based on their content and relevance.

First, students were given questionnaires about their interests in art and culture (see Appendix C). The survey was given on the first day of class in order to provide general knowledge about the students' interests in art and popular culture. Although it may be easy to identify certain characters in students work (i.e. Mickey Mouse, or the Na'vi species from the movie *Avatar*), the sheer volume of adolescent literature, comics, games, animation and other media would have made it difficult to identify imitation without having some awareness of the media that students favored. Once the students provided information about the books, shows, brands, musicians, and materials that they liked, it was possible to do research in order to make the identification of pop culture

influence more apparent. Even with this information, it is possible that some instances of copying/appropriating/transformation may have gone unnoticed due to the teacher's unfamiliarity with children's media, or the obscurity of certain characters, brands, or settings.

The study also took into account the kinds of art and art processes which students professed to dislike. The questionnaires enabled comparisons of students' interests, values, and the work that they produce in class.

In addition to information about adolescents' interests, student's artwork was collected and documented throughout the duration of the class. Work was photographed weekly and the results of each assignment were analyzed, based on the ways in which popular culture may have played a role in the creation of the artwork. The teacher observed factors such as students' interpretations of lesson parameters, their use of concepts discussed in the lesson (such as scale or gesture), their social activities, and whether or not the works contained any narrative elements. Work that used popular culture was analyzed in several categories. These included what aspects of popular culture students chose to imitate (a character, a plotline, a style, a brand name), and the degree to which the student attempted to match the original (see Appendix D).

While analysis of students' artwork was an important part of the study, it was also important to search for the motivations behind students' use of images from popular culture. To explore these motivations, students were asked to do some simple writing assignments within the context of each lesson, to provide them with an opportunity to discuss their processes and to discuss the meaning of their work. In "Image to Word: Art and Creative Writing", Kathleen Walsh-Piper (2002) lists some other benefits of having students write about art:

Writing about works of art really serves a dual purpose. Not only does the work of art provide a point of inspiration for the writer, but it also causes the viewer to slow down, analyze, and respond to the work and to become aware of the looking process... (Walsh-Piper, 2002, p. 27-28)

In other courses, simple writing assignments like poems, lists, or letters have been used to encourage students to explain their experiences with art-making. Students can describe the steps they go through to create a work of art, or describe the meaning or purpose of their work of art. Supplementing visual work with written descriptions may help students who struggle with a given material to express ideas or content that they could not communicate through the art. An example of these writing assignments is a “Facebook Profile” for a character, in which students fill out a worksheet that describes the name, origin, and traits of a character that they create (see Appendix E). Students’ visual works were compared to the writing samples produced in class.

In addition to artwork and writing, classroom events were documented, including the comments and activities of the students. A journal of observations was kept and entries were made after each class, in which the day’s lesson and activities were noted. Journal entries described the ways that popular culture played a role in class activities, discussion, or students’ projects. These notes were categorized according to whether the observations were related to students' social behavior (collaborative work and conversations), the classroom environment (motivational strategies and materials offered for discussion, seating arrangement, absences), and also the teacher’s influence (comments and directions, choice of lesson). Any other issues that arose during the course of the class were also included in the journal. To supplement teacher notes, a device was used to record each lesson. In addition to audio recordings, the environment was photographed as frequently as possible during each lesson.

The analysis of my collected data involved reading over the organized data, identifying patterns in students' work and looking for events that repeat in specific contexts. For example, it was possible that a group of students would always use pop culture when they work together on a project, but not when they worked alone.

This study attempts to produce information on what meaning or value students derive from acts of copying, appropriating and transforming images from popular culture. It explores the ways in which students interact with popular culture through art, and seeks to identify contexts which promote meaningful art-making. With this knowledge, it may

be possible for a teacher to create an environment which supports students' interests in popular culture while still encouraging those students to expand their skills.

CHAPTER IV

DATA

Data was collected over five Saturdays during February and March of 2010. Over the course of these classes, popular culture frequently played a role in discussions, activities, and work created by the students. Students produced work that included imagery from popular culture in a variety of contexts and with various materials.

Week One

Lesson Components

The first class began with student surveys followed by a group discussion about students' interests: their favorite movies, television shows, music, brands, games, books, art processes, materials, and what they hoped to learn in Art and Storytelling. Results of the surveys revealed that the eighteen students had an extremely wide range of interests and preferences. While most students reported unique interests in each of the categories, there was some overlap in students' specific interests in popular culture. Responses given by at least two students included:

Movies & Television:	<i>Pokémon, Spongebob Squarepants, Avatar, iCarly, Family Guy, The Simpsons, Sonic X, Kick Buttowski.</i>
Books, Comics, Graphic Novels:	<i>Pokémon, manga, superhero comics, Sonic the Hedgehog.</i>
Music:	<i>Michael Alanson, Lady Gaga, Hip-Hop, Rock.</i>

Brands:	Nintendo (Wii, GameCube, DS), Xbox, American Eagle
The kinds of art I like the most:	Cartoons, comics, manga, drawing
Materials I use on my own:	Pencils, sharpeners, erasers, markers, crayons, paint.
In this class, I hope we learn about:	Cartoons, manga, drawing
I really hope this class is not about:	Art history

During the in-class discussion, students were asked to brainstorm different art forms in which stories and images are both present. Students' responses included movies, plays, graffiti, graphic novels, comics, animation, anime, claymation, dioramas, illustration, and cartoons. When asked which kinds of art they might want to explore in class, students expressed an interest in all topics except dioramas.

After the introductory conversation about classroom rules and students' expectations, there was a teacher-led discussion about utopian imagery: a futuristic cityscape, a scene of diverse animals coexisting peacefully, and a scene depicting happy couples. None of the paintings contained recognizable images from popular culture. After sharing some of their intuitive reactions to the work, students heard the definition of utopia and were asked if any of the images showed an ideal or perfect place. Students defended the images that they felt were strong examples. They made guesses about the values and/or hopes of the individual artists; for example, many students agreed that the artist of the cityscape wanted a future with lots of new technology. After the discussion, students were asked to create a drawing of their own utopia.

Environment and Materials

Students were provided with 11" x 17" white drawing paper, oil pastels, colored pencils, drawing pencils, erasers, and pencil sharpeners. They were encouraged to choose any or all of the materials offered. Students sat in groups of 4-5 per table, and were able to choose their seats or move about freely to other tables while they worked. Students

selected music to play for the duration of the class.

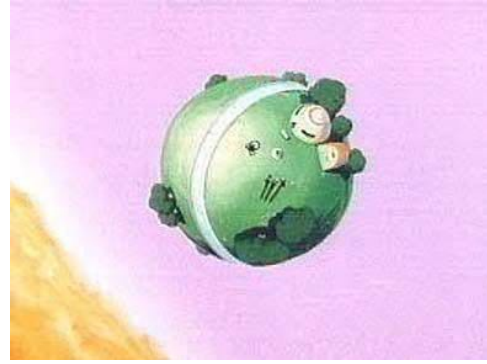
Aside from the images provided for the discussion of utopia, the room had few other images. Each work table had their own copies of the three motivational images to share during the discussion, and these remained on the tables while students worked. A welcome sign on the door was illustrated with a monster drawn by the instructor. This was the only other image present besides the three illustrations.

Social Activity and Collaboration

During the initial discussion of students' interests, several general references to popular culture were made. Students referred to manga, anime, and superheroes as topics of interest for the class. While talking about the kinds of artwork that students like or dislike, Kevin said that he hoped we weren't going to make "childish things". When I asked him to explain what childish meant, he said, "like Disney". Andy said that he hoped to learn about Tim Burton.

During the rest of class, most students were quiet and worked independently. The majority of students did not know one another, with the exception of Dawn, Brian, and Lydia. Dawn and Brian are brother and sister, and they attend the same school as Lydia. During class, I heard these students conversing quietly about some friends at school and also about their drawings.

Different activities that took place during the class involved copying and borrowing, some from popular culture and some from other sources. Andy brought a *Dragon Ball Z* graphic novel to class, which he referenced while working on his utopia drawing. The book contained an illustration of a small planet, with oversized buildings, foliage, and paths along its surface. Andy created a colored illustration based upon the ink drawing in his book, adding a few personal embellishments to the scene, including a sun and another planet. Kevin, who sat next to him at the table, observed what he was doing. He complimented Andy, saying that the drawing was, "sick".



Left: *Figure 2.* Andy's drawing of King Kai's planet from *Dragon Ball Z*. Right: *Figure 3.* Sample illustration of King Kai's planet, retrieved April 4, 2010 from <http://www.digitalmediatree.com/tommoody/getpic/2235/>

Another student in class, Colin, used his cell phone to search the Internet for photographs of animals. He drew a city devoid of people, inhabited only by animals. The photographs provided him with reference. A student at the same table, Marcus, copied directly from one of the images that I had given as part of the discussion of utopia. He spent the class carefully drawing the buildings and architecture that appeared in the cityscape illustration.

I also provided students with sketchbooks to use for planning and free drawing throughout the classes. After finishing an illustration of a superhero planet, a student named Jordan began drawing Pokémon in his sketchbook. He had a pack of Pokémon cards and would select one card at a time to draw. Jordan would not only draw the character but also the card itself. He included the monster's name and some of its characteristics and abilities. Jordan told me that he spent a lot of time drawing Pokémon at home, and had invented some of his own.

While showing me some of his drawings, the student sitting next to him, Tania, started to point out monsters that she recognized:

Tania: "That's Charizard!"

Jordan: "You play Pokémon?"

Tania: "Yea, I have some cards".

Jordan: "You should bring them next week, so we can trade."

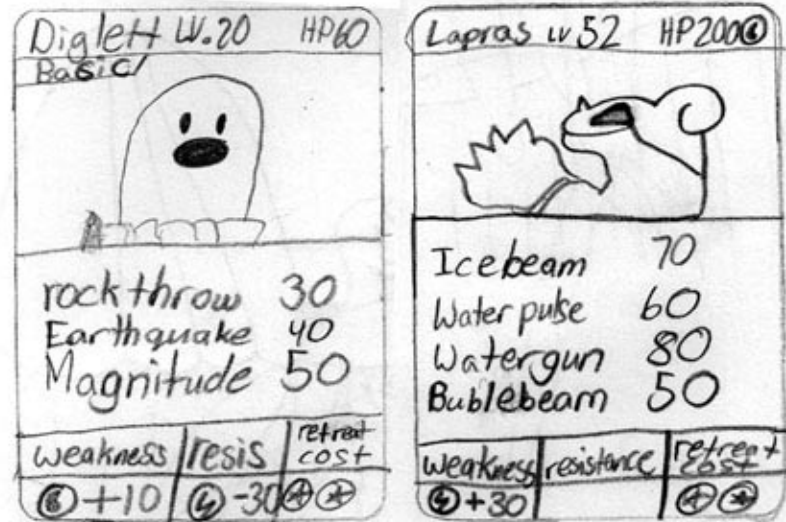


Figure 4. Jordan's sketchbook drawings of Pokémon cards.

At the end of class, when Jordan's mother arrived, she asked to see some of his work. We looked at Jordan's superhero planet, and then he began to show her the drawings of the Pokémon cards. She seemed unhappy, and told Jordan that he should stop copying the cards. Jordan insisted that his drawings were not exactly like the cards, but she responded that he should not bring the cards to class again. I was worried that Jordan's mother was afraid that he might get in trouble for having them. I told her that I didn't mind their presence as long as Jordan was able to focus on his work during class. She explained that she did not like Pokémon because of all the violence in the games and on the television show.

Student Work

In addition to Andy's *Dragon Ball Z* planet and Jordan's Pokémon cards, there were other examples of popular culture in students' drawings and writing. Jordan also produced a utopian landscape in which superheroes ruled the world. Included in his image were Superman, Aquaman and Batman. Unlike his Pokémon cards, these were not

easily recognizable. Without reference, Jordan focused on using symbolic elements, like Superman’s “S” logo, to indicate identity. I discovered who the other two heroes were from Jordan’s written explanation of his work. He said that this was a perfect world because, “the superheroes always catch the villains”.

A few other students produced work which was influenced by popular culture without being directly related to a specific model. Colin’s city included a reference to pop singer Lady Gaga, whose name and song title “Bad Romance” he placed in advertisements on a theatre. Michael, a student who said he was interested in learning about graffiti, created a tag that said “Wonder”, and around the stylized lettering he added information and drawings that explain what exactly would be wonderful about the future: no war, no nuclear energy, more hospitals, and other improvements.

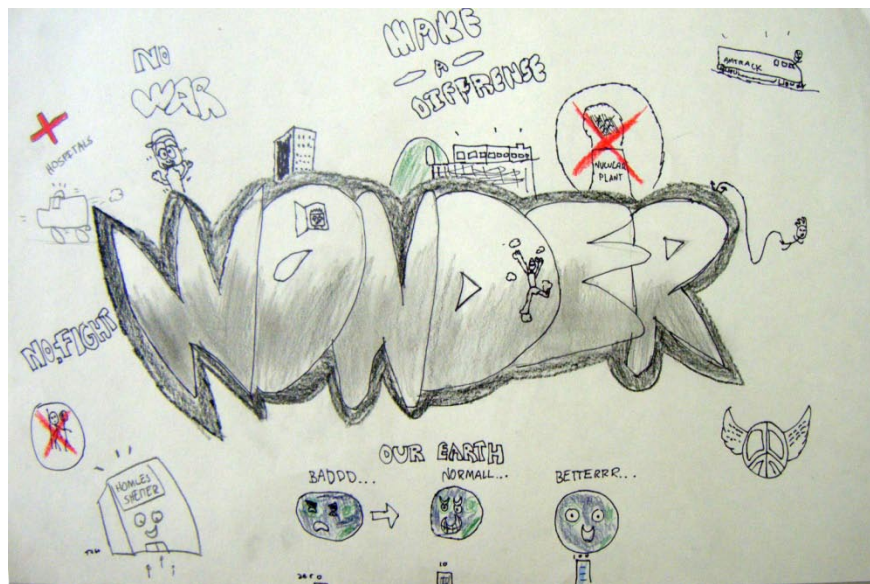


Figure 5. Michael’s graffiti representation of utopia.

Week Two

Lesson Components

While the first lesson focused on a location, this class focused on the development of characters. In their surveys, many students said that they wanted skills for drawing cartoon characters. It seemed appropriate to introduce the concept of gesture drawing to help students create simple drawings of the human figure in different poses and motions.

There were about fifteen minutes of sketchbook drawing while students slowly arrived. Class began with a discussion of slides on an overhead projector. The slides showed the differences between stick figures and gesture drawings, which we discussed in a group. We also talked about using body language to show emotions. I showed them various gestures and students discussed what emotions they might be expressing, including sad, happy, scared, and angry.

After the discussion, students took turns posing for one another and drawing gestures on newsprint paper. They came up with a variety of poses and students who volunteered to model were very expressive with their bodies. Many students tried poses standing on one leg, holding arms out and creating unusual shapes. There was a high level of participation and interest.

The activity ended after ten poses. I then explained how a gesture drawing could be used like a skeleton with the character built around it. I demonstrated this by taking a gesture of a figure flying, and I created the outline of a superhero girl. This was demonstrated on the overhead and then on paper, where I showed students that they could erase the gesture when finished so that only the character's outline remained.

Students were asked to create a drawing that showed a character in motion or in a unique pose. I suggested that they use some of the drawings they made in the workshop for help, picking a gesture that they liked. However, I told the students that were free to create new poses and to draw multiple characters, backgrounds, or other details as they chose.

Environment and Materials

Students had access to a range of white drawing paper from 4" x 6" to 11" x 17". There were drawing pencils, graphite sticks, erasers, pencil sharpeners, thick and fine Sharpee markers, and a variety of other drawing pens available to students.

Students sat in a U Shape around a projector, facing a model stand and a white wall for the projection. In the back of the room, a wall of motivational images was available for students to use or observe. These images included people and characters in different poses, taken from a variety of media: photography, comic book covers, paintings, drawings, and gestures. Some were recognizable figures from popular culture, including Pop Eye, Spiderman, Babar the Elephant, Windsor McKay's Little Nemo, and illustrations from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg. There were also books underneath the inspiration wall, including an animation handbook on drawing specific body movements, and a collection of abstract gesture drawings.

Social Activity and Collaboration

This week, a few more students came to class who had been absent during the first week. These students knew some of the other children in the room, and conversation was more lively and animated than in the previous week.

Kevin, Daniel and Andy sat together this week, and brought out various comic books. Andy had two *Dragon Ball Z* books, and Kevin had a *Naruto* book, which is a manga series. These books were out on the table while the students worked.

Colin made some drawings of Super Mario in class, a character from a popular Nintendo videogame. In the middle of working, Colin asked me if I had any images of Super Mario that he could look at while drawing. After finding out that I didn't have any such reference, he seemed reluctant to finish the drawing. A similar event took place with Kyle, a student who was drawing several versions of Sonic the Hedgehog. Some of the drawings he created without a gesture skeleton, standing in fairly straight-forward poses. In addition, he had made a running gesture and was trying to create a Sonic the Hedgehog character around that framework. After doing the head, arms and torso, he left the legs unfinished.

Compared to his drawing based on the gesture, the straight-forward poses were much neater and detailed, which led me to believe that they were drawings he has developed repeatedly with practice. I asked Kyle if he planned on finishing the gesture drawing. “I don’t think that it’s going to look right”, he told me. I told him that I thought he should finish the drawing because what he had done so far looked great. He seemed skeptical, and when I came back later the drawing was still unfinished. When I asked about it again, Kyle said, “I don’t know”.

I told Kyle that I couldn’t make him finish his drawing, but that it was good practice for cartoonists to try to learn new poses, so that we can “get control of our characters and make them do what we want”. After this, he did add legs and feet to the sketch.

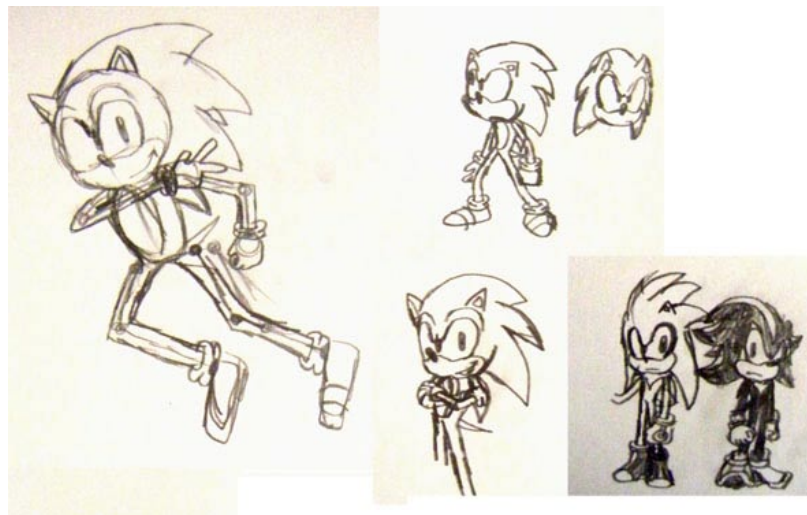


Figure 6. Kyle’s sketches of Sonic the Hedgehog and other characters.

A couple of students responded to images in the motivation wall, and both of them chose characters from popular culture. Ivan, who was new to class, went to the motivation wall and brought down a scene with Pop Eye and Olive Oil. Ivan brought the image back to his seat and attempted to copy Pop Eye as he was posed in the cartoon. He drew a gesture based on Pop Eye’s stance, and then tried to draw the character over it. Ivan struggled with his drawing quite a bit and had sketchy, choppy lines, both in pencil

and when he traced his pencil lines with ink. Meanwhile, Tim created a drawing of a stuffed Spiderman figure that I had hung on the wall. Rather than taking the stuffed figure down from the wall, he stayed in his seat and observed from afar.



Left: *Figure 7.* Ivan’s Pop Eye drawing made during the gesture lesson. Center: *Figure 8.* Tim’s Spiderman character, drawn from observation of a toy. Right: *Figure 9.* Photograph of the Spiderman toy that was drawn by Tim.

Other acts of copying unrelated to popular culture took place as well. Two other students, Tiffany and Lydia, teamed up to look through a book called *The Animator’s Survival Guide* and found examples of hands. Lydia was doing this to help Tiffany, and she said that Tiffany made her hands “too spiky”. Lydia also asked me where she could buy this book.

This week, Jordan created a superhero using the exact pose that I had drawn for the lesson example. He asked to see my drawing as well, saying that he wanted to look at how I had drawn her cape.

Student Work

Besides the work discussed above, there were more examples of popular culture that were made clear to me by student’s writing. I asked students to create a fake Facebook profile for their character, listing some characteristics like name, hobbies, abilities, and history. With a little research, I discovered that some students were referencing characters from video games, manga, and superhero comics/cartoons. Jordan

says that his character, Thunder Planet Man, is from the planet Krypton and is allergic to Kryptonite, both of which are attributes of the D.C. Comic character, Superman. Even though his character has a unique outfit and name, Jordan uses popular culture to inform his profile.

Alan's character, John Price, shares the name, appearance, and storyline of a character from the *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare I & II* videogames. Brian's character, Sasuke, hails from *Naruto*, a manga series. This character has the power to produce lightning with his hands, and he appears inside the force field in Brian's illustration:

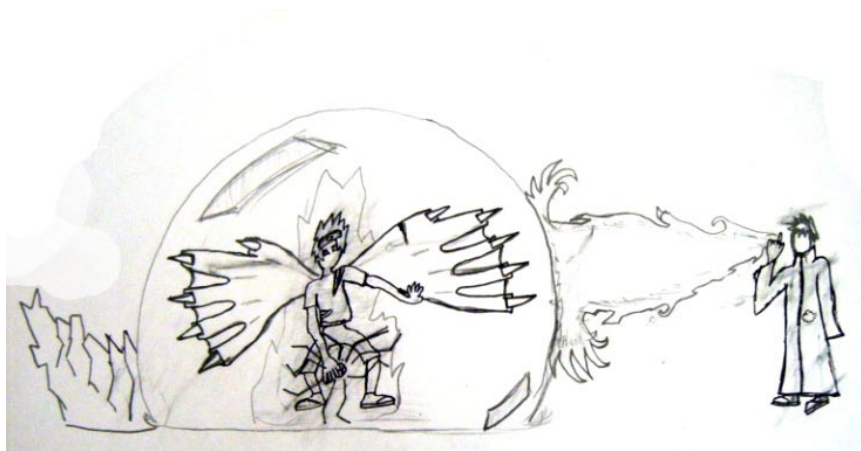


Figure 10. Brian's drawing of a battle between characters from *Naruto*.

Week Three

Lesson Components

This lesson was about using color to create mood or feeling in a work of art. The lesson began with a group discussion of three sets of images. First, students compared images that differed only in their color palette. We discussed how the color choices changed the meaning of the pictures. They identified how the use of dark and light colors could change the feeling of an image, and then were given a list of some common color association in western culture. Then students were asked to use this knowledge to create an image that illustrated a mood of their choice. We brainstormed some color schemes that would work well for "scary", "happy" or "sickness". Students were given the choice

to add color to the characters that they created in the previous class, or to create a brand new image.

Environment and Materials

In this class, students were given copied versions of their drawings from the previous week, printed on cardstock so that they could withstand the addition of color. They were given oil pastels, watercolors, and watercolor paper in a variety of sizes. Students received a demonstration of an oil resist, to give them the option of using both watercolor and oil pastels together. Finally, some students also brought their own colored materials, including colored pencils and markers.

There were a variety of motivational images for this lesson. Students' character sketches were hanging on the wall as they entered the classroom. Besides these, I created four of the images for the discussion of color. One was a character of a bunny, and the other was a boy facing a vast cityscape. I created two versions of each image: one was a positive image with traditionally "happy" colors such as yellow and orange, and one with traditionally negative colors, such as dark blue, gray, and black. Students discussed the differences between these images and the different ideas or feelings that they evoked. After viewing a list of common color associations, students applied this thinking to abstract paintings (Rothko and Pollock) when they were asked to describe the mood of the pieces. Students described the Rothko as "calm", "boring", and "peaceful", while the Pollock was described as "chaotic", "fiery" or "furious".

Social Activity and Collaboration

The students were arranged into four tables of 4-5 students. Class was more social as students became more comfortable with one another and school friends congregated. Daniel, Kevin, Andy, Colin and Kyle sat together, and some brought their comic books for reference. Andy had a book called *Dr Slump* as well as a *Yu-Gi-Oh* book. Kevin had another *Naruto* book, as well as *The Last Olympian* by Rick Riordan. Andy created a sketch of a character from the *Yu-Gi-Oh* book and colored that sketch with reds and yellows. He then made another colored version of his utopian image from

the first class. Ivan asked him about the piece and Kevin answered for Andy, identifying it as the planet from *Dragon Ball Z*. Ivan replied that it was “cool”. While this was happening, Andy lent his *Yu-Gi-Oh* book to Brian, who leafed through it while working on his characters from the previous week. It appeared that he was looking for reference that would help him draw hairstyles or create patterns on his characters’ clothes.

Ivan was having some trouble while he worked. He continued his Pop Eye drawing initially, adding blue, green, gray, and red to his drawing with oil pastels. He seemed frustrated and started to work on sketchbook drawings. He also borrowed the *Yu-Gi-Oh* book after Brian had finished with it, and made a sketch of a character in his sketchbook. When I asked him if he was planning to finish his Pop Eye drawing, he said, “I just want to think about it right now.”

Daniel and Kevin breezed through the color-based portion of the project and then resumed drawing in their class sketchbooks and sketchbooks brought from home, while looking through their comics. I briefly talked with these boys about these comics and some of the other books that they were reading, including *Y the Last Man* and *The Last Olympian*. When asked about *The Last Olympian*, the boys all agreed that the movie version that was just released looked “fake”, and that the movie omitted too much information from the books.

Tiffany and Lydia took some time to show me comics that they had been working on at home. Lydia’s comic caught my attention because her characters seemed styled after Sonic the Hedgehog, with similar eyes, hair, and disproportionately large heads. I read the first several pages of her comic, including dialogue between some girls and boys who were having adolescent relationship problems (a girl was upset that a boy had not called her. She sent a female friend to go question the boy). The style of her characters was influenced by Sonic the Hedgehog, but the content seemed to be based on typical adolescent experience. Lydia would bring these comics into class during subsequent weeks, to show me her progress.

Kyle also worked on characters that were stylized after Sonic the Hedgehog. His character looked more human than hedgehog, but had a similar hairstyle. I also noticed that the character was surrounded by gemstones that looked like the “chaos emeralds”

used in related videogames. When I suggested that he create a background for his character, Kyle seemed nervous about following my suggestion as he had in the previous week. I did not pressure him into continuing, but I sensed that he was fearful of trying new techniques or drawing images that were not already part of his repertoire.

Finally, Michael created a number of pieces for this lesson, one of which was a graffiti tag which said “Chunk”. It was illustrated with sickly green and yellow, as well as some bright red. Gray, dripping shapes hung from the letters. When I saw the image, I smiled and asked Michael if his image was about being sick to your stomach. He smiled back sheepishly without answering and went back to his work table. I wondered if he was afraid that I was going to be angry with him if he said yes.

Student Work

Kyle’s Sonic-hybrid characters, Lydia’s comic, and Michael’s graffiti tag were all examples of pop culture imagery. In addition, Tim created a purple Pacman illustration, along with three other images that did not reference pop culture; according to the worksheet on color associations, purple was listed as energetic and/or powerful.



Figure 11. Michael’s graffiti tag illustrating the word “chunk” for the mood lesson.



Figure 12. Tim's illustration of a purple Pacman for the mood lesson.

Kevin and Daniel's characters both share many physical characteristics with the manga characters in the comic books that they bring to class. These physical similarities include facial features (large eyes, spiky hairstyles, small noses and mouths). Daniel references a fictional manga location in his Facebook profile, Neo Tokyo. Both boys employ some thematic elements common to the *Naruto* manga series that they read, specifically revenge and violence.



Left: *Figure 13*. Daniel's character design, showing manga influence. Right: *Figure 14*. Kevin's character design, showing manga influence.

Week Four

Lesson Components

Class began with a short exercise in which students observed three paintings. Each image showed different locations: a snowy landscape with an Eskimo, a dark cavern full of skeletons, and a forest with children in animal costumes. Students created short sketches in response to the paintings, drawing an object or creature that they thought would belong in the given environment.

After this activity, the main lesson was introduced. Students were asked to create a monster out of clay. They received a brief demonstration on using clay tools and were also shown how to use toothpicks as structural supports. Other than this demonstration and the 'monster' theme, no other motivation was provided. As students finished their monsters, they were asked to begin building habitats for their creatures using mixed media.

Environment and Materials

Besides the three paintings used in the introductory activity, there were no other visual resources available. Even Kevin and Daniel did not bring out their usual comic books this week.

The room was sectioned into two halves for this lesson. There were four tables for students to work with clay, and on the other side of the room were tables for the monster habitats. For the clay project, students were given oil-based clay, small quantities of colored Sculpey clay, plastic clay tools, plastic forks, toothpicks and beads. For the creation of environments, I provided construction paper, collage scraps, glue sticks, scissors, Sharpee markers, colored tape and cardboard.

Social Activity and Collaboration

During this lesson, there was some open discussion within the classroom about different movies. I told Brian that his sculpture reminded me of the style of Tim Burton. This caused his table to erupt in a discussion of Burton's new adaptation of *Alice & Wonderland*, which none of my students liked. Dawn was very vocal about this, saying that she thought Burton's redesigned Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum were "fat and annoying". Then students began an animated discussion of *Avatar*, especially those at Dawn's table. They discussed how impressive the flying scenes were as well as the design of the dragons.

As students worked on their sculptures, I walked around offering assistance to the students. Jordan wanted to make a sculpture of Charizard, a Pokémon monster. He was anxious about making this piece, insisting that his sketch, "looked wrong" and that, "the sculpture won't come out right because I don't have a picture to look at."

I encouraged him to follow his drawing and gave him advice on using the toothpicks for structural support. I also demonstrated how to use the cutting tool to create the claw shapes that he wanted. Jordan needed a lot of one-on-one guidance throughout the class. Eventually he realized that all of the body parts could be stabilized with toothpicks, and at this point he stopped asking for my help. Jordan was very proud of his piece and embellished it with the beads and toothpicks to create spikes, eyes, and a pattern on its chest. Charizard does not have spikes or chest bumps, so I was interested to see that Jordan made these embellishments after being so concerned about the authenticity of his sculpture at the beginning of the project.

I noticed that Kyle, who was sitting next to Jordan, was also making a

recognizable videogame character named Kirby. When I spoke to Kyle about his sculpture, I accidentally called the character “Curly”; he quickly corrected me. I asked what videogames he played that featured Kirby. He said that he played *Super Smash Brothers*, which is a game that allows players to battle characters from various Nintendo games. I told him that I was very bad at the game and could never learn how to fight properly. He told me that it was easy, but that his cousins always beat him because they owned the game and had much more time to practice.

After clean-up, I gave students the last ten minutes of class to draw in their sketchbooks. Rather than drawing, Jordan and Kyle engaged in role-playing with their two monsters. They imitated a battle between their characters: Cartoon/ videogame character Charizard, and videogame character Kirby. Although these characters are from different games, they serve similar functions; the creatures are picked by a player to use in a battle. Each has specific moves and limitations to their powers. Both boys seemed well versed in the abilities and limitations of their monsters. Jordan listed a series of "moves" that Charizard would make and said "You can't beat that, can you?" Kyle made a face that suggested he agreed, but unhappily. The two used a great deal of onomatopoeia during their play, saying "bam! pow! rawr!"

Besides advising Jordan to be gentle with his sculpture, I did not interfere with their role-playing. They moved around their worktable but did not interrupt other students' sketchbook drawing.

Student Work

Kyle and Jordan were the only students whose sculptures referenced popular culture this week. The lesson continued into the following week so that students would have adequate time to finish their environments and to do a short writing activity. More examples of popular culture emerged in those activities.

Week Five

Lesson Components

Class was divided into two halves. In the first half, students finished their habitats from the previous week and did a short writing activity based on their work. Students finished at different times, and those who finished early played a group comic game as they waited for the rest of the class to complete their sculptural pieces. In the second half of class, students began comic strips. The motivational activity was a simple card game, in which students arranged picture cards in different sequences to create stories. The lesson emphasized creating a logical order of events and starting a comic with a clear beginning, middle, and end already in mind. Some students were able to make an entire comic within the hour, others simply mapped out their ideas in sketchbooks, preparing character designs and story ideas.

Environment and Materials

Again the classroom was separated into two halves: one for students to finish their habitats, the other for the lesson on comics. Students began working on their habitats immediately and I gathered those who were finished at a side table for a comic book game.

Students' sculptures from the previous week were arranged on the model-stand along with their environments. Materials for the habitat were the same as those from the previous week: collage papers, cardboard, glue sticks, scissors, and markers. Students also made use of some cotton stuffing that I had brought to safely transport their clay sculptures: it was used to make clouds. Unfortunately I forgot a few materials for the sculpture project. One of these was colored tape, which many students were using to connect the cardboard pieces for their habitats. Some students were clearly frustrated by the lack of building materials and their inability to build rather than decorate probably forced them to change their designs. I had made an assumption that students would not be very precious with this part of the assignment, and instead they wanted to invest more time on them.

In addition to the habitat materials, blank accordion books, scrap paper, comic worksheets, students' sketchbooks, pencils, erasers, sharpeners were brought for the second half of the lesson. Again I made some worksheets for class that involved my own artwork. The idea for the comic game was to give students a comic strip that had already been started. The object would be for them to guess “what happens next” using information gleaned from the first panel. I created some simple scenes: a dog eyeing a bone, a boy running with paper in his hand, etc. These prompts contained empty dialogue bubbles for students to fill in, then three additional blank panels to complete the story.

I also created the picture cards that students used to play with sequencing. These included characters of a dog and a woman with different expressions, and various other elements including onomatopoeia like “Knock knock!” or “GRR!”, a bone, and a picture of a shadowy figure entering a door. Students arranged these so that they told different stories, i.e. “The dog and the woman were playing fetch when there was a knock at the door. The dog growled as the shadowy figure entered the room”.

Social Activity and Collaboration

This class had a few instances of collaborative behavior, in both halves of the lesson. At the end of the previous class, Jordan and Kyle had been playing together with their sculptures, role-playing a battle between their pop culture characters. This week, the two students teamed up to create an environment for their characters. They pieced together some cardboard and collaged on top of them with blue and green papers. They then used the cotton stuffing to create clouds for the sky.

When students were finished with their sculptures, I asked the class to come together to look at one another’s work. I directed the students to place their clay characters in one of the environments. The students took a minute to decide where to place their work. Afterward, I told them to imagine that they were the creatures in these environments, and asked them to think about what their characters were seeing or doing in these habitats. I distributed paper to students and asked them to write a short description of their scenes.

Students made some changes to their sculpture location after hearing the instructions. A group of students made their way to Jordan and Kyle's collaborative habitat, where an animated dialogue began as they arranged and rearranged their characters in this environment. In all, seven students placed their work in this environment and arranged two opposing lines of creatures preparing for battle. The final touch was Andy's angelic, winged character watching from the sky.



Figure 15. A battle of clay monsters created by a group of students.

Initially, Kevin and Daniel had returned to their seats, but I asked them to complete the writing assignment before working in their sketchbooks. They returned to the scene and were soon laughing along with the other students whose work was placed in the same environment. References to Kirby and Pokémon were part of the conversation. They also discussed battle in general. Daniel was sarcastic in his writing description, but seemed to have a good time laughing with classmates while they cooperated to organize the scene. Two of the students whose work was part of the scene did not write a description, including Tania. She added her bat monster to the battle after returning from a bathroom break, but seemed somewhat intimidated by the older students. She had expressed an interest in Pokémon during the first class, and her bat was

placed on the "good" side next to Charizard and Kirby. Students' writing samples were narrative hybrids of popular culture and original content, and some examples follow:

The Porcubunny! His mom was a porcupine... his dad was a bunny rabbit! Now he faces close cousins: Porcudragon, Kirby, and Jr. Dragon. Porcubunny and his brother Spyke will face them in battle to the death. But they all have to take out the evil angel. Also the 2-horned snore wolf has joined the team of Spikez. Porcudragon has [betrayed] the Spikez team. (Colin)

The Battle of Good and Evil. On the right side is the Good team. The warrior of green teams, the fire dragon and two pets in order. On the left side is the evil team: the [furious] beast team by Saturn, the three-headed Cerberus, and the angry bunny, and the last one is the son of Cerberus. Finally on top is god... (Andy)

This model is about a battle against good and evil. On the good side is Charizard, Glicor, Kirby and MewTwo. On the bad side is the darkest bunny, Hypernoid, and sleepy dog. (Jordan)

MewTwo, Glicor, and Charizard are all Pokémon characters. Hypernoid is a dragon-like creature from a similar game, called *Bakugan*. Kirby is the videogame character that was sculpted by Kyle.

Aside from that group, a few other students made references to popular culture in their descriptions. Dawn referred to her environment as Pandora, the fictional planet from the movie *Avatar*, and said that her creature is one of the alien animals that live there. *Avatar* was discussed at Dawn's table during the previous class, while the students worked on their environments. During this class, there was also a brief discussion of Pandora's box from mythology, and an internet radio service called Pandora. Any of these casual mentions may have given Dawn the idea to write about Pandora. She describes Pandora as a faraway planet, which is indicative of the movie.

Tiffany and Lydia, who are close friends from school, decided to write about one another's sculptures. When Lydia writes about Tiffany's character she says, "[the] sculpture looks like a lonesome werewolf with no feelings or emotions what-so-ever.

Just like the anime *Naruto*. It's just sitting there doing nothing. It has no friends or family.” My research of *Naruto*, first inspired by Brian’s drawings of Sasuke, revealed that the story is about a young warrior whose entire family is murdered by his evil older brother. He becomes a lonesome fighter seeking revenge. It is important to note that Tiffany, Lydia, Dawn and Brian always sit together during class and all attend the same school.

More instances of collaboration emerged in the comic strip portion of the lesson. While some students were finishing their habitats, I had the other students use the comic strip worksheets that I created. This time I specifically asked students to work together to finish the comics. Lydia wanted to work alone, but Kevin, Marcus, Andy, Daniel, Colin and Tim decided to work together. These students decided that it would be funny to make every comic end in "boom!" They manipulated the stories so that the last panel always resulted in an explosion. These group comics demonstrated many of the themes that Paul Duncum (2009) cites as typical of pop culture, such as violence, politically incorrect statements, absurdity, and obscenity. Tim was annoyed by the explosions, so he moved on to another project. But the rest of the students found their series to be very amusing and they made about ten completed examples. Later in the class, Brian asked to see these comics so that he could use the other students’ drawings as reference for an explosion in his own comic.

Kyle and Jordan teamed up again, maintaining a discussion of Pokémon and Kirby and carrying these ideas into their comic strips. Kyle’s comic featured Link, a character from a Nintendo game called *Zelda*, and Pikachu from the Pokémon franchise. I asked him if there was a place that these characters could meet in a game, and he replied that you can battle Link and Pikachu in *Super Smash Brothers*, the same game that he uses to play with Kirby.

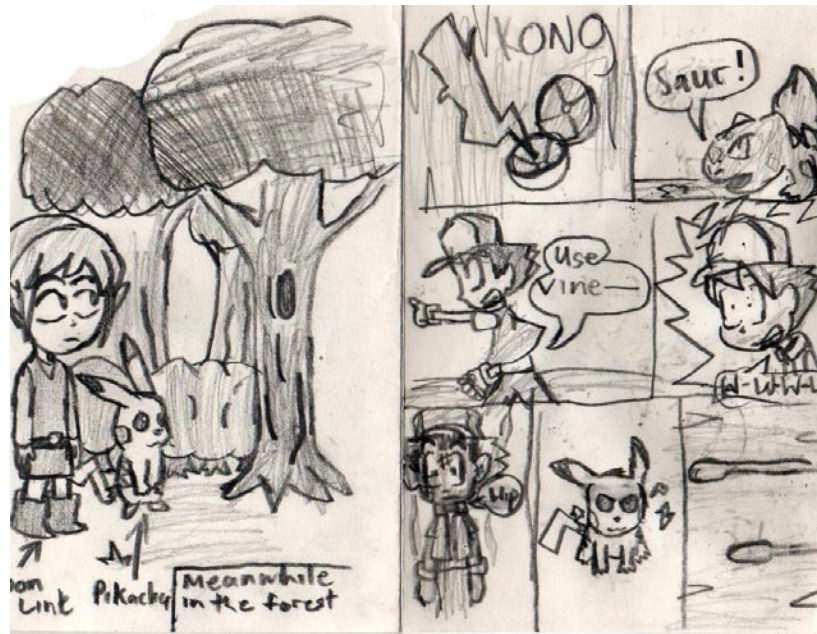


Figure 16. An excerpt from Kyle’s comic, with characters from various videogames.

At the end of class, I was finally able to talk with Daniel and Kevin about their comic characters. The stylization of their work corresponded so much to the manga that I wanted to know explicitly if they felt that their work was original or based on what they were reading. I asked Daniel first, as he was showing me a comic in his sketchbook from home. He said that he made up all the characters themselves. Daniel uses black lines emerging from the characters’ eyes to identify them as humans, demons, or half demons. One line makes the character a half demon, while two lines make them full demons. I asked him to explain what the story was about, even though I had read about it already in his Facebook profile. Daniel said that the half demons and demons did not get along, and that later the characters were going after the “dragons and [another type of creature] in Neo Tokyo.”

Kevin interrupted him to say, “Those groups are part of that manga you read. And so is Neo Tokyo. You didn’t make those up yourself.”

Daniel seemed unconcerned and said, “Well, that’s true, but the rest of it is mine.” “Yea,” Kevin admitted. Kevin then told me that Daniel was the one who taught him how to draw in the manga style. “He showed me a new way to do eyes, this is what I’m doing now”, and pointed at a drawing highlights that Daniel had made for him.

“I tried to draw realistically,” said Daniel, “but it was too hard.”

I asked Kevin about the comic he had just started, called “Shadow Realm”. I asked if that was based on manga and he said that it was from *Yu-Gi-Oh*. He then told me, “It would be too hard to draw the way that I do at home in just two hours. It takes a lot of time to do my comics”. I told him that if that was the case, he could use his class comic as a storyboard, to plan out the compositions and arrangements that he might want to use in his ‘real’ comic. He seemed receptive to the idea but was also very invested in working on a character design in his sketchbook.

Student Work

Jordan and Kyle both began comics that included characters from popular culture. Jordan again referenced Charizard. He did not begin working on the story, but focused on creating a large drawing of Charizard that filled the first full page of the accordion book.

While waiting for his mother, Jordan told me that some of the boys at his table were making fun of one of his sketches of Charizard, telling him that the wings he had drawn on the monster were “sucky”. I told him I was sorry and that I would talk to the boys about their inappropriate language and unwelcome criticism during the next class. “They’re right though”, he said, “I know my wings don’t look right, and they showed me a better way to draw them...” He opened his sketchbook and pointed to a wing drawn by the other student, which included spiky texture and a feather-like quality that Jordan’s drawing did not. “See? They’re right, but I don’t think they should have been mean about it”. I told him that he was right: criticism can be useful, but it should also be respectful.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

This research project was designed to provide data about students who use imagery from popular culture in their artwork. Over five weeks in Art and Storytelling, students not only used popular culture in their artwork, but also in their writing and social activities. The students use content from popular visual culture in a variety of ways each week. While some copied directly from a model, others used multiple strategies, blended drawings from different reference materials, and made hybrids that merged students' original imagery with content from popular culture. Students also expressed opinions about the kinds of art that they like, and navigated issues of ownership and originality.

The Roles of Copying, Borrowing, and Appropriating

One of the questions that this project sought to explore is, "What roles do copying, borrowing and appropriation play in students' creation of meaningful content?" These terms were defined in order to differentiate between projects that are closely tied to a pop culture model in their form and content, and those that are further removed from their model. This included not only the formal qualities of the image, but the narrative content included by the student in project or in writing. Students employed all three techniques over the five weeks.

Copying

For this study, copying was defined as an attempt to reproduce an image exactly as it appears in a model. Copying was employed by various students over the course of the five weeks. These students attempted to recreate images from popular culture as closely as possible, often while looking at an example.

Jordan frequently engaged in copying Pokémon monsters in his sketchbook. Andy copied from his *Dragon Ball Z*, *Dr. Slump*, and other comic books, which he used for the utopia project as well as the gesture lesson. Andy also brought sketchbooks from home that contained drawings copied from his favorite comic books. Kevin, Brian, Daniel and Ivan all spent time copying characters from comic books in their sketchbooks. Ivan copied directly from a Pop Eye illustration that I had brought as one of many motivational images when he did the gesture project. For the same assignment, Tim drew a two-dimensional Spiderman illustration based off of a three-dimensional toy.

Kyle did not draw directly from reference, but had several Sonic the Hedgehog characters that he drew repeatedly in the same poses. When he attempted to make changes to the images by changing the pose of a character or altering certain details, he became anxious. It seemed that Kyle had mastered some images by copying them many times, but was not yet comfortable altering those images to suit new contexts.

These students were not the only ones who engaged in some kind of copying; many students used reference materials at different points over the five weeks, and these were not all from popular culture. Colin and Michael both copied directly from photographs they found by connecting to the internet with their cell phones. Marcus, another student in class, copied directly from an illustration that was part of the lesson motivation. Briana and Lydia used *The Animator's Survival Guide* to draw hands, while Jordan once drew from a lesson example that I created.

Some students who engaged in copying exhibited anxiety about their work and would move on to something new when they did not have success at matching the model. Jordan, Kyle and Andy expressed these concerns several times during projects, saying “I don’t have a picture”, or “I’m not sure that will look right”.

Borrowing

While there were many copies in Art and Storytelling, this was not the only way that students used popular culture in their work. Other students used characters or settings from a pop culture model while making stylistic or contextual changes. This is the technique that I called “borrowing”: the student takes characters or settings and casts

them in roles that are very similar to their use within popular culture. Examples of borrowing were usually detected by talking to the students or reading their written description of the project.

Brian was a student who used borrowing. For his gesture project, he created a fight scene between Sasuke, a character from the *Naruto* manga series, and his brother. He depicts Sasuke creating a force field with lightning. The characters have stylistic similarities to the manga books, mostly their hairstyles. Otherwise, Brian creates a scene without attempting to mimic an existing illustration. He drew a gesture and then built the figure of Sasuke around that framework.

Dawn used a similar approach when working on her monster sculpture. She created a long, snake-like creature with an environment that was fairly abstract, with colored shapes and clay spirals. In the written description of her piece, Dawn identified the environment as Pandora, the fictional planet from the movie *Avatar*, and says that her monster is one of the aliens that live there. While the work does not bear significant resemblance to the model, her description is consistent with how Pandora is described in the film: an alien environment full of unusual plants and animals.



Figure 17. Dawn's monster sculpture, of an alien that lives in "Pandora", which is a fictional location from the movie *Avatar*.

Jordan, a student who often copied, also borrowed characters for his utopia project. He drew Superman, Batman, and Aquaman all coexisting in a place that he called Superhero Island. Jordan used the same kind of schema to draw each character, changing only their position or adding embellishments like logos. He also drew police cars, water, a tree, a rocket, and other environmental features.

Kyle also had an interesting project that fell into the borrowing category. He took characters from a few different videogames and put them together in his comic during the fifth lesson. While this was a more complex use of popular culture, the characters he used exist simultaneously in a game called Super Smash Brothers, a Nintendo game in which characters from different Nintendo games come together for a giant battle. Kyle had these characters battle each other in a forest, using the Pokémon system where human characters choose two pets to battle. It was interesting to see that this project was created right after the students took part in the writing assignment where they made a group battle of their monster sculptures.

These kinds of works were like paraphrases of popular culture. While they did not expand very much on the model from popular culture, they did not focus heavily on recreating images, either. The students seemed to care about the ideas or stories being told, and wanted to retell them using their own images, or fit their images into an existing pop culture context. Borrowing still afforded students the opportunity to try out techniques that were discussed during the lesson, for example, drawing gestures or learning how to use clay.

Appropriating

Another technique that students used with popular culture was appropriating. Students who used this technique combined popular culture with original content or imagery, creating hybrids that blended a model with completely original images or content. These students were likely to focus on crafting styles or characters that matched popular culture, but then used these characters in stories that were original.

A significant example of this technique was found in Lydia's comic book,

“The Plan”. I was only able to see this work a handful of times, because Lydia worked on it outside of class. The characters in her comic were clearly based on Sonic the Hedgehog, and shared the names of main characters from the sonic games: Amy, Sonic, Shadow, and others. However, her characters were involved in a love story which, to the best of my knowledge, has nothing to do with the actual activities of Sonic the Hedgehog in comics or video games. Lydia used these characters as puppets, and put them to work serving her own storytelling needs.

Another student, Daniel, also worked on a comic book at home and brought it into class. His characters had many stylistic similarities to the Manga comics that he and Kevin brought to class, including the style of hair and facial features as well as weapon and clothing design. In the final lesson, I was able to talk to Daniel about his comic book, which was a story of conflict between different groups of characters: demons, half-demons, and humans. Kevin interrupted Daniel’s description to say that certain aspects of Daniel’s story were part of existing Manga. Daniel acknowledged that this was true, but said that most of the characters and plot were his own.

The final example that fits appropriating was the group battle constructed by students using their monsters. The students mixed sculptures influenced by popular culture with sculptures that were not, and used them to construct a large battle. While not as extensive as the comics, this short project became a battle of good versus evil that included references to Pokémon and Kirby videogames, but also to mythical themes (Cerberus, angels) and to students’ unique use of materials (“spikes” creatures, which were identified by the students’ use of toothpicks as fangs and spikes). This project became a kind of social event that allowed students to create a narrative together, weaving plotlines from popular culture with their own ideas.

Summary of Techniques

Students engaged popular culture in ways that were consistent with existing literature. Smith (1985) discusses students who make comics to tell original stories but who use characters from popular culture to do so. This was true among students in Art and Storytelling who used appropriating, such as Lydia and Daniel. They used existing

models (characters, locations, styles) like a framework in which to insert their own stories. These were the kinds of projects that Smith asserted “cannot be considered mindless” (Smith, 1985, p. 147) However, some of the strategies that students used when copying made me wonder if they could truly be called “mindless”.

In one case, Tim drew directly from a plush Spiderman doll that I brought into the classroom. He had to use observation and simplification to turn this three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional drawing. Is this necessarily mindless? I also observed Ivan struggling to draw Pop Eye directly from an illustration. This technique is not so different from painters who attempt to make copies from masterworks. While it is certainly up for debate whether or not a drawing of Pop Eye is a masterwork, the goal is the same: to master another artist’s technique. Students who copied were trying to break pictures down into individual lines and marks that, together, would create a cartoon. In addition, during the Utopia project, Colin was able to combine drawings from reference with invented perspective, and with objects that were drawn from imagination.

Stories played a major role in how students used popular culture. Stories were often original even when characters were taken from popular culture.. Lydia based her character design and character names on Sonic the Hedgehog, but told a unique story. Even though her characters were heavily influenced by popular culture, it would be inaccurate to dismiss this project as imitative.

One of the most important things I noticed was that students who used popular culture often used popular culture in multiple ways. For example, Jordan borrowed for his utopia and monster projects, but copied in his sketchbook. Also, no student relied exclusively on popular culture over the five weeks.

The Value of Popular Culture

The second question guiding this study was, “In what ways does popular visual culture influence the artwork and aesthetic values of adolescents?” With only five weeks to observe students and their artwork, I can only make limited hypothesis about their values and the motives that drive students to use popular imagery. However, students’ creative processes and comments provide some insights about why students may use

popular culture, and how they perceive authorship and originality.

In their survey responses, students expressed a particular preference for comics, cartoons, television shows, movies and videogames over other forms of artwork. These responses all reflect an interest in narrative, which seems appropriate for students in a storytelling class. In their work, students frequently made visual and verbal references to places, characters, styles and plotlines from popular culture. I did not see brands reflected in students' artwork over these five weeks. Perhaps this is because branding is not closely related to narrative.

In students writing examples, their justification for the use of popular culture sometimes included "Because I love ____" or "____ is the best!" These students seem to use popular culture as their content simply because they care about these topics and want to express this visually. On the other hand, some instances of borrowing or copying seemed to stem from uncertainty. For example, Ivan copied from Pop Eye during the week of gesture drawing. The next week, when there were no visual resources, Ivan's sculpture was extremely similar to those created by Kevin, Daniel and Colin, who all used toothpicks as spikes. Copying was a strategy that he used to develop content.

The social power of popular culture also emerged during the five weeks. In some ways, choosing to use images from popular culture could help a student gain the acceptance of peers. Andy, Daniel, Kevin and Colin shared their comics, commented on one another's drawings, and often complimented other students in class when they created a representation of a character that was very close to the original. In another instance, Jordan was teased by some students because his drawing was not a very close representation of his model, Charizard.

Another social goal, besides impressing peers, was to use popular culture to establish common ground with other students. Lydia, Brian, Dawn, Tiffany and Ivan all attended the same middle school, over the course of the five weeks they discussed *Naruto*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and *Avatar*. All of these models appeared in students' artwork over these weeks. Kyle and Jordan developed a companionship that seemed largely based on their shared interest in Pokémon, and together they created artwork and engaged in play that involved Pokémon monsters. Kevin, Daniel, and Andy shared their

comic books together and talked about these books while they worked. These materials provided discussion topics for students, which then filtered into their work.

One particular social event illustrated the writing of Paul Duncum (2009), when I distributed the comic worksheets to the students and a group of boys turned them into an experiment in absurdity, violence and politically incorrect content, an experiment that was above all pleasurable to these students. The series of “Go Boom” comics that these boys drew included references to terrorism, gun violence, absurd events, and vulgar language. After looking at these comics, I was reminded of Duncum’s statement:

When students produce work that is just plain silly, or ostensibly sexist, racist, homophobic, vulgar, offensive to people with physical disabilities, and so on, what are teachers to do?” (Duncum, 2009, pp. 232-233)

I had invited popular culture into the class by choosing to do a lesson on comics. Could I blame the students for filling my comic templates with the conceptual content of real comic books? Should I discuss this content seriously with the students? If I did so, would I discourage them from making work that was meaningful to them?

In my opinion, it seemed that students had used violence and language to justify making an explosion at the end of each comic. I had little reason to think that they were advocating violent acts, and instead were making a joke by turning very innocent prompts (mice with cheese and dogs with bones) into images that were shocking and explosive. The experience illuminated the difficulty of allowing students to explore salient content while still creating trying to protect them from offensive or damaging content. Teachers who intentionally bring popular culture into their classrooms have to walk this line constantly, and carefully.

Some students’ artwork seemed to reflect Brent Wilson (1974) theories about students who use popular culture to express their desires or fantasies, discussed in “The Superheroes of J.C. Holtz”. The comics that Lydia and Daniel brought to me had content that addressed relevant topics for adolescents, namely teenage relationships and conflict between good and evil. Maybe these students were role-playing through their characters, using them as avatars through which to experience taboo behaviors, like romance or physical violence. It is difficult to know something like that without probing into a

student's personal feelings. This leads me to point out another similarity between Wilson's (1974) theories and the students' work: neither of these projects were created specifically for Art and Storytelling; both were examples that the students created at home rather than in the classroom. Though these projects created in private, the students also exhibited significant pride in their work, enough to bring them into the class for me to read and discuss.

I also became interested in events that took place during the last class, when a group of students combined their sculptures in order to create a giant battle. After this activity, Kyle began a comic that brought characters from different videogames together in his comic strip, which seemed partly inspired by the preceding events and by his interests in Pokémon, *Zelda*, and *Super Smash Brothers*.

I began to think about these students projects in the context of a culture that produces a game like *Super Smash Brothers*. In this Nintendo game, seemingly disparate characters are pulled together in a meta-environment where they can interact: banding together to fight one another. While these characters all belong to the same company (Nintendo), the characters have unique worlds and storylines that are mostly unrelated.

Similar crossovers and blending of worlds happen on television when characters from one show make cameos on another show. The literature on manga and dojinshi revealed that many amateur comics are made in tribute to professional ones, and that a world of fan fiction has exploded online, where characters from movies, television, manga and anime all meet and interact through stories, drawings, and animation.

Mash-up is musical term that is used to describe digital recordings where portions of multiple songs have been blended to create a new song. In "God's Little Toys: Confessions of a Cut and Paste Artist", Gibson (2005), a musician who creates mash-up songs, talks about the implications that blending and appropriation have on the concept of ownership in contemporary art and music, asking, "Who owns the words? Who owns the music and the rest of our culture? We do. All of us. Though not all of us know it – yet. (Gibson, 2005, para. 15)

As students in the first generation of digital natives, maybe these students do know this. Students who participated in the monster battle had no qualms about blending

popular culture with original content. Later, Daniel seemed relatively unmoved by Kevin's assertion that some of the characters and ideas in Daniel's comic weren't "his". The fact that some of the characters were original was enough justification for Daniel.

Japanese artist Takashi Murakami (2000) wrote *Superflat*, in which he describes a Japanese aesthetic that attempts to combine different aspects of Japanese visual culture. He describes this as similar to merging layers in Photoshop, and says that the aesthetic attempts to blend the layers of Japanese culture. Describing the aesthetic, he says:

No one has yet taken a serious look at the image resulting from the integration of layers of entertainment and art. But that integration is already occurring. Much integration is still underway. (Murakami, 2000, p. 25)

It appears that these students are participating in this integration. Students merged layers of entertainment and art in my classroom through clay, drawings, comics, paintings, and other media. They did so in group projects as well as independently. Students' consistent willingness to take images and content from popular culture may be a sign that students are being influenced by these trends, and have less concrete notions of originality or ownership.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

The object of this study was to explore the ways that adolescents use images from popular culture in their artwork, possible reasons students have for using popular culture, and how popular culture influences students' aesthetic values.

Over a five week period, students produced a variety of images inspired by popular culture. They demonstrated a variety of strategies and techniques when using these images, supporting Nancy Smith's assertion that "there are types of copying that cannot be characterized as mindless". (Smith, 1985, p. 147)

While some students engaged in copying that did not expand very much upon the original model, these practices still seemed to provide students with drawing practice, reference material for larger projects, social status among their peers, and a means for expressing their love for an aspect of popular culture. Other students created more elaborate projects using popular culture, by borrowing and reframing stories or images from popular culture in unique compositions and scenes. Still others appropriated images and themes from popular culture, blending them with original imagery and using them to tell new stories.

Students who borrowed and appropriated may have been role-playing through their images. Others celebrated more general content of popular culture, like violence or absurdity, through the form of comic strips. These findings are in accord with existing literature written by Wilson (1974, 2003), Duncum (2009), Smith (1985), and Toku (2001, 2003). Students in this class overwhelmingly favored comic books, manga, cartoons, videogames and anime over other forms of visual culture, which they demonstrated in their responses to questionnaires and by repeatedly copying from these forms every week.

The students who appropriated and borrowed often blurred the boundaries of originality, creating hybrid projects by weaving personal content and imagery with pop culture styles, characters, or stories. Lydia drew very recognizable videogame characters, but cast them in stories that were largely unrelated to their original context. In his comic, Daniel blended existing locations and characters from manga with new characters and locations he invented. It is difficult to say how much these projects are the product of popular culture, or how much they are the product of the students' own ideas. The students themselves did not seem bothered by such questions.

During the five weeks, even though students copied images on a weekly basis, only one student ever criticized another for using something that was not "his". When the criticism was made, it came from another student who used popular culture in his drawings. Most importantly, the comment was met with a calm and confident rebuttal. This is a sharp contrast to my memory of adolescence, and my own peers' frequently negative responses to my own appropriative projects. It is possible that my own silence, as a teacher, made students less likely to criticize their peers.

Even so, the students' pervasive use of popular culture and relative indifference to acts of copying may reflect a growing trend in popular culture toward indistinct boundaries of genres and authorship. Students' use of mash-up in their monster battle and comics may be related to increasing amounts of mash-up in popular culture. Games, movies, television and Internet subculture all include mash-up and unusual juxtapositions of unrelated characters and images. Murakami's (2000) Superflat aesthetic is an example of mash-up in contemporary art practice

In addition, students engage many intertextual materials. Pokémon were very popular among the students, and these characters exist in card games, television shows, videogames, illustrations, toys, merchandise, posters, and many other manifestations. Who, then, owns Pokémon? Is it Nintendo, or the animation studios that produce the shows, or the artists who illustrate the cards? Is it the man who drew the first Pokémon monster? Is it the child who buys a pack of Pokémon cards and then, effectively, owns those pets? Students may not have any interest in answering these questions, but may be

responding artistically to the fact that images from popular culture seem to “belong” to many different people.

As teachers, then, where should we stand on the issue of popular culture? It seems that the answer largely depends on whether or not we, as individual educators, see these trends as good or bad for the future of the arts. Do we celebrate contemporary artists who use these techniques to make beautiful and provocative images? As Murakami (2000), do we see the blending of layers as a portrait of our society? If we do, then perhaps we allow students more opportunities to exercise copying, borrowing, and appropriating in our classrooms.

Or inversely, do we worry that recycling and recreating images will result in increasingly mediocre art forms? In “Texts without Context”, Michiko Kakutani (2010) discusses some potential drawbacks to mash-up culture, including the rise of Internet piracy and the difficulties that working photographers, writers and visual artists face when matched against free or inexpensive content provided by blogs, amateur artists, Google images, and other Internet tools. By supporting the growth of mash-up culture, do we then undermine the work of professional artists? Will a generation of aspiring artists find that their skills can no longer be translated into a career?

Because these answers are based on individual values and perspectives, it is difficult to provide any clear direction. It is clear, though, that popular culture plays a complex role in adolescent artistry. Students in Art and Storytelling used these materials in ways that challenged the idea that copying is always rote or uncreative. Students used these images for a variety of reasons, both in self-initiated projects and in teacher-initiated assignments. Because of the increasing pervasiveness of popular visual culture, it is likely that students will continue to use these materials in their work, whether teachers support their efforts or restrict them. The results of this study may indicate that students are responding to cultural shifts regarding issues of ownership and originality.

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APPENDIX A
SATURDAY ART SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

SATURDAY ART SCHOOL 2009-2010

Office Use Only

FALL '09 SEMESTER

Circle course:
F. Voyage 3-5
Art F 6 Sec 1 **Art F 6 Sec 2**
Art F 7 Sec 1 **Art F 7 sec 2**
Art F 8
D&P 9-12 Sec 1 **D&P 9-12 Sec 2**
D&P 12-15 Sec 1 **D&P 12-15 Sec 2**
Dr to S 9-10 **Dr to S 11-12**
Sculpture Sec 1 **Sculpture Sec 2**
Ceramics **MS Portfolio**
HS Portfolio **Adult Foundations**

Circle tuition:
Tuition \$175
Scholarships: Half \$115 Full \$45
Tuition rate for 2nd/3rd child _____
Sibling last name (if different) _____

PAYMENT

Date			
Payment due			
Payment made	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash
Balance due			

SPRING '10 SEMESTER

Circle course:
F. Voyage 3-5
Art F 6 Sec 1 **Art F 6 Sec 2**
Art F 7 Sec 1 **Art F 7 sec 2**
Art F 8
D&P 9-12 Sec 1 **D&P 9-12 Sec 2**
D&P 12-15 Sec 1 **D&P 12-15 Sec 2**
Dr to S 9-10 **Dr to S 11-12**
Sculpture Sec 1 **Sculpture Sec 2**
Ceramics **MS Portfolio**
HS Portfolio **Adult Foundations**

Circle tuition:
Tuition \$175
Scholarships: Half \$115 Full \$45
Tuition rate for 2nd/3rd child _____
Sibling last name (if different) _____

PAYMENT

Date			
Payment due			
Payment made	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash	Check (incl. # _____) or Cash
Balance due			

Phone/Letters/Calls:

Date: _____ Reason: _____
 Date: _____ Reason: _____
 Date: _____ Reason: _____

Notes:

APPENDIX B
SATURDAY ART SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM, CONTINUED

SATURDAY ART SCHOOL 2009-2010		
Child's First Name	Last Name	School Name, Number
Address (inc. apartment # and zip code)		
Parent or Guardian's Full Name (and relationship to child)		Home Phone #
Any medical information we should know about: (i.e. asthma, allergies)		

List below individuals who are authorized to pick up your child at the end of class. Include yourself and any other authorized persons. If your child will arrive and leave alone, write 'self'. (Please note: Saturday Art School does not call in the event of a child's absence or late arrival.)

1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT
Provide the name and number of two emergency contacts other than parent or guardian, who will be available on Saturdays.

Name _____	Tel# _____
Name _____	Tel# _____

- I understand that payments are to be made according to the payment schedule and that failure to do so will forfeit my child's place in the class.
- I understand that no refund or tuition adjustment will be made for incidental absences, including but not limited to illness.
- I represent that I am the custodial parent or legal guardian of the child I am enrolling and I hereby give authority to Pratt Institute to obtain emergency medical treatment for my child with the understanding that the family/guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- I hereby give permission for my child to be photographed and any photo taken be used in promotional literature or displays.
- I understand that Pratt Institute reserves the right to withdraw my child for any reason.
- **I understand that Pratt Institute and the Saturday Art School have no resources or support staff for students with special educational needs. Should you still wish to register, please tell us about your child:**

Are you a new student? Yes No (if No, when were you last here) _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Relationship to Child _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Welcome to Art & Storytelling!

This survey is to help me figure out what kind of things you like so that I have a better idea what kind of activities you would like to do while you're here. Fill out as much as you can. Thanks!

NAME: _____

Favorite TV Shows / Movies: _____

Favorite Books/Comics/Graphic Novels: _____

Music I listen to: _____

Brands that I like (clothes, videogames, etc): _____

The kinds of art I like the most are _____

The kinds of art I like the least are _____

When I make art on my own, I like to use these materials: _____

In this class, I hope we learn about _____

I really hope this class is not about _____

APPENDIX D
EVALUTION CHART FOR THE USE OF POPULAR CULTURE

Lesson Title:	Date:	Student #	Student #	Student #
MODEL: What aspect of pop culture is being used? (a comic book, movie, commercial, etc) Does the work show formal qualities that match the “style” of a known model (i.e. Manga), and to what degree? Is this artwork an example of copying/appropriation/or transformation?				
ENVIRONMENT: Do the settings or spaces in the artwork derive from popular culture ? Describe.				
OBJECTS / BRANDS: Does the artist use recognizable objects / brands from commercials, fashion, toys, etc? Describe.				
CHARACTER: Does the student use a recognizable character from popular culture? Does the student imitate the physical qualities and/or the personality traits of the character(s)?				
NARRATIVE/STORY: <i>IDENTICAL:</i> matches the plot of a known story closely. <i>PC/PC HYBRID:</i> a mix of two or more pop culture stories. <i>PC/NonPC HYBRID:</i> a mix of original and pop culture narrative.				
PERFORMANCE/SOCIAL: How does the physical work function within the the classroom experience? What discussions or play emerge from the work? Is the work manipulated or used by students in a way that involves pop culture? What conversations develop about the work?				

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

FACEBOOK PROFILE

Character Name:

Age:

Gender:

Home/Habitat:

Hobbies:

Special Skills or Powers:

Goals:

Quotes / favorite phrases:

History (Where did this character come from? Where has it been and what has it done?):